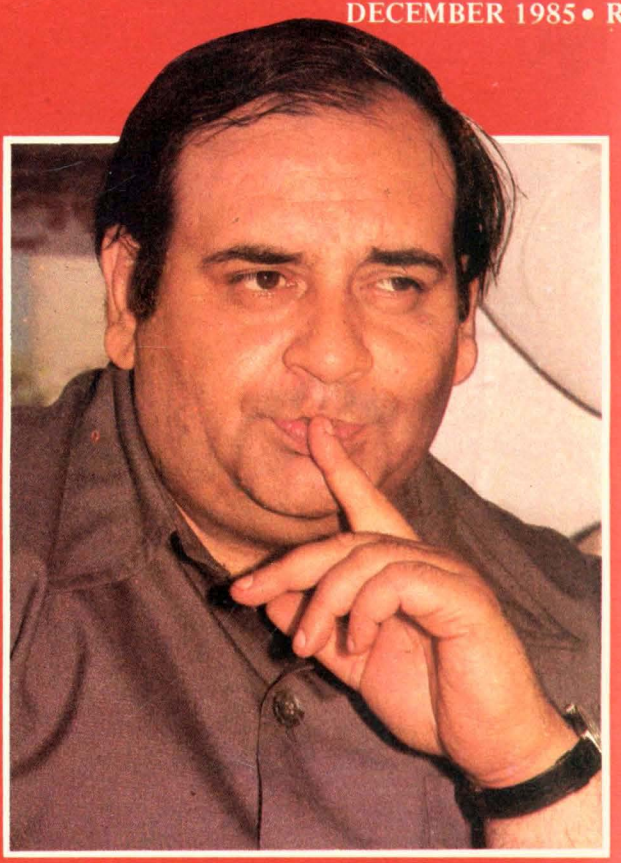
Vidhushak On Columnists • Sheela Barse On Police Violence • KS Venkateswaran On Socialism

imprint

DECEMBER 1985 • Rs 5

Special Secretary, JF Ribeiro



Internal Security Minister, Arun Nehru

HOW SAFE ARE WE?

What the new Internal Security Department can, will and should do about terrorism, Intelligence and law and order.

Charles Correa On Saving Our Cities

Exploding The Doon School Myth

Shyam Benegal Bounces Back

Patents: The Mothers Of Invention

Est's Werner Erhard: Fraudster?

Expatriate Millionaires: The Final Bust

Born–a new breed of Bajaj

bajaj cub

The economical high performance scooter.

The Bajaj Cub is the newest in the range of Bajaj scooters. A 100 cc scooter with electronic ignition and three speed gear box, it is designed for the optimum combination of economy and performance.

The last word in economy... The Bajaj Cub gives you 61 kilometres to a single litre of fuel*. With such economy, you'll go far.

And high performance... It's a tough performer. With a 6.0 horsepower engine. That's more than enough to carry you and your family. From here to anywhere.

From the first name in scooters And the Bajaj Cub has something extra. The expertise of Bajaj Auto. Expertise gained through 25 years' experience in building two-wheelers. Building them tough and rugged. To last a lifetime.

And of course, there's the largest chain of dealers and service and spare parts centres spread across the country. Waiting to serve your needs.

* At 40 kmph with a load of 130 kgs.

bajaj auto ltd

Value for money, for years

LINTAS BAJ 21 2316

ON THE MARQUEE

THERE IS SOMETHING VERY CRUDE about the 88-foot tall colour cut-out of Mrs Indira Gandhi which was installed at the Boat Club (near India Gate) in New Delhi to commemorate the first death anniversary of the late Prime Minister. In the world today, only North Korea's Kim Il Sung, Ferdinand Marcos and some Latin and Central American unmentionables raise monuments of this scale to themselves or to the deities they want to exploit. The Soviet Union and China tried this with Stalin and Mao respectively but galloping realities and 'catching up' forced drastic reduction in the size.

The blow-ups, the cut-outs and the sculptures of Stalin, Mao and the L & C American unmentionables were getting bigger and bigger as their public esteem was diminishing. Politicians relentlessly exploit the dead to glorify the living. Of course, this too, up to a point. For instance, Nikita Khruschev systematically enlarged Stalin to Marx and Lenin proportions until he was ready to demolish him completely, as he did, in his famous speech to the Congress of the CPSU in 1956.

In India, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel remain installed in many minds and hearts without much official prompting. So will Mrs Indira Gandhi. But she can be *made* to be forgotten if crude efforts are made to use and exploit her in the service of the living. The policies Mr Rajiv Gandhi is initiating are different from Mrs Gandhi's. They ought to be. The realities are different. The outlooks of the two Gandhis are different. Age, environment, friends, social influences are different. The perceptions are different. And, of course, the personalities of the two are very different.

The whole world says Mr Rajiv Gandhi is different from his mother. His actions say it even louder. Where is the need, in that case, to invoke Mrs Indira Gandhi's words and deeds to bless Mr Gandhi or to obtain her approval from her eternal abode?

At the Boat Club rally held on October 31, a gathering of largely rented audience, the biggest provider of hired crowds, Mr Veer Bahadur Singh, the Chief Minister of UP, did not even know what to say: throughout his brief speech in his own language, Hindi, he mixed up the living with the dead. How very disgraceful! And is this really remembering Mrs Indira Gandhi?

It is the privilege of Mr Rajiv Gandhi, the Prime Minister, to claim, as he has done, that Mrs Indira Gandhi was not only his mother but the mother of all the poor of India. Only, this will invite the question: What about the children and women, made poor and orphaned by your mother's avengers?

The granaries of India are today overflowing with grain. That is, Mr Gandhi, your mother's and our late Prime Minister's greatest contribution to India. And this is a powerful truth. Why dilute it with bombast? If the truth is allowed to prevail, Mrs Indira Gandhi will be remembered for a long, long time to come. And if you, Mr Gandhi, want your mother to be truly honoured for this achievement of hers, then you must ask your agriculture and external affairs ministries to evolve Grow-More-Food packages for other countries where food scarcity is acute. We must prod and encourage them with money and technology, to increase agricultural productivity. If we can help the countries of Africa achieve freedom from hunger and can end starvation, then this will be a bigger and more lasting memorial to Indira Gandhi than all the testimonials you can collect on behalf of her dubious international achievements. At home, provide drinking water to the villages which are without water, and do something – you can, you must – to end the indignity millions of our women suffer daily on the roadside by providing simple, walled toilets, to begin with, at least on roads along which settlements have sprouted. That will be a good memorial to a prime minister who wanted to but failed to work for the emancipation of other women. And this is something not beyond our finances or capability, and need.

*

How you, Mr Gandhi, personally remember Mrs Gandhi is entirely a son's business. But as Prime Minister of

PHOTOGRAPH BY BHAWAN SINGH

India now you owe an obligation to the country to ensure that the tributes and memorials to our late Prime Minister are as dignified and austere as the eight kilometre Congress (I) march to Shakti Sthal (Mrs Gandhi's samadhi) at dawn on October 31, in which you participated. And it is, of course, your privilege alone to claim that 'Mrs Gandhi was not my mother alone, but the mother of every poor man and woman in the country', except that, by making such a claim, sir, you have invited us to ask,

Then what about these orphans, these new poor, Mr Gandhi? And, of course, you realise what the several crores of rupees spent by the government on the October 31 Boat Club rally, by itself not legitimate expenditure, could have done for these hapless victims of your mother's avengers?

You, Mr Gandhi, are the best thing that has happened to us in a long time. You have raised high hopes – many unrealistic – but that is more our fault. This country supports you. The gathering support has sucked in even the traditional opponents to Nehru and to the Congress. The largest single age group in the country today, the youth, identifies itself with you. The young person in even conservative UP homes today is different – he or she is more direct, less dishonest, a doer. Lead us, then, Prime Minister, with sensitivity, with common sense, with decency. And wisdom. (Maturity will follow, speedily.)

* *

AND DEAR PRIME MINISTER, you are too agile and erect to understand sprained backs and craned necks. At the frequency you are flying out and flying in, many of your colleagues risk more than normal wear and tear. And a New Delhi friend who made a casual check of who was where among your Cabinet colleagues on the morning of your dawn departure for the UK last month found half of your colleagues making up the lost sleep

Craning can cause spondylitis, and *servilitis*, an ailment peculiar to Indians.

even beyond mid-day. A serious firman from you to the effect that no one outside of protocol or security will see you off or receive you at Palam will improve the productivity of your hard-pressed colleagues. Importantly, if you go about it firmly, it will save our country millions of man-hours a year in due course. And such an ethic will also reduce pressure on our airports, railway stations, and on our roads.

Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year.

R. V. Pandit

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY HINDUSTAN TIMES

imprint

CHRISTMAS ISSUE

VOLUME XXV NO 9 | CONTENTS | DECEMBER 1985

imprint

Vol XXV No. 9 December 1985
A BUSINESS PRESS PUBLICATION

Publisher
R V PANDIT
Associate Publisher & Executive Editor
VIR SANGHVI
Managing Editor
SHIRIN MEHTA
Assistant Editor
HUTOKSHI DOCTOR
Editorial Staff
AMRITA SHAH
Marketing Managers
S K THAKUR
MADHUVANTI GUNAJI

Advertising Sales Offices:

BOMBAY:
Business Press Private Limited,
Maker Tower 'E', 18th Floor,
Cuffe Parade, Bombay 400 005.
TEL: 211752/211861/215056

BANGALORE: K S PATTABHI DAS:
Business Press Private Limited,
9/2-B, Hayes Road, Bangalore 560 025.
TEL: 606215/562074.

CALCUTTA: A K MITRA:
168, Jodhpur Park, Calcutta 700 068.
TEL: 424436.

HYDERABAD: V T JAGTIANI:
3-5-1119/11, Kachiguda Cross Road,
Hyderabad 500 027.
TEL: 556666.

MADRAS: K DEVARAJ:
Business Press Private Limited,
332, Khaleel Shirazi Estate, 6th Floor,
Pantheon Road, Egmore, Madras 600 008.

NEW DELHI: N DAS:
K-3, DDA Flats, 1st Floor,
Safdarjang Development Area
'C', Hauz Khas, New Delhi 110 016.
TEL: 660136.

Cable: IMPRINTMAG in each city.

For Editorial And Accounts Correspondence:
IMPRINT, Business Press Private Limited,
Maker Tower 'E', 18th Floor, Cuffe Parade,
Bombay 400 005. TEL: 212825/215056/211752.

IMPRINT is a Business Press monthly publication with the publishing office located at Surya Mahal, 5, Burjorji Bharucha Marg, Bombay 400 023, India. **IMPRINT** is registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India under No RN 6178/61.

For change of address and circulation enquiries write to: **IMPRINT,** Business Press Private Limited, Maker Tower 'E', 18th Floor, Cuffe Parade, Bombay 400 005, at least 30 days before the change of address takes effect. Both the old and the new address should be given. When writing to us enclose a recent mailing label showing the subscription number. Airmail rates are available on request. **IMPRINT** is distributed by India Book House.

LETTERS

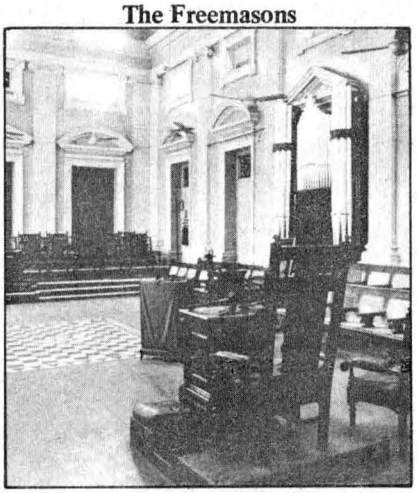
The PM's Security

In *On The Marquee* (October 1985) R V Pandit first said that the safety of the Prime Minister is 'the responsibility of all Indians' and that the people's concern in this respect is 'so deep'. In the same breath he said that the PM, going to address an election meeting flanked by machine gun-toting commandos makes 'a grotesque sight in a democratic country'.

What is 'grotesque' about it? If the safety of the PM is concern number one, it should be shown and demonstrated in reality. It cannot be left to chance. Secondly, where terrorism is senseless and without a bit of human consideration, what was done as a safety measure for the PM in Punjab was quite proper.

Naresh Umrigar
Surat

The Freemasons



Hutokshi Doctor's article, *The World Of The Freemasons* (October 1985) should not have been published, and even if it had to be published, it could have been shorter.

Moreover, as a Freemason, I feel the statement – "What stays with several Masons these days, is the lure of the banquet and toast that follow each meeting" – is incorrect and false.

However, I am consoled by one fact after reading the article – that is, nobody, other than Freemasons, will comprehend the significance of the article.

Narendranath R Pai
Tellicherry

Black Money

In your otherwise excellent coverage on Mr V P Singh (October 1985), may I say that I found one paragraph lacking in perception of reality, though induced by a concern for the poor. It was in relation to estate duty.

In theory, estate duty is appealing because it purports to make for equality of opportunities. In practice, it inducted many affected people to massive black deals. It injected dishonesty as a way of life in those who felt that if a large part of their savings meant for their children, grandchildren and family are taken away by legislation on death, after the same was done each year by wealth-tax during life, it would not be so morally reprehensible for them to stash away, or keep in gold or whatever, a large portion of their estate. They take the risk, they get the gain and the country is bled white.

Black money is India's single biggest bane, and no price is high enough, no theory ethically supportable, to let it take birth and erode our lives. The government should check what breeds and generates black money, and remove its cause, root and branch. This, not just because the cost of collection is more than the receipts, but because it cuts into the very heart of the country's economy and the lifestream of its people. In fact, all direct taxes, except the corporate tax should be totally excised or so drastically cut to a non-tempting level that black deals will disappear significantly or become needlessly dangerous.

Buji Chinoy
Bombay

LETTERS

SELLING TO THE CONVERTED

Your well-researched and extremely persuasive cover story, *The Selling Of The Prime Minister* (November 1985) misses out on two features.

First of all, despite all your claims to the contrary, TV is still largely an urban medium. It is true, as you claim, that the new transmitters do cover the rural areas, but the fact is, the villagers don't own the requisite number of TV sets. Many of these villages also don't have electricity.

So, the TV-selling is an urban phenomenon. It is an attempt to reach the middle class people who are pleased to see one of their own talking to Americans and Britons on equal terms. They are the ones who have no experience of the tribal areas and are delighted to see the PM checking out on what the yokels are doing.

But, has it occurred to you that, as far as this audience is concerned, he might not need any selling at all? After all, when electricity was invented, there was no real need to sell it to people who hated the dark: they wanted it desperately.

Perhaps, Rajiv Gandhi's image-builders are wasting their efforts in concentrating on a middle class that is entirely in love with him in the first place. As far as these urban-dwellers are concerned, a sophisticated, moderately good-looking PM is one million times better than the *kurta*-dhoti brigade of Chandrashekhar and company.

On the other hand, the PM's marketing men may also be misunderstanding the nature of these Rajiv fans. A group of people that makes political decisions on the basis of a man's sophistication is also likely to object if its beloved TV is interfered with too much. And if the PM's office keeps pulling *Khandaan* off the air and putting him on instead, there may well be a backlash.

So, here's a message for all those brilliant marketing chaps you interviewed: stop selling to the converted, boys. It's too easy and your overkill might well backfire on you.

S P Agarwal
New Delhi

A Tale Of Two Governors

A Tale Of Two Governors by Tavleen Singh (November 1985), underlined the unfortunate degradation of the office of Governor over the last 15 years. Governors are no longer a bridge between the Centre and the states. They are, instead, looked upon as the link between the Prime Minister and members of the ruling party in the states. Even in states where the Congress is not in power, Governors are looked upon as 'agents' of the Centre. In these states, Governors express their 'views' to create controversies.

The partisan political interests of Jagmohan in toppling the Farooq Abdullah ministry in Jammu and Kashmir, the transfer of B K Nehru to Gujarat, the dismissal of Patwari when he was the Governor of Tamil Nadu, and the conduct of Ram Lal, then Governor of Andhra Pradesh, in dismissing the NTR ministry, clearly indicate that Governors are now little more than puppets of the ruling party.

The office of Governor should either be abolished altogether or else it should be delinked from political motives.

S A Srinivasa Sarma
Bombay

Selling The Prime Minister

Your cover story on the alleged selling of the Prime Minister (*The Selling Of The Prime Minister*, November 1985) was misguided. There is nothing new in the Prime Minister appearing on TV. Even Indira Gandhi used to appear on the news every night.

As Anil Dharker pointed out in a recent issue of *Debonair*, it is too cynical to suggest that the PM is being sold to us. The truth is that he is simply the best man for the job. What a pity that **Imprint** should be so cynical. You should be like *Debonair* and support the Congress (I).

Shakti Malhotra
Bhopal

If the PM is so interested in selling himself, then may I suggest that he dispense with people like Jagmohan – the subject of two articles in your November issue? That will be much more effective than all these TV appearances.

R Venugopal
Bombay

You have correctly highlighted the attacks made by the Prime Minister on the Sikh community during the election campaign. He was so intent on winning the Hindu vote that he did not mind branding the entire community secessionist.

Now that there is peace in Punjab, people take the line that what he said in December 1984 did not really matter. But the truth is that it did. The Prime Minister cannot make irresponsible statements for public gain.

Ajtar Singh Brar
New Delhi

Perhaps the Prime Minister was shrill in his denunciations of the Sikhs during the Lok Sabha poll. But what did you expect? Two Sikhs killed his mother and the country was held to ransom by Bhindranwale.

That he later made peace with the Akalis only shows his magnanimity, not that he was lying the first time around.

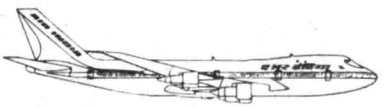
O P Gupta
New Delhi

The yawning gap between our Maharajah Class and an ordinary First Class

Our way of making you feel like a Maharajah, of course. Or rather, our many ways:

- Every seat a luxurious Slumberette on all our 747s.
- A choice of continental and delicately spiced Indian cuisine served in style, on elegant china and silverware.
- A selection of the finest wines and liquor.
- Gracious service by traditionally dressed hostesses. In the spirit of Indian hospitality.
- Decor reminiscent of a Maharajah's palace.
- Maharajah lounges at most airports.
- Separate and exclusive check-in facilities.

So, rather than yawning of boredom anywhere else, step aboard our Maharajah Class, put your feet up, recline on a Slumberette and feel like a Maharajah.



AIR-INDIA

The airline that treats you like a Maharajah

AIR-1584R

EDUCATION

By Vijay Sahni

GROWING UP EQUAL

John Martyn's approach accounts for Doon's image today.

THE IMAGE of Indian public schools has changed dramatically over the last 15 years. In 1970, newspapers were full of articles attacking the elitism inherent in Dehra Dun's Doon School and Ajmer's Mayo College. The government, too, let it be known that it regarded such institutions as anachronisms that were quite out of place in a socialistic society. By 1980, this had begun to change and in November 1985, any doubts about the government's attitude to public schools were removed by the Doon Golden Jubilee *tamasha*. Rajiv Gandhi turned up, wearing school uniform, the world's press descended on Dehra Dun and the Delhi newspapers outdid each other with front page coverage and gushing reports about 'India's best school'.

In a sense, it is quite easy to see why the image changed. Doon School boys reached positions of power and influence in various fields and one lot ended up running the country. But these explanations do not tell the full story. There were probably as many – if not more – Doon School boys in the public eye in 1970 as there are today: Ajit Haksar, L M Thapar, Dinesh Singh, Karan Singh, B G Verghese, Piloo Mody, Vasant Rajadhyaksha, Lovraj Kumar, Vittal Mallya, Ravi John Mathai, Bhaskar Menon, Jehangir Gazdar and 'Bubbles' Jaipur. These men are probably still more impressive than the best of the generations that followed them: Aroon Purie, Rajan Nanda, Roshan Seth, Prem Jha, Lakshman Singh, Rajiv Gandhi and Arun Singh.

And as for the fact that a Doon clique runs the country, that too has happened before: Sanjay Gandhi relied on such school friends as Kamal Nath and Akbar Ahmed. Yet, this clique did not succeed in changing the image of Indian public schools. Instead, it reinforced the feeling that the products of such schools were out of touch with the Indian reality.

There is another reason why Doon seems so much more acceptable now. In the years immediately following Independence, it seemed offensive to have a school that quite shamelessly patterned itself on an English public school, was staffed by Brits drawn from such establishments as Harrow and Eton, and used English as the medium of instruction. It seemed not just elitist, but also anachronistic.

Now, nearly 40 years after the Raj, we appear to have come to terms with our often troubled relationship with the British. An aide to the Prime Minister can tell *The Sunday Times* (London) that the real rulers of India are the ghosts of two Doon teachers, Holdsworth and Martyn, and arouse no criticism. Fifteen years ago, he would almost certainly have been castigated by a sensitive press for suggesting that the English still ruled India. Another aide can ask *India Today* to just 'think of the Prime Minister as Rajiv Martyn Gandhi', and find that nobody minds. India is now mature enough to accept that it did gain something from the English.

But, as Mady Martyn points out in her biography* of her late husband John, Doon's second Headmaster, things were quite different in those early post-Independence days. "In 1953, there had been a serious suggestion that the Doon School should change over to the Hindi medium which would have brought John's association with the school to an end." And seven years later, this was

* MARTYN SAHIB : A Biography Of John Martyn Of The Doon School; *Price: Rs 120, pubished by Dass Media.*

Perhaps Martyn and Foot's greatest contribution was that they created an equal environment where you were what your talent made you—not what your father's rank said you should be.

GROWING UP EQUAL

still an issue. "In 1960, John recalled what he had said in 1953: 'Two things above all contributed to the unity of India: dislike of British rule and a knowledge of the English language. One had gone. Could India afford to lose the other?'"

The task before the English teachers couldn't have been easy. The original advertisement for Headmaster had stated: "Though slavish imitation is to be avoided, the proposed school will attempt to develop in an atmosphere of Indian culture and environment, many of the best features of English public schools." The first Headmaster, A E Foot, had taught at Eton. He recruited John Martyn, who was then teaching at Harrow, and the two of them set off for a country about which they knew little.

They arrived in India in 1935, the year Doon opened, 12 years before the end of the Raj. Both Martyn and Foot had impeccable credentials and Martyn was offered a job on the Viceroy's staff. It would have been easy for them to have fitted into the colonial establishment and to have treated Doon merely as a Chief's College for a different kind of chief. One reason why Doon's English origins are no longer an issue is that while they did try to create an Indian Harrow, neither man fitted the caricature of the English sahib. While he was still at Eton, Foot had taken a party of boys to Wales to help unemployed miners dig allotments and grow their own vegetables and Martyn, who visited Russia in 1934, had been impressed by the apparent success of communist philosophy.

Of the two, Martyn seems to have been affected most by India. When Foot suggested that he travel around the country a little before Doon opened, he went off to see the Scindia School. He was, says his wife's biography of him, 'moved by the whole atmosphere at Scindia' and promptly switched to Indian dress. He had to be warned by F G Pearce, Scindia's Principal, 'against adopting Indian dress and ways too completely'. Later, Martyn acquired a hubble-bubble and taught himself Hindustani. At Shantiniketan, the Principal, T V Ghose, told him that 'it was impossible for Indians and Englishmen to be natural in the presence of each other', an assertion that vexed him greatly and one that he was later to disprove. Small wonder, then, that among the more conventional colonial types, Martyn and Foot were regarded as 'dangerous reds'.

Of course, in the early days, Indians did not perceive that they were dealing with a different kind of Englishman. As Mady Martyn writes: "Socially the new Doon School masters had the worst of both worlds. While the more hidebound British felt that they were training young Indians to be rebels, many Indians thought the Doon School was yet another device to anglicise and over-Westernise young Indians and breed a generation of toadies."

In fact, Foot had always been clear about the kind of boys Doon was going to produce. "I have thought it impossible that the boys who were educated here should not lead the greater part of their lives in conditions of freedom similar to that of the country (England) I already know about."

There is an important distinction to be made here. Doon was an English school in the sense that it was patterned on schools in England, but it was not an 'English' school in the sense that it was part and parcel of the Raj – dedicated to turning out native administrators and babus who would handle the paper work of the empire.

This was more significant than it might seem at first. Doon's counterparts in India were places like Mayo College in Ajmer. Mayo was a Chief's College and its students were not encouraged to develop any initiative or think for themselves. They were taught deference: the Thakurs for the Maharajahs and the Maharajahs for the King Emperor.

Perhaps the greatest contribution that Martyn and Foot made to the education of the Indian upper-middle classes was that they created an equal environment where you were what your talents made you – not what your father's rank said you should be. In time others, including Mayo and Scindia, were to accept this principle. But just think how different it could have been! Had Martyn been a *burra sahib,* then it is unlikely that Doon would have become the good school it is today. And perhaps, it may not even have lasted 40 years after the Raj.

Part of the reason why there is much less anti-Doon feeling now is that people have come to accept that the English public school system was not a Raj phenomenon and that the mere fact that Doon was started (and run) by Brits should not be held against it.

Of course, it is possible to argue that while Doon did teach leadership and the like, it also brought boys up in an artificially controlled middle class environment into which poverty never really intruded. And that the only contact that Doon boys had with the poor was when they went on 'social service' jaunts to the village (like the PM's tribal tours?). But that is another issue altogether! ♦

COUNTER-VIEW

By Subramaniam Swamy

BRAINWASHING INDIA

As Rajiv's image begins to slide downhill, government media hype increases.

DOORDARSHAN and AIR have come to be used as instruments to brainwash India. Television now reaches 65 per cent of India's population, while AIR reaches about 85 per cent. Indian newspapers, at best, reach 25 per cent of our citizens. In other words, the government-controlled media have undiluted access to at least 40 per cent of the Indian people and probably influence, without competition, a total of 60 per cent of the people.

This influence of the government media is frightening. Since the Indian government shamelessly manipulates the news and views aired on its media, these instruments have become, in fact, weapons to brainwash the people. Never in the history of India has any government had the ability to influence the people the way it does now. The temptation to manipulate the media will soon become irresistible, because the slow devaluation of Rajiv Gandhi has commenced.

Let us first look at the record. Since January 1985 there have been 28 by-elections to legislative Assemblies and the Lok Sabha. The Congress (I) lost most of them. There has been one state that has gone to the polls this year – Punjab. There, the Congress (I) received a drubbing, which it didn't even in 1977. Two major municipal corporations went to the polls – Bombay in April and Calcutta in June. In both, the Congress (I) lost its majority. This process of the Congress (I)'s electoral debacle is likely to continue. The next round of elections is in February 1987, when Haryana, Bengal and Kerala will go to the polls. The Congress (I) is most likely to lose all three. It is then that the government will be rocked. It is then that Rajiv Gandhi's democratic credentials will be put to the test. Right now, he and his cohorts are busy explaining away this series of defeats. By-elections? Oh, they always go against the ruling party. Corporations? These are local elections. Punjab? Well, actually, Rajiv wanted the Akalis to win. But Haryana, Bengal and Kerala will be too much to explain away. Then, Rajiv's vote-getting ability will be on trial and then, the trouble will begin.

Rajiv's victory in the Lok Sabha polls had little to do with what he stands for and more to do with the crude display of his mother's body on TV for four days. At her funeral pyre, he was shown wearing the sacred thread over his jacket. If he had suddenly turned religious, then he should have remembered the *Atharva Veda*'s injunction against preserving a mother's body for more than one sunset.

Doordarshan was employed to make this episode look like a national emergency and, since then, the government-controlled media have concentrated on projecting Rajiv as the saviour of the nation and an international leader. In fact, his international standing has suffered recently. The last US visit was not a success and President Reagan treated him and Zia on par – a syndrome that Mrs Gandhi had destroyed.

What should worry us now is the manipulation of the mass media. We are in an era in which there is no effective medium to challenge government propaganda. With the growing problems of the economy and the international situation, Doordarshan will have to try even harder to make Mr Gandhi seem like a knight on a white charger. The question is: Can we stop this slide to Goebbelsia? ♦

Subramaniam Swamy, a former member of the Lok Sabha, is a regular contributor to **Imprint.**

Yours for years

Apcolite Super Acrylic Emulsion is more than just another premium wall finish. Its 100% acrylic base also ensures those beautiful looks stay beautiful for years. In any weather, on interiors & exteriors.

Choose from a wide range of colourfast, washable shades. Muted pastels, deep directs and the whitest white. Computer matched to perfection.

Give your walls the rich treatment they deserve. With Apcolite Super Acrylic Emulsion.

Apcolite

The luxurious look that lasts. For years.

Leadership through excellence **asian paints**

KEEPING THE PEACE

The appointment of a Minister for Internal Security shows how concerned the government is about the deteriorating law and order situation, the threat of terrorism, and the lax intelligence set-up. But what will Arun Nehru actually do?

By Rajni Bakshi and Aarti Sen

ARUN NEHRU has a way of making waves wherever he goes. Barely three months after he was appointed Minister for Internal Security, the portly cousin of the Prime Minister has transformed the ambience at the Home Ministry. There is an air of frenzied activity at New Delhi's North Block. Officials rush from meeting to meeting, Chief Ministers consult with the Minister about the law and order problems in their states. The Intelligence set-up is on the verge of being reorganised. The paramilitary forces have been asked to re-examine their training programmes.

Even S B Chavan, the Union Home Minister and the man whose powers Nehru has usurped, concedes: "Arun Nehru is a very capable man. Things are getting done." Adds Julio F Ribeiro, the police officer who Nehru has appointed Special Secretary in the ministry: "This man means business. He is receptive to new ideas, keeps time to the minute, and keeps us all on our toes." Says Ram Pradhan, the Home Secretary: "There will now be greater co-ordination and a more concentrated thrust on the law and order front."

In a sense, the air of activity and the dynamism that Nehru has injected into the Home Ministry are in keeping with the government's concerns and priorities. As the Prime Minister himself has said: "As we develop, the primary need or promise of any government is not the development of vast projects, but it is law and order." That Arun Nehru – now widely regarded as one of the three most powerful men in the government, and a force in the Congress (I) party – should have been put in charge of Internal Security, shows how seriously Rajiv Gandhi's government is taking the law and order situation.

Certainly, there is much to be concerned about. On paper, India has an extensive and well-organised law and order set-up. Each state has its own police force and, as a back-up, some kind of reserve force. Should these fail, the Centre has its own network of paramilitary forces, among them the Central Reserve Police (CRP) and the Border Security Force (BSF). In

addition to these, there are a host of specific policing organisations, such as the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and the Railway Protection Force (RPF). There is also a well-developed Intelligence network headed by the monolithic Intelligence Bureau (IB), which includes various smaller outfits under a Director-General (Security) in the Home Ministry.

And yet, over the last five years, most of these organisations have failed to perform satisfactorily. Each time there has been a riot, the state police forces have collapsed, and the paramilitary have either proved inadequate or been stretched to the limit. As a result, the maintenance of law and order during a crisis has virtually become the responsibility of the army. In 1983-84, the army was called out 96 times. By 1984-85, this figure had nearly doubled, to 175.

The Intelligence organisations have also fared poorly. During the Punjab crisis, the Intelligence Bureau failed miserably to keep track of the growing terrorist menace and in June 1984, poor Intelligence-gathering led the army to mount an ill-planned attack on the Golden Temple, in the course of which not only did a third of the soldiers involved in the action lose their lives, but the Akal Takht was also destroyed. The final ignominy came when Mrs Indira Gandhi, whose personal safety had become IB's obsessive concern, was shot dead by two of the uniformed policemen to whom IB had entrusted her security.

In the last few months, the Assam accord, the Punjab elections, and the withdrawal of the Ahmedabad agitation have all contributed to the impression that the law and order situation has now returned to normal. Such a view is dangerously misleading. The relative peace in Assam, Punjab and Gujarat is due to political solutions, not to any new law and order measures. The central problem – that any serious political agitation seems to lead to a breakdown in law and order in today's India – has still to be dealt with. And what Arun Nehru calls, 'the growing threat of extremist and terrorist violence', remains.

ONE INDICATION of the deteriorating law and order situation is the growth of communal violence. After the traumatic massacres of the Partition, communal rioting remained largely absent from India in the first decade-and-a-half of Independence. Between 1947 and 1963 there were, on an average, about 100 communal incidents a year. Then, the figure began to shoot up. By 1965, there were 676 incidents. By the mid-'70s, however, the problem was controlled (there were 169 incidents in 1976) and it began to seem that communal riots were a phenomenon of the past. But the '80s demolished that hope. There were 427 incidents in 1980 and 1,220 in 1981-82. During this period, 809 people died and 8,476 were injured in communal violence. (These are Home Ministry figures – other estimates put the death toll higher.)

WHAT IS MOST frightening is that even when the security set-up has advance warning of a threat, it still fails. An attempt on Longowal's life was expected as was the assassination of Arjan Das.

By 1983-84, even 1980-82 began to seem relatively tranquil. The most significant aspects of communal violence during this period were: firstly, the rioting was no longer confined to traditional trouble spots, and secondly, the violence had turned murderous. In 1983, the post-election violence in just one Assam village – the now infamous Nellie – resulted in the deaths of over 1,000 men, women and children. The death toll in the rest of Assam was well over 2,000. In 1984, the violence spread even to Bombay. Official figures put the number of those killed in the Bombay-Bhiwandi riots of May 1984 at 278. For most of 1983 and 1984, communal violence made life virtually unliveable in the old city of Hyderabad, with curfew being in force for 136 days over 21 months. In September 1984, alone, 31 people died in Hyderabad's communal violence.

The Home Ministry does not regard the 410 deaths in Punjab during 1983-84 as being 'communal' in origin; 'terrorism' is the preferred term. But the Home Minister himself conceded in Parliament that the riots that followed Mrs Gandhi's assassination in November 1984 were anti-Sikh and, therefore, communal. He accepted, also, that in just two days, in one city (Delhi), over 2,400 persons lost their lives – two-and-a-half times the death toll at Nellie! Add to this, the hundreds of Sikhs who lost their lives in the 55 other towns of North India (in which the army had to be called in to restore order), and you have some conception of the number of deaths due to communal violence over the last two years.

THE LAW AND ORDER apparatus has also demonstrated that it is incapable of coping with terrorist violence. Over the last two years, three Indian Airlines planes have been hijacked; one Air-India plane has crashed, probably because of a terrorist bomb (though 18 IB officials have been seconded to Air-India); two foreign diplomats have been assassinated in Bombay and Delhi; random bomb blasts have injured hundreds of innocent passers-by; and assassination of political figures has become the mode of settling scores. Despite being aware of the threat to his life, the massed might of the Intelligence Bureau could not protect Sant Longowal and, in Delhi, the police bodyguards provided to Arjan Das, after the assassination of Lalit Maken, proved fatally ineffectual.

The army in Bhiwandi: the police failed.

Says Ved Marwah, Delhi's articulate Commissioner of Police: "The killings of Lalit Maken and Arjan Das were connected with Punjab terrorism. The killers' base is outside Delhi and they came here from elsewhere." The police response is that it is the job of the Intelligence agencies to bust terrorist gangs; local police forces can do little against those who are based outside their jurisdiction. For their part, the Intelligence agencies take the line that it is next to impossible to protect a VIP from a trained assassin who is prepared to risk his own life. This is a specious premise. From 1960-65, the OAS, an organisation composed of highly motivated former French army officers, made at least 18 attempts to assassinate President Charles de Gaulle, but none succeeded. Unfortunately, every time an assassination attempt on any leader of consequence has been made, it has succeeded. So much for our security forces and the protection they can offer to those whose lives they have been entrusted with.

The worrying aspect of the terrorist threat is not just the danger posed to the lives of VIPs. It is the random nature of the violence. The transistor bombs in Delhi are one example of the manner in which violence is being unleashed against innocent bystanders. In the long run, this has a more powerful impact on public confidence in the law and order machinery than any number of assassinations.

AT THE ROOT of many of these problems is the failure of the police force. One indication of how bad things are can be obtained by looking at the crime rate. The Bureau of Police Research and Development recorded that there was a 43.2 per cent increase in cognisable crimes, under the Indian Penal Code between 1970 and 1980. These figures are the last available ones because the Bureau has not bothered to publish another report since 1980 (though the 1981 report is now said to be at the press stage).

Even if a report had been published, it is by no means clear that the crime figures would prove anything. In recent years, policemen have learnt to make their performances look better on paper by simply refusing to register criminal complaints. Perhaps the best example of this are the November 1984 Delhi riots in which, according to official figures, 2,400 persons were killed and many more were robbed and beaten up. During this period, the Delhi police registered only 359 cases. As N S Saksena, a former Director-General of the CRP notes: "There should have been thousands, and not a mere 359 cases registered in Delhi." To add insult to injury, the Delhi Police Annual Administration Report for 1984, records that 25 to 30 people were killed in the first few days of November.

The refusal to register crime is symptomatic of the state of the police force today. In most Indian

PHOTOGRAPH BY HOSHI JAL

AT THE TOP OF THE HEAP

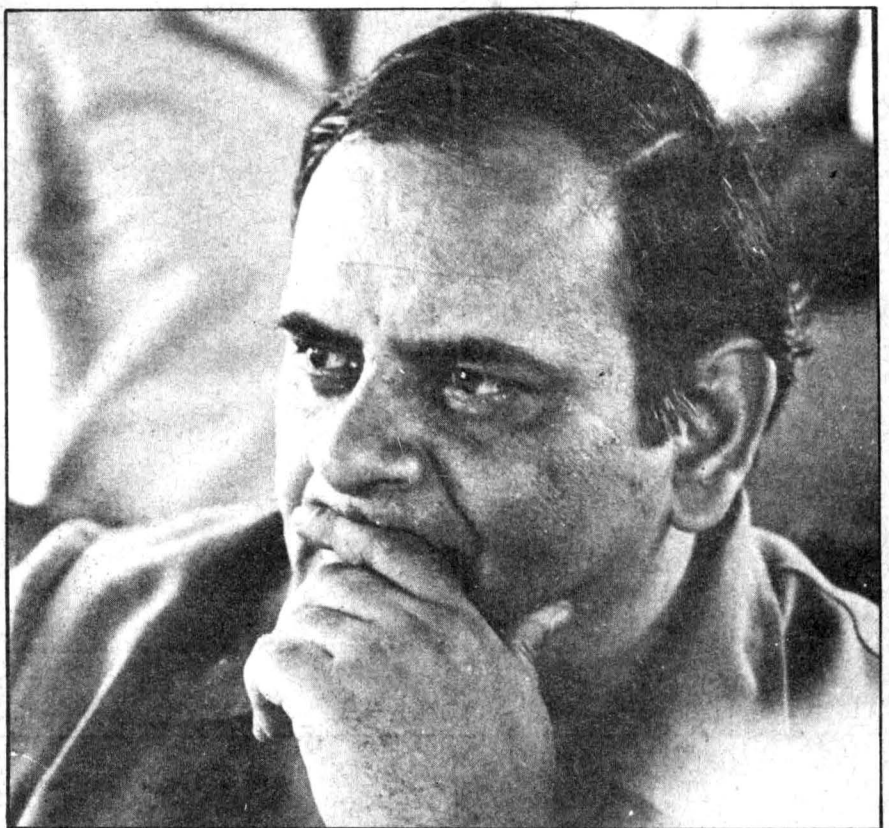
Arun Nehru is the man to watch in Delhi these days.

ARUN NEHRU is probably the most feared man in New Delhi today. While Rajiv Gandhi's other associates are perceived as genteel, Doon School-Oxbridge types whose interest in government is largely managerial, Nehru is the political animal in this group. Born into a political family (he is a distant cousin of the Prime Minister), Nehru did not go to either Doon or Cambridge, always longed to enter politics even when he worked for paint manufacturer, Jenson and Nicholson, and has little time for the we-are-only-in-this-to-help-Rajiv poses favoured by some of the Prime Minister's other aides.

Though he entered politics in 1980, he came to national prominence only in November 1984 when he was appointed Congress (I) General Secretary and entrusted with the job of choosing candidates for the Lok Sabha elections. He ruthlessly eliminated many time-servers from the list and gave tickets to a new breed of Congressman.

In the process, he won the gratitude and loyalty of many of the new MPs but also the undying hatred of the older breed of Congress (I) hack. Some of this hostility was blunted when the Prime Minister appointed him Minister of State for Energy in January. At the time it was wrongly assumed that this appointment meant that Nehru had been cut to size; and the lower profile took the edge off the resentment.

In fact, away from the glare of publicity, Nehru proved his mettle. He was a spectacularly successful Minister of State for Energy. During his tenure, the efficiency of the country's power plants went up by 5 per cent – higher than the earlier maximum rise of 3.8 per cent during the Emergency. Several gas turbine projects were pushed through and the Delhi Electric Supply Corporation increased its collections by Rs 16 crore, thanks to innovations introduced by Nehru.



Given that the Prime Minister has often expressed his concern about the law and order situation, Nehru was probably the best choice for the job. While most other ministers are reluctant to make waves or to break with precedent, Nehru has always done what he believes to be right. Within the Home Ministry – where he has completely overshadowed the Cabinet Minister, S B Chavan – he has earned the respect of officials because of his boundless energy, unfailing punctuality, and dislike of personal publicity. It is safe to assume that he will soon have the same impact at the Home Ministry that he had at the Energy Ministry.

Nehru's new position has caused him to become the most feared man in Delhi. He has always been utterly ruthless in dealing with his enemies, and now, with the entire Intelligence machinery at his disposal, is far more powerful than ever before. Moreover, his appointment as Minister for Internal Security also coincided with the rise to power of many of his protégés. Vir Bahadur Singh, the UP Chief Minister, is Nehru's man; Jagdish Tytler, the new Aviation Minister is another protégé; and other ministers like Sitaram Kesari are known to be personally loyal to him. Even old UP rivals like V P Singh have made up with Nehru. All of this makes him incredibly powerful. Unlike his rivals for power, though, his influence does not derive solely from the Prime Minister: he has begun to develop a base of his own.

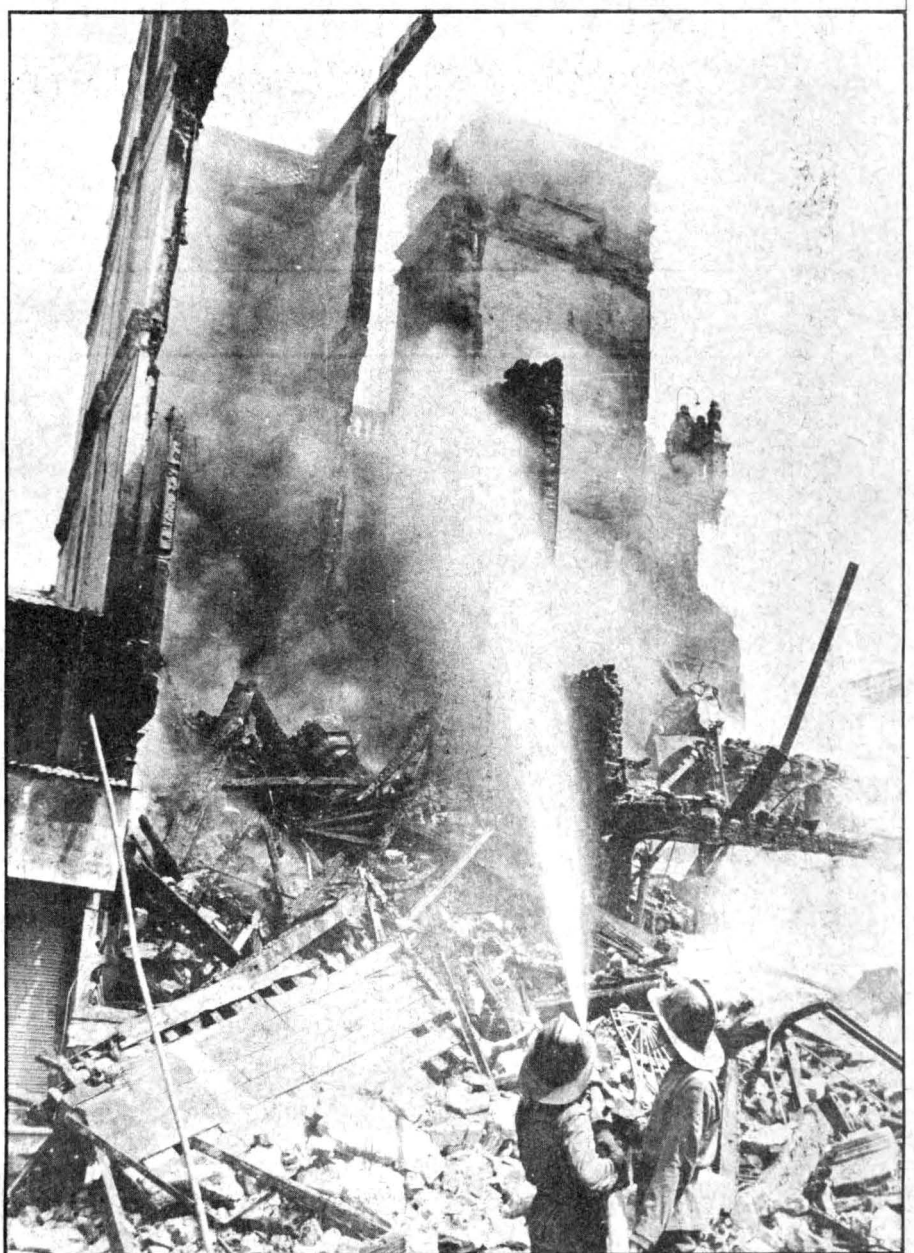
To the policemen whose future Arun Nehru controls, of course, all this doesn't matter. They are just glad that they have him on their side. As J F Ribeiro says emphatically: "This man wants things to change." ♦

PHOTOGRAPH BY MUKESH PARPIANI

states, the police have lost the will to maintain the peace. As a result, they turn tail and flee at the first sign of any real trouble. Added to this is the problem of police corruption which, as Home Minister S B Chavan admits, 'is unfortunately on the rise'. Consequently, criminal mafias are allowed to run parallel administrations: for instance, the coal mafia in Dhanbad, and Varadarajan Mudaliar's gang in Bombay.

Worse still, in many areas it has now become difficult to distinguish between police and criminals. There are such celebrated instances of police brutality as the Bhagalpur blindings, but on the whole, police brutality is now so commonplace that it no longer makes the news. Sometimes, an entire force is transformed into a marauding gang. In August 1982, the government of Maharashtra cracked down on the leaders of the Bombay police union. The force responded by revolting and going on a rampage all around the city. Completely overwhelmed by the looting, arson and violence, the state government called in the army. That was the first time since Independence that the army was required to quell a civil disturbance in Bombay and it shattered the image of what was supposed to be India's best police force.

More recently, the residents of Khadia in the walled city of Ahmedabad complained of police brutality and looting during the anti-reservation riots. Later, as resentment against the police grew, truckloads of constables descended on the offices of the anti-government newspaper *Gujarat Samachar* and set fire to its press. As is now becoming routine, the army had to be called in to restore order and public confidence.



Violence in Ahmedabad: complaints of police brutality.

CONFRONTED as it is, with a situation in which the police force in the states has failed, the Intelligence set-up has fared poorly, terrorist violence is seemingly impossible to control, and communal disturbances turn murderous with a frightening rapidity, what can Arun Nehru's new Internal Security Department do to improve matters?

The Presidential Notification that announced Nehru's appointment made his functions breathtakingly obvious. According to it, Nehru has direct charge of 52 subjects including the paramilitary forces, IB, the grant of visas, and the implementation of the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act, 1985, and the Terrorist Affected Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1984. The Notification went on to say that 'cognisance has been taken of mounting threats to India's unity and integrity and the new department of Internal Security has been created to co-ordinate policy and monitor action against subversive forces'.

The significance of Nehru's appointment is that it comes at a time when, having signed the Punjab and Assam accords, the Prime Minister could well have taken the line that

PHOTOGRAPH BY KALPESH J DUDHIA

THE RISE OF A POLICEMAN

J F Ribeiro is an unusual policeman: he has imagination.

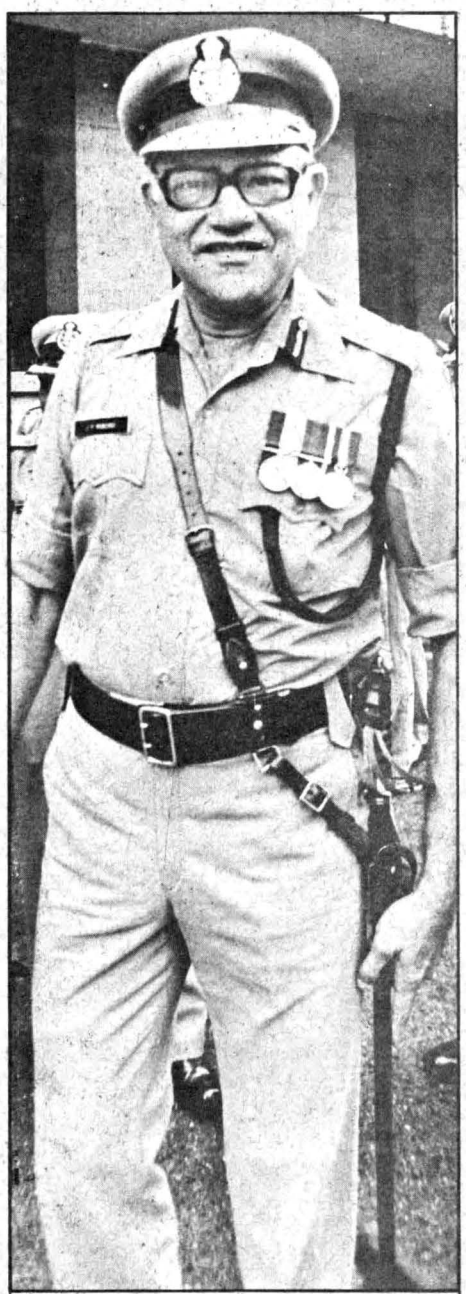
ONE of the qualities attributed to Arun Nehru is 'a natural talent for choosing the right man for the right job'. If proof is required, his selection of J F Ribeiro as Special Secretary to the Home Ministry seems to provide it. Till now, bureaucrats have told the police what to do. The fact that a policeman has been brought in at such a senior level seems to indicate a positive change in the attitude of the new government. For Ribeiro is one of the most high-profile policemen in recent years. And with reason.

During his stint as Police Commissioner of Bombay from February 1982 to April 1985, he cracked down heavily on the criminal world. Powerful underworld leaders like Haji Mastaan and Karim Lala, who had earlier used their political connections to evade arrest, were put into jail under Ribeiro's orders. True, gang wars and killings continued on the streets of Bombay, but he did succeed in restoring some measure of public faith in the police.

With his performance in Bombay drawing notice even from the Centre, talk of his taking over the Central Reserve Police Force did not seem misplaced. Instead, he was sent as Director-General to Gujarat a few months back to deal with renewed violence in the state. There too, Ribeiro – helped by the political settlement reached between the state government and the anti-reservationists – succeeded in defusing a volatile situation.

The principle underlying his achievements is simple. "You snap the link between politicians and criminals and the problem becomes easy to solve," he explains. Most people are aware of this solution, but few have voiced it so openly and acted on it. In Bombay, Ribeiro made newspaper headlines with his admission that 'the nexus between the police and criminals is as old as the hills'.

Along with efficiency, Ribeiro has



imagination – a quality rarely associated with policemen. As Bombay Police Commissioner, he invited two students from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences to sit in his office and note down complaints concerning women. The social workers would look into the complaints independently and usually solve them more successfully than a policeman who, Ribeiro concedes, would probably deal with them in a 'ham-handed fashion'.

In Nasik, once, Ribeiro was faced with a crowd of women agitators, sitting on the railway tracks. Realising that the use of force would rebound on the police, he placed a tear-gas shell so strategically that the smoke blew in their direction. The move worked: the tracks were cleared instantly.

Women's problems are of special interest to Ribeiro. "Women in our country are treated very badly," he reflects. In fact, in Ahmedabad, a meeting had been arranged between female social workers, legal experts and the police to discuss women's problems, when Ribeiro had to leave suddenly for Delhi. He would now like to organise such conferences on a nation-wide scale.

But, at the moment, he is too busy reading up for his new job. His dark, carpeted office in South Block with its imposing news ticker, is very different from any of his earlier offices. Dressed in a beige safari suit, the new Ribeiro bears only a faint resemblance to the earlier uniformed figure of authority. His new job, he says, is extremely interesting, but he does not think his past experience is directly related to it. "These are all policy matters, I am a babu now," he says cautiously.

Even so, his years as a policeman are bound to influence his views on the revamping of Internal Security. Ved Marwah, the Police Commissioner of Delhi, feels it is good that 'a person who has worked at the ground level and who understands the problems of the police, will be applying his mind to the subject'.

Unfortunately, there is a tendency to convert policemen into bureaucrats and swamp them with routine file work. What role Ribeiro will play in the new department remains to be seen. ♦

PHOTOGRAPH BY MUKESH PARPIANI

law and order was no longer a problem. That he has chosen not to do this suggests that the government is serious about strengthening the internal security of India.

And yet, constitutionally at least, Nehru's options are limited. Law and order is a state subject and there is little that the Centre can do. But as Home Secretary, Ram Pradhan, points out: "The Centre has an overall responsibility. After all, it is the Centre that has to reply to Parliament on behalf of the states." The official Home Ministry line seems to be that the new department will concern itself with monitoring law and order and will only help the states when asked to.

In practice, however, this is not the whole story. There are Congress (I) governments in most states, and their Chief Ministers have the utmost regard for Nehru as a party heavyweight and will do pretty much what he says. Moreover, in other states – Punjab, for instance – the police force is incapable of handling law and order on its own and they must, therefore, depend on the paramilitary forces that Nehru controls.

Certainly, Nehru's first few months in office have not suggested that he is content to sit around and monitor statistics. Soon after his appointment, he met the Chief Ministers of Punjab, Gujarat, Kerala, Haryana, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar and UP. He also met the then Punjab Governor, Arjun Singh, Kashmir Governor, Jagmohan, Foreign Secretary, Romesh Bhandari and the heads of all the paramilitary forces. Each of them was given a lashing of Nehru's characteristically pragmatic advice. The Nagaland Chief Minister was told that the worsening law and order situation was due to the infiltration of insurgents from Burma. The UP Chief Minister was asked to watch out for clandestine movements across the Indo-Nepal border and to pay special attention to the dacoit menace. (As he owes his Chief Ministership to Nehru, there is little doubt that he paid close attention to what he was told.) The Bihar Chief Minister was told to deal with the Naxalite problem as a socio-economic phenomenon and not a mere law and order issue. And the Haryana Chief Minister was asked to be mindful of the consequences of the release of Punjab detenus.

Communal riots in Bombay: keeping vigil.

IN ADDITION to his considerable political clout, Nehru's main hold over the states is his control of the paramilitary forces. In the years after Independence, it was hoped that using the army to quell civilian strife would be avoided by building up central paramilitary forces (under the Home, rather than Defence, Ministry). The old Crown Reserve Police became the Central Reserve Police (CRP) and the Border Security Force (BSF) was set up, largely to tackle the insurgency in the North-East.

That the army should have been called out 353 times, mostly for the

PHOTOGRAPH BY MUKESH PARPIANI

REVAMPING INTELLIGENCE

Can the Intelligence Bureau be turned into a trim, accountable organisation?

AT THE OUTSET let's get a few basic facts straight:

- The Intelligence Bureau (IB) existed even in the British days. If it's required today by the Congress party at the Centre to know who's plotting against the government, it was even more desperately required by Her Majesty's government to be informed about the seditious activities of Mohandas Gandhi and party.
- The IB does not exist as a constitutional entity (it need not, as it's just an office of the Ministry of Home Affairs) but its Director is authorised, under the Indian Post Offices Act, to intercept your mail.
- It has an all-India reach and has a vague 'unaccountability' about it which is not by accident.
- All countries have a political Intelligence outfit of some kind or another, democratic countries not excluded. The FBI does not merely survive, it thrives. MI 5 may be somewhat coy, thanks to Mr Philby, but is unobtrusively aggressive nevertheless.
- All new parties or new governments the world over, pontificate during their honeymoon with the people about 'revamping' the big bad Intelligence set-up but pretty soon it's business as usual.

To worsen matters, as it were, there are certain 'made in India' problems about IB. First, sedition is what you want to make of it. (Jyoti Basu could very well be plotting against the sovereignty of the nation, if you choose to look at it that way.) Moreover, in a country where the parties in power in the states have been toppled like ninepins and floor-crossing is nothing to be apologetic about, it's hard to say who's conspiring against whom. After all, you have to be pragmatic in politics. Second, the Opposition parties in India did nothing much to make the party in power at the Centre feel complacent about internal security: violent agitations, Naxalism, *gheraos*, moves for autonomy and the like. Third, when an external Intelligence agency, like Research and Analysis Wing (R & AW), evolves from the internal Intelligence agency like IB, interdepartmental jealousies cannot be helped.

Fourth, in the permissive environment of the Janata days, IB men were left to their own devices and merrily formed trade unions and exchanged notes with *Surya* and other media. R & AW men followed suit and the Constitution had to be invoked to discipline the recalcitrant sleuths. Fifth, what do you do with a police-dominated IB – a relic of the Raj days? Policemen have their vested interests and their professionalism is perhaps diluted by the stints many of them are forced to do in the state police forces. This adds yet another dimension to the confused scenario: some are policemen, some are directly recruited into the IB, and there are problems of inter-service seniority, and so on.

When you put all this together, you get an IB that's obviously a hotch-potch, a flabby, neither-police-nor-civilian hermaphrodite of an organisation, looking desperately for an identity and for direction from a Ministry of Home Affairs of which it is one of the main 'attached offices'.

That's the kind of IB Rajiv Gandhi has inherited from his mother, along with so many other dubious legacies. So, what does he do?

Enter Arun Nehru, who's as good a Home Minister as any. Punjab terrorism, infiltrators from Pakistan, police ineptitude, the Gujarat agitation – what more excuse do you need to have even a Minister for IB alone, never mind, Internal Security? Two uniformed policemen killed Mrs Gandhi, despite the existence of the IB leviathan, and a separate PM's security wing under it. Earlier, an over-enthusiastic IB official in Bombay had 'killed' JP prematurely, several months before he really died. The organisation has been plodding along somehow, wangling a post here, opening a new station there, by pointing to arrest of a Coomar Narain or a Swaroop. (Oh yes, catching foreign spies in India is part of IB's duty and they have to remind themselves about this whenever a hapless Coomar Narain commits a *faux pas* and gets nabbed.)

At a distance, Arun Nehru may look like a life-guard, but he can't breathe life into IB as if it's a drowning swimmer pulled out of the deep waters. There will be many cosmetic changes. Like a new IB Service on the lines of the R & AW services, so that the officials don't have to shuttle between the states and the Centre. There will be more advanced gadgetry, like better ciphers and communication devices and, of course, they will import word processors.

The so-called 'misuse' of IB will continue. They will continue to spy on the truants within the ruling party in the states and the Centre, report about the 'uncommitted' members of the judiciary, prepare election forecasts and advise on the ticket-worthiness of Congress candidates. When you are in politics, you'll agree that such misuse or subversion or whatever you choose to call it, is the name of the game. In recent years, IB officials have also learnt that the way to advance their prospects is to perform political rather than Intelligence tasks. That is how top promotions are decided. As a result, IB tells the government what it wants to hear and its outputs can be dubious. One example is the 1977 election. It was declared because IB assured Mrs Gandhi she would win.

Yet, if the quality of the outputs improves, and if Arun Nehru shapes IB into a trim, accountable organisation – never mind the means to achieve this – his efforts will not go unnoticed. That's a tall order, no doubt, even for the redoubtable Mr Nehru. ♦

The SRP in action: inadequate paramilitary network.

maintenance of law and order, over the last three years shows how inadequate the paramilitary network has been. This is despite the fact that 13 battalions were added to the CRP and 11 to the BSF between 1980 and 1984. Between 1982 and 1984, these forces were deployed on 227 different occasions. As these are central forces, the states are supposed to pay for them. So, to discourage state governments from requesting them too readily, the Centre raised their charges for deployment from Rs 24 lakh per battalion per year to Rs 60 lakh per battalion. The price-hike made little difference. Most states had already exhausted their own reserve forces. In UP, for instance, the Chief Minister admitted in 1980, that the PAC had 90 per cent utilisation: in other words, that the force was not called out only on 36 days out of 365! Nor has the government's arming of various security forces with special powers helped. Over the last two years, the Railway Protection Force and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) have been converted into armed forces by Acts of Parliament. Both have also been armed with special powers to arrest without warrants in an effort to make them more effective.

At the moment, Nehru's Internal Security Department controls the 58,233 men of the CISF, the 71 battalions of the CRP and the BSF, whose actual strength remains secret. There are also the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (whose trigger-happy men killed Beant Singh and injured Satwant Singh) and the Assam Rifles, both of which have virtually no peace-keeping role in most of India.

Then there is the National Security Guard (NSG), the new hush-hush paramilitary force headed by Ram Nagrani, a former Research and Analysis Wing (R & AW) official, which is supposed to tackle terrorist violence. Originally, the NSG, established in June 1984, was to have over a dozen battalions, but so far only five have been set up. Plans call for the force to be modelled, partly, on the British Special Air Service (SAS), with its men trained to fight alone rather than in units. The government intends to arm the NSG with the most advanced arms and weapons and make it the country's premier paramilitary force, the sort of outfit that can control a violent situation in hours.

So far, Nehru's ministry has concentrated on replacing the outdated arms used by its forces. Addressing the National Police Academy, the Prime Minister said that the obsolete .303 rifles that the police relied on, need to be replaced by a faster and more powerful gun and Ribeiro con-

firms that he spends much of his time these days reading up on advanced weaponry. Such measures are long overdue. The BSF and CRP, for instance, perform two separate functions – guarding borders and controlling riots – and require very different weapons for each.

But as K F Rustamji, the founder Director-General of the BSF points out, hardware alone is not going to be enough. He accepts that both, the police and the paramilitary forces, may need better arms, newer uniforms, more vehicles, advanced radio equipment and the like, but he points also to the manner of their deployment. Their overuse has caused weakness, they lack strong leadership, and their structuring is poor with no lateral movement between forces. Adds P R Rajgopal, a former Director-General of the CRP: "The problem with the deployment of the paramilitary forces is that the accent is on the number of battalions rather than on accountability. It is not enough for the CRP to just send 900 men to help a Superintendent of Police (SP) control a tough situation. It must be accountable."

It is to be hoped that the consultations that are currently on in the Internal Security Department will take into account these factors when it comes to upgrading the paramilitary forces.

IT IS NOW something of a truism that the Intelligence machinery has failed. Part of the problem lies in the origins of the Intelligence apparatus. For nearly two decades after Independence, IB, headed by the cantankerous B N Mullick, concerned itself with coping with the communist threat. After relations with the Chinese worsened, IB took the assistance of the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to set up such outfits as Establishment 22, the Aviation Research Centre (ARC) and the Special Security Bureau (SSB), as well as a training centre at Chakratha to train Tibetan guerillas and to handle the Chinese threat.

After 1965, when the Chinese problem had faded, IB should have professionalised its working. Instead, the focus shifted to R N Kao, a Kashmiri Brahmin who enjoyed Indira Gandhi's trust. Kao set up the Research and Analysis Wing, composed of the old foreign Intelligence wing of IB. Though R & AW's brief was only the collection and dissemination of Intelligence from abroad, his proximity to Mrs Gandhi ensured that IB (which remained under the Home Ministry while R & AW went to the Cabinet Secretariat) came to be perceived as a dull police outfit while the resources and the glamorous foreign postings went to R & AW. Finally, IB officials had to be mollified by being sent off to the British counter-Intelligence services for training: that way, they too could get foreign postings.

AS LONG AS THE Intelligence Bureau continues to serve the interests of the party in power, India will continue to have a second-rate Intelligence service. Nehru must realise this.

Right from the British period, IB had gathered domestic political Intelligence. After Mullick's retirement, this trend intensified. Indira Gandhi routinely used IB to spy on political opponents (and her own ministers), to tap telephones, to intercept mail and to provide assessments of her party's electoral prospects. When the job seemed too sensitive for IB, she entrusted it to Kao who cheerfully violated the terms of R & AW's charter and engaged in domestic Intelligence gathering.

During the Janata period, Morarji Desai ended R & AW's domestic adventures but his government's ineptitude led to demoralisation and a rundown of services at IB. When Mrs Gandhi returned to power, she resurrected Kao (who became her Intelligence Advisor at a salary of one rupee) and made him India's chief spy. By then, the rot had set in. IB was politicised and unionised, and R & AW was packed with friends, relatives and protégés of both Kao and another R & AW official, Sankaran Nair. (In Intelligence circles, the joke was that RAW stood for 'Relatives And Wives'.)

As a result, when a real threat to India's stability appeared, neither Intelligence outfit was able to cope. While R & AW told the Cabinet that Sikh terrorists were being trained in Pakistan, it was unable to provide any hard evidence. And IB failed completely to identify the extremists' contacts in the government or to assess their strengths and weaknesses. It is said that even the model of the Golden Temple that the Intelligence services constructed at Chakratha for the benefit of commandos training for Operation Bluestar, was based on faulty information and contributed to the heavy casualties sustained by the army.

After Bluestar, IB (and R & AW) became obsessed with Indira Gandhi's security and yet failed miserably to protect her life. Since then, despite the expansion in the number of men deputed for VIP security, the terrorists have killed pretty much who they wanted. Now, the Prime Minister's security, the responsibility for which switches from agency to agency (from the army to the Special Frontier Force to the National Security Guard to the Special Protection Group) has become the Intelligence set-up's *raison d'etre*. As a consequence, the Special Protection Group's black dungaree-clad commandos are now omnipresent and bullet-proof screens are erected whenever the Prime Minister makes a speech in a sensitive area. Few democratic leaders – not even President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher who have both survived assassination attempts – have security that is so blatant and oppressive. Given the In-

telligence services' past record, one can only hope that it is as effective as it is unsubtle.

We carry, elsewhere in this issue, an insider's view of what *will* be done to IB by Nehru's department along with his recommendations about what *should* be done. To that, one can only add that the moves Nehru has already set in progress (converting the Special Protection Group into an Intelligence-gathering outfit like the US Secret Service; clubbing economic Intelligence organisations along with the political Intelligence services – a move that the Finance Ministry is opposing) are of limited effectiveness. Finally, the government will have to decide whether it can afford to subvert the Intelligence apparatus for party political purposes.

"THE paramilitary forces," says Home Minister S B Chavan, "should be used sparingly. There is no need to ask for them at the slightest provocation." The problem with relying on paramilitary outfits is that they are sometimes as likely to aggravate a situation as they are to control it. Says Special Secretary (Home) J F Ribeiro: "Most reserve police forces are located in barracks and lack the day to day contact with the people that other policemen have. They are trained to hit out and, generally, called in only when the situation seems to be getting out of control." Consequently, many reserve police forces can be needlessly brutal. Earlier this year, the Gujarat State Reserve Police (SRP) was called in to control violence in Khadia, Ahmedabad, and responded by going on a rampage throughout the area. Finally, the Courts had to rule that several individual SRP officials were not to be allowed to enter the precincts of Khadia. And far from quietening things down, the SRP caused the Ahmedabad rioting to spread further.

"The use of paramilitary forces," adds S B Chavan, "demoralises the local police force. We are encouraging states to depend more on their own police forces." This is easier said than done. Over the last three years, local police forces have nearly always failed during crises. The reasons for this failure are varied. Firstly, a lack of discipline has led to policemen taking sides during communal riots. During the Bombay-Bhiwandi riots, Muslims claimed that the largely Hindu force was reluctant to protect them and during Delhi's anti-Sikh riots, the local force (many of whose members are from Haryana) did nothing to save the Sikhs.

Secondly, police corruption has now reached the stage where it hampers police performance during civil disturbances. During the Delhi riots, many of those looting Sikh houses and businesses were local *goondas* who had been paying off the police for years. Predictably, the constabulary avoided apprehending them. Thirdly, police motivation is low. Many policemen do not feel particularly committed to the uniform they wear and are extremely reluctant to risk their lives in the line of duty. Consequently, they tend to run at the first sign of trouble and leave it to special armed forces from outside to mop up violent situations.

WHATEVER additional arms and equipment the government gives the paramilitary forces, the basic problem at the level of the police constable remains.

The solutions are complex. Police training must improve. The politicisation of the officer cadre must end. More money and better facilities must be made available. Police salaries need to go up. Even those officers who disapproved of the unionisation of the Bombay constabulary between 1980-82, readily concede that the constables were grossly underpaid and lived amidst squalor. As Arun Nehru himself has said, much is expected of the police, but not enough attention is paid to their needs.

Nehru's ministry knows where to look for some solutions. The National Police Commission submitted an eight-volume report to the government in 1981 and made many valuable suggestions for improving the performance of the police. That report has been largely ignored for the last four years. Finally, in June 1985, a meeting of Chief Ministers to discuss the report was announced, only to be cancelled soon after. Now, Nehru is looking at the report. Ribeiro says that some of its recommendations are already in the process of being implemented. The trouble is that law and order is a state subject and there is little that the Centre can do for the policeman in terms of welfare, housing, training and the like, though Nehru has specifically promised housing to at least 55-57 per cent of policemen. And the states, having taken their police forces for granted for so long are not going to be easily persuaded to act.

THE ESTABLISHMENT of an Internal Security Ministry raises some worrying questions about civil liberties. The government's traditional response to any threat of armed insurrection has been to effectively suspend all civil liberties and treat even peaceful dissenters as potential murderers. In the '50s and the '60s, it handled the Naga and Mizo rebellions by allowing the armed forces to behave with great brutality, uprooting entire villages, arresting 'suspects' almost at random and torturing anyone with even the remotest links with the rebels. In the late '60s and early '70s, it unleashed a reign of terror on Naxalites and many young men were murdered in police 'encounters'. More recently, in the Punjab, a similar approach was followed and both third-degree interrogations and 'encounters' were relatively common.

Considering that the government is

now making capital out of 'State Under Siege' rhetoric, there is a very real danger that civil liberties will be trampled underfoot in an attempt to make the nation safe for democracy. There are already some instances of this happening. In September, Rajiv Gandhi's regime shocked even some of its more ardent supporters by banning and confiscating copies of a booklet prepared by Citizens For Democracy (CFD), a group headed by former High Court judge, V M Tarkunde. The report, prepared by a committee of intellectuals and academics, recounted how, in the aftermath of Bluestar, innocent people were being harassed and tortured by the Punjab authorities in the name of 'anti-terrorist activity'. Even as civil liberties groups protested the ban, the government went further and arrested some of the authors of the report, charging them with sedition.

In Andhra, N T Rama Rao and the central government have repeatedly stressed their intention to sink all political differences in the battle against 'extremism'. This 'battle' has taken the form of the most repressive and brutal onslaught against Naxalites in the history of Andhra. Recently, Dr A Ramanathan, Vice-President of the Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Committee (APCLC), a stern critic of the NTR regime's curtailment of civil liberties, was shot dead in cold blood – allegedly by the police. The government has rejected demands for a judicial inquiry. The murder, says APCLC President K G Kannabiran, was 'a calculated effort to blur the distinction between civil liberties work and extremist political activity so that attacks on one are not distinguishable from attacks on the other'.

In the light of all this, it is not surprising that there are widespread misgivings about the centralisation of police Intelligence and paramilitary authority in Arun Nehru. Even the *Indian Express* was moved to ask if he would be our Beria, and KGB parallels are quite common in Delhi political circles (though the fear among politicians is that Nehru will use IB to keep tabs on his rivals). The Left-wing journal, the *Economic And Political Weekly* wrote of the setting up of the department that 'it might turn out to be an important milestone on the path of India's transformation into a full-fledged police state'.

Such fears may well prove to be unfounded. It is too early to assume that Nehru will equate curtailing civil liberties with keeping the peace. But as even K F Rustamji, who welcomed the establishment of the department, cautions: "It must be staffed with people who cherish new ideas and dissent." Otherwise, the cost to India's democracy might well outweigh any law and order benefits.

VIOLENCE, Indian politicians are fond of asserting, has no place in a democratic society. Yet, few of them stop to consider why, then, there is so much violence in today's India. If they did, they might realise that the rapidity with which most political agitations turn violent these days must have something to do with the shortcomings of Indian democracy. Over the last five years the government has alienated itself more and more from the people and has become unresponsive to the grievances and aspirations of minorities and special interest groups. Consequently, as frustration over the lack of governmental response has mounted, such groups have turned to violence as a means of drawing attention to themselves and their plight.

THE DANGER WITH a special law and order ministry is that it is tempting to treat the symptoms and forget the disease. Civil disturbances indicate a much deeper political problem.

Indira Gandhi's second reign offered enough instances of this phenomenon. What started as a minor agitation among a section of the Sikhs ended up as a community-wide issue because of the government's unresponsiveness. Negotiations were sabotaged, agreements reneged on and peaceful settlements ignored. In the process, as Sikh anger grew, so did the violence. Much the same sort of thing happened in Assam where Mrs Gandhi's response to the anti-foreigner agitation consisted of a strategy – to drag the negotiations on and on till the agitationists tired – rather than a programme or a package for a possible solution. Once again, the agitation spread and became more violent.

Fortunately, Rajiv Gandhi has reversed this trend. Assam and Punjab are relatively quiet now, not because of any great improvement in the law and order apparatus but because political solutions have been found. In Gujarat, the dismissal of Madhavsinh Solanki (a key demand of the agitators) achieved what several battalions of the paramilitary forces and the army could not.

Mr Gandhi's willingness to conciliate, to negotiate and to search for political solutions is to be applauded. But he has had the advantage of having distanced himself from his mother's intransigence – it is easier to reach a settlement when you disown somebody else's mess. On the other hand, the phenomenon that led to the law and order problem in Mrs Gandhi's time, remains. The political system is still unresponsive: most legislators care little for the people who elected them and are unwilling to reflect their aspirations or articulate their grievances. It seems inevitable that new Punjabs and Assams will develop.

At that stage will come the real test of this government's ability to keep the peace. Will it rely on Mr Nehru and his security department and treat everything as a law and order issue? Or, will it respond to the real problems underlying the violence? ♦

Guest Column / by Sheela Barse

VIOLENCE AND THE POLICE FORCE

THE TEN-YEAR-OLD boy was branded on both his temples with live coals by his employer, a housewife. This is one of my first memories of the malignant aggression in human beings. The boy had been brought up in an orphanage run by a priest whom the inmates called 'papa'. To my suggestion (I was of the same age as the boy), that he should complain to 'papa' and perhaps return to the orphanage, the boy had replied that the priest used to ritualistically flog 'errant' children once a week, in the presence of all the inmates of the institution.

There are other memories: Of the village schoolteacher lifting the tiny, six-year-old son of a *mali* and throwing him down on the ground, to punish him. Of the farmer who chopped off his bride's feet with an axe because she came running to embrace him every time he returned from a trip to the town. (The husband considered her behaviour immodest.) Of a woman being tortured so badly to 'cure' her of her fits, that she put her head in the *chulha* and burnt herself. (She had four small children, including a baby barely a few weeks old.)

My first memory of police violence is of a police sub-inspector (PSI) fisting a drunken cabbie in his face because the fellow could not walk straight. Two blows and the cabbie spat out blood and a tooth. I was an adolescent girl then and did not know that social violence was going unnoticed while newspaper columns were emphasising and isolating the brutality of the police force. Years later, Justice A N Mulla coined the phrase 'criminals in uniform'. It was a shockingly judgemental pronouncement from a practitioner of the system which believes in the right to defence for even the Billas and the Sobhrajs. Mulla, who chaired the Jail Reforms Commission, is reputedly a protagonist of correctional and rehabilitation programmes that respect the dignity of the criminal as a human being.

The press, and the 'intellectuals' have developed a mindless dependence on Mulla's coinage. True, if you want to defend the description, all you have to do is reel off the episodes that have become legends of police brutality: the mass rape and looting of women in Nainar in 1980 and in Siswan in 1982; the destruction of Maya Tyagi and the gang-rape by policemen of the 16-year-old girl in Bellary which led to the burning of the police station; the electric shocks given to the young men in Chhatrapur and the Bhagalpur blindings. Added to this are the umpteen stories of police excesses, 'encounters' and deaths in police custody.

Does this black record give us the charter to persecute the police and brand them all 'criminals in uniform'? My contention is that we are largely responsible for creating and sustaining the wretched state of the police.

To begin with, we use the abhorrent incidents to tarnish the whole force and its total activity. We forget the round-the-clock police vigil which helps a community, even in a communally sensitive area, to carry on its social, economic, political and cultural activity. We forget that the lathi charges and the tear-gas shells do stop looting and damage to property by a kind of protester; the 'shoot at sight' order during intense communal clashes does prevent anarchy and curb destruction.

Our gravest sin has been to pick on the police without taking into account the other forces that are at work on them. This single act of omission has damaged the police's reputation for us. Our failure to investigate and identify the hold myriad other agencies have over the police organisation has prevented us from noticing the demoralisation which results.

CONCERNING MYSELF only with police violence, let me first identify the areas of violent police activity. One, detection of crime; two, prevention of crime; three, giving protection to certain agencies when they enforce a plan which the government supports but a section of

Sheela Barse, a freelance journalist, writes often on matters relating to the police.

PHOTOGRAPH BY AYESHA SONI

A study showed that of 292 'encounters' in the Banda district between 1979-82, in which 145 persons were killed, 80 per cent of the victims belonged to the lower peasant castes. Police violence hits the poor the most.

the population opposes; four, controlling specific regional situations such as the dacoit menace, the Naxalbari movement, the insurgency in the North-East regions, the activism in tribal regions and so forth; five, the maintenance of law and order which involves disciplining *morchas*, controlling protests, preventing mobbing of popular persons, containing riots, etc.

An awesome task, all this, for any person, even the multi-talented workaholic who has acquired expertise in each of these areas and has no other personal interests and responsibilities.

But how much more difficult for the average policeman! Our police constable (PC) who has passed the eighth standard and the station house officer (SHO) who may be a graduate, have certainly not been given any specialisation courses nor are they trained for any specialised task. We only have broad categories: the policeman, the armed policeman and the paramilitary corps. And yet, the spectrum of skills any head of the crime branch requires is mind-boggling.

The average PC or SHO has neither the talent nor the training, and in urban areas, no time either, to handle the multi-dimensional work. He simply leans heavily on his authority to be effective. He beats up the thief to recover stolen property, then moves on to deal with the chaos created by an accident. He pushes people around, and returns to the station house to find some hutment dwellers creating a racket. He slaps one or two of them into submission and then might have to listen to a list of his wrong-doings from his superior.

So, his attitude to the average citizen is unwaveringly cynical. The PSI or the PI (police inspector) cannot even understand you when you tell him that every citizen ought to be treated with respect. How can he respect criminals? he asks: How can he expect the offender to co-operate in the process of sending him to jail? he argues. For him, the theory of sustained interrogation, proper documentation and application of the correct laws does not exist. Because he can't work as a professional in this force. The telephone does not work, the other concerned agencies are not work-oriented, vehicles are not available, colleagues refuse to slog for a pittance, the police prosecutor does not know the law, the boss is not willing to fight for better support structure, the government is unhelpful.

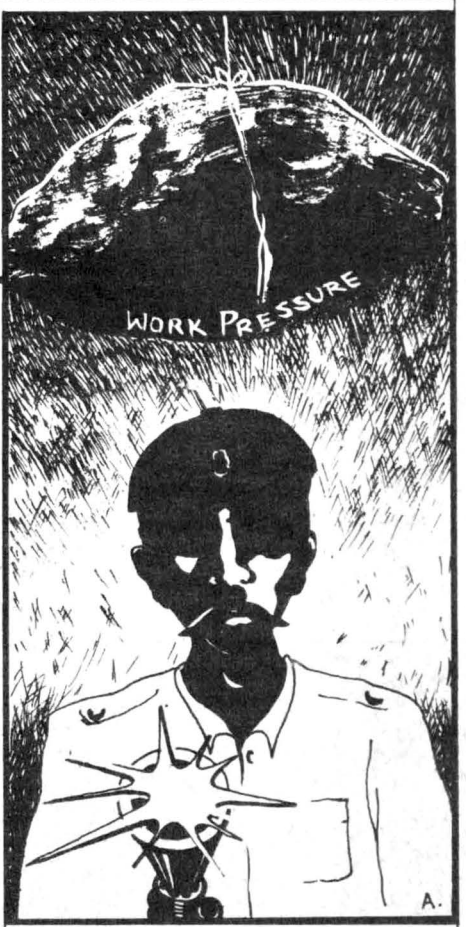
Against this backdrop the officer is accountable for containing crime in his area. How does he do it? Often, by beating the life out of the accused, even killing him off. In MP, the police pleaded with the government for helicopters and beep devises to locate the dacoit gangs hiding in the Chambal ravines or the Daang forest. But they got nothing. Eventually, they started plotting 'encounter' deaths. Expectedly, this method was misused and, as Professor B N Jual of the Gandhian Institute of Studies concluded from an analysis of 292 'encounters' in the Banda district between 1979-82 (in which 145 persons were killed), 80 per cent of the victims belonged to the lower peasant castes.

Sometimes, the police use violence out of despair. That is what is happening in the terrorist cases. On May 4, 1985, the Chandigarh police tortured alleged extremist Gurinder Singh with such a vengeance that within two hours he had to be admitted to the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Research with his arms and legs broken in several places. The nuscles of his calves, thighs and biceps had been completely crushed and a foot had been so badly damaged that it turned gangrenous within two days and had to be amputated. The crushed muscles blocked blood circulation which led to the failure of his kidneys.

As a rule, however, the police do not leave such blatant proof of their tampering with suspects. In Maharashtra, the favourite third degree weapon is the rubber truncheon which does not break bones and does not cause ruptures in the skin. The victim is usually hit on the head, legs and the soles of his feet. The lashes on the soles are said to cause agony akin to electric shocks. During, and sometimes even after, the torture, the man is hung by his handcuffed or tied hands from the ceiling or the top bars of a window. Often, when the case is a sensational one or when political pressure is brought to bear on them, police officers routinely ask their seniors or the Home Ministry for permission to use fifth degree.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY APARNA SINGH

The police, under the illusion that they have a vital role to play in the security strategy, align themselves unquestioningly with the government. The officers perform political tasks.



FOR THE AVERAGE citizen all this is pretty damaging evidence of the brutality of our police force. But they cannot account for the frustrations and the impediments placed in the way of the policeman. The powers that be and the judiciary often nullify the officer's good work; political interference has reached critical proportions and the frustrations have only intensified police violence – both in degree and quantum.

So, officers resort to beating up every criminal produced in their office because they don't want the offender to return from the courts to mock their impotence as lawmen. They inflict violence to retain some of their abused authority. They terrorise petty criminals to be able to feel effective in at least some areas of their job.

The officers must also use a lot of illegal violence to prevent the freed criminals from establishing total control in their territory. Take the cases of Karim Lala, the narcotic smuggler who also supplies armed gangsters for specific assignments, and his nephew Samad Khan, a sadistic contract killer. The powers that be (Zail Singh and Vasantdada Patil, the former Chief Minister of Maharashtra) were guests at his functions, and the judicial processes kept the twosome free to continue their terrible criminal activities. Unable to function in Lala's territory, a very senior officer took to personally raiding Lala's liquor and gambling *addas*, smashing them up, dragging the managers out on the street and thrashing them in full view of the neighbourhood. The officer insisted that he had to take the risk if he had to do some policing in Lala's *jagir*. As for Samad Khan, the underground grapevine says that the police helped Khan's killers to gun down the man.

The meddling by politicians and their 'friends' was evident even in the 1984 Bhiwandi communal riots. The police could not move against Bal Thakeray though he was inciting Shiv Sainiks against the Muslims. Weeks after the carnage, bowing to public opinion, the government did allow the police to indict Thakeray and arrest some *pramukhs*, but the cases will die in the police files.

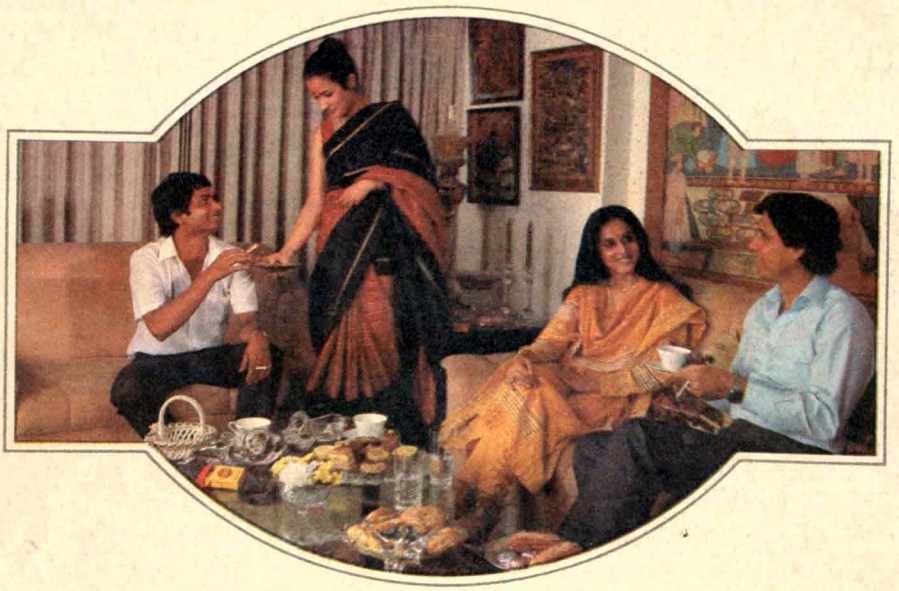
Eventually, the town exploded. More than a hundred people died, several hundred were injured. The casualties were partly due to the violent methods used by the police who are under the Union Government's orders not to use soft techniques like lathi and tear gas, but to start with gunfire, shoot at sight if need be and as soon as possible. (Incidentally, according to top police sources, Antulay's man Vaqar Momin was identified by them as an instigator and supporter of rioting Muslims but they had to co-operate with him as he was received by Mrs Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi and other VVIPs!)

PROVIDING PROTECTION is another of the assignments which the police handle, very often without realising they are being misused. It is sad that the government policies that draw the police into this job are underplayed by the press. For example, the government uses the police for repressive action against labour organisations that provoke people into taking an anti-establishment stand. But the government is rarely selected to take the blame.

The police, under the illusion that they have a vital role to play in the government's security strategy, align themselves unquestioningly with the government. The officers, overwhelmed by the 'trust' reposed in them by the ministers or other powerful leaders, unleash terror on the poor and the oppressed. In August 1984, a Circle Inspector shot dead Jiviben and all those who ran to lift her in Garodi village in Modasa *taluka* of Gujarat. The woman had opposed the take-over of grazing land.

In spite of this dehumanised behaviour, few can believe that every man who joins the police force is a born criminal or has destructive instincts. It is surely the job that brutalises them. Their repression, exploitation, as also the compulsion to be effective while working under inhuman pressures in an increasingly violent society, is forcing the police to resort to such extreme violence. Some of the finest officers have lost faith in professionalism. They even refuse to take action against offenders who have sadistically tortured innocent persons including women and children.

The temptation to say that this is the government's problem, not ours, exists. But the fact remains: it *is* our problem. For the quality of the freedom we enjoy is inextricably linked with the quality of our policing. ♦



The tinkle of crystal,
the sparkle of talk and laughter...
and Gold Flake.
Great quality...
For the gracious
people.

GOLD FLAKE KINGS
Quality that's forever

Every genuine WILLS GOLD FLAKE cigarette bears the name W.D. & H.O. WILLS

STATUTORY WARNING: CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH

CLARION C-GFK-1


Zodiac confidence
Because fashions come and go but classics go on forever
Shirts Rs.69 upwards.
Ties Rs.35 upwards.
Belts Rs.53 upwards.
Wallets Rs.30 upwards.
Handkerchieves Rs.32 upwards for a box of 3.
Socks Rs.15 upwards.
(L.T. extra)
ZODIAC
ULKA 2.5

DOON: THE MYTH

In May 1983 we put the Doon School network on our cover. Since then, Doon has become a national obsession. Is all the media hype justified? DHIREN BHAGAT went to Doon's Golden Jubilee to find out.

". . . .the reason for all this – this nostalgia and sentimentality, this great body of glorifying literature – was gratitude. Public schools, and we shall see this especially as the 20th century advances, evolved to teach, among others, the stupid and became very good at it. And even where they failed to teach them very much academically, they gave them other assets like class confidence, manners and ways of speaking, which were of enormous use in later life. As a result they inspired gratitude.

". . .the public for school literature was by no means confined to boys. Adults read it. *The Hill* and in particular *The Harrovians* were written specifically for adults. When *Boy's Own Paper* celebrated its 50th anniversary, in 1929, the Prime Minister. . . .Baldwin himself, arrived to pay tribute to the 'beloved paper of my youth'."

– Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy *The Public School Phenomenon* (1977)

For another view of Doon School see Growing Up Equal *on page 7.*

AFTER the Doon School Golden Jubilee bash, I went up to Mussoorie. In the course of our walks, Bill Aitken and I visited a cottage occupied by two well-turned out and charming Old Boys whom I had seen quite a bit of during the celebrations. The conversation turned to Doon. The good and saintly Mr Aitken wanted to know what the atmosphere had been like at the anniversary. From what he had read in the papers, it had seemed like a great meeting of minds, one of the great meetings of the century. The Old Boys looked at each other, uncertain, then looked at me. Was the Old School myth to be kept up, or should the truth be told? My loud snorting laugh settled the issue. The Boys relaxed. Good God, no. They had been sloshed a good bit of the time, certainly the emphasis had been on drinking, not thinking. (Drink wasn't permitted in the school; you had to get to the bar the Golden Jubilee Committee had set up in a bungalow across the main road. On November 3, during the Prime Minister's visit, the bar was shut but the son of my host in Dehra Dun, an enterprising Old Boy from the '60s, had stashed away a case of Scotch in Holding House. At one point during the particularly boring *Merchant Of Venice,* he and his friends sneaked away and killed three bottles – five *baras* each – in eight minutes flat. Good spirits, *yaar*.)

The coverage in the press – and on Doordarshan – certainly *didn't* capture the atmosphere of the jubilee, though clues could have been found in the remarks of two Old Boys' wives published before the event. In *The Times Of India* Doon School Golden Jubilee Supplement, Ratna Sahai seemed to get it just right: "In the 30 years that have elapsed since school, conversation, mutual interests, whatever little there was of either has by now come to an end. However, as an OB said, 'What is the need for conversation. It is enough to sit together and go dong, dong, dong – with the booze. The only thing left to do is drink.'" In the *Doon School Weekly*, Mrs Ramchandani, the wife of the Headmaster (another Old Boy) was

The Network: Standing (L to R): B G Verghese, Rajan Nanda, Akbar Ahmed, Lakshman Singh, Kamal Nath, Roshan Seth. Sitting (L to R): Piloo Mody, Ajit Haksar, Rajiv Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi, Karan Singh, Bhaskar Menon.

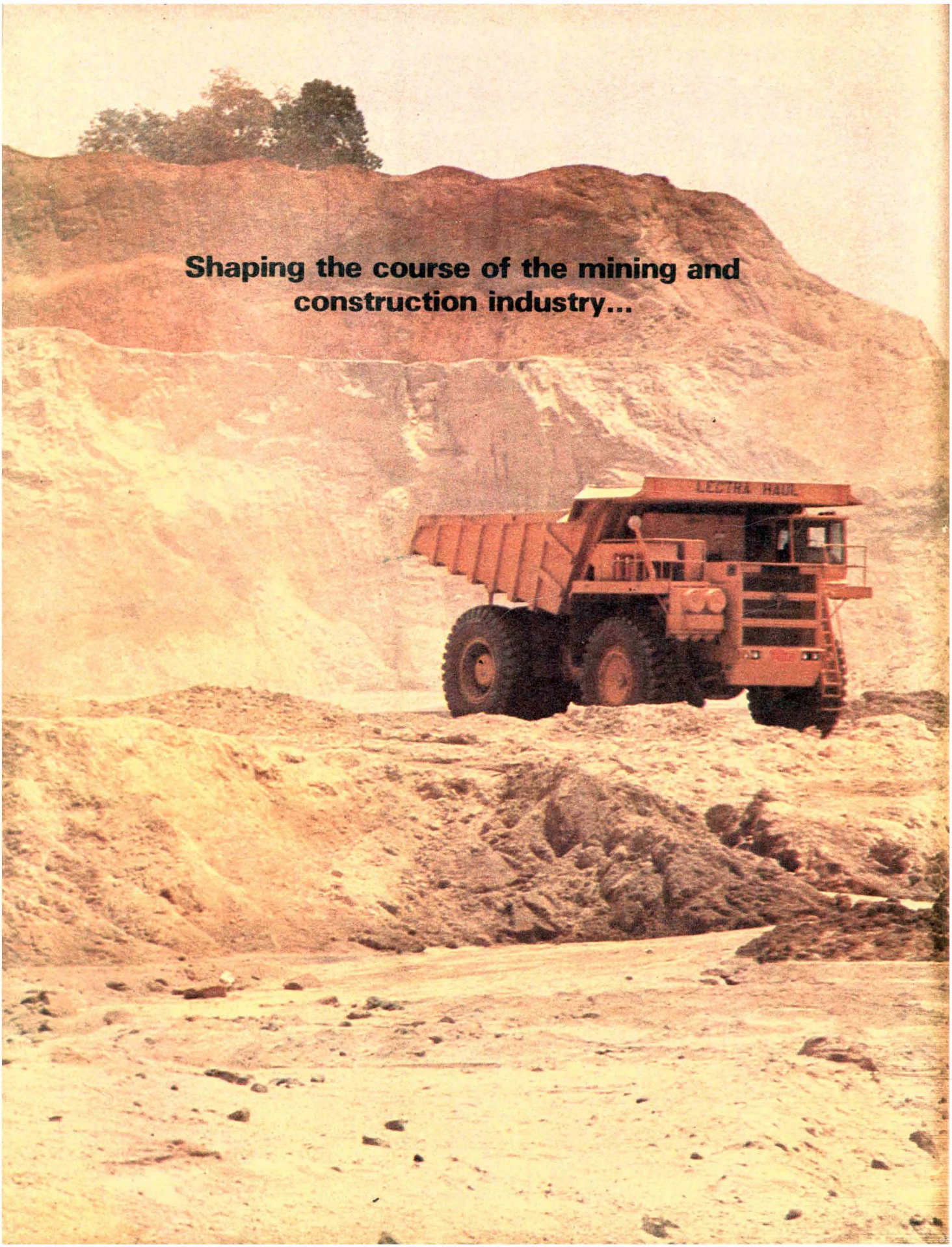
more diplomatic: ". . .Old Boys individually are very fine chaps but collectively, they're a bore."

At the Annual General Meeting of the Old Boys' Association on November 2, the atmosphere was one of banter and gloating. During Matters Arising an Old Boy, who had since settled in Australia, made his way to the mike. He said he was very keen that his son went up to Doon, but the school wouldn't take the boy. He felt there was not enough provision for Old Boys' sons. At first, he was heckled – as is customary. ("Your boy's a duffer – he'd have got in otherwise." "Sit down you ass, your trousers are falling down.") But as he went on to make the general point that there should be more reserved places for Old Boys' sons, irrespective of merit, the congregation began to take him more seriously. ("Damn right, *yaar*.") Soon after, Gulab Ramchandani, the Headmaster, came on. He explained that it was no secret that 33 per cent of the beds in school were reserved for Old Boys' sons and brothers. Last year there were some 80 vacant beds in all. There had been applications from over a hundred Old Boys' sons. What Ramchandani had done was to take in as many Old Boys' children as would get in on merit and then apply the 33 per cent quota, thus increasing the percentage of Old Boys' sons to 42. ("Not enough," the shout went up.) "Some of you," Ramchandani went on, "will say: make it 50 per cent." ("Yaa, Yaa.") "Others will say make it 100 per cent." ("That's it, that's it.") "It just can't be done." ("Why not, *yaar*?") "The fact is, we have got to take in all kinds of people." I have never heard any one be so condescending to the rest of the world.

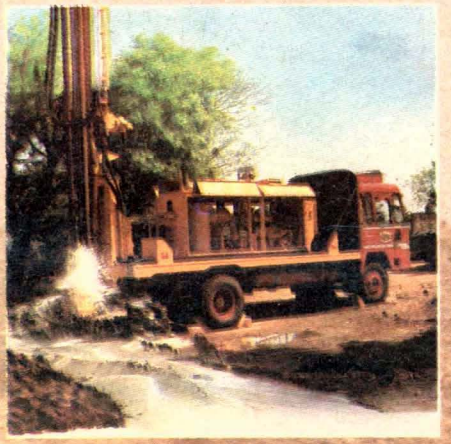
GATHORNE-HARDY had written of the great demand for public school literature in Victorian and Edwardian England: the novels of G A Henty of Westminster, Desmond Coke of Shrewsbury, Gunby Hadath and the Reverend E E Bradford.

There is no such demand here, though it may well develop in the next 50 years. The jubilee pageant *Doscovesky*, however, got as close to that genre as anything I have seen in India. Written by Jayant Kripalani, directed by Ratna Pathak Shah and choreographed by Astad Deboo (mercifully, the boys played the parts: so great was the accent on professional-

ILLUSTRATION BY ESKAY


Shaping the course of the mining and
construction industry...
LECTRA HAUL

Integrated systems from Kirloskar



A complete range of compressors, drilling tools, coal cutting motors, generating sets and diesel engines for dumpers, haulers, scrapers, loaders, concrete mixers. Also industrial pumps and valves to handle all types of fluids. All engineered to suit specific mining and construction applications.

Total systems reliability and responsibility from a single source.

Kirloskar

Quality and Reliability since 1888.

ism, for a while I thought they'd get in actors from Bombay), it set out to show the life of a boy at school from the day he joins to the day he leaves. A warm self-regarding sentimentality filled the performance. It resembled not Robert Musil's *Young Törless* (for my money the most authentic account of life at a public school) but rather *The Hill – A Romance Of Friendship* (1905) or *Sixteen – A Diary Of The Teens* (1917), though it was neither as well worked out as these popular Edwardian books, nor as frank. There was schoolboy talk, affectionate parody of masters, breaking bounds, school assemblies, climbing walls and trees, even a pillow fight in the dorm after Lights Out, but the weak boy who the others had picked on was still up and fighting when the housemaster came in to break it up. Even bullying became a matter of teamwork, not terror. Good fun, *yaar.*

You're bound to meet a big fat hulk
Who'll bully you till you're in a sulk
He'll end up being your friend for life
Who'll ask your sister to be his wife.

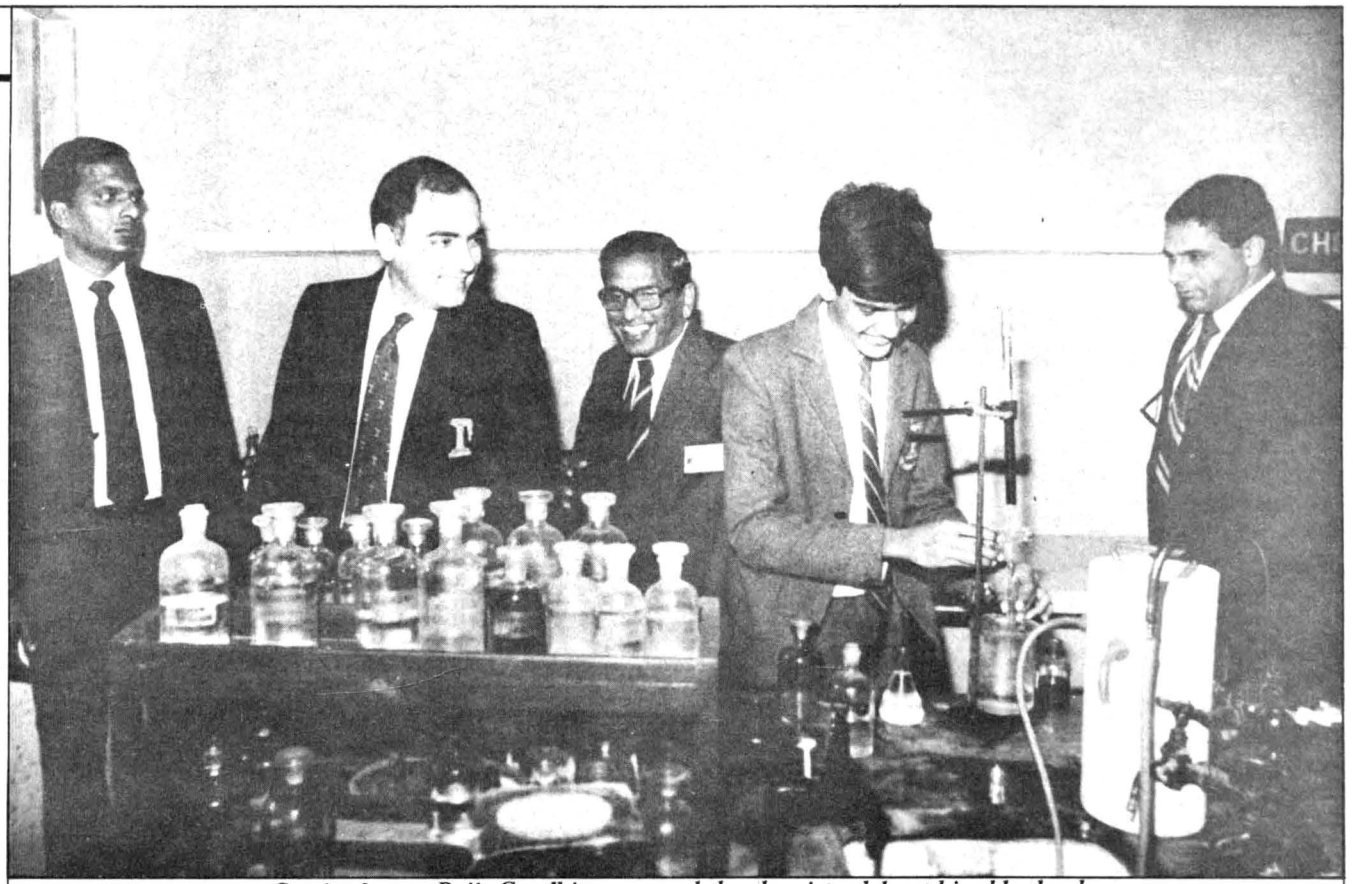
It is always interesting how a school views itself, how its Old Boys speak of the history of their school, what they make of it. Places like Mayo have had the silly snobbery of the Maharajahs, the chestnut about how the prince of Kotah arrived at school with 200 retainers for whom a village had to be built, or the one about Alwar who came into school on an elephant, in the process breaking down the school gate. (He had with him 20 polo ponies and eight carriage horses, as well.) Doon was different. It was conceived of as a public school (Mayo became one only after Independence) and though S R Das, whose dream it was, died in 1928, the school was eventually founded in 1935, guided by various influences (Eton, Harrow, Dr Arnold, Kurt Hahn, Tagore) but unburdened by traditions.

But public schools cannot survive for long without acquiring traditions and legends; if they have no history, then a history has to be invented. This was most noticeable in the mid-19th century in England when the new schools began to pretend they were old.

IN DOON the legends have grown around the four 'bachelor' Englishmen: Foot, Holdsworth, Martyn and Gibson. At first, it was affectionate talk and reminiscence, but now the four are rapidly becoming legends. It makes sense. Last year's Founders' Day was the first at which none of the four was present. ('Holdy' went back to Somerset to grow flowers in 1963; Foot died while playing tennis on Hayling Island in 1968; Martyn died last June in Vienna; Gibson, after retiring as Principal of Mayo in 1969, has stuck it out in Ajmer but ill health has prevented him from making it to Founders' Day these past two years.) And when the flesh and blood is no more in front of you, the legends can safely take over. (More than one Old Boy whispered to me that there were quite a few errors of fact in Michael Dalvi's affectionate portrait of Holdsworth in *The Times Of India* supplement titled, you've guessed it, *Holdy, The Legend.*)

In the official history Rajiv released, *Doon: The Story Of A School*, an entire chapter is devoted to the canonisation of the four 'bachelors', Rajiv in his speech paid 'homage' to the four, and much of the talk concerned them. Ian Jack in a recent *Sunday Times* profile of Rajiv quotes one of the Prime Minister's aides summing up: "I often think that today the real *de facto* rulers of India are Martyn and Holdsworth." Granted they were exceptional teachers, but why this fuss? The answer is surely that they are Doon's substitute for tradition; they are the sahibs whose achievements and even whose Englishness can be vicariously savoured by generations who were taught to aspire to an Englishness that continues to elude them. Gibson, one is reminded again and again, was a double Blue at Cambridge, and 'Holdy' a triple Blue at Oxford; reminded by people who never made it to Oxford or Cambridge themselves. "Just as going to school in a country house was like being born in one; so, if your school, however technical the connection, could trace its foundation to 1584, it was rather like tracing your own lineage back there too." – Gathorne-Hardy. Last summer an English journalist with Reuters making her way to Mussoorie, decided to stop at the school and write an article about it. The Headmaster, Gulab Ramchandani, BSc (Lucknow) had her over for tea and, as Mrs Ramchandani served cucumber sandwiches, he observed with evident pride that at Doon they were 'more English than the English' adding that, of course, that didn't prevent them from 'being Indian as well'.

Traditions are important to Old Boys, more important to Old Boys than to anyone else. The Staff and boys at a school quite easily see the point of changing with the times, of getting on, but it is Old Boys who sputter with rage when 'traditions' are tampered with. The biggest of these rows at Doon involved the introduction of the Central Dining Hall in 1970. When the school was smaller, boys ate in their own Houses, but this was no longer considered practical after the school had grown in size. Predictably, the Old Boys created a fuss, even went as far as electing a committee to put forward its opposition. "Not only did the continuance of old traditions reassure them that there had been nothing wrong with their own education; it also proved to them that the same education was being given to their sons." –Gathorne-Hardy. So, it was not at all surprising to hear Rajiv as Chief Guest (dressed in his school blazer and tie) speak of 'the values and traditions that are sadly disappearing today'. It was more surprising, though, to hear him talk of that other Doon tradition, "what Holdy used to call 'the Greek inquisitive system'," for the 3,000 Old Boys gathered there, smart and successful though they were, looked a smug bunch hardly in the habit of questioning things. As Steven Weisman, the *New York Times'* correspondent observed over the weekend:



Coming home: Rajiv Gandhi goes round the chemistry labs at his old school.

"It seems incredible that no one here has any doubts about the rightness of this system. When you ask them they justify it all with meritocratic clichés: 'We got here on our own merit. We deserve it.' No doubts!"

DOON, as I said, was a school with a difference. Martyn had made friends with Kurt Hahn in the summer of 1933 at Sedbergh; walking across the Scottish moors that summer, Hahn told the young man of his plans to found 'The Round Square' of Gordonstoun. (Gordonstoun was founded in 1934; Doon, a year later. Doon is to this day a member of the international association of Round Square Schools.) Foot, the first Headmaster, had some progressive ideas as well. So, when I was told that there was no corporal punishment at Doon, I readily believed it. There had never been any corporal punishment at school, Sumer Singh tells us in his official coffee table history, *Doon: The Story Of A School.* "Foot had given a great deal of thought to the question of punishment. He examined the prefectorial system as it existed in English public schools and found it wanting. He felt the English system depended too much on sanctions and did not approve of the fact that these were often of a violent nature. . . .Foot, therefore, allowed neither fagging nor corporal punishment. . . .Foot did not even use the word 'punishment' choosing to use the word 'sanction', instead." (Page 69.) Whatever doubts I may have had were dispelled when Rajiv in his speech told us how Doon's masters 'enforced discipline without corporal punishment', how 'yellow cards were enough', and how at school 'one's own conscience became the taskmaster'. At Mayo I had been beaten around by the principal, the masters and the monitors – even by house prefects – caned, kicked, slapped, beaten and punched. Clearly, Doon was different.

It was sheer luck that I ran into Nick Nugent, the BBC correspondent. Mark Tully and Satish Jacob had gone to England to promote their book on the Punjab and Nugent had been sent to India to stand in for them. Since he had taught for a term at Doon in the late '60s, he welcomed the assignment to cover the jubilee. I asked him what he made of it all. He said he was surprised about the 'no corporal punishment' line that everyone seemed to be taking. He had been to a real 'progressive' school in England and while at Doon had been shocked by the punishment he had seen. And now, all of a sudden, they were denying that there had ever been corporal punishment at the school.

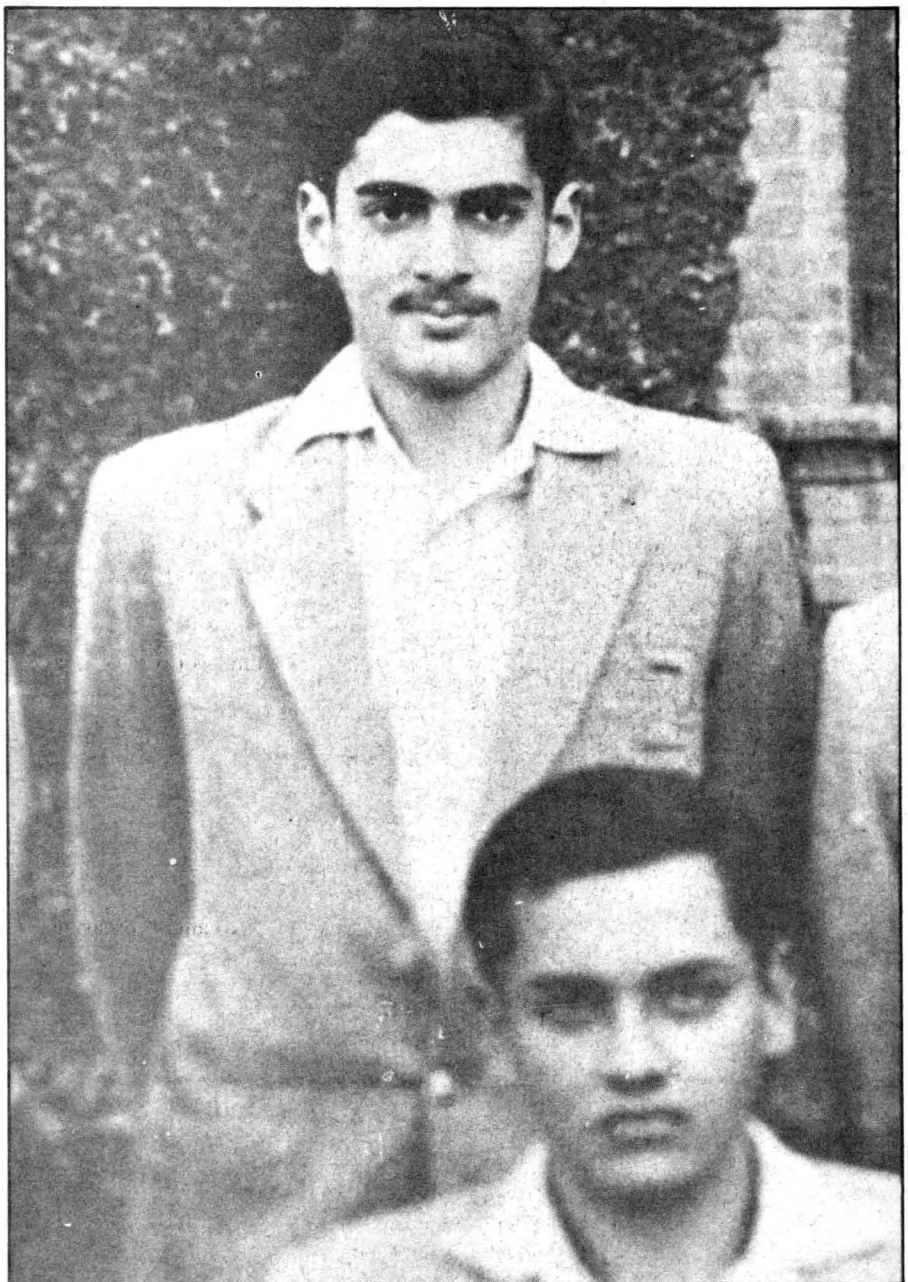
I began asking the Old Boys I knew. No, they said at first, there had been no corporal punishment at school. But, when you put the question in another way, the answers were more revealing. Had anyone ever given you a bend-over? I asked Hardeep Paintal, who was there in the late '50s, a contemporary of Rajiv's. Oh yes, just bend-overs, yes, the prefects did that sometimes. With a hockey stick or cricket bat? Well, sometimes. Only if you'd done something wrong. Anyone ever kicked you? Once in a while. No, not a running kick, just a kick.

General Bhupinder Singh had been at Doon in the '30s. "No, no corporal

punishment. Except one incident. I wouldn't call that corporal punishment, though. I had got something wrong in Gibson's geography class. He called me out, asked me to bend over and hit me. I was young, only nine. A tear appeared in my eye. Gibson said: 'Bhupi, have I hurt you?' I said, 'Yes.' He bent over and said, 'Okay, now you hit me.' I hit him. I wouldn't call that corporal punishment, as it did not humiliate me."

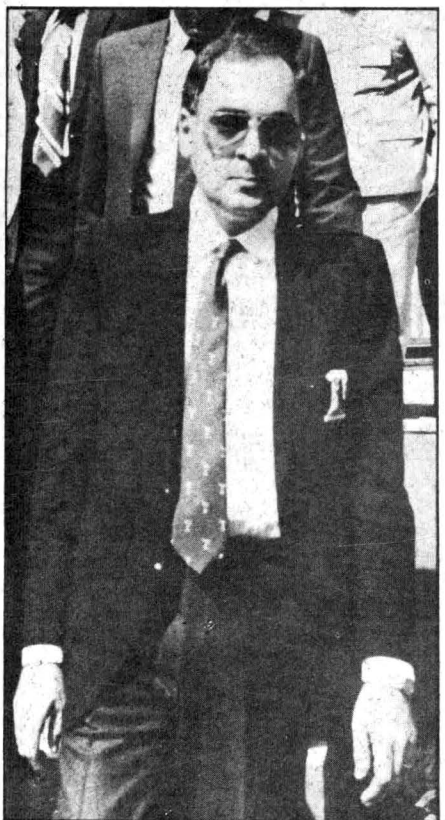
At Mayo I had been caned by Gibson at least six times in the year-and-a-half before he retired (six of the best on each occasion) but I had never been as lucky as the general. I was soon to learn that others at Doon had shared my luck. Someone else told me about Gibson's old tennis racquet which he kept to hit boys with. Balram Tandon, the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent, remembered getting 'five of the best' for being a slow geography student. "He would say, 'Oh, you don't know who the Hottentots are? Come out and bend over.' Ha. ha, ha."

And it wasn't just Gibson. B N Deb, now Principal of Blue Mountain, recalls he was hit twice by masters at school – once by Gibson and once by an Indian chemistry master. ("It was not institutionalised but we were beaten once in a while.") He is embarrassed when he recalls the occasion the Indian master beat him. "I had done something wrong in the lab. In a rage, he had hit me with a Bunsen burner tube. I reported him to Martyn (the Head) and created a fuss. If it had been Gibson I wouldn't have complained, but because he was an Indian, I felt he had no right to hit me." A contemporary of his, Vijay Handa, a Delhi businessman, at first denied there was any corporal punishment. When I persisted with my enquiries, he said: "Yeah, the prefects would *dhup* you, *yaar*. Some of them were okay, but some hit hard. I wouldn't call that corporal punishment, though." Why not? "Corporal punishment is when you mind it." And didn't he mind being hit? "No, *yaar*, it was all in good fun."



The re-definitions are the most amusing part of it. Corporal punishment is bodily punishment, not just hitting, but punishment drill, front-rolling, leap-frogging – any of these. I am not against it myself, am undecided about it, on balance probably approve of it. However, when I was beaten, not being a saint I *did* mind being beaten; when I was made to front-roll on asphalt for 20 minutes, I minded it a lot though, even then, I cannot recall toeing the progressive line on bodily punishment. What is amazing about Doon is not that there was corporal punishment or even that it was particularly harsh (I suspect it wasn't, not compared to the convents or, even Mayo) but that so many people, Rajiv downwards, seem to think there wasn't any at all. To my mind there is only one explanation for this trick of collective memory. It is a 'tradition' at Doon that there is no corporal punishment; to Old Boys it is the tradition and not the fact that matters. After all, Foot himself had

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY SUNDAY OBSERVER



Crucible of leadership? Rajiv Gandhi in his Doon days (left) and at the Golden Jubilee celebrations (top).

disallowed corporal punishment and homage must be paid, as Sumer Singh dutifully does in his official history, to 'the traditions and systems established by Foot and Martyn'. (Page 31.)

(Talking to Sheil Vohra, the cricket master who has been with the school since 1959, I learnt that there had been no corporal punishment in the school for 'the past 15 years'; certainly the present boys say they are not subjected to beatings or bend-overs. A boy who left in 1968, told me that corporal punishment was done away with that year. "I know," he said ruefully, "I had been *dhupped* all along and was dying to get my own back when I got to the final year. And that's when they stopped it. Damn.")

I HAVE NO DOUBT that men like Foot intended that 'one's own conscience becomes the task-master' (Rajiv's phrase, but if I know anything about the originality of Doon thought, it's probably Martyn's: Rajiv and his speech-writer couldn't have known Foot though they probably recall the time he came as Chief Guest on Founders' Day in 1960.) But punishment or no punishment, did conscience become the task-master?

I got a dissenting view from Dinesh Mohan, a professor at the Delhi IIT, who left Doon in 1960 along with Rajiv. "You hear a lot about the ethos of Doon School these days," he said. "But if you ask me, there were two unwritten rules that really characterised the Doon ethos. One was, you can do what you like, break the rules, but don't get caught. Two, if you get caught, or even if you don't *DON'T* sneak. It's these rules that lie at the bottom of Rajiv's government. They've got nothing to do with character development or the importance of conscience. In fact, they're quite the opposite of conscience. It doesn't matter if Caesar's wife is chaste or not, she must *appear* to be chaste."

Most of the Old Boys I spoke to agreed these 'rules' existed. In the pageant, a boy was caught breaking bounds. There was a roar from the audience: *DON'T SNEAK*. He didn't; it was the pageant after all. But they didn't accept the conclusion. "There were some rules it was 'okay' to break," General Bhupinder Singh said to me, "like breaking bounds. But cheating, no. The boys didn't stand anyone who cheated." Would they sneak if they knew someone was cheating in exams? "No, but they lost respect for the boy."

"Anyway," the recently-retired General said, "it's one thing to have a healthy contempt for the rules at school. That doesn't mean in later life one goes about breaking rules." Half-an-hour later, in the same conversation, he admitted he had 'bent quite a few rules' in his career to help Doscos. "I wouldn't do anything criminal, but break a few rules – I've always done that for a Dosco and I would expect every Dosco to do that for another Dosco."

TOWARDS THE END of the weekend, just before we saw the slick audio-visual history of the school produced by Ajai Lal, in which we heard about Doon the 'crucible of character', I spoke to an enterprising Delhi businessman, like a good many Doscos, a Punjabi. He had set out in middle life with Rs 5,000 and today ran a business that employed 200 people. He was one of Doon's many risk-takers, the men who had done Doon proud. In the middle of the conversation he lowered his voice and told me a story.

During the Emergency it was widely 'alleged' that Sanjay and his men took bribes to get things done. "Alleged?" I asked. "Surely 'known' is what you mean." He laughed, it was the slippery laughter of someone being more careful than he needed to be. Well, Kamal Nath had come over to this man's mother's place and, while they were drinking, Kamal Nath began telling them of a cinema-owner who had lost his licence. The cinema chap claimed he had paid the Youth Congress to have the licence restored. "And you know the worst of it," Kamal Nath said laughing, "he hasn't even paid us. I've checked."

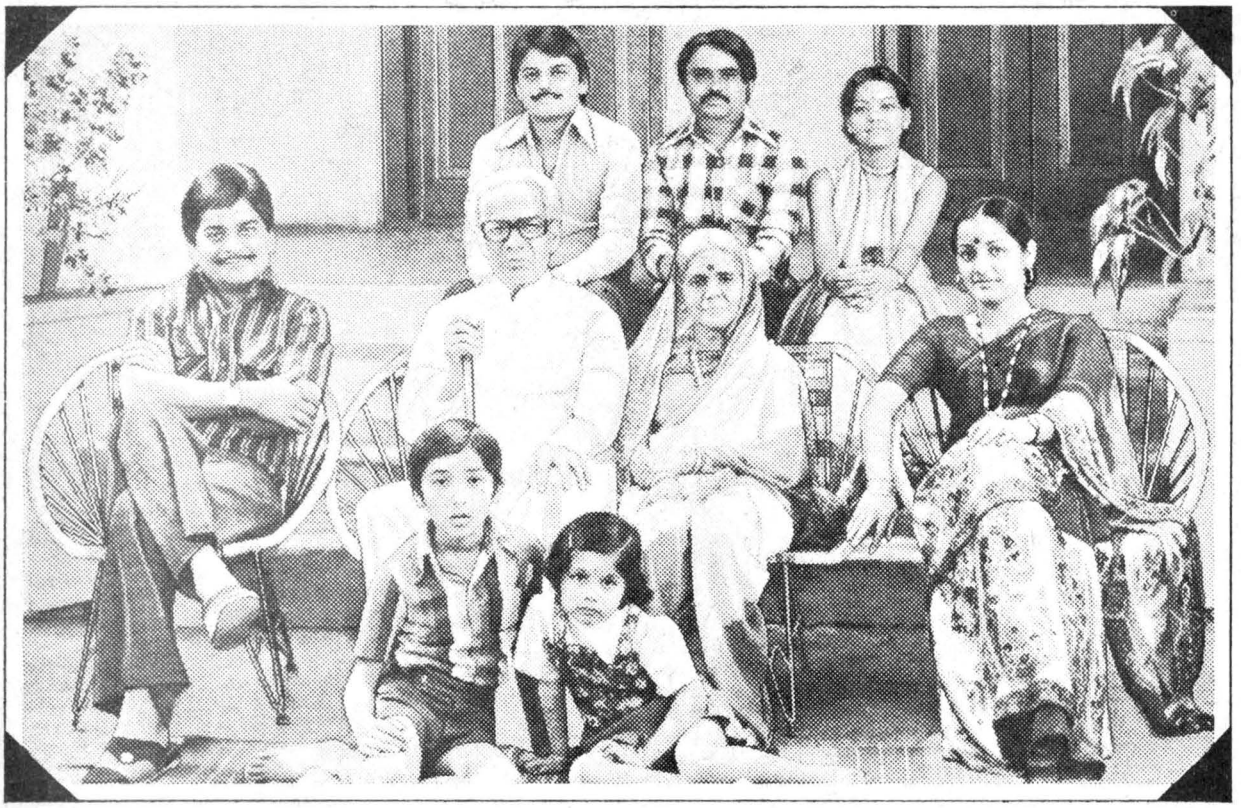
Kamal Nath's host got angry. "Please leave this house," he said. "I won't have a Dosco discussing his corrupt deals in this house."

The way the story was told we were meant to be impressed. I was – initially .

But then, I was struck by the irony of it. The man had known Kamal Nath was doing things a Dosco 'shouldn't do'; his slippery laughter had indicated as much. And yet he was perfectly willing to have Kamal Nath over. It was only when 'Roly Poly' broke the rules, made public his corruption, that the man had objected. It wasn't his conscience that troubled him but his sense of etiquette: Morals had given way to manners. "And even where they failed to teach them very much academically, they gave them other assets like class confidence, manners and ways of speaking which were of enormous use in later life." ♦

PHOTOGRAPH BY SURINDER KAPOOR

SPOT THE LIC AGENT IN THIS PICTURE



WE BET YOU CAN'T BECAUSE HE IS ONE OF THE FAMILY.

Yes. The professional LIC Agent is virtually a part of the family of his client, the policyholder. For the LIC Agent offers expert advice on life insurance, tax benefits from life plans and the various options for improving one's savings. In short, on matters of vital concern to any family.

When your Agent who is your family friend meets you next, discuss with him how life insurance can benefit your family and how it can help you in meeting the expenses of your children's education, start-in-life, marriage, or for your own planned retirement. And how to match your life insurance protection to your growing responsibilities and increasing income.

Talk to your Agent today.
He is YOUR FRIEND IN NEED & A FRIEND INDEED.

योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्

Life Insurance Corporation of India

1985-86 LIC's year of the Agent

Pratibha-LIC-85-29

THE HAVOC OF SOCIALISM

If this country is to progress, then, argues K S VENKATESWARAN, it must first abandon the short-sighted socialist populism of the Nehrus and return to the principles of a free market.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JITENDRA ARYA

THIRTY-EIGHT YEARS after Independence is as good a point in time as any to evaluate the cumulative effect that the economic policies followed by successive governments of India have had on national development. The exercise assumes added significance in the context of the unprecedented euphoria that has been generated by the accession of Mr Rajiv Gandhi to the Prime Ministership. The new administration, we are told, has finally and irreversibly ended the era of economic populism and set the nation firmly on the course of pragmatism. In the words of Mr Nani Palkhivala, the years of the locusts are over.

But are they? Shorn of the rhetoric and public relations hardsell surrounding the various policy changes announced by the new government, I think not. True, some of the changes do stand out in refreshing contrast to the woolly-headed and purblind policies pursued by past administrations, but looked at objectively and dispassionately, they

K S Venkateswaran, the Editor of Freedom First *is a frequent contributor to* Imprint.

do *not* represent the kind of fundamental ideological shift that enthusiastic supporters would have us believe they do.

Conventional wisdom has invariably supported the myth that increasing doses of 'socialism'* constitute the only panacea for the many and varied ills plaguing our economy over the years. Semantics apart, it will be my endeavour in the course of this brief essay, not only to debunk this myth, but to demonstrate how misleading are the claims currently made about the apparent eagerness with which Mr Gandhi's government is distancing itself from the ideological attachments of its predecessors.

It needs but little effort to discharge the latter task. The alacrity with which Mr Rajiv Gandhi bent backwards at the AICC (I) meeting last March to swear by the socialist dogma and placate those who saw in his earlier pronouncements a 'dangerous' deviation from the familiar path trod by his mother and grandfather, offers convincing proof of the sheer inability of the new administration to shake off its legacy. Similar reaffirmations at appropriate intervals, both by the Prime Minister and the leading lights of his government, kept coming. Even as recently as November 9, 1985, Mr Gandhi found it necessary, while addressing the National Development Council which approved the draft of the Seventh Five-Year Plan, to assert that there was no significant difference between the approach adopted by his government and that of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Many believe, of course, that these periodic reaffirmations of allegiance to the socialist dogma are merely ritualistic and tactical, and that it would be unwise to read too much into them, given the Prime Minister's basic belief in the virtues of a free economy. That, I am afraid, is a rather naive view to take. For one thing, if Mr Gandhi does believe as fervently in economic liberalism as his enthusiastic supporters claim, it is indicative of an unpardonable weakness of character – bordering on intellectual dishonesty – for him not to act decisively on his beliefs.

For another, the government's own performance over the past year belies any claim of genuine adherence to the tenets of a free economy. The much talked-about Union budget, despite all the lip-service it paid to economic liberalisation, did precious little to make a clean break with the past and put the nation firmly on the path of fiscal pragmatism. The measly concessions doled out to tax-payers, the steep hike in excise and other levies, the pathetic indifference to the need for keeping revenue expenditure within the limits of revenue receipts, the continuing encouragement to massive investment in the public sector despite mounting losses and proven unviability, all testify to the essentially reactionary approach of Mr Gandhi's government. The so-called reforms which won whole-hearted approval from the urban middle class and commentators in the press, are really only cosmetic and peripheral in nature.

Mr Jawaharlal Nehru led the country down the slippery slope of misguided socialism, with calamitous results. His daughter compounded his folly within months of coming to power.

HARSH though it may seem, a major share of the blame for the malaise afflicting our economy today can be laid squarely at the doorstep of the late Mr Jawaharlal Nehru who, despite his best intentions, led the country down the slippery slope of misguided socialism soon after Independence, with results that could not have been more calamitous. Milton Friedman, the Nobel laureate who did an extraordinarily candid television serial entitled *Free To Choose* in 1980, describes the exertions of Nehru and his ilk most succinctly:

"They embarked on a series of Russian-type five-year plans that outlined detailed programmes of investment. Some areas of production are reserved to government; in others, private firms are permitted to operate, but only in conformity with The Plan. Tariffs and quotas control imports, subsidies control exports. Self-sufficiency is the ideal. Needless to say, these measures produce shortages of foreign exchange. These are met by detailed and extensive foreign exchange control – a major source both of inefficiency and of special privilege. Wages and prices are controlled. A government permit is required to build a factory or to make any other investment. Taxes are ubiquitous, highly graduated on paper, evaded in practice. Smuggling, black markets, illegal transactions of all kinds are every bit as ubiquitous as taxes, undermining all respect for law, yet performing a valuable social service by offsetting to some extent the rigidity of central planning and enabling urgent needs to be satisfied."

Nehru's folly was compounded by his daughter who, within months of her ascension to power, went about systematically pulling down those structures of private initiative and enterprise – admittedly few in number – which Nehru had, either out of conviction or expediency, allowed to stand. Mrs Gandhi's impatience with private enterprise was matched only by her cynicism. Populism, spurred by an insatiable urge to establish her 'radical' credentials, ruled the roost.

*Conscious as I am of the semantic nuances associated with 'socialism', I have, throughout this article, used the term to denote an economic system that is characterised essentially by an elaborate and pervasive State control over the means of production, with such attributes as runaway growth of governmental 'welfare' activities, increasing reliance on the public sector, subordination of the individual to the State, and so on.

Mrs Gandhi's technique, of course, is now all too familiar: give the dog a bad name and hang him! With a party consisting entirely of spineless yes-men (the inconvenient ones had already been shown the door), she virtually went on a rampage, destroying one vestige of freedom after another, in a manner that had to be seen to be believed. The nationalisation of 14 leading banks and the abolition of Privy Purses payable to the erstwhile rulers of the Indian States, were only two glaring examples of the lengths to which Mrs Gandhi could go within months of coming into power. (Her later excesses have, of course, been too well-documented to need any elaboration.)

These very examples, incidentally, serve to illustrate the central argument of this essay, viz that 'radical' reforms of such far-reaching consequences are, far from being justified by economic criteria, almost always actuated by considerations of sheer political expediency and bring little or no relief to their intended beneficiaries. The abolition of Privy Purses, for instance, had no justification whatsoever either in law or morality, as any objective analysis of the facts would reveal. When the Government of India took over the states ruled by the princes, it inherited cash balances and investments totalling no less than Rs 77 crore, besides enormous properties including thousands of acres of *jagir* lands, palaces, museums, buildings, stables, garages, fleets of motor cars, aeroplanes, etc. Against these, the amount of Privy Purses payable in 1950 aggregated to a mere Rs 5.8 crore – an amount which was to gradually diminish in time. The princes were, in recognition of the immense sacrifices made by them, solemnly assured both under contract and under the Constitution of India of these minor privileges and it was therefore nothing short of a blatant breach of faith for the government to renege on them. As for the moral aspect, the case against the government was unanswerable. As one leading commentator put it: "If the government can break its promise regarding Privy Purses, which has sanction under international law and the highest constitutional guarantee, what would be the sanctity of any other promises given by the government either in national affairs or in international relations?"

The take-over of the banks was even more sordid and unconscionable. Less than 48 hours before Parliament was to meet, Mrs Gandhi's government cynically promulgated an Ordinance, with the help of a pliant President, which pre-empted even the bare minimum debate on the subject. The owners were to be given an 'amount' which bore no proportion to the value of the assets taken over – a phenomenon sickeningly common to all schemes of nationalisation. (One insurance company was paid Rs 10,000 for acquisition of its *net* assets worth Rs 2.3 lakh.) No tenable reason was, of course, proffered for the take-over, except the vague incantation that the banks were not doing enough to help the rural folk.

The two prominent examples of Mrs Gandhi's socialism – the nationalisation of banks and the abolition of the Privy Purses – were sordid and unconscionable acts. Yet, very few protested.

If I have dwelt at such length on the two prominent examples of Mrs Gandhi's socialism, it is because these examples attracted little critical attention at the time they were pushed through, and attract even less attention now, after their failure has become more than apparent. Other consequences of the socialist folly are no less conspicuous, and it would be instructive to take a quick glance at some of them:

*Ever since India became a Republic, the annual per capita income of our people has risen by a mere 55 per cent in real terms and stands at a measly $270 while those of two other countries whose economic performance was comparable to ours in 1950, viz Thailand and South Korea, stand at $800 and $1,900 respectively.

*Despite the Green Revolution, India produces only about 150 million tonnes of foodgrains with 166 million hectares of cultivable land, while China with only 100 million hectares of cultivable land is able to produce 400 million tonnes.

*In 1982 the World Bank ranked India 15th among 185 countries in terms of GNP, but in terms of per capita income, we fell among the 15 poorest nations of the world.

*Despite a constant increase in the number of unproductive and largely wasteful jobs in the public sector, no less than about 45 million Indians are unemployed today. Their number keeps increasing at a rate of 1.3 lakh *per month.*

*Although the public sector accounts for over 65 per cent of our industrial fixed assets, it gives only 22 per cent of the total industrial output. In terms of investment, no less than Rs 30,000 crore have been sunk into this unproductive sector. Even if the performance of the oil companies is taken into account, the overall profit made by the public sector is a pitiable 0.8 per cent after tax.

*Despite massive doses of direct and indirect taxation, the revenues of the government have never kept pace with expenditure. The rupee in 1982 was only 1/25th of its value in 1939 and less than 1/6th of its value in 1950.

*In 1950 India ranked 16th among the exporting countries of the world with 2.2 per cent of global exports, while three decades later, it slipped to the 46th position with a measly 0.4 per cent share in the international market.

*Despite having the third largest number of qualified scientists and technologists in the world, India ranks

between tenth and 18th in terms of scientific productivity, research products, innovations, discoveries and breakthroughs. Our expenditure of 0.6 per cent of the gross domestic product on scientific research pales into insignificance when compared to 4.4 per cent in the Soviet Union, 2.2 per cent in the USA and West Germany, and two per cent in the UK and Japan.

*The oldest industry in India, the textile industry, which used to produce 4,100 million metres of cloth in 1953-54, produced no more than 3,961 million metres two decades later – a virtual 'freeze' of capacity. The story in many other sectors of industry is no better, thanks to the skewed industrial policies pursued by successive governments.

The list is far from exhaustive, but it is highly revealing of the havoc that socialism can wreak in a developing economy like ours. The point that is consistently forgotten by those who clamour for 'distributive justice' through more pervasive state control is that real progress is impossible without economic growth. As Robert McNamara, the former President of the World Bank, put it: "For a poor country to operate an economy which distributes income among people more justly, there manifestly must be economic growth. Without economic growth a poor country can only remain poor. There is little point in trying to redistribute indigence."

It is also an ineluctable fact, borne out by history, that economic growth takes place fastest under conditions of freedom. Governments, by the very nature of things, are singularly ill-equipped to ensure rapid economic growth. Inefficiency, mismanagement and corruption more than offset whatever marginal gains are achieved even by the most conscientious governments. H V R Iengar, the distinguished former civil servant, once observed that in India, at least 40 per cent of government expenditure goes down the drain. The record of our so-called anti-poverty programmes, especially the Integrated Rural Development Programme and the National Rural Employment Programme, itself is highly illuminating. Despite an allocation of no less than Rs 932 crore last year, the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament reported recently that there were serious irregularities on the part of almost all state governments in the implementation of these programmes – corruption, misappropriation, false debits in the accounts, diversion of foodgrains, and so on. Truly has it been said that anti-poverty programmes have a tendency to degenerate into pro-party programmes!

The time has come to shed our illusions and realise that the only effective antidote to poverty is a return to the principles of a free market. As Ludwig von Mises, one of the most perceptive economic thinkers, reminded us several years ago: "It was not vain disquisitions about a vague concept of justice that raised the standard of living of the common man in the capitalistic countries to its present height, but the activities of men dubbed as 'rugged individualists' and 'exploiters'. The poverty of the backward nations is due to the fact that their policies of expropriation, discriminatory taxation and foreign exchange control prevent the investment of foreign capital while their domestic policies preclude the accumulation of indigenous capital."

It is time we realised that the only effective antidote to poverty is a return to the principles of a free market. That government is best which governs the least.

Any sane and pragmatic economic policy will, first and foremost, have to recognise the proverbial wisdom that that government is best which governs the least. The crying need of the hour is a drastic curtailment in the role of the State which should ideally be confined to the supervision and prevention of abuses in the marketplace. True, that would postulate a radical transformation in the attitudes of our businessmen among whom honesty and integrity are today at a heavy discount, but it may not be as insurmountable a problem as it is made out to be. (Incidentally, has it ever occurred to our anti-business lobbyists that at least part of the blame for the deplorable conduct of our businessmen is attributable to the permit-licence-quota raj which has, over the years, turned even the most punctilious businessman into a hardened cynic?)

THERE WILL BE resistance to sea-changes of the kind suggested above. Even those who are convinced about the need for a 'U-turn' in our economic thinking have frequently raised doubts about the desirability of sudden change and advocated a gradual approach, on the grounds that the impact of any cataclysmic change may be too much for our frail institutions to withstand. Well-intentioned though such pleas may be, they overlook the fact that in matters of fundamental reform, nothing is more disastrous than gradualism because, even as the changes get underway, diverse counter-pressures develop which, in a pluralistic set-up like ours, may be difficult to resist. Gunnar Myrdal put his finger on the hub of the matter when he observed that 'a plunge in the cold water is less painful than slow submersion'.

In the ultimate analysis, there is the question of political will, which alone will determine whether we will march into the 21st century as a vigorous nation or limp painfully behind the rest of the world swathed in economic band-aids. Past experience, alas, holds out little hope. ♦

PHILIPS

How beautifully a bulb can fool you.

Light bulbs are making the prettiest promises these days. Promises of long life, bright light and so on.

You have no way of checking these promises out because all bulbs look alike – to start with.

Only after some time you come to know. Bad quality shows: less light, high electricity consumption, bulb failure.

So, how do you decide on which bulb is the right one?

The safest way is to pick the one name in bulbs that has been trusted for over 50 years.

Philips. The Company that does a 100% check on every single bulb to make sure you get a 100% value for every watt you pay for.

Be a100% sure.Buy Philips.

PEI-1985

All bulbs look alike, but when it's Philips you're sure.

Philips – the trusted Indian household name for over fifty years

CHARLES CORREA

Design For Living

India's most distinguished architect and urban planner talks about the growth of our cities, and introduces an extract from *The New Landscape*, his recently published book.

BY MALAVIKA SANGHVI

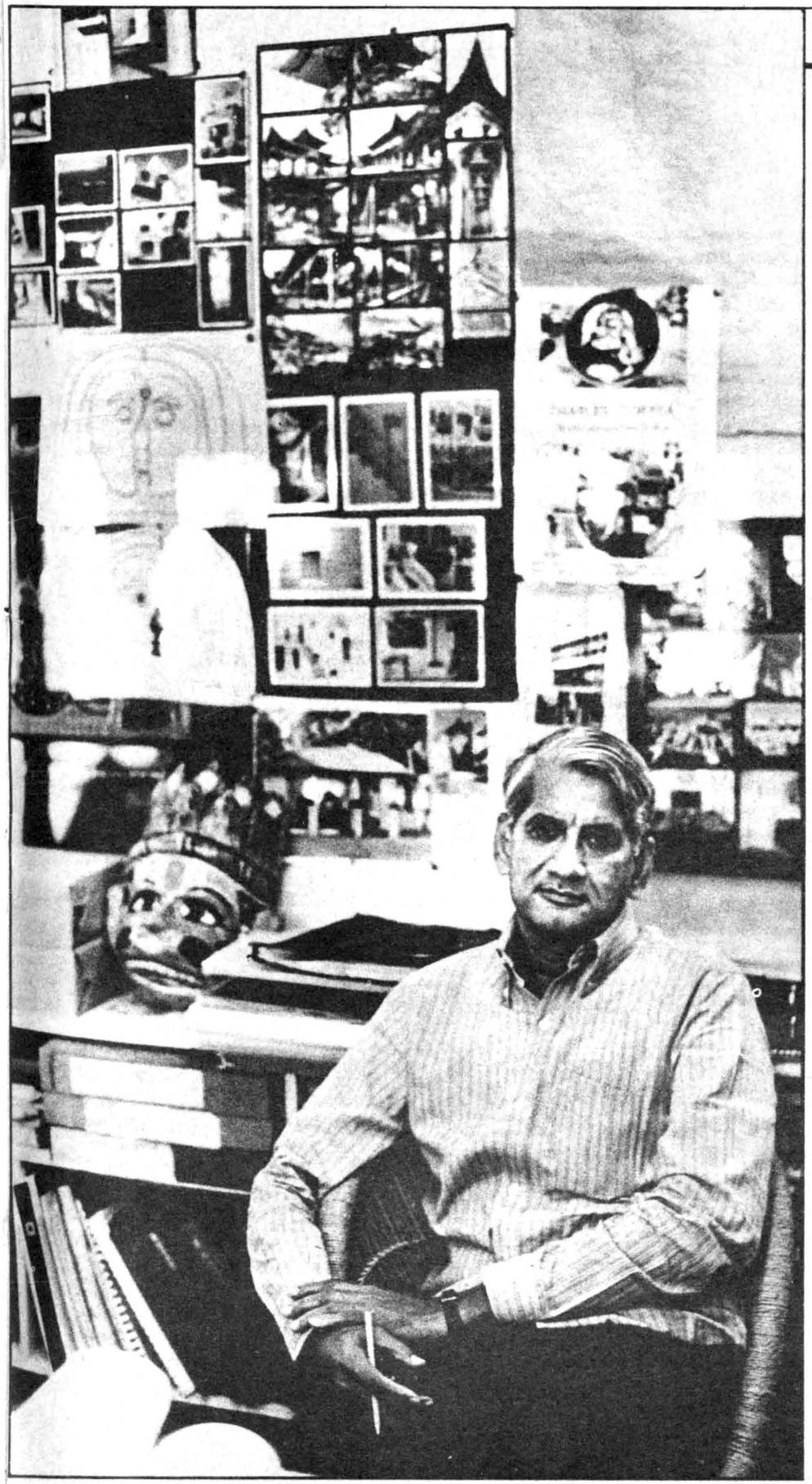
Imprint: ***Why did you write*** **The New Landscape?**

Charles Correa: Because I think the issues of urbanisation (squatters, distress migration, etc) are going to trigger off crucial political crises in the next few decades, all over the Third World – and these issues are very close to us in Bombay.

For instance, the squatters. I think it is terrible to throw people out from where they live. On the other hand, if you don't have a bigger strategy, if you are just going to allow people to clog up everything, a city can't work. In 1964, there were less than four lakh squatters, that is, under ten per cent of the population of Bombay. Today, there are 45 lakh squatters (according to the government's own figures). In these years, the population of Bombay has doubled – from 45 lakh to 90 lakh – and most of this growth has been through squatters.

It is crazy now to talk of 'throwing them out'. Then again, a system of entry permits is unconstitutional (and immoral) and wouldn't work either. So should we just do nothing about it? Just accept more and more squatters on humanitarian grounds? I think that's crazy, too. You would not even be helping them in the long run. All you could do is accept the first few waves of squatter-migration to the city. But there will come a point when all the

Malavika Sanghvi is a frequent contributor to **Imprint**.



crevices will be filled, and it will be impossible to accept any more. So the problem won't go away.

What about the pavement-dwellers?
I think the issue here is different. They are encroaching on *public* right of way. If you don't end that kind of encroachment, then the city will break down. And that's quite different from the case of shanty-towns, which are occupying vacant land but are not blocking anyone's right of way.

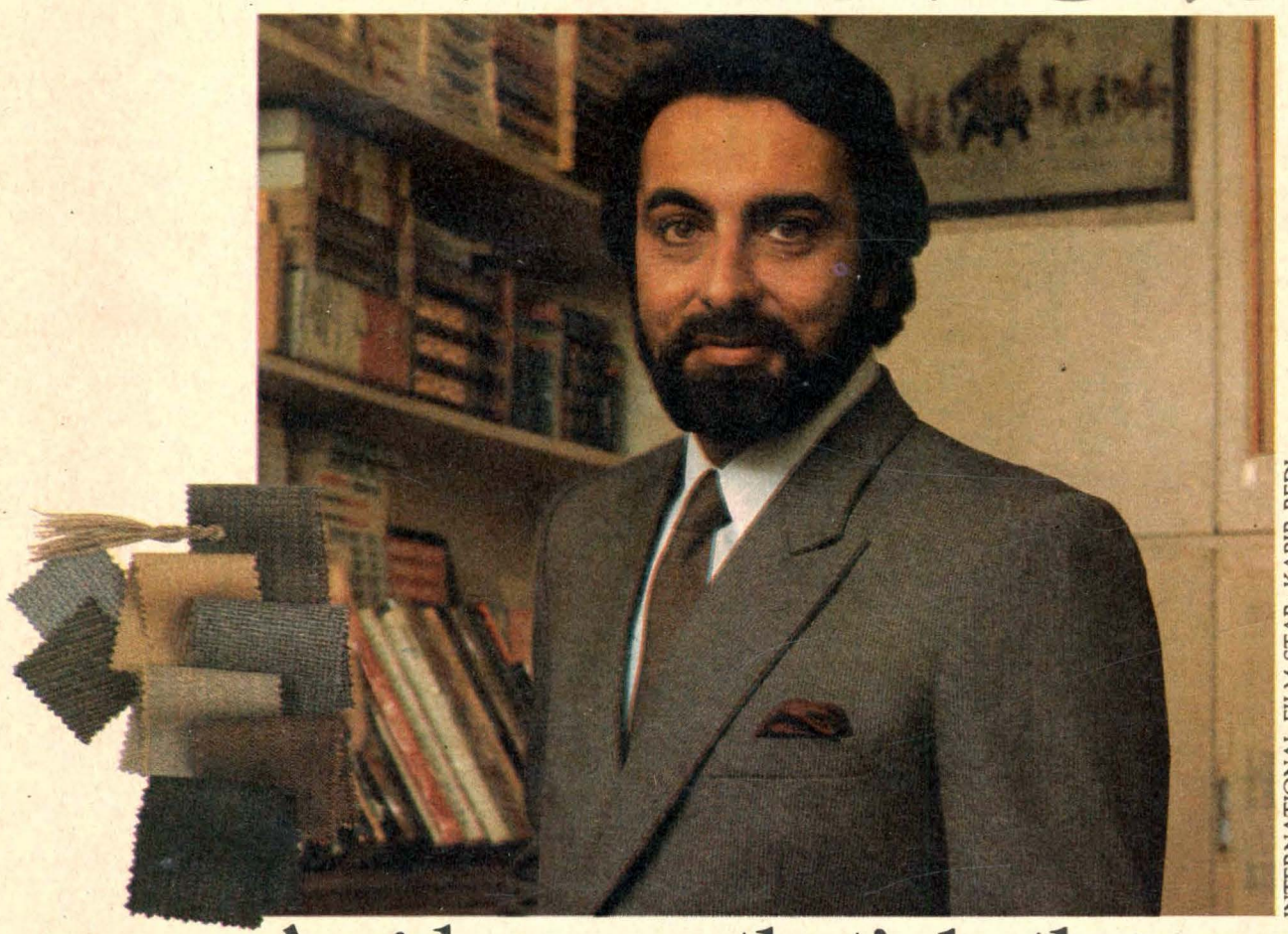
But, in the long run, as long as you have this level of rural-urban migration, what is the solution?
Eventually, you'll have to open up new jobs in new centres. That is the only long-term solution that will work. It's a crisis not only in India, but all over the Third World.

Do you think that will happen in the case of Bombay?
Well, isn't it a question of political will? Some government offices can easily shift to New Bombay. For instance, there is no reason for all the LIC offices to be here. Or say, the state sales tax offices. But how does one motivate people to make that jump? You can demonstrate, for instance, that if a company moves its offices out of central Bombay, it'll save Rs 20 lakh in rent. But that kind of saving is not going to be enough motivation. For a big firm or government department, that is not a large sum of money.

You need to do much more to motivate people – as individual human beings. I've tried to outline such a strategy in my book. It's based on the premise that a person who shifts out of Bombay is a pioneer. He's taking a risk. And he should be rewarded.

How do you think the government should act?
As soon as people know that the state government is totally committed to creating a new centre, things will happen. If the state government is not serious, if it

WINTER Weaves



INTERNATIONAL FILM STAR: KABIR BEDI

A wide range that's both traditional and contemporary.

For business and dressier casual occasions, you have a number of weaves this season. Ranging from Plain weave, Twill, Matt weave, Fancy weave, Mixed weave, Broken Twill, to Plain weave with fancy effects, Double Plain and Twill with Herringbone effect. Take a look at the weaves presented here. As you can see, fresh details lend an unmistakably new touch. Now take a look at the fabric. It's the season's finest. India's fastest-selling worsted suitings. Brought to you by Vimal. In a wide range of colours, designs, and textures. To ensure you a warm and cheerful winter '85.

From India's most modern textile plant ONLY VIMAL

VIMAL
A RELIANCE PRODUCT

Worsted Suitings

The commitment to excellence continues.

Mudra : A : RTI-2507

doesn't shift itself, then why should anyone else move? Furthermore, if you can assure people that they are going to an area with good schools, hospitals and the like, then they'll act. They are legitimately quite worried about their children's future. I think we should make this a political issue the next time any candidate stands for election from this city.

You also write about cities and their myths; that must apply to Bombay.

Yes, I think one has to distinguish between the physical aspect of a city and what it means to people. Everyone says New York is a terrific place, but they mean the myths of New York, not the physical city. If you look at a boring American city like Detroit or Cleveland, it is physically quite similar to New York – the grid pattern, skyscrapers, etc – but it doesn't have the myths.

Take Calcutta – even today, it has its myths. The people living there love it, regardless of its physical aspect. Even Paris, most people live in poky little flats, but the city is loaded with myths.

You've said in the book that, despite the decline in facilities, perhaps Bombay is a livelier city now.

Yes, that's true. I remember, when Piloo and Vina Mody shifted to Delhi, their cook was very unhappy in their bungalow on Lodhi Road. All he could do was go to the hedge and talk to the neighbour's cook. Whereas in Bombay, he could go down the road, stop at a cigarette shop, and find 25 friends. Then I began to realise that Delhi was very different.

You remember the terrible murder of the two Chopra children in Delhi? That was a by-product of the pattern of Delhi: young teenagers not being able to drive, no bus system because of the sprawl – it's inevitable that they try to hitch rides and get into trouble.

It's less likely to happen in Bombay, because people have more mobility and a greater choice. They can even use their rail pass on a Sunday and see friends. And the urchins don't buy a train ticket but travel free, up and down. Bombay is linear, so mass transport is easy. Whereas in a city like Delhi or Chandigarh, you have to walk or cycle in the hot sun.

Why do you think that these two planned Indian cities – Chandigarh and Delhi – lack Bombay's liveliness?

Part of the reason is that Bombay grew organically, so that there is always a mix of income groups. Secondly, the real planners of Bombay were the railway engineers who built the two suburban lines.

"IN A SENSE, THE murder of the two Chopra children was a by-product of Delhi: young teenagers not being able to drive, no bus system – it was inevitable that they would hitch rides. It's different in Bombay."

People live near the stations, and this means that everyone is reasonably mobile. In Bombay, right from the beginning, locational decisions followed transport lines. In cities that haven't grown organically, transport has had to follow the planners. That's disaster. But in Delhi, all the people who make the decisions drive around in cars. So they don't notice. It is their children and servants who do.

Yes, Delhi's a very different kind of city.

Oh, Delhi's a compound! It's all quite well-arranged. In a real pecking order. The decision-makers – the politicians, the senior civil servants, etc – live in Lutyens' Delhi; you know, Akbar Road, Aurangzeb Road, that sort of area. Then you have the colonies – Golf Links, Sundarnagar, etc – where the box-*wallahs* live. And then, outside this centre, are the second and third generations of colonies – that is, Greater Kailash, Vasant Vihar, and now Qutub Enclave. All in all, it's the biggest functioning compound in the world – with the great mass of India's poor kept safely outside.

One reason why the Delhi riots had such an impact was because they affected the box-wallahs of Delhi.

Exactly. For the first time, Maharani Bagh and Friends Colony were besieged. And everyone was thunderstruck! It's exactly the same thing when an Indian Airlines plane crashes – everyone is terrified. Whereas every day, we read about some bus accident in which so many people die. Nobody pays any attention to that. How can we possibly imagine ourselves sitting on top of that bus, going to Hubli?

Do you think there are any lessons in Bombay's experiences for the next generation of metropolises?

Yes. You can't keep overloading the old structures. You have to develop new work centres. Then the city can grow. The opening up of New Delhi is a prime example. Many other things follow from this. For once you open up new centres, and once there's enough land, then population densities are not so claustrophobic, and living conditions can become quite pleasant.

Do you see any potential trouble-spots?

Of course, distress migration will drastically transform our cities. But I don't think we have to be negative about it. I see a lot of positive and optimistic aspects emerging as well. That's what my book is about. With intelligent anticipation, we can certainly try to deal with this crisis. Hence the title: *The New Landscape.* ◆

SAVING OUR CITIES

Good planning, foreseeing future problems and tackling them systematically can lead to a totally new environment. For us in India, CHARLES CORREA argues, it is not too late to save our cities.

THE GROWTH of our metropolitan cities has been astronomical, beyond human comprehension – which poses a danger, of course. Because we can get high on this arithmetic – as some of the British Viceroys did, when they thought of all the natives in need of civilisation. And the Victorian missionaries, as they contemplated the billions of Asian and African souls waiting to be saved.

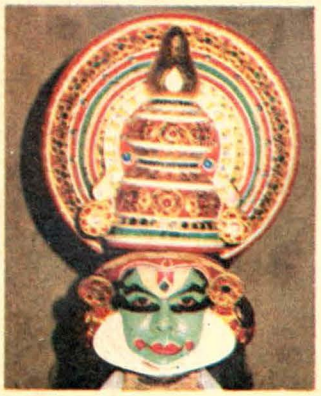
To avoid this very real danger, it is essential that we disaggregate the numbers. Only then will we begin to see them clearly. If we consider, for example, the remarkable opus of Modern Architecture in this century, we find that the most glaring failure has been in the field of mass housing (in contrast to private residences, museums, schools, etc, where the record has been quite the opposite). Without doubt, the architects earnestly and sincerely believed that they were going to create a more humane and liveable habitat. In actual fact, in most cases what they produced was faceless, ugly, and dull.

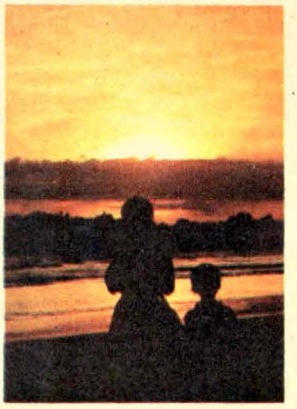
Is it a matter of design talent? I think not. Rather, it was an inevitable outcome of our methodology, of the way we picked up the problem. For due to the enormous success of Henry Ford's assembly line and other such seemingly relevant examples, architects were seduced by the analogue of the mass-produced car – even Le Corbusier (or rather, *especially* Le Corbusier) with his Citrohan housing. The principle involved was apparently to first create the ideal house and then clone it. Unfortunately this does not work. For, without doubt:

Ideal House x 10,000 ≠ Ideal Community.

Sadly, Henry Ford's methods did not take into account many of the things we find are essential to housing: variety, identity, participation, and so forth. In short: pluralism. Louis Mumford was intuitively right when he criticised modern architects for trying to identify an ideal set of environmental conditions: such and such degree temperature, so much per cent humidity, and so forth. The search, Mumford pointed out, was doomed to failure, since ideal conditions were,

Kerala





WHEN THE NORTH WIND BLOWS KERALA GLOWS WITH WARMTH

October, November, December... Brrr... The temperature makes cold hearted plunges in Northern India, while KERALA bathes in sunshine and warmth.

Run away from dreary Winter chill and chilblain. Come to KERALA where there is no Winter. And the sky is blue, the Sun a mellow gold, and the beaches inviting.

KERALA lies hugged by the Arabian Sea down her full length. Dimpled with some of the best beaches, lagoons and coves on Earth. Not far from the coastline you have the breathtaking beauty of backwaters.

Kerala breaks the cold spell for you, with a gift of warmth this Winter.

For more details, contact: KERALA TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE, (Department of Tourism, Kerala), 219, Kanishka Shopping Complex, Ashok Road, New Delhi 110 001 • 28, C in C Road, Madras 600 105 • Park View, Trivandrum 695 033, Tel. 61132 • Kerala Tourism Development Corpn. Ltd., P.B. No. 46, Behind Secretariat, Trivandrum 695 001, Tel. 64261, 64705 or your nearest Govt. of India Tourist Office.

Kerala
Sunny southern state

Topads T. DOT 3985

Once you have the aggregated numbers, you have the temptation to clone. So, to house 10,000 families the architect designs a building which can accommodate, say, 500 of them – and repeats the design. Great for the architect – and for the bureaucrat.

by definition, varying conditions. Given human nature, it would be impossible to establish a fixed static condition as the perfect one. In other words, our way of perceiving our task was wrong – and was doomed to failure.

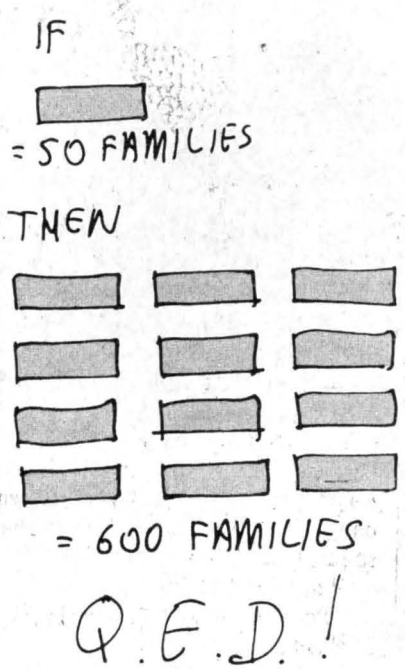
One fears that much the same continues to happen even today in housing. The first step (into the trap) is to aggregate demand. This means not only current demand but also backlog, and often future demand as well.

The next step is to set up large centralised agencies to deal with this demand. Now the trap has closed. It doesn't matter whether the centralised agency is a governmental one or is organised by private developers. The result is the same: count their legs and divide by four.

Very often, the faceless inhuman results are mistakenly believed to be the outcome of a particular political ideology. But, of course, that is wrong. Politics has nothing to do with it. Such housing is found all over the world: in the Bronx, in Moscow, in Singapore, in Bombay, at the Portes of Paris. It is the direct result of the process. For once you have the aggregated numbers, you have the temptation to clone. In other words, having to house 10,000 families, the architect designs a building which can accommodate say, 500 of them – which means that 20 such buildings will have to be built. And that's it. (QED) The bureaucrat in the large centralised agency, for whom the architect works, of course loves this. It makes for a very clean office file! He can, for any given financial year, make very precise estimates of exactly how much cement and brick and steel he will need, and he can present a well-organised budget to his political bosses.

Modern architects in the '20s were the first to walk into the trap – this was in the aftermath of World War I, probably the first time that Europeans became aware of such large numbers. And the effect was mind-blowing. It triggered off a great burst of feverish activity. The next time this happened was in the years immediately after World War II. Again there was a frenzied response – most of it disastrous! The danger now has moved to the Third World. For it is here that the big numbers are surfacing. Colossal aggregates that completely dwarf anything thrown up by Europe. Are we going to repeat the same mistakes?

Hasan Fathy, the great Egyptian architect, once said: "Nobody should design more than 12 houses at a time. If you take the greatest surgeon in the world and ask him to operate on 200 people in a day – he'll kill them all!"



THERE IS A SYNDROME common to almost all Third World urban centres. They each seem to consist of two different cities: one is for the poor; the other (interlocked with it) is for the rich. Very often the latter has a special name. In Bombay, for instance, it is called 'The Fort'. In Dakar, Senegal, it is 'The Plateau' – which is astonishingly accurate, both in terms of geography, as well as the economic/psychological realities of that city.

Although these two worlds are quite separate territories, rich and poor enjoy a symbiotic relationship. This is not always understood by the rich who often conveniently overlook the fact that they need the poor to run the city – not to mention their own households. In most of Bombay's privileged homes, there are a multitude of tasks (from the daily washing of the car to the weekly laundry) that are regularly performed – for a pittance – by squatters. They are an analogue of the 'guest' workers of Europe, and the Mexican wetbacks of Texas. Ironically enough, if the squatters in Bombay had to pay for regular accommodation then the cost of their services would rise prohibitively, and become much more than their employers could afford!

In order to decrease this disparity and to move towards a more equitable society, some Third World governments have tried to reduce the holdings of the rich by socialising the land. For instance, some years ago, the Government of

The fact of the matter is brutally simple: the people who can pull the levers to change Bombay *don't* need to change Bombay. Thus, the government's plan for New Bombay was foiled – for simultaneously reclaimed land at Nariman Point/Cuffe Parade was being made available to the rich.

India passed an act which places a ceiling on urban property, (limiting it to 500 square metres in large metropolii, 1,000 square metres in smaller cities, and so forth). Any surplus land has to be surrendered to the government, at a minimal price, for construction of low-income housing. Unfortunately, this has not worked. Firstly, because the law can be evaded by sub-dividing the property. Secondly, the surplus land comes in little bits and pieces all over the city – very often in locations quite unsuitable for low-income housing (because of lack of access to jobs, mass transport, etc). What is needed is not an acquisition act which nets haphazard little parcels of real estate, but one which delivers large chunks of land at a scale, and in locations, which would allow our cities to undertake the re-structuring they so desperately need.

The desire to possess land is evidently a very tenacious one. In New Bombay, despite statutory powers of acquisition, there was enormous resistance from the local farmers and villagers to part with their land – although it was only of marginal yield. They were not against the idea of the new city; they just wanted to hold on to the land and to make the 'profits' themselves (which probably wouldn't happen either; they would more likely have sold out to Bombay developers much too early for that). Still, one can understand their resentment – for after generations of poverty, they finally thought they had a miraculous change of fortune. With the result that even today, the land keeps coming in bits and pieces, so the development programme has to be constantly readjusted.

Given the crucial objectives of New Bombay, it was tragic indeed that the government tripped up on the very first step: land acquisition. Instead of being generous with the farmers, the bureaucrats always offered too little – and too late. Perhaps, instead of expropriating the land, government should have found a way which allowed the owners to exchange their land for equity in the development corporation.

Another crucial issue: employment generation – the key to all urban growth. To take the pressure off Bombay, it is essential that the new city centre attracts the offices that are otherwise proliferating at the southern tip of the island. But an office cannot start on its own in the middle of nowhere. There is a certain bundle of inter-related jobs, a critical mass, which has to be attained before the take-off point is reached. In our original proposals, we had suggested that this could be achieved – in one blow – by the state government moving the capital function across to the new centre, since it was sure to pull private business in its wake.

A number of studies were undertaken to identify precisely the critical mass involved, and just who could act as the lead sector. But to no purpose – for how do you get the decision-makers (i e the government ministers, the bureaucrats, the industrialists, the businessmen) to start a new centre, when they can afford to compete for space in the old one? Because, for the privileged, Bombay is quite an easy city to live in. Schools, clubs, colleges, sports stadia, cinemas, housing and offices are all within a stone's throw of each other at the southern end of the city.

The fact of the matter is brutally simple: the people who can pull the levers to change Bombay *don't* need to change Bombay. In fact, they often stand to gain by the *status quo.* Thus all through the '70s, simultaneously with developing New Bombay, the state government was reclaiming land at Cuffe Parade/Nariman Point, next to the existing city centre – and selling it for astronomical sums, thus creating considerable prosperity for a select few in the process. The resulting high-rise jungle has increased enormously the strain on city services, i e, water supply, public transport, garbage collection, etc. Finally, by taking the issue directly to the public through citizens' groups, a stop was put to this reclamation. But the compilation of the critical mass of offices needed for New Bombay received a severe setback. We lost at least five years in the process.

Only recently has the momentum begun to build again. Some of the key

PHOTOGRAPH BY BIMAL MASKARA

Shifting to new growth centres is not attractive to urban dwellers. But often, the solution would be irresistible if they were to look at it in the context of their own lives. This is one of the ways in which New Bombay can be developed.

wholesale markets (e g iron and steel; onions and potatoes) are being moved to New Bombay; there have been massive investments in the new port (which will handle a larger tonnage than the existing docks in Bombay), and in the terminal facilities for oil and natural gas from the off-shore wells at Bombay High. The state government has moved some of its offices – albeit rather minor ones – around which a commercial node is growing. Today, a great deal of construction is in progress and by 1986 New Bombay's population is expected to cross 500,000. It even – and, to me, this is like signs of spring – has begun attracting its own squatters.

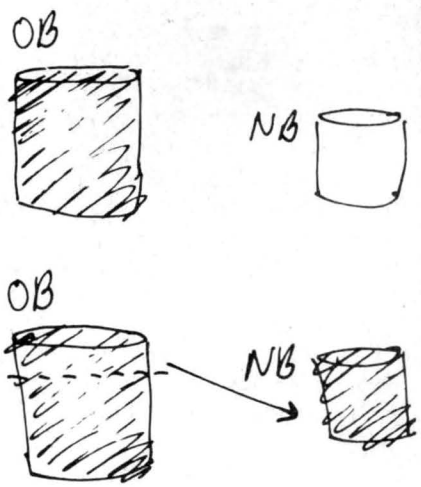
THE DESIRE TO OWN LAND seems to be primordial – and one which can be harnessed for achieving some crucial objectives. It is not necessarily restricted to the rich. On the contrary; the urge to establish territorial rights and build your own house seems to operate at all income levels. Certainly, as soon as land tenure is assured, the squatter's motivation to improve his habitat grows by leaps and bounds. And, of course, one shouldn't assume that all the housing built by the middle and upper income groups is necessarily speculative and anti-social. Much of it is the legitimate and heart-felt concern of the householder for the future of his family. In fact, it is a concern which can be happily mobilised for the development of new areas. For we can easily see that while moving to a new growth centre might have little attraction for decision-makers collectively deciding for a business corporation, (or for a government department), it may constitute an irresistible advantage to each one of them – and to all the staff – in the context of their own lives.

For in a country like India, most working people (from chairman to peon, and including, of course, government officials) worry about that terrifying day (58 years old!) of 'retirement', when everything – salary, position, car, house – is taken from you in one fell blow. It's a day to be feared, a kind of male menopause. So most spend the last few years in power feathering their nests, getting a company or government flat permanently allotted to them, and so forth. It's easy to ridicule this activity, and even to condemn it, but it is the outcome of legitimate human concerns.

Now examine another factor in the urban equation: viz, the staggering cost of office and residential space in the heart of our metropolitan cities. Today, because of the disastrous mismatch of demand and supply in Bombay, this market price is more than eight times the replacement cost of equivalent space in New Bombay. Thus, every square metre of office sold in the existing city could not only finance equivalent office space in the new one, but also pay for the housing and social institutions needed for executives and staff. Furthermore, if that housing were given to a worker on retirement (against a deduction of monthly percentage of salary) then we would be dispelling one of the greatest insecurities of his life. Far from resenting the move to a new context they might, in fact, welcome it. After all, no one minds being a pioneer so long as he gets the rewards of being a pioneer. This is the essential principle of all new settlements.

Of course, such a scheme cannot be open-ended; it is not a long-term strategy, but merely a tactic to start the new pot cooking. It should be announced with a sharp cut-off point: six months or the first 50,000 office jobs (or whatever critical mass it takes to get the new centre going). It should be made open to any office establishment, including governmental ones. In fact, especially governmental ones, so that state employees will be motivated enough to force (perhaps through a strike?!) the kind of structural changes their ministers are too myopic (or timid, or lazy) to make.

Siphoning off existing activity to new areas necessitates an understanding of what might be termed Decanter Theory. Let us imagine Old Bombay and New Bombay as two beakers OB and NB – one full, the other quite empty. If we

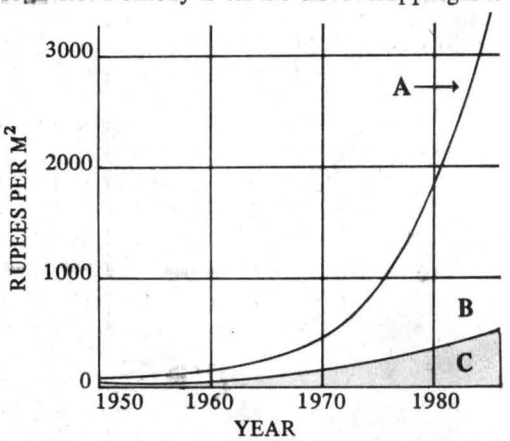


Fifty years ago, Calcutta was a great metropolis and Bombay was just another harbour city. Then, the British decided to shift the banking system to Bombay because it was on the sea route from Suez to Singapore. And Bombay became the great metropolis that Calcutta once was.

could siphon off some of the contents of OB, then of course one would prefer that they be replaced by open spaces and social infrastructure. Yet this is hardly likely to happen. The city does not have the financial resources to buy the existing owners out and replace them by parks. Neither is there any way they will 'volunteer' to make the (supreme) sacrifice.

But suppose the activities decanted from OB to NB are financed by their replacements – i e by the new offices that buy up the existing buildings. OB is still as full, granted; but it's still much better off because NB has started cooking. Soon NB will reach critical mass and then the migration patterns will change, taking the pressure off OB.

Perhaps the most profound planning lessons of all lie not in our textbooks, but in history. How did Bombay become such a great metropolis? There are dozens of other parts along the long coast-line of India – so then why Bombay? To answer that question, we will have to go back and unravel the genetic code, the DNA of Bombay (or Sao Paolo or London). Even today Bombay has an extraordinary vitality – fuelled by its role as the financial capital of India. The banking system across the nation is headquartered here – which in turn was triggered off by the Reserve Bank Act of 1934. Now, 50 years ago, Bombay was just another harbour city, with a population of less than a million people. Calcutta, on the other hand, was a great metropolis and the *real* financial capital of the whole sub-continent. But the British (probably for reasons of military logistics: Bombay is on the direct shipping line between the Suez Canal and



C rises gradually with inflation. A escalates sharply with the scarcity value of the commodity. B expands to mop up the difference. The bigger the gap between A and C, the better this decanter theory works.

A: MARKET PRICE
B: LAND COST AND PROFIT
C: CONSTRUCTION COST

Singapore) preferred Bombay. That was the day Calcutta died (the first lethal blow had already been struck a decade earlier when the Imperial Government moved to New Delhi), and a crucial new ingredient was coded into the double helix that underlies Bombay.

With the flow of migrants into the existing centres, the slums and uncontrolled settlements contain an even larger portion of the urban population: 33 per cent in Karachi and Calcutta, 41 per cent in Brasilia, more than 45 per cent in Bombay, as high as 80 per cent in Buenaventure (Columbia). But this sorry state of affairs need not prevail. Given the political will, the enormous demand in our cities today can be used to advantage; because the scale of this demand makes it possible for the planners to shift the focus to large new contiguous territories (and thus restructure the city in the process). If intelligent incentives are provided, decanting existing activities to these new locations could be a viable objective. And if this new land is first socialised and then developed, the resulting increase in land values could help pay for the infrastructure of roads, sewage lines, etc. This would have the further advantage of restricting the use of the limited resources of the developing agency to the infrastructure and transport systems alone. Thus, with a minimal amount of seed money, it should be possible to use the enormous urban growth of the coming decades to help support itself. There already exists the concept of self-help housing; there must

There is little relation between the form of our streets and how we use them. Most sidewalks in Bombay are always crowded. During the day there are the hawkers and at night, there are the domestic servants who sleep on the pavements.

now come into being the concept of – and the programme for – the self-help city.

THE SCALE OF THE PROBLEM determines the solution. This is the key to the strategies we must develop over the next 25 years. If we succeed in our interventions, then we might actually be able to use this growth to our permanent gain, and emerge from the tunnel that lies ahead – so to speak – better off than when we entered. After all, most cities in the past have grown by continuous, incremental stages. Thus the authorities never perceived the opportunity to 'rearrange the scenery'. Let us, for instance, turn the clock back to the time when New York had only one or two million inhabitants. If, at that stage, it was apparent that it would soon have to accommodate ten million people, then a lot of basic structural changes might have been not only financially possible but politically viable, and New York today would be a far more rationally organised city.

And this, in the final analysis, is the advantage of our predicament. That, for the first time in history, we are able to perceive an enormous quantum leap in urban growth; a perception that should really prompt us to readjust this scenery we've inherited. Intelligently done, this could have staggering geo-political implications – for instance, the kind of leverage the US gets from having an urban structure which spans a continent and connects two oceans. A little over a century ago, the US was dominated by its Eastern seaboard cities (Boston, New York, etc), facing only the Atlantic. The reason why that nation can now address the Pacific is that in the interim there has grown a matching set of urban centres along the West Coast (San Francisco, Los Angeles, etc) – and also right across the continent (Detroit, Chicago, Denver). It is an organic interdependent urban structure generated by the enormous population growth that has taken place in the US over the last 100 years. In contrast: Australia, (a continent which was structured to face Britain through its south-eastern ports of Melbourne and Sydney) though it suspects that its future lies with its Asian neighbours to the immediate north and west, doesn't have the dynamic population growth necessary to make such urban restructuring possible. Where there's growth, there's hope.

This is not to say that population should continue to grow in the Third World. It is merely to emphasise that in spite of anything we do, the population will, in many cases, double before it stabilises. We do not have much choice about that. What we *do* have a choice about is in their distribution pattern across the nation – as well as the internal structuring within the urban centres. Future generations will certainly hold us accountable for missing that unique opportunity.

At the other extreme, we must learn to be equally inventive about how we generate our habitat at the micro-scale. For instance, there is little relation between the form of our streets, and how we use them. Most sidewalks in Bombay are always crowded – during the day with hawkers (forcing pedestrians onto the traffic lanes), and as evening falls, with people unfolding their beddings for a night's rest.

These night people are not pavement-dwellers, but mostly domestic servants and office boys who keep their belongings in a shared room, and use city pavements for sleeping at night. This pattern allows them to economise on living expenses (and thus maximise the monthly remittances sent back to their villages). What is dismaying is not that they sleep outdoors, but that they have to do so under unhygienic conditions, with the public walking right amongst (and over!) them. Is there any way in which the city streets and sidewalks could respond to their needs?

To be involved in these issues, the architect will have to act not as a prima

It is the poor whose needs are the most desperate. In Rio, Lagos or Calcutta millions are living in illegal squatter colonies. Is the architect, with his highly specialised skills, going to find a way to be of relevance to these squatters, for whom even the ugliest building is a surreal dream?

donna professional, but one who is willing to donate his energy – and his ideas – to society. It is a role that has a very important historic precedent. For throughout most of Asia, his prototype in the past was the site *mistri*, i e an experienced mason/carpenter who helped with the design and construction of the habitat. Even today, in the small towns and villages of India, the practice continues. Owner and *mistri* go together to the site, and with a stick scratch out on the earth the outline of the building they wish to construct. There is some argument back and forth about the relative advantages of various window positions, stairways, and so forth. But the system works because both builder and user share the same aesthetic – they are both on the same side of the table! It was exactly this kind of equation that produced the great architecture of the past, from Chartres to the Alhambra to Fatehpur-Sikri. (If the architect today cannot win an argument with a company executive, do you think we would have been able to overrule a Moghul Emperor 300 years ago – and survived?)

Today, the situation is quite different. Not only has the shared aesthetic evaporated, but the interface has diminished. Only about ten per cent of the population have the resources to commission the kind of buildings the academically trained architect has learnt to design – and only a tenth of them would think of engaging him (the others would appoint a civil engineer, or perhaps a contractor directly). So there you have his interface with society: all of one per cent. This figure represents the people who commission the office buildings, apartments, luxury hotels, factories and houses that make up the bulk of the architect's practice. The situation is not to his making; it merely reflects the grotesque inequality within society itself. But, of course, it is the poor whose needs are the most desperate. Today in Rio or Lagos or Calcutta, there are millions living in illegal squatter colonies. Is the architect, with his highly specialised skills, going to find a way to be of any relevance to them?

Unfortunately, even among those architects who have enough of a social conscience to want to reach out to the poor, many are really a-visual – in fact, in some cases, belligerently anti-visual – rejoicing in the acres of ugliness/goodness of it all. What these communities need is not just our compassion, but our professional (visual and topological) skills. Without these, the squatter colonies will turn out to be nightmares – proliferating, over the next two decades, on a scale which boggles the mind. In turn, they will maim whole generations of Third World children, condemned to grow up in such environments.

We cannot just trust to luck and a blind faith in humanity; for every Mykonos history has created, there are ten other depressing towns. The stunningly beautiful handicraft and weaving of certain societies are the result of a cumulative process, spread out over many decades – each generation making marginal improvements to the end-product. Without the benefit of such a heritage to provide context, people often opt for ugly things. If we want to increase the probability of winding up with something as beautiful as Udaipur, then strategies for sites and services will have to be programmed accordingly. Perhaps, by giving extra weightage to those of the inhabitants who are more visually sensitive, so as to hasten the process? (In a self-help scheme in New Bombay, for instance, folk artists were brought in as catalysts, to work with the householders.)

To value the visual component, so obviously present in traditional habitat, is not to join the epicene enthusiasms of todays fashionable eclecticism. Far from it. We must understand our past well enough to value it – and yet also well enough to know why (and how) it must be changed. Architecture is not just a reinforcement of existing values – social, political, economic. On the contrary. It should open new doors – to new aspirations.

Extracted from The New Landscape *by Charles Correa. Available at Strand Book Stall, Rs 65.*

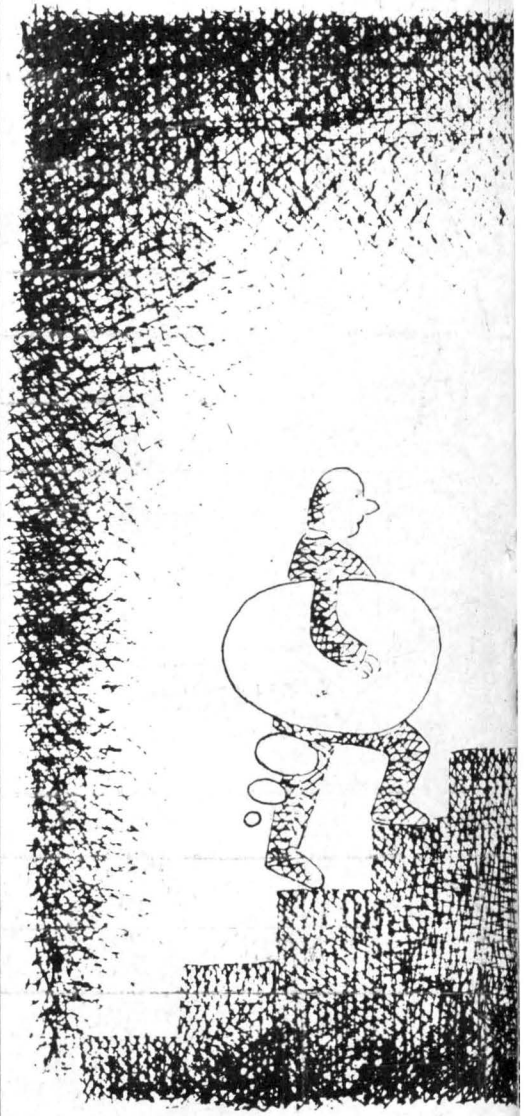
FUTURISTIC FANTASIES

By Hutokshi Doctor

The Patent Office is where they all come to — with their dreams, their inventions, their fantasies. And, often, that's where it all ends.

THERE IS A HUSH over the Patent Office, for great work is in progress. In one corner, a man puts the stamp of approval on designs and inventions. In the Search Room, a man classifies and files away new patents, every one of them another significant step in the history of civilisation. An inventor sits feverishly flicking through the patents in a file. In a little, bare office, a man knits his brows in perplexity over the intricacies of perpetual motion — every inventor's final solution to the problems of mankind. In the foyer, an inventor waits nervously for an application form. In the corridors, a man pads over the faded red matting, pouring tea into glasses with a flourish, while the staff of the Patent Office gets on with the stupendous task of recording, encouraging and protecting 'inventive genius'. Inventive genius – the most hallowed term of them all at the Patent Office.

Behind a closed door, in another bare office, a private meeting is in progress. An examiner is questioning an inventor. When Michael Pereira, inventor, leaves that office, he looks a trifle wary, somewhat chastened. Through the door you can see the examiner, Dr Mishra, slight and shy. She will decide whether Michael Pereira's name shall join the list of inventors that children will memorise before they go for quiz contests.



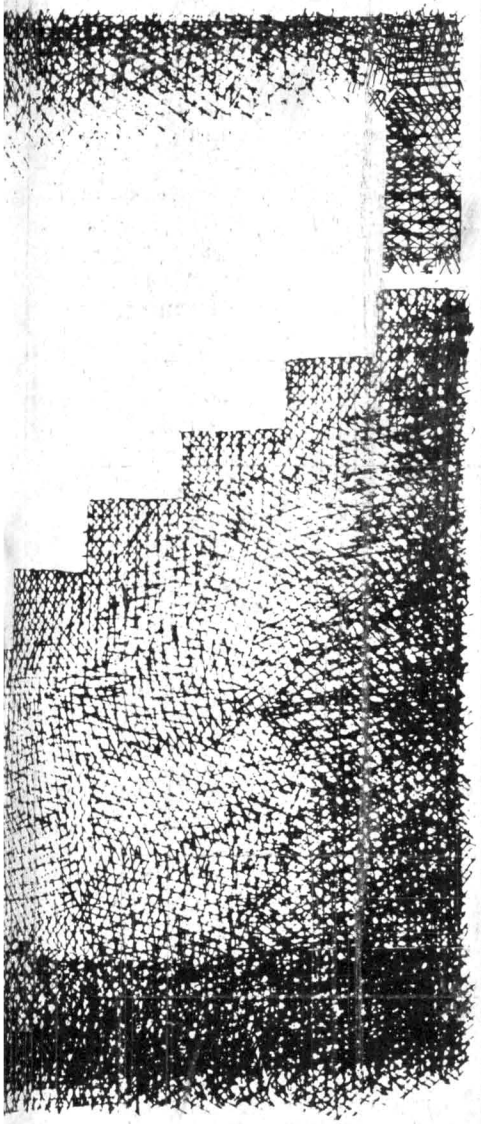
But Michael Pereira grows quickly expansive. "I have come here to patent my dream," he announces. "It is a 15-year-old dream." In a brown envelope, held firmly in a strong brown hand, is Michael's dream. It is a mysterious new cigarette-holder which will make every cigarette completely harmless. No more tar, no more statutory warnings, no more smoker's cough, and no more lung cancer. Or so Michael says.

What is it made of?

"Porcelain, wood, metal, plastic..." Michael shrugs.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALOK NANDA

Is it chemical?
"No."
Is it mechanical?
"Purely mechanical."
It's like a filter?
"Everything else is a secret," Michael smiles. "Even if I tell you what's



behind it all, you won't believe me, it's so simple. But it works, you know."

Michael then sets about counting up the zeroes in his profits.

"See, if I make it myself, then no counting the money! But if some cigarette company starts making it, then supposing even one million people start using it, how much I'll make? Say Rs 10 each. And you have to buy at least four a year. So Rs 40? So Rs 40 million? Out of that, even 10 million profit. If I get my four per cent royalty, then how much? Four lakhs, no? Then if 50 million people all over the country buy, and then all over the world, *then* how much?"

Our minds boggle at the number of zeroes to Michael's dream.

Then, Michael says, seriousness edging the wild excitement out of his brown eyes, "Who made the telephone? Some chap. When he said first that he could speak through a wire to someone a mile away, everybody laughed, no? And when they said you could hear over a wire across the ocean, then also they laughed."

What if his dream isn't patented? What if Dr Mishra decides that he is not worthy of the highest title the Patent Office can confer – that of True and First Inventor – then what?

"God's will be done," Michael says. He has his business. He can always go back to that. Michael makes electric fly-catchers.

SOMEWHERE, a man sat watching the tide come in. Something snapped, something clicked, and eureka! he had a principle that would enable him to generate electricity from the waves that hit the shore all along the country's coastline. He was convinced. But nobody else was. He claimed that a prototype would cost Rs 7 lakh. Nobody would listen, except the media that picked him up, exposed him to ridicule, and dropped him back into obscurity. He threatened to go on a hunger strike outside the Prime Minister's residence, to protest against the government's apathy towards his invention. His name was G P Waiker. That was two years ago. His invention was never patented, and nobody's heard of him since.

In a workshop in Pali district, P L Mistry is tinkering away with his 28th invention. Twenty-seven inventions are displayed in the workshop: a platform-ticket machine that releases tickets at the push of a button, and rejects counterfeit coins; a gleaming cylindrical tea plant that mixes the brew in the desired proportion of tea and milk; a gravity-operated ceiling fan; a robot; a device to avert train disasters. . . .

Somewhere, a man watched a plough slowly furrow the earth, and Rotillor was conceived. Rotillor ended up as a versatile machine that ploughed the soil, broke the clods, levelled the earth, mixed in the fertiliser and sowed the seeds, all in one continuous operation. And, many decades ago, Sardar Raja Babu, ADC to the Maharajah of Patiala, stood in a field watching a Persian Wheel churn water and propel it into a canal. He worked out an intricate system of pulleys and levers that doubled the efficiency of the Persian Wheel. And then he added the master-stroke that enabled him to claim the title, Automatic Chursa, for his invention: he fixed a lever onto a whip so that, as the animal moved, it inflicted the whiplash upon itself and kept going. Raja Babu got his Automatic Chursa patented in January 1912, and became the first Indian to hold a patent.

Raja Babu's grant of patent is filed away under 'Agricultural Implements' in the Search Room at the Patent Office along with thousands of others. Somewhere, you would find Waiker's rejected application, and all of Mistry's 27 creations. For all these men, the Patent Office has proved the only way of protecting their right to make, sell and use their invention, or authorise others to do so.

Sometimes, a man can make a fortune 'working' his patent to manufacture unbreakable plastic seals, moveable underground cables, an *idli*-cooker that makes more *idlis*, faster than ever before, a water filtration plant that works on a purely mechanical principle, or suitcases that will never open upside down. When these inventors return to the Patent Office, they come as heroes. Often, the first seal, or the first six inches of the cable, or the first cooker, are presented to the examiner at the Patent Office who first saw the credibility in a man's seemingly outlandish and hare-brained idea and conferred upon him the title of True and First Inventor. With considerable pride, Mr Garg, one of the three examiners at the Patent Office in Bombay, walks over to his cupboard, bare except for the length of cable and one bright yellow seal, and brings them over to display.

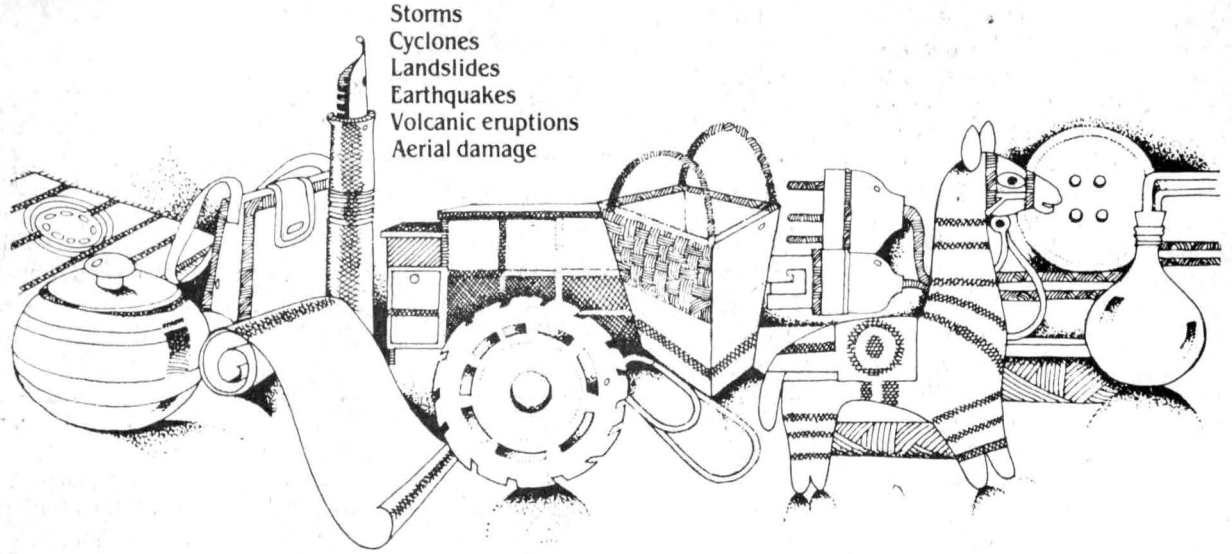
But if the cupboards are bare, and the success stories few, the shelves in the Search Room are overflowing with box-files crammed with patent grants dating back to 1911. Most of them have been carefully indexed and filed away during the 10-14 years

Fire Insurance Policy

Here are 13 reasons why every small scale industry should take it

Risks like:

Fire
Lightning
Riots
Strikes
Malicious damage
Explosions
Floods
Storms
Cyclones
Landslides
Earthquakes
Volcanic eruptions
Aerial damage



Here is one weighty reason why even the tiniest industry can afford it:

Premiums considerably reduced: you pay as little as One rupee for a Thousand insured.

This policy is specially for small scale industries whose original investment does not exceed Rs.5 lacs and where total sum insured is not over Rs.10 lacs.

भारतकाले रक्षणम्

GENERAL INSURANCE CORPORATION OF INDIA

AQUARIUS/GIC/2/85

Get more information from our following subsidiaries:

National Insurance Company Limited.

The New India Assurance Company Limited.

The Oriental Insurance Company Limited.

United India Insurance Company Limited.

of their exclusive privilege. The privileged years pass, and the patents become public property, but still they languish on the shelves, many of them now outdated, many still so futuristic as to be almost inconceivable. Some are simple modifications, others are revolutionary brainwaves, but they must all have taken years to perfect, they must all have been brought here with trepidation and excitement, with the hope of seeing those ideas implemented. Instead, they have been reduced to four yellowed printed pages, accompanied by a couple of sketches.

These patents 'chart the course of civilisation', to put it in Patent Office terminology. You can leaf through designs and descriptions of the tiffin-carrier with various modifications – four tiers, a leak-proof lid, clasps that will never give up their tenacious hold, clasps that will double as forks and spoons, special dips for curries and dals, streamlined horizontal models, even one with wax at the bottom and several little wicks that can be lit to heat the food. There are descriptions of ground-effect vehicles that will skim two inches over the surface of land or water, supported by a cushion of pressurised gas. And somebody's conception of a futuristic airplane in 1943 – without a tail or fuselage, and with the crew, cargo, fuel tank, etc, incorporated within the V-shaped wings of the plane. In the '20s, someone patented a dirigible ensconced in an inflatable air-cushion and suspended in entirety from giant parachutes.

But the files and their imaginative treasures are seldom disturbed. The Patent Office, situated at an industrial estate in Lower Parel, is usually quiet and peaceful in the midst of the funnels and trucks, the regular clatter of automated machinery, and the smell of chemicals. Sometimes, an entrepreneur, or the representative of a company in decline, stops by to check out new patents to see if there's anything worth buying up for manufacture. More often, it is an inventor who sits hunched over the files, his enthusiasm plummeting, perhaps, as he finds his discovery patented 15 years ago, or soaring, as the case may be. Otherwise, the room is empty except for Mr Parmar, Assistant Information Officer, young and bespectacled and very conscious of the seriousness of his duty, busily filing away the progress of mankind. Or making sure that every patent has its one brief moment of glory: publication in the weekly *Gazette Of India.* From here, a patent will either be picked up for manufacture, or be punched and filed with the rest of the wasted brainwaves on the shelves.

"I have over 1,000 files," Mr Parmar announces proudly. About 30 patents to an average file. That's a lot of 'inventive genius'.

In the Search Room this afternoon sits John T John, 'scientist' from the BARC, struggling to fill in the nine-page application form spread out on Mr Parmar's desk.

"How shall I classify your invention?"

John runs his nail over his briefcase. The scratching sound is reassuring in the disturbing silence. Finally, he says: "Explosives."

"There are 15 files under Explosives."

John faces the stern eyes of Mr Parmar and an unfortunately placed insurance advertisement that displays a pair of frightened eyes peeping out from behind a wall; beneath, the words: "Even walls have ears."

"Bombs," he says.

"Bombs?"

"To reduce the impact."

"Pyrotechnics? Explosion chambers?"

"Bombs. Bombs. To reduce the impact of bombs," says John, quite happy with his explanation.

"See, you have to tell me more. I have to classify your invention."

"It is such a simple thing," John says, quite agitated. "I cannot tell *anyone.* But there will be no more deaths during bomb blasts. And hardly any damage to property."

Mr Parmar is not convinced. "A bomb blast takes a few seconds. How is your preventive method going to make a difference?"

John looks uncomfortable and hurt. "I cannot tell," he says. "You just give me all the files."

A few minutes later, all you can see of John T John is a shiny cap of oily hair surrounded by box-files. By the end of the day, John has filled in only one sentence, under the category 'I Claim': "A device to reduce the impact of bombs."

LIKE MOST OTHER inventors, John will return several times, on each visit making one more guarded disclosure, accompanied by suspicion and the fear that someone will steal his idea. The examiner who handles his application will badger him with questions for months, before discovering that the invention is only an abstract principle without any application (patents are not granted for principles), or that the claims are just impossible to work out or even imagine.

It takes weeks for the examiner to decide whether or not the design and description of a new invention is scientifically feasible. After that, it probably takes months to go through the patents in similar categories in the Search Room to make sure the invention is 'truly novel'. Even that won't suffice, because a patent can only be granted to a True and First Inventor world-wide. Which means that the examiner spends hours in the library adjoining the Search Room, leafing through dozens of classifications and thousands of patents, making sure that what he's got is not a deliberate or coincidental copy of an existing patent. No wonder the examiner is allowed 18 months to consider every application. (There's a computer at the Central Patent Information Research Institute in the USSR, called Razdan-3, that takes just a few minutes to scrutinise all the analogues for a particular patent. And Razdan-3

is fed additional information on new patents every day.)

The examiner's work is a serious business. For the three of them (two MScs and one PhD) are, ultimately, the final authority on what is novel, what is scientifically possible, what can be patented and, therefore, what can be processed and marketed in their part of the country. These three examiners, who are assigned patent applications that fall within their areas of specialisation, are expected to be aware of each new invention all over the world. They can reel off hundreds of interesting new inventions abroad – a new processor introduced in the USSR for shepherds to receive signals from sensors on every straying animal; a porous fabric that acts as a sanitary barrier between the patient and practitioner in mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, popularised in the US after the AIDS scare; flexible plastic hamburger holders, also, inevitably, introduced in the US; personal, hand-held bidets where 'a spray of cleansing and soothing fluid can be precisely directed to target areas'; or mechanised finger-nail varnishers, where all you have to do is insert your fingers into slots, turn a switch on, and withdraw them with the nails all painted and varnished.

After the examiner has delivered the verdict, the patent will be approved by the Assistant Controller and then sent to the head office in Calcutta where it will be provisionally accepted, and then published in the *Gazette Of India,* so that anyone who chooses to, can object to a patent, usually on the grounds that the invention is not original. By the time the final patent is granted, five years have normally elapsed. Five years during which the inventor hugs his secret to himself, scanning the papers every morning to make sure that mankind has not taken that 'giant step' which he reserves for himself.

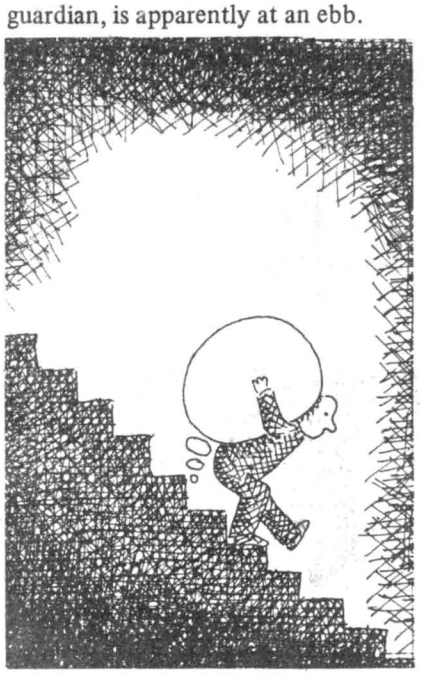
Not all inventors are so secretive. Often, they will sell their idea for a pittance, by-passing the Patent Office and the four per cent royalty on ex-factory profits it ensures for the patentee. There is the story of the man who invented plastic tongue-cleaners, and approached a firm with his idea. The next year, while the man waited for the firm to make an offer, the tongue-cleaners went on sale in colourful little bunches at every store.

"So," says Mr Parmar moralistically, "we are here to protect the intellectual property of the patentee."

Unfortunately, scarcely anyone in India knows about the existence of the Patent Office, exiled to one corner of this industrial estate, not even accorded the respect that is necessary to include it in a Central Government building. Mr A De, Assistant Controller, sitting at his huge desk, sorting out the applications 'to send to head office', views his office as the dynamic centre of all progress in the country. ("Abraham Lincoln said invention is the key to industry and industry is the key to progress," he tells you gravely.) But, he laments, the four regional centres of the Patent Office together file only 3,000 applications every year. Of these, about 2,000 are weeded out. And of the remaining 1,000, about 80 per cent are patents granted to foreigners since, at present, India does not allow the import of items patented abroad – each invention must be patented in India and manufactured, in collaboration, indigenously.

"You know how many applications Japan files in one year?" Mr De asks excitedly. "Three lakh. Imagine? Three lakh. When we will be like them. . .?"

Inventive genius in this country, of which the Patent Office is the sole guardian, is apparently at an ebb.



IN AN OFFICE down the corridor, Mr Garg and Mr Kardam sit, discussing the merits and demerits of an invention. But this time, neither of them are very serious, because the invention is yet another in the long and futile list of inventions created by one of the Patent Office's regulars. This inventor brings in a new idea every fortnight. This time, it's a generator that works on the principle of perpetual motion. It has two telescopic arms of different length, which rotate 360 degrees. At various points in their circular route, the telescopic arms shorten and lengthen. The initial momentum suffices to take the machine into motion, and from there it swings into perpetual motion in a vacuum. Mr Garg doesn't think it's possible. Mr Kardam suggests that two permanent magnets might help to maintain the initial momentum. Both agree that permanent magnets are a source of energy and the inventor claimed not to use energy. So that is that.

But somewhere, a fertile mind is listing the benefits of this perpetual motion machine – it will power automobilies, spaceships, rockets. And next fortnight it will be something else. He is a man with prolific dreams.

Dreams power this shabby, deserted and forgotton office, the archives of inventive genius. Dreams power the inventors who come here with their automatic shoe-shiners, their screws with better grooves, their machines that will run on air. Dreams power the small staff, who firmly believe that every patent granted here is a significant step in the civilisation of man. They go about their work so seriously, convinced that every invention must be accorded the same importance. So, when you ask Mr Parmar whether, in those 1,000-odd files of his, there are any patents that are breakthroughs, that will change our lives, he regards you with a sneer he reserves for the disbelievers. Looking around at his files, he tells you that every patent is a breakthrough. But genius is never recognised. How do you know, he asks, that some day, a patent for a workable perpetual motion machine, or for a drug that will completely cure cancer, or for a motor that runs without fuel, will not be resting in these files? ♦

FOLLOW-UP

Crashed At Last?

An up-date on the fallen fortunes of Abdul Shamji and Mahmud Sipra.

IN MAY 1985 Imprint suggested that two of the UK's most celebrated expatriate Asian millionaires were in severe financial trouble. Mahmud Sipra, the former fiancé of Salma Agha and a would-be movie moghul, had already seen his companies end up in the hands of receivers, and was now hard pressed to repay the millions he had borrowed from Johnson Matthey Bankers (JMB). We suggested that Sipra's borrowings, estimated to total US $ 56 million, helped cause the collapse of JMB in 1984.

The same article also featured the sagging fortunes of Abdul Shamji, the high profile Ugandan Asian tycoon. His Gomba group, we suggested, owed JMB a considerable sum of money and also owed huge amounts to other banks. In an interview, Shamji forcefully – if not entirely convincingly – disputed this contention.

Three months later, when we carried our second story on JMB and the expatriate Asians, the issue had emerged as a national scandal in the UK with calls for the resignation of the Governor of the Bank of England, and an emergency debate in the House of Commons. Our second article covered the new developments, repeated our contention that, his bravado notwithstanding, Abdul Shamji was heading for a fall, and suggested that fraud investigations could well be launched into Sipra's dealings with JMB.

Since then, both these events have come to pass. On October 25, 1985, the Bank of England sent the receivers into Gomba and they took over most of Shamji's UK registered companies. And Scotland Yard has launched a fraud investigation into Sipra's loans with JMB.

THE SIPRA INVESTIGATION has its roots in a claim made by Brian Sedgemore, a Labour MP. Sedgemore alleged that after JMB collapsed, and just as Sipra's El Saeed group was about to go bust, Bank of England officials asked Sipra to sign back-dated letters authorising the withdrawal of US $ 27 million from his JMB account. Said Sedgemore: "The alleged purpose of the proposed fraud was to give Johnson Matthey (now the Bank of England) preference over the other creditors in the liquidation of Mr Sipra's companies." Sedgemore further suggested that JMB (under the management of the Bank of England) released Sipra's Regents Park house to him for a payment of £ 65,000 though the real value was nearer £ 600,000. Sedgemore implied that this favour was due in return for back-dating the letters.

Sedgemore went on: "What we are witnessing is the biggest financial scandal of the 20th century. So far we have only seen the first worms crawl out of the can." His allegations were denied by the Bank, but the Solicitor General, Sir Patrick Mayhew, asked Scotland Yard to investigate the affair.

Mahmud Sipra : millions to be paid back.

Sedgemore says he has evidence of other frauds and *Private Eye*, the satirical magazine, has claimed that top JMB officials were influenced by Sipra's generous hospitality, and lent him S 50 million without asking for adequate security. For his part, Sipra denies all wrong-doing and last month, was busy telling the Indian press about his latest girl-friend, a statuesque Sophia Loren look-alike called Elaine. With millions to be paid back, and the Scotland Yard investigation going ahead, it remains to be seen how long he can keep up the image of a swinging bachelor.

SIPRA ALWAYS SEEMED too good to be true. Abdul Shamji, on the other hand, was the very model first generation immigrant. He numbered among his friends, Norman Tebbit, the present Chairman of the Tory party, and his supporters liked to put it about that he was a friend of Margaret Thatcher's. And while Sipra dabbled in trade and films, Shamji seemed to have a solid industrial base.

Abdul Shamji : unwilling to pay?

Last month, the solidity of that base was called into question. When **Imprint** interviewed Shamji for the feature that appeared in our May issue, he said: "Sipra collapsed because he was not solid. I am confident that, despite any liquidity problems, we can pay back our loans." Despite this confidence, he could not meet the first of his rescheduled debt repayments on June 28, 1985. Nevertheless, he did have assets and it seemed probable that he could pay back at least some of the money.

This possibility vanished on October 25, 1985, when the Bank of England appointed Mark Homan and Colin Bird of Price Waterhouse as receivers for Shamji's two British holding companies. A Bank official told *The Sunday Times*: "The appointment of receivers was not so much because we lost confidence in his *ability* to pay us, but because we lost confidence in his *willingness* to pay."

Shamji owes JMB an estimated £ 19 million but his companies are understood to owe over £ 40 million to other banks. His Gomba group's principal bankers are Barclays, JMB, Punjab National Bank and Bank of Scotland. His associate companies are indebted to other banks, among them Midland, the United Bank of Kuwait and the Bank of Credit and Commerce International. It remains to be seen how much of their money will be recovered.

THE IMPORTANCE of the events surrounding the collapse of Shamji and Sipra's empires lies in the damage they have done expatriate Asian businessmen in the UK. The City of London, England's financial centre, is a deeply conservative place. Bankers are, traditionally, reluctant to deal with anyone whose antecedents seem at all dubious. For many years, the City remained suspicious of Asian immigrants whose aggressive business style contrasted with the City's way of doing things.

Nevertheless, there could be no denying that many of the expatriate Indians and Pakistanis were exceptionally good at making money, and the reluctance of the financial establishment to do business with them was frequently interpreted as being racist in origin. As a result, many of the UK's expatriate millionaires – Raj Sethia is the most famous example but there are many others – took to doing business with Indian banks in London.

Johnson Matthey Bankers was the banking division of an extremely successful and highly respected gold-trading house. It had been a quiet, well-run, but relatively small operation till 1980. That year, Ian Fraser, a brash 36-year-old, was appointed a director with special responsibility for the commercial loan book. Fraser was determined to expand JMB's asset base at breakneck pace. And yet, within the City's chummy set-up, new borrowers were hard to find.

He sensed at once that the expatriate Asians, who despite their business acumen were frozen out of City institutions, were perfect borrowers. Most were slightly embarrassed by having to deal only with Indian banks and longed to be able to claim that a respectable British bank was backing them.

Most of JMB's new-found clients were Sindhis. Many had trading links with Nigeria. The Asians had made huge profits by earning unheard of commissions in trading deals with the Third World. They assured Fraser and JMB that such commissions could easily be obtained if one knew the right people in the government of Third World nations.

The problem was that generous Third World governments were only too likely to be toppled and replaced by less generous regimes as in the coups in Sudan and Nigeria. Many of JMB's Sindhi borrowers found that their commissions and payments were blocked by the new regimes and suffered liquidity crises. JMB teetered on the brink of collapse.

IRONICALLY, the two men – Shamji and Sipra – who are most often linked with the JMB collapse, had nothing to do with Nigeria. Mahmud Sipra's problems stemmed from his tendency to over-extend himself and to invest in film ventures that did not pan out. And Abdul Shamji simply grew too fast.

Surely Fraser could have seen this coming? Why didn't he do anything? Labour MP, Brian Sedgemore, had his own explanations. He claimed that Shamji made available a flat in Mayfair for Fraser's liaisons with his mistresses. And other MPs have made suggestions about bribery and expensive entertainment. These allegations are unsubstantiated but Sedgemore claims that he has tape-recordings of phone calls made by Fraser that prove his charges.

Regardless of whether the charges are proved – Shamji is already suggesting racist motives and denying everything – the image of expatriate Asian businessmen has been damaged almost irretrievably. Expatriate Asian businessmen are humiliated and ashamed. And at least one other Sindhi group is rumoured to be on the brink of collapse. ♦

Another Judgment

How long can Jagmohan hang on to his office?

NOTHING AFFORDS a more striking illustration of the insolence with which some of our politicians treat justice than the curious events that have followed the Supreme Court's landmark judgment against Jagmohan, the former Lieutenant Governor of Delhi, in what has come to be known as the 'Express building demolition case'. The salient features of that case are too well-known by now (see **Imprint**, November 1985) to need any elaboration.

Belying all hopes that the stinging strictures passed by the highest court in the land would have made Jagmohan's resignation as Governor of Jammu and Kashmir a matter of course, the wily politician, characteristically, sought to evade the force and consequences of the verdict against him in a manner that was as astounding as it was devious. Mercifully for justice, the attempt failed miserably.

It may be recalled that one of the most disturbing features of the case was the incredible ambiguity which characterised the submissions of the respondents even as the hearings were under way. Not only did the proceedings witness the unseemly spectacle of the counsel seeking to represent parties who were at pains to disclaim responsibility for such representation, but worse still, there was an amazing inconsistency in the stand taken by some of the respondents as compared to the affidavit purportedly filed on their behalf by Jagmohan in the beginning. Deploring the fact that 'the respondents have been filing different affidavits from time to time to suit their purposes as the hearing progressed (as a result of which) it was difficult to reconcile the conflicting averments made in these subsequent affidavits', the Supreme Court rightly dubbed the conduct of the government in the case 'unfortunate'.

Far from deferring to the decision of the court, Jagmohan (as also the Union of India) lost no time in filing a petition seeking a review of the judgment – a course of action which, by itself, is neither surprising nor novel. What *was* novel, however, was the manner in which he went about it. First, there were the letters written by two of the senior counsel appearing in the case – L N Sinha, a former Attorney-General, who represented the Union of India, and M C Bhandare, a Congress (I) member of the Rajya Sabha, who represented the Municipal Corporation of Delhi – disowning certain submissions made by them during the hearing of the case. These letters, addressed to their respective Advocates-on-Record were, curiously enough, passed on to Jagmohan, who promptly used them as the basis of his review petition. Advance copies of the petition were also, incidentally, sent to the press (barring the *Indian Express*) for publication.

The burden of Jagmohan's song, essentially, was that the delay in the pronouncement of the judgment (over two years) was responsible for certain important facts stated and submissions made by the respondents 'escaping' the attention of the judges. This allegation, as the Supreme Court (on November 7) rightly observed, was virtually tantamount to scandalising the court. "We cannot also help observing that there has, in this case, been a lamentably complete lack of candour and want of probity on the part of some of the counsel in making factually incorrect statements and thereby casting aspersions on the court."

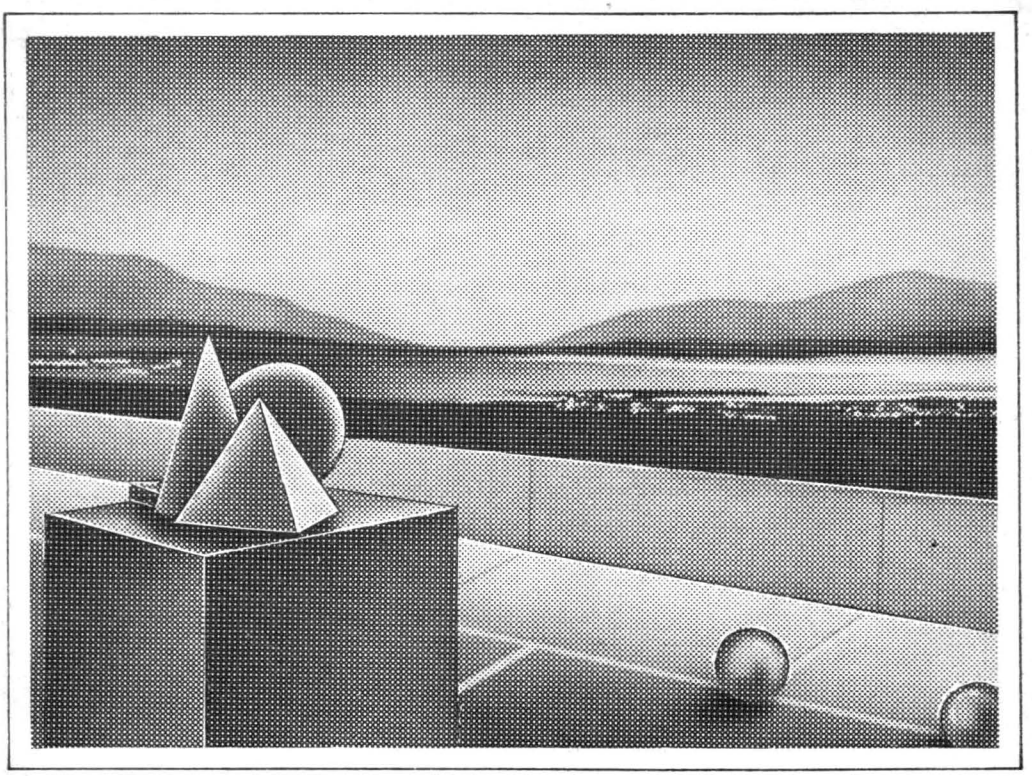
If the facts mentioned in the letters of the counsel were indeed true, the proper course of action for them to pursue, as the court pointed out, was to file affidavits with the permission of the court. "It is unfortunate that the two senior counsel have chosen this devious and, indeed, curious method of disowning arguments advanced by them. . . We deprecate the conduct of those involved in this unsavoury event. We feel greatly concerned that the advocates of this court, who are not mere pleaders for parties but officers of the court, should stoop to such blameworthy tactics, unworthy of the high traditions of the noble and learned profession to which they belong."

Jagmohan: time to quit.

Effectively, these remarks connote a condemnation far more severe than the one delivered by the court in its judgment of October 7, when it found Jagmohan guilty of rank abuse of power. Indeed, for a person holding the exalted office of Governor, it virtually amounts to a notice to quit. Unfortunately, given the thick skin in which public men of Jagmohan's ilk are clothed, to expect any spontaneous deference to judicial verdicts, however solemn, would be unrealistic. The only hope lies in the force of public opinion to flush out such vermin before they eat into the vitals of our nascent democracy. ♦

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY BLITZ


Unbeatable. Inimitable. Impeccable.
Unmistakably No.1... McDowell's
The soda with spirit



Take another look at us

For 30 years now, we have built
a reputation as India's largest manufacturer
of the famous 'Charminar' AC Sheets and Pipes
—meeting the basic needs of the people.
Winning repeat laurels for record exports of
AC Products, Machinery and Know-how.
And expanding our base
for further growth and diversification.

To better reflect the widening horizons

HYDERABAD ASBESTOS CEMENT PRODUCTS LTD.

will now be known as

HYDERABAD INDUSTRIES LIMITED

ASP/HIL/851 B

Stormy Weather

Things are better at Air-India–but only just.

IN AUGUST 1985, barely a month after the *Kanishka* crash, **Imprint** carried an article on the reigning chaos and confusion within Air-India. The article had, with the support of documents, argued that there was infighting within Air-India's top management, that camps had been drawn between Captain Dhruva Bose (the Managing Director) and C L Sharma (Deputy Managing Director), that Captain Bose and Captain A M Kapur (the Chairman) were not on talking terms, and that this had affected the performance and morale of Air-India employees.

In addition, the article had documented how Air-India, which had dramatically been turned around by its former Chairman Raghu Raj, seemed to be sinking back to its former position. Although the airline had many inherent strengths, we argued, things did not seem to be going too well: competition from other airlines was undercutting Air-India's revenue; the Gulf sector (its most profitable route) is on the verge of drying up, a steady siphoning off of funds by unscrupulous employees was affecting the airline's morale and profits; and the lack of strong leadership at the top was trickling down to the lowest levels, with disgruntled unions demanding more and working less. We concluded that, if the airline was to capitalise on its strengths, direction and long-term planning would have to be reintroduced and, above all, strong leadership would have to be reimposed, even if it antagonised a few employees.

The response to the article was unprecedented. Letters, xeroxed copies of documents, official union complaints, disgruntled letters written to the Prime Minister himself, came pouring in. Many of these were clearly written by cranks – disgruntled individuals who thought this an ideal way of getting back at the airline – but there were others which couldn't be ignored. Sent with xeroxed documents, which supported the points they were making, these letters sought to show us that mismanagement proliferated. Most of them pressed for further articles on Air-India.

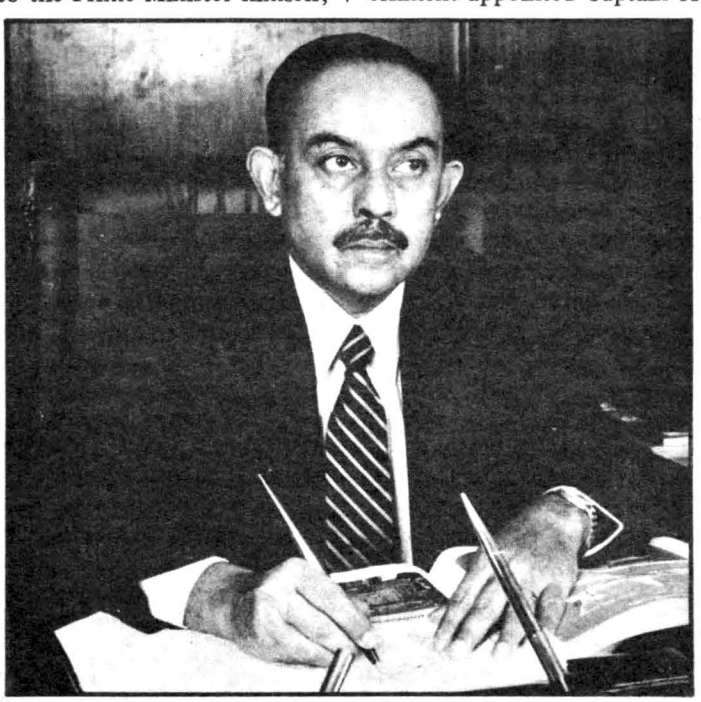
The letters alleged various financial fiddles within the airline. One such allegation concerned three flats bought by Air-India in a building in Santa Cruz at a cost of Rs 49.92 lakh. The flats were questionable buys: they are still unoccupied. Another concerned the ongoing saga of the Deputy Managing Director's medical treatment in London: how the expense was sanctioned, why an Air-India doctor turned up in London at the same time, etc. A third had to do with irregularities at the Hotel Corporation of India, an Air-India subsidiary: missing cutlery worth Rs 60,000, a shortfall of Rs 40.5 lakh in the Delhi Centaur project, etc. And so on.

Within the context of Air-India, such allegations are not particularly surprising. In recent years, anonymous letters to the Prime Minister, the Civil Aviation ministry, and the Chairman of Air-India have been enough to set off official inquiries and vigilance investigations. Some of the charges and counter-charges are substantial enough, and are backed with considerable documentation. Others – such as the claim that S Narayanswamy, Air-India's Company Secretary was investigated for corruption – are unsubstantiated and are convincingly refuted by the subject of the allegations.

THE BAD BLOOD and the back-biting stem from basic weaknesses within the management structure of Air-India. In our first article, we focussed on the dispute between Managing Director, Captain Dhruva Bose, and his Deputy Managing Director, C L Sharma. Since then, that clash has been sidelined. Captain Bose is now more firmly in command of the airline than ever before and the negative fallout of the dispute has been marginalised.

Another dispute, however, continues. In 1984, the government appointed Captain A M Kapur the Chairman of all three airlines: Air-India, Indian Airlines and Vayudoot. While the government suggested that Kapur would not be an executive officer, it stopped short of saying what his job would actually be. Consequently, Kapur has interpreted his brief pretty much the way he wants. He has taken particular interest in the workings of Air-India and earned the ire of Captain Bose who sees himself – justifiably – as the airline's executive head. Earlier this year, Kapur began negotiating directly with trade unions and functioning as a one-man grievance cell for disgruntled senior Air-India managers.

By June 1985, Bose had begun to tire of Ka-



Captain Bose: in command.

pur's constant interference and issued a circular to all department heads. It read, "All dealings and correspondence with the office of the Chairman, excepting those in respect of routine/periodic reports and submissions, should be routed through the office of Managing Director." As a result, official communications to Kapur reduced in number but the unofficial flow of information continued.

Kapur had, in any case, found the one big stick he required to beat the Air-India management with: the General Sales Agent (GSA) in London. For 14 years now, Air-India has dealt with the British travel trade through Hindustan Travel Service (HTS), an agency run by Joginder Sanger. Air-India's links with Sanger have always been controversial. Critics have long suggested that Air-India doesn't need a GSA in London and that, in any case HTS is not the best choice for the job.

Captain Kapur: reviving controversy.

Captain Kapur revived the GSA issue. He resurrected many of the arguments that had traditionally been advanced against Sanger's continuance and found some new ones. Two years ago, Shyam Kaul, then Air-India's Manager in London, had given HTS an extra commission in apparent contravention of a directive issued by Air-India headquarters. Other agents had complained about the links between Sanger and Hari Kaul, then Air-India's Commercial Director. The trade unions in London had alleged that the airline was in the process of laying off much of its sales force and handing over marketing responsibilities to HTS.

When Kapur took over as Chairman, the Aviation ministry had already been probing Air-India's links with its London GSA. A team from Air-India headquarters had been sent to London to audit the accounts. The Indian High Commission had sent its own audit team and the Ministry had done another audit. Kapur seized on this probe to accuse Air-India's management of what was, at best, faulty judgement and, at worst, questionable behaviour.

He conducted his own inquiry, went to London himself and told the press that he disapproved of the arrangement with the GSA. At board meetings, he suggested that Hari Kaul had behaved improperly and various allegations about Kaul's links with Sanger began to appear in the press. Finally J R D Tata, who is an Air-India director, had to stand up for Kaul at a board meeting and defend him from his critics.

This October, Kapur appeared, finally, to have won. On October 22, 1985, soon after Jagdish Tytler was appointed Aviation Minister, Air-India formally terminated its agreement with HTS. The airline issued no official statement explaining its reasons but stories leaked to the press repeated many of the allegations that Kapur had made.

THE BAD BLOOD at the top diverts attention from some worrying aspects of Air-India's performance. In the days after the *Kanishka* crash, the airline proudly proclaimed that its load factors were unaffected. Even at the time, the evidence that Air-India offered to back up its contention was not entirely convincing. Load factors probably did drop in June after the crash. (In May, Air-India flew 8,340 fare-paying economy class passengers between Bombay and New York. In June, the figure was down to 6,574. Similarly, it flew 3,269 passengers from Bombay to S E Asia in May, and only 2,111 in June.)

Now, it seems clear that there has been a drop in traffic to some destinations: London, New York and Japan, for instance. Moreover, there is also a drop in the cargo load factor. Because of security reasons, Air-India now insists on keeping cargo for at least 24 hours before transporting it. This delay has resulted in a loss of cargo traffic to other airlines which transport it immediately.

There are other problems, too. The Gulf boom, on which Air-India's profitability is largely based, is tapering off. In any case, there is now more competition on the Gulf sector. Earlier, Air-India shared the traffic with Gulf Air, which operated 30 flights a week. Two months ago, the government of Dubai launched its own airline, Emirates, and asked for traffic rights. It was allowed nine flights and Gulf Air's quota was reduced to 21. When Gulf Air complained, this decision was reversed and its quota set at 26, and the Emirates' at 10. This means that Emirates and Gulf Air will, between them, operate 36 flights as against Gulf Air's old quota of 30. The six extra flights are certain to hurt Air-India.

Air-India officials respond to most criticism by saying that though there is much that is wrong with their airline – the in-fighting, the mismanagement, the worrying reliance on Gulf traffic, for instance – it has many advantages. While it may no longer have the reputation for in-flight service or the international image that it enjoyed at its peak – the newer S E Asian carriers have filled that slot – it is still not a third-rate airline of the sort that people only use when they have no choice at all.

It has a sound base for future expansion: there are Indians settled abroad who periodically fly back to the mother country. And its middle level executives are a hard-working bunch who perform world class jobs. ♦

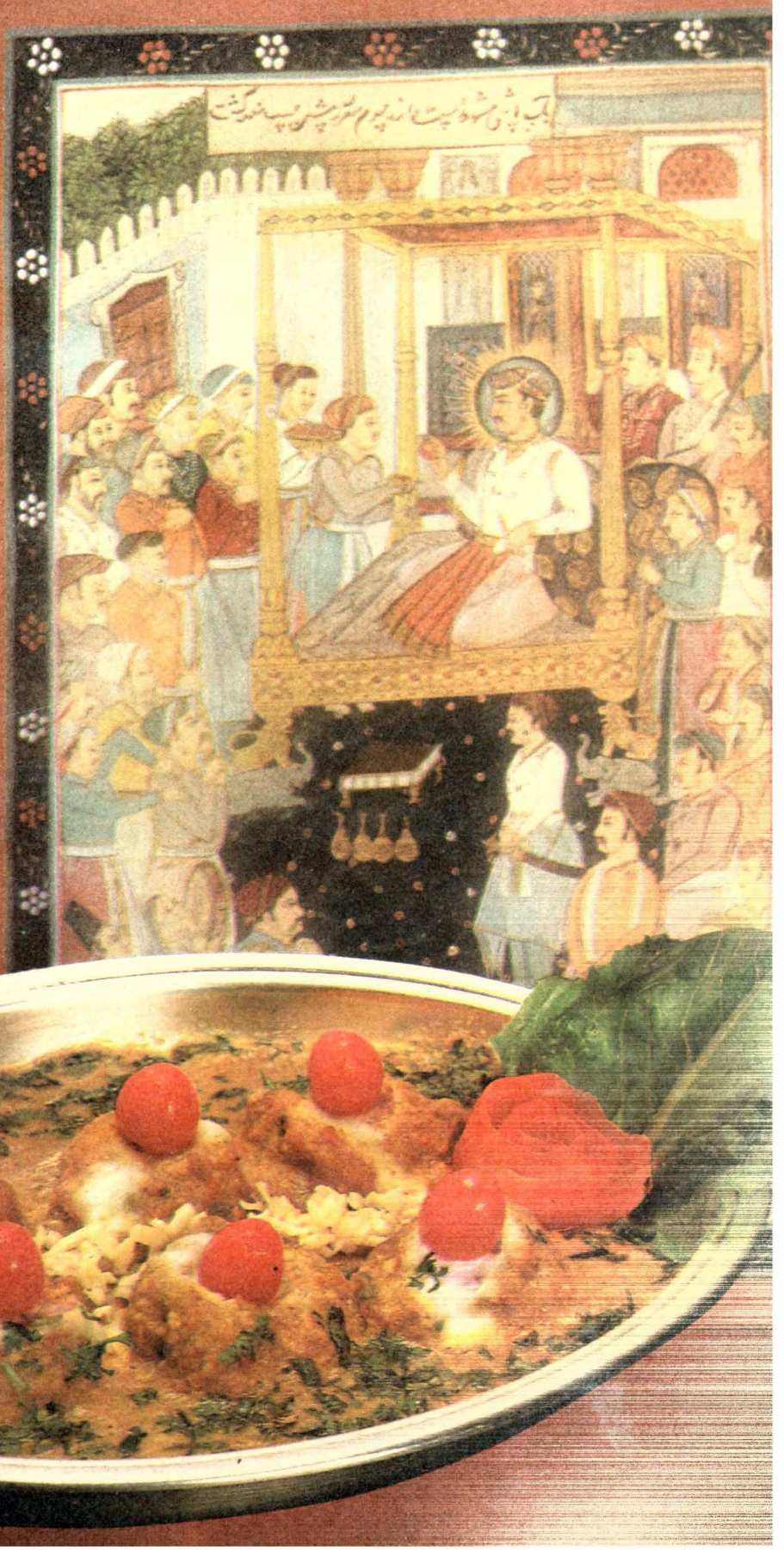
Mughal cuisine offers a lajawab cheese.

The mughals invented so many marvellous ways of 'currying' favour with you and for centuries no one dared meddle with their taste. Now the genius of Amul Cheese adds a new dimension to the curry, by transforming the kofta into a gourmet's delight. Versatile, inspiring Amul! With a taste and texture that never interferes with a basic recipe — just enlivens it. With enough character to make the pure cheese dishes stand out as wonders. Amul cheese has a delicious way of blending in with Western and Indian recipes in soups, salads, rice meals, snacks, desserts and even curries!

Amul Cheese

perks up meals
with zest and taste.

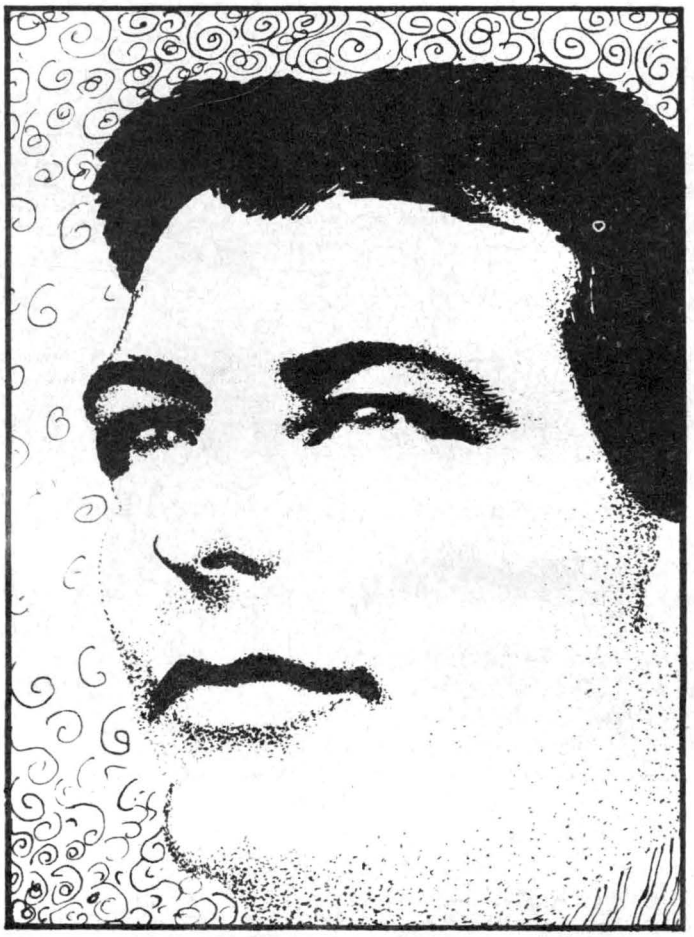
Marketed by:
Gujarat Co-operative Milk
Marketing Federation Limited,
Post Box No. 10, Anand 388 001,
Gujarat.



THE WINDS OF WERNER

Werner Erhard, the millionaire guru of est, is expected in India soon. But is he involved in a financial fraud totalling US $ 15 million?

BY RICHARD BEHAR AND RALPH KING JR



PLENTY of controversy has swirled around Werner Erhard, the millionaire guru of est (Erhard Seminars Training) who began life as Jack Rosenberg of Philadelphia and who once sold used cars for a living. One man undoubtedly wishes that he had never heard of Erhard: Zurich-based Wolfgang Somary, heir to one of the oldest banking fortunes in Switzerland.

Bankers normally ask lots of tough questions – and demand plenty of solid collateral – before making loans to foreigners. But on one occasion that he's never likely to forget, Somary seems to have done neither.

Described by associates as ethereal, otherworldly and dedicated to humanitarian causes, Somary, 53, apparently became so enamoured of Erhard's messianic notions about transforming the world that, in 1981, he authorised a low-interest US $ 15 million loan to help him spread his message. That money is now a key prop in Erhard's empire, which stretches across 20 countries and a bewildering array of foundations, trusts and tax-haven shells.

Somary apparently began to wonder if he would ever see the money again, and took the matter to a federal court in San Francisco, charging that Erhard was welshing on his deal. Both Erhard and Somary are tight-lipped about the dispute. In fact, when we began pressing for an interview, Somary grew increasingly nonco-operative and

Adapted from an article in the November issue of Forbes.

ILLUSTRATION BY FATIMA AHMED

eventually withdrew the suit. Meanwhile, we had turned up an astonishing labyrinth of characters and organisations in the case. They reach from a foundation in Switzerland to a bank in Panama and a government-connected charity in Costa Rica.

One way or another, all have left their finger-marks on the multimillion-dollar loan, shedding much light not only on the way Erhard does his deals but also on the complexities of off-shore financial gamesmanship when big bucks are at stake.

When last heard of, Erhard was riding high with his consciousness-raising cult, which combined everything from Scientology, Zen and Gestalt to echoes of Erhard's own upbringing by a Jewish father who turned Episcopalian. Est made Erhard rich, but it gradually lost its attraction, and Erhard closed his est training business last year.

Now, Erhard, 50, lives on a boat in swanky Marine County, devoting himself to pet projects like The Forum, a kind of Son of est, and the Hunger Project, which seeks to eradicate world hunger through education.

Meanwhile, Erhard no longer retains his longtime off-shore tax expert, Harry Margolis, who is under federal indictment for fraud and perjury involving over US $ 100 million in false loans and tax returns. Erhard himself is spending plenty of time in court. He faces over US $ 2 million in tax liabilities that the IRS asserts he has, and is in the midst of a nasty divorce from his wife, Ellen, who is seeking 50 per cent of all his assets under California community property law.

That divorce is what has Somary shaking. Assuming that Ellen Erhard prevails, there will be that much less for Somary to go after if Werner Erhard does not live up to the terms of the loan.

The way the loan was set up was astoundingly complex. Somary used an obscure nonprofit Zurich association he co-founded in 1974, the Intercultural Co-operation foundation, to lend the funds. But instead of having the money go directly to Erhard, he had Intercultural send the money via the First National Bank of Boston's branch office in Panama City, Panama, through what appears to be a spurious Costa Rican foundation, the Fundacion Soberana Orden de San Juan de Jerusalén, and only thereafter to Erhard's pocket in San Francisco.

The loan, made on September 15, 1981, when est enrolment was peaking and Erhard was casting about for funds, proved enticing. Not only did it carry a virtual giveaway 2 per cent interest rate and required no repayment of principal for ten years, but it also went to Erhard's for-profit, sole proprietorship Werner Erhard & Associates.

WAS WOLFGANG Somary really taken in by Erhard's promise to devote the funds to 'benefit the world'? Incredible as it may seem, Erhard did convince the hard-headed banker to part with a large sum of money which he may never see.

The Costa Rican group that acted as intermediary in the deal had, in fact, been set up by an Erhard friend several days before the transfer occurred, and also stood to benefit. Under the terms of the deal, a major portion of the interest payments would wind up not with Intercultural but, if Intercultural so chose, with the Costa Rican outfit instead.

What, in fact, is this Costa Rican group? A check with a staff attorney at the Controller General's office in San José reveals that the organisation has never filed an annual report. And other local authorities claim that the group seems to do precious little charity work of any sort. The group makes pretences to having a connection with the 900-year-old Rome-based Sovereign Military Order of Malta, an international charitable organisation that has close ties to the Vatican. But authorities in Rome and Denmark (where an ecumenical version of the order is based) disavow any association with the Costa Rican organisation and insist that it is illegitimate.

How did a man like Wolfgang Somary let himself get drawn into this mess? Good question – and one that seems to puzzle his own Intercultural colleagues. Dr Hans Fischer-Barnicol, the Executive Director of Intercultural's research arm in Heidelberg, seemed completely in the dark about a US $ 15 million Intercultural loan to Erhard through Costa Rica. So did James George of Port Murray, NJ, a current Intercultural board member who has been active off and on since Intercultural was founded. Said he: "This $ 15 million is new to me. (The organisation) has been in moth balls for a number of years, without financial resources."

Court documents obtained by us reveal that Somary arranged for Intercultural to make the loan on little more than Erhard's promise to transform Werner Erhard & Associates into a charity, as well as to devote the funds to further 'charitable purposes' and 'benefit the world'.

Benefit the world? That's a pretty broad charter, especially considering that Erhard was, basically, answerable to no one. "Werner Erhard & Associates is a sole proprietorship, and it funnels right into Mr and Mrs Erhard's tax returns," says Allan Goddard of Arthur Young & Co, Erhard's accountant.

What did Erhard do with the money? Here is where US $ 12.5 million of it went: In 1975 Erhard's tax attorney, Margolis, established a charitable trust in the tax-haven isle of Jersey, consigning ownership of it to

THE HUNGER HUMBUG

Is Erhard's Hunger Project just an extension of the est swindle?

THE EST FAD has faded, but Werner Erhard goes on. He still sits on the board of a lively outfit he co-founded in 1977 called the Hunger Project. Since then it has become an in thing for the socially involved, having attracted a whole range of est alumni, from ComputerLand founder William Millard to entertainers Valerie Harper and John Denver. All are drawn by the group's fuzzy yet fervent ideas about how to fight global hunger.

Set up as a California-chartered charitable foundation with a US $ 100,000 grant from the est Foundation, the Hunger Project today boasts 4 million participants in 152 countries. Although this year it expects to show only US $ 9 million from the contributions, the organisation is beginning to rival long-standing groups like Care and UNICEF as the highest-profile hunger charity in the country.

What, in fact, is the Hunger Project? A lot of it boils down to est-like 'briefings' in which well-meaning but naive do-gooders attend four-hour seminars. At the sessions, people are invited to change the 'context' in which they think about hunger, to close their eyes and imagine what it would be like to starve, and among other things, to make regular monthly cash donations to the project.

To be assured of a fresh supply of acolytes, the graduates then go forth into the world to spread the word not just that starving is bad but that Hunger Project seminars are good. And this brings in the next wave, creating a kind of chain letter.

Although very little of the money collected actually goes to feed people, the Hunger Project does have the occasional token development project to show the curious. The largest such project is a five-year, US $ 1 million development effort funded jointly with Save The Children in Costa Rica.

Why Costa Rica, the most prosperous country in Central America, and a place where most aid experts say hunger is virtually non-existent? One reason may be the man who put the deal together, a prominent Costa Rican government official and a friend of Erhard's named Fernando Flores-Banuet. He just happens to be the same individual whose San José charity served as a conduit for the US $ 15 million Zurich loan to Erhard in 1981. ♦

a California-based company entitled est, An Educational Corp, which happened to have certain real estate and office equipment assets.

With US $ 8.5 million of the loan, Erhard in 1981 'bought' those assets for Werner Erhard & Associates, along with another US $ 900,000 worth of artwork directly from the Jersey trust. Result? Erhard personally acquired the property that was formerly held by the trust, while the trust acquired US $ 9.4 million in cash, courtesy of the Intercultural loan.

Another US $ 1.6 million of the loan was used to pay off Werner Erhard's personal debt. An additional US $ 1.5 million went towards purchasing a 'body of knowledge' from a Netherlands-based firm called Welbehagen (meaning 'pleasure'), which in turn was owned by a Zurich-based foundation known as the Werner Erhard Foundation For est. Swiss government records show that several months later the foundation liquidated itself, asserting that it had insufficient capital to carry out its stated functions. Really? Especially when its Dutch subsidiary had just received that US $ 1.5 million from the loan?

As Wolfgang Somary has apparently learned the hard way, making sense out of Werner Erhard's finances is about as easy as coming to grips with his high-sounding blather about 'benefiting the world'. ♦

CARING ABOUT PEOPLE

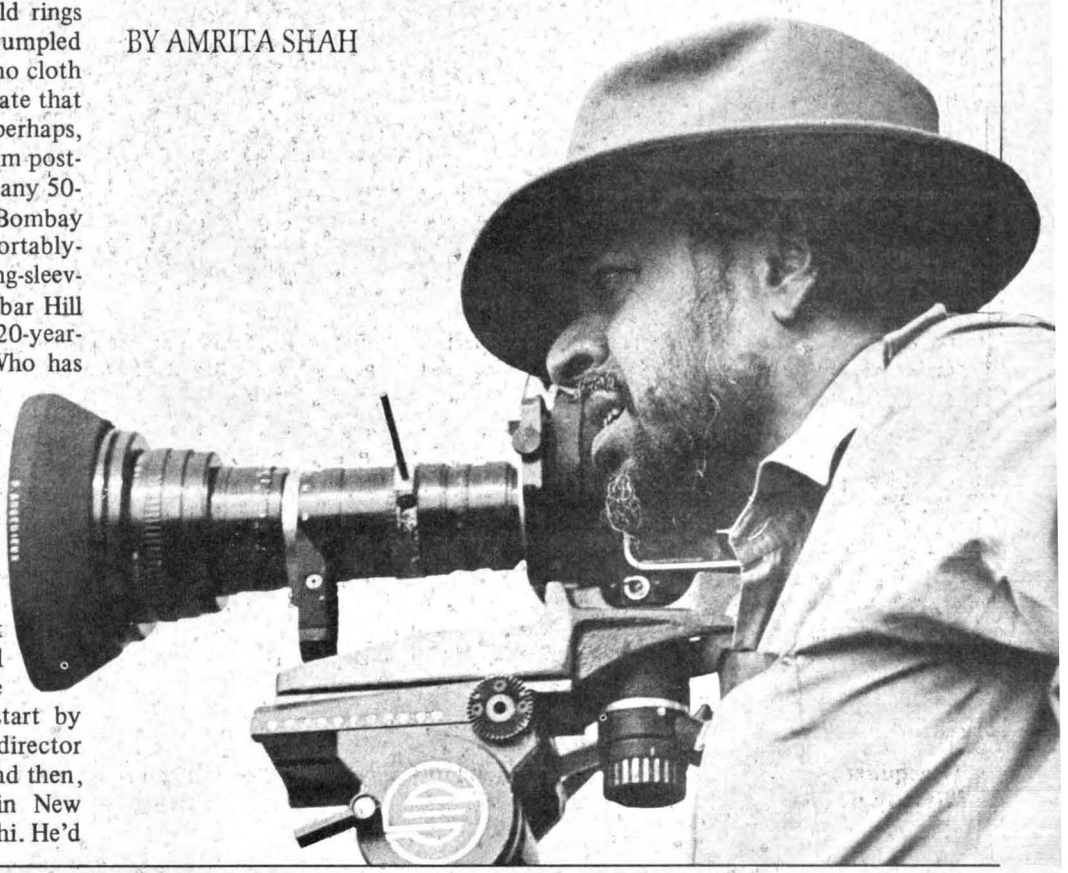
Shyam Benegal is the best-known of the parallel cinema's directors. But his work is often misinterpreted and his real concerns are sometimes ignored.

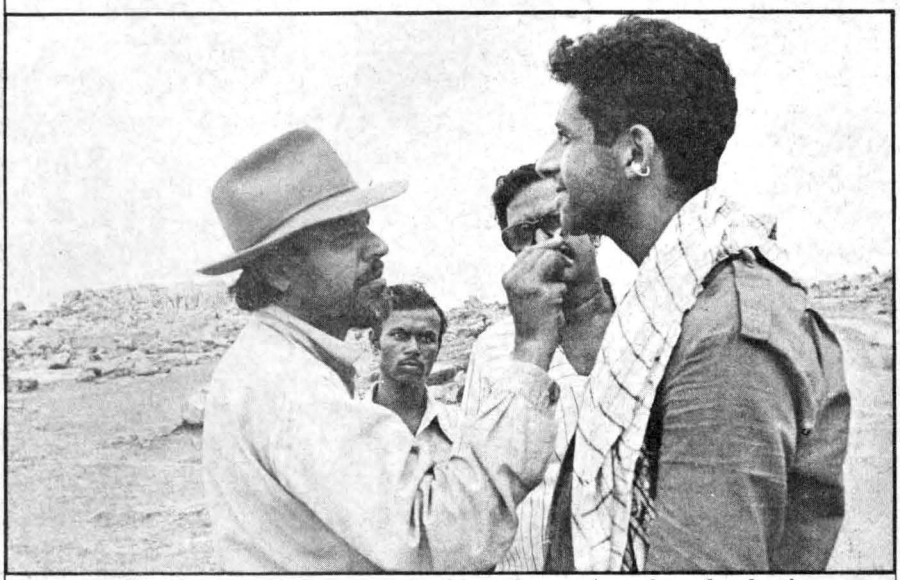
BY AMRITA SHAH

IT IS A SMALL white-washed room in a larger office in a crowded part of central Bombay. Four chairs are ranged in pairs along two walls; a polished antique desk rests in a corner by the window. Shyam Benegal reclines in a chair by the desk, his hand stretched towards a pack of Cartier cigarettes and a white lighter placed before him. As the door opens to admit a small boy with glasses of tea, the clatter of a busy office can be heard.

Shyam Benegal is talking about his films: how he made them, and what he thinks of them. And yet it is obvious that he is not dressed for the part. No white shoes, no gold rings and no dark glasses; no crumpled *kurta*, no torn chappals and no cloth bag. There is nothing to indicate that he is a film-maker (except, perhaps, for the framed Hollywood film posters on his wall). He could be any 50-year-old upper-middle class Bombay dweller who dresses in comfortably-cut corduroy trousers and long-sleeved shirts. Who lives on Malabar Hill with a working wife and a 20-year-old college-going daughter. Who has been driven in the same car for the last 15 years to a cluttered office in Tardeo. He could be an architect, a journalist, a publishing executive or an adman.

And if you were to visit his two-bedroom apartment one evening, what would he talk about? "Well," says Anil Dharker, a close friend and the Editor of *Debonair*, "he'd start by talking about this Russian director that he'd met at a Festival. And then, he'd describe a restaurant in New York where he had superb sushi. He'd





Touching up Naseeruddin Shah's make-up: 'a real mother hen'.

talk about wine, Russian vodka, the problem of the North-East – any number of things." And while he was talking, there would be music, too – classical music, or jazz, perhaps. "Shyam," says good friend Shama Zaidi, "just loves music."

Amid the conviviality and the conversation, it would be easy to forget the Shyam Benegal of the magazines. Scowling under a cricket cap as he organises stars on his sets. Flying to Delhi to discuss a new cinema policy for India. Negotiating with the Russians about a documentary on Nehru. Creating star after star. Turning Smita Patil, Shabana Azmi and Naseeruddin Shah into household names. Holding out till he could make the kind of film he really wanted to make and, in the process, helping establish another kind of Indian cinema.

At home, and at work, Shyam Benegal. is not quite the forbidding figure that the media make him out to be, not quite the star-maker, not at all the alternative movie moghul. He's just another upper-middle class Indian, leading an ordinary life.

SHYAM BENEGAL is perched precariously on a rickety chair in a village on the outskirts of Hyderabad. All around him, actors, technicians and assistants hustle and bustle. But Benegal, the director of the movie they are all making, seems strangely at peace with the world.

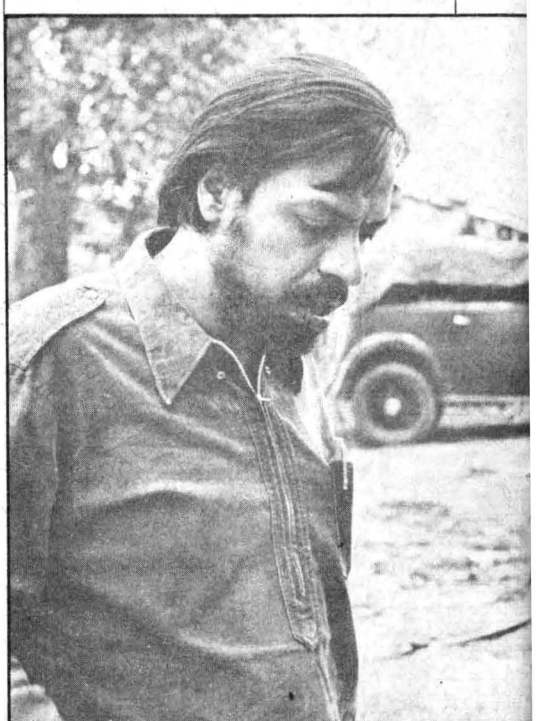
Perhaps, he is glad to be back in Hyderabad. For Hyderabad was, after all, where it all started. He saw his first films here. As a little boy in Alwal – a semi-rural settlement adjoining Hyderabad – he would travel to a nearby cantonment area and watch scores of British and American films in the local cinema. It was in Hyderabad, too, that he made his first film. It wouldn't, admittedly, have won any awards, made as it was by a young man, experimenting with his father's hand-cranked camera, but it was a beginning.

Hyderabad recurs again and again in Benegal's work. He wrote a short story about a local zamindar's son who got involved with his Harijan maidservant and sat on it for years till, finally, Blaze Enterprises gave him the money to go back to Hyderabad and turn it into *Ankur. Nishant,* too, was steeped in the ambience of that region and many of his other films have some connection – however tenuous – with his early years in Hyderabad. The child-birth scene in *Bhumika,* for instance, is based on an early personal memory.

Now, Benegal is back in Hyderabad making his latest, as yet untitled, film. It is based on the local weaver's community, and a decade after *Ankur,* Shabana Azmi is still around, playing yet another local girl. There are newer actors, too. There's Om Puri, who joined Benegal's loose association of actors some years after *Ankur.* Then there's Anu Kapoor. There's Ila Arun and there's a fresh new bunch of actors recruited from Delhi's National School of Drama. The company sits under a canopy, around a long table, sipping hot, sweet tea from glass tumblers and chattering animatedly.

The bonhomie carries over to the set – a room in one of the weavers' houses. The scene is set in the night, so all the windows have been covered, and the room is both hot and noisy with the chatter of the company. Benegal strolls in, apparently undaunted by the prospect of shooting an emotion-charged sequence in the hot but happy confusion. Perhaps, it is being part of a family of ten children that has taught him how to work amidst the heat and chatter.

As the artistes rehearse, and the technicians set up the shot, he sinks



On the sets of Ankur:

into a chair behind the camera, at once a part of the film-making process and, at the same time, slightly withdrawn from the activity on the sets. His interference is minimal, his involvement, total. The cast has some ideas. Shabana suggests another position for Om. Anu asks Ila to fall behind the pillar when he slaps her. Benegal listens patiently. Some suggestions are accepted, others are rejected, but Benegal explains each decision.

The scene takes a while to shoot, but nobody seems to mind. Just when everything seems finally to have fallen into place, around the fourth take, one of the actors muffs his lines. Benegal is immediately reassuring. The actor is made to feel that the mistake was only natural and the cast regroups for the fifth take. Later, Benegal explains: "An actor's self-esteem is very fragile and the last thing I want to do is hurt people's self-esteem."

"That's very typical of Shyam," submits Shabana Azmi. "He is genuinely concerned about the people he works with." She recalls how, in the early days, when they were both starting out on the sets of *Ankur,* Benegal would spend hours earnestly discussing the most trivial problems faced by members of the unit. Now, even when he's at the top of the profession, he has retained that concern. "He is," says Shabana flatly, "a mother hen. Always worrying about how you are and what you are eating."

And so, here in Hyderabad, he is busying himself with the reading habits of a 16-year-old actress. Is she reading enough? What is she reading? Finally, he even makes out a reading list for her. The concern seems free of any strings. When a magazine claimed that Benegal had moulded Shabana (a claim that she herself cheerfully concurs with), he was so upset that he wrote her a long letter strenuously denying that he ever entertained such a notion.

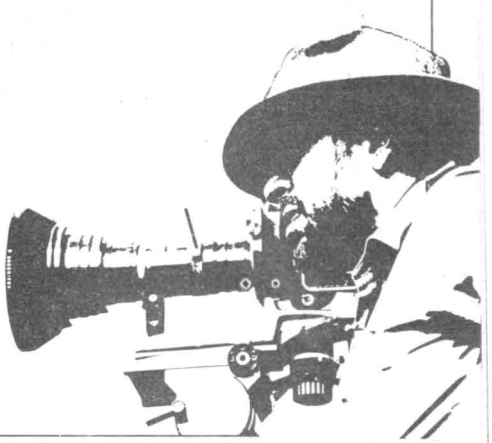
The concern is born out of only one thing: Benegal genuinely cares about people.

caring about people.

VIEWED AGAIN, with the benefit of hindsight, it seems clear that *Ankur,* Benegal's first feature film, was really about people and their relationships. At the time, though, this was not widely perceived. When *Ankur* was released, it caused a considerable splash because while it was clearly an 'art film', it was an 'art film' with a difference. For one, it was a slick and polished product. Benegal was, after all, in Anil Dharker's phrase, a 'veteran novitiate' with over 600 commercials and innumerable documentaries to his credit. For another, the film was instantly accessible; it was deep without being obscure, different without being esoteric. And finally, it made money, something that its arty predecessors (*Uski Roti, Sara Akaash,* etc) had not been able to do.

Nevertheless, critics and audiences alike, tried to put it in a particular slot to which it was probably, in retrospect, not suited. It was a film – on one level – about the sexual exploitation of a maidservant by a wealthy zamindar's son, and could, conceivably, be viewed as a Leftist tract about exploitation in the rural areas.

Viewed again, with the benefit of hindsight, it seems clear that *Ankur,* Benegal's first feature film, was really about people and their relationships. It was not just about the exploitation of the rural poor.



Making Junoon *with Shashi: selling out?*

Benegal's second feature, *Nishant*, could also be seen in those terms – as a socialistic fable about how the sexual exploitation of a woman caused a rural uprising.

And yet, looking back, it seems clear that neither film was a mere pamphlet or an urban film-maker's token bow to peasant revolution. Both films were really about people. *Ankur* was about the complex and tortured relationship between the weak zamindar's son and the infatuated maidservant. *Nishant* was a study of various interlocking relationships – between the kidnapped woman and her helpless husband; between her and the youngest of her captors who was drawn towards her; between him and his more assertive brothers; and between them and the community they terrorised.

It is important to appreciate quite how important characterisation is to Benegal (one reason why he gets great performances from his actors) if one is to make any sense of his later career. He followed the success of *Ankur* and *Nishant*, with two highly regarded films. *Manthan*, financed by the dairy farmers of Gujarat, told their story, and *Bhumika* was a thinly-disguised biography of the Marathi film actress, Hansa Wadkar. Both were people films, though again, this was not widely perceived at the time. *Manthan* was seen more as a propaganda vehicle, and *Bhumika* was noted mainly because of the performance of its star: Smita Patil.

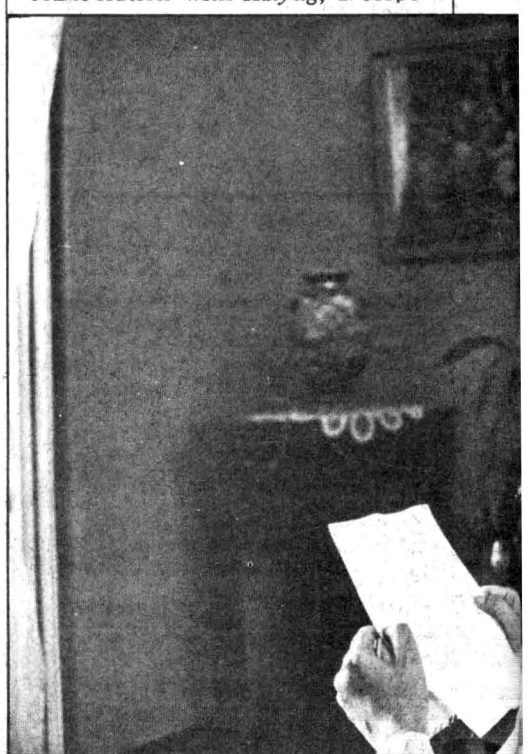
In a sense, these four films marked his last hurrah. They were widely acclaimed (with the notable exceptions of *The Times Of India*'s Bikram Singh and Khalid Mohammed) and were easy to commend: three out of four, dealt with forms of rural exploitation and one was almost feminist in the handling of its theme. The problem was that Benegal could not go on making the same kind of film again and again. He wanted to move away from the same themes, and to examine different kinds of characters in different situations.

To do that, he had to stop making the sort of small-budget, anti-exploitation film that was a staple of the art cinema. And from that stemmed what the media saw as his decline.

"NO," says Shyam Benegal, in his quiet, matter of fact voice, "I don't think the later films marked a drop in quality. It was a growth of a different kind. You outgrow certain things; they don't appear challenging any longer." The subject is dropped. It is clear that Benegal is sure that he did the right thing by moving on, even if his critics don't see it that way.

The problems started with Shashi Kapoor's *Junoon*, a period film based on the Mutiny. *Junoon* cost a lot – at Rs 60 lakh, it was the most expensive non-commercial film made till then. (The battle scenes alone cost more than all of *Ankur*.) Because Shashi Kapoor was the producer, the unit lived it up: five-star hotels (the Clarks Avadh in Lucknow, the Clarks Amber in Jaipur), air travel, good food and the like. Moreover, its lead pair, Shashi and Shabana, were also stars, and the rest of the cast consisted of well-known names.

To the art film*wallahs* this was selling out. Benegal had deserted the simple, inexpensive films about exploited peasants for a lavish, big-budget spectacle. As even *India Today* noted at the time, "Six years ago, the thought of Shyam Benegal making such a film would have been as unlikely as the prospect of Picasso taking to illustrating comic books." It turned out that *Junoon* made some money, and Shashi and Benegal continued their collaboration with *Kalyug*, a corpo-



Leela Naidu in Trikal:

rate version of the *Mahabharata* starring such commercial heavyweights as Rekha and Raj Babbar. *Kalyug* did not make money, seemed a long, long way away from the kind of film that Benegal had started out with, and got generally critical (perhaps unfair) reviews.

The shift from the peasants of *Nishant* to the tycoons of *Kalyug,* or from the insecure zamindar of *Ankur* to the arrogant princeling of *Junoon,* only makes sense when you realise that, in a sense, Benegal hadn't shifted at all. He was still making films about people and their relationships. *Junoon* was only set in the Mutiny – it was not about it. Its real concerns were its characters: Shashi as the Pathan obsessed by an English girl; Jennifer as her part-Indian mother, feeling her way around a hostile Mutiny-era India; and Shabana as Shashi's wife, insecure about his obsession. Similarly, while the setting for *Kalyug* was Bombay's corporate world, its theme was pure *Mahabharata*: families at war, shared wives and filial loyalty.

It says something about the superficial nature of film criticism in India that so many critics were willing to take the films at face value without probing deeper to understand the film-maker's real concerns. There were other factors at work, too. Partly, the media, having built up Benegal, now thought that he was due for a knocking. "It's just a habit with the media," says Shama Zaidi. "I've read critics who've even dismissed Ray totally." Shabana agrees: "It is easy to put people on a pedestal and to then discover that your god has feet of clay."

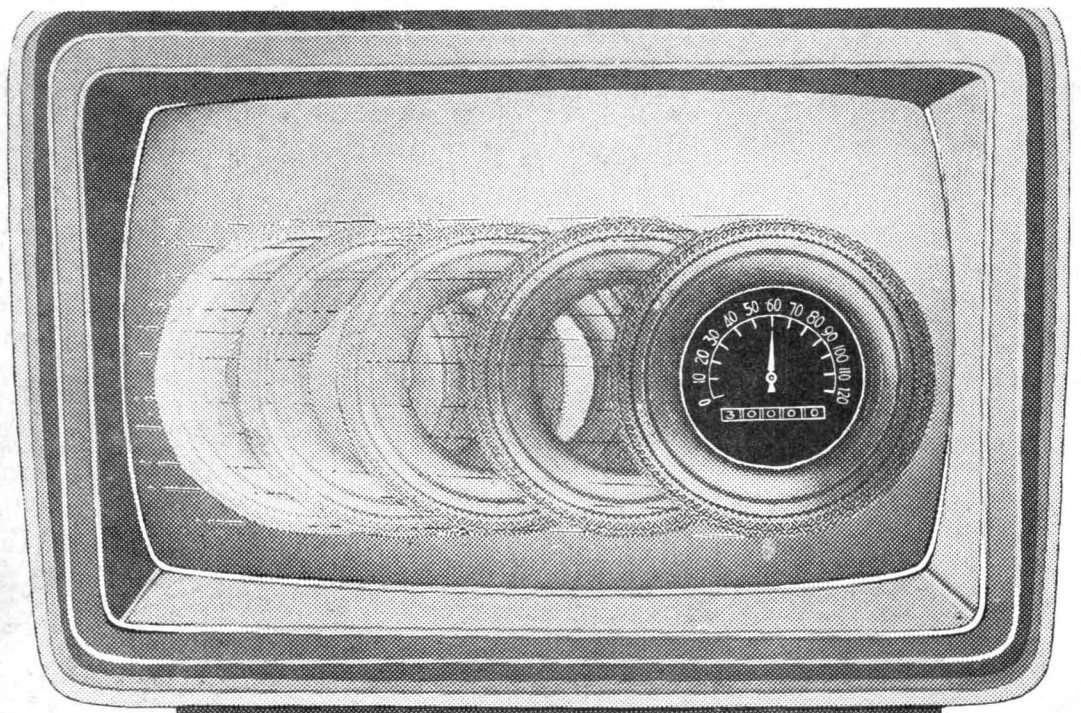
age Benegal.

Partly, it was also that Benegal was no longer a one-man movement. Now, there were other film-makers who were making accessible 'art films'. His own cameraman, Govind Nihalani, made *Aakrosh,* a stirring saga of Adivasi exploitation, and later also directed *Ardh Satya,* an intense story of the conflict between an honest policeman and an underworld boss. Prakash Jha made *Damul,* an attack on the exploitation of the poor by rich landlords in Bihar. Gautam Ghosh made *Paar,* a saga of human endurance and an indictment of the powerful who exploit the weak.

It is too simplistic to say that all these films were similar to those that Benegal made in his early days, but all the same, it is fair to claim that some were the kind of films that Benegal did not find challenging any longer. He was looking for new challenges – for period settings, for urban dramas and the like – and many of his critics were quite happy to let him look for these challenges on his own. For their part, they were quite content with the work of the new film-makers.

Around the time that the critics had begun to feel that Benegal was slightly past it, he also made two of his worst films. *Aarohan,* financed by the West Bengal government, has yet to be widely exhibited, but *Mandi,* made for Blaze, the people who financed *Ankur,* was put on general release to widespread disappointment. Even Shabana, the film's star, feels that the second half of *Mandi* did not work, and Anil Dharker, Benegal's

It says something about the superficial nature of film criticism in India that so many critics were willing to take Benegal's films at face value without probing deeper to understand the film-maker's real concerns.



MORE MILEAGE. From the COMPUTER created car tyres

Modistone COMPUMILER RANGE

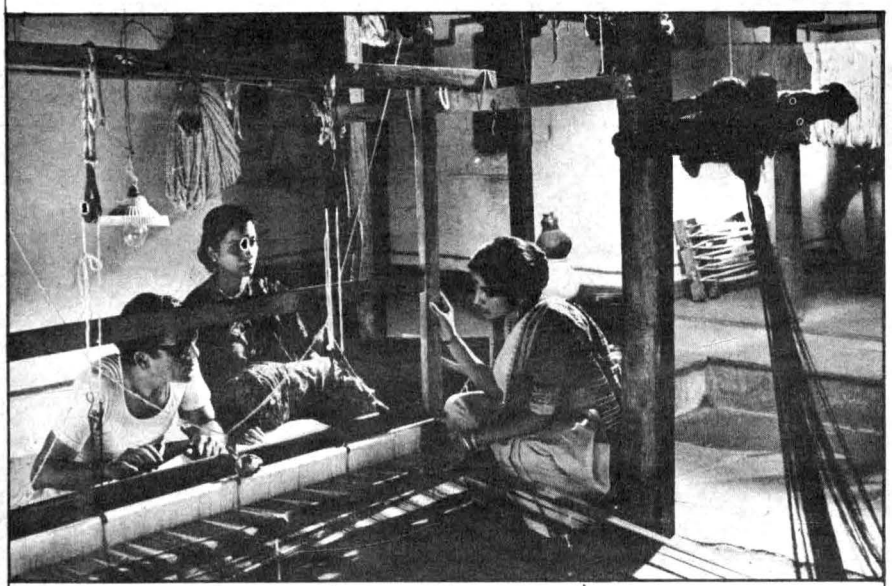
Modistone Car Tyres — the Modistone Compumiler range — are manufactured on computerised machines. A process that lends the tyres characteristics few tyres have.

Modistone Compumiler range— premium nylon tyres that are just right for this computer age. **With safety, comfort, reliability and longlife engineered into every fibre, every component that goes into making the tyres.**

Modistone Compumiler range— few car tyres are quite like them because they are literally built by the computer! That's why 2,50,000 people chose Modistone for their cars last year. Proof enough that they're the largest selling car tyres in India.

Modistone
When miles matter

Interads



A scene from his latest film: back in Hyderabad.

friend, suspects that the film would have worked better as a simple comedy. "The second half floundered because Shyam, being a complex person, tried to look for significance."

It was not entirely unexpected. No director can make entirely satisfying films year after year. But coming as they did, at a time when people were only too willing to write Benegal off, *Mandi* and *Aarohan* did his reputation incalculable damage.

SHYAM BENEGAL is back in the small whitewashed room that is his office. It is a busy time. The Hyderabad film is into post-production. The sound-track has to be fitted. Most days he journeys to Studio SeaRock in Bandra, at the other end of town and supervises the dubbing.

Another film is now ready for release. *Trikal,* set in Goa, is what the media are already calling his comeback film. Nearly everyone who has seen it at a preview has loved it and the Bombay glossies are clamouring for interviews and promising to put it on their covers. It is a good period: despite the pressures and tensions, Benegal seems pleased. Things are moving and he is back on top of his world.

Trikal is part of the reason for the good humour. In many ways, it is his most complex film, comparable perhaps to *Kondura,* the great lost Benegal master-work that never found a commercial release. When he planned *Trikal,* he was reading South American authors like Garcia Marquez and became fascinated by the Latin ethos. This fascination has translated – on celluloid – into a memorable film, full of haunting images and a peculiarly Latin ambience in which reality and memory merge.

The performances, too, are stunning. Neena Gupta, an underrated actress, makes the most of a small role; Keith Stevenson is strong but subdued; Dalip Tahil is surprisingly good and various lesser known actors turn in excellent performances. Benegal's old knack of extracting the best from his actors is clearly in evidence. On the other hand, the old criticism about too many characters could probably be applied to *Trikal* just as much as it could be to *Kalyug* or *Junoon*.

Is Benegal happy with the film? "Umm." He pauses. "Well," he says, slowly, "I had a lot of fun making it. You could say that it has turned out to be quite close to the kind of film that I would have liked to have made."

The script is his own, this time. "When I first went to Goa to conceive the film," he remembers, "I was struck by one single image. It was of a vast expanse of green fields. And in the middle of all this greenery was a peasant carrying a gleaming coffin. I suppose the idea for *Trikal* grew out of that image." And, indeed, the film opens with a funeral, one that dominates a full quarter of the movie's running time. It is an audacious risk to take, but Benegal makes it work, using the funeral to introduce the various characters and the manner in which they relate to each other. In its network of interlocking relationships, the film is vintage Benegal. There's an old house, an old family, and a suggestion that change (in this case, the liberation) is just around the corner. There is little of the Goa of the tourist brochures. The action hardly ever leaves the old house and there are no shots of the sea – something of a first for a film set in Goa!

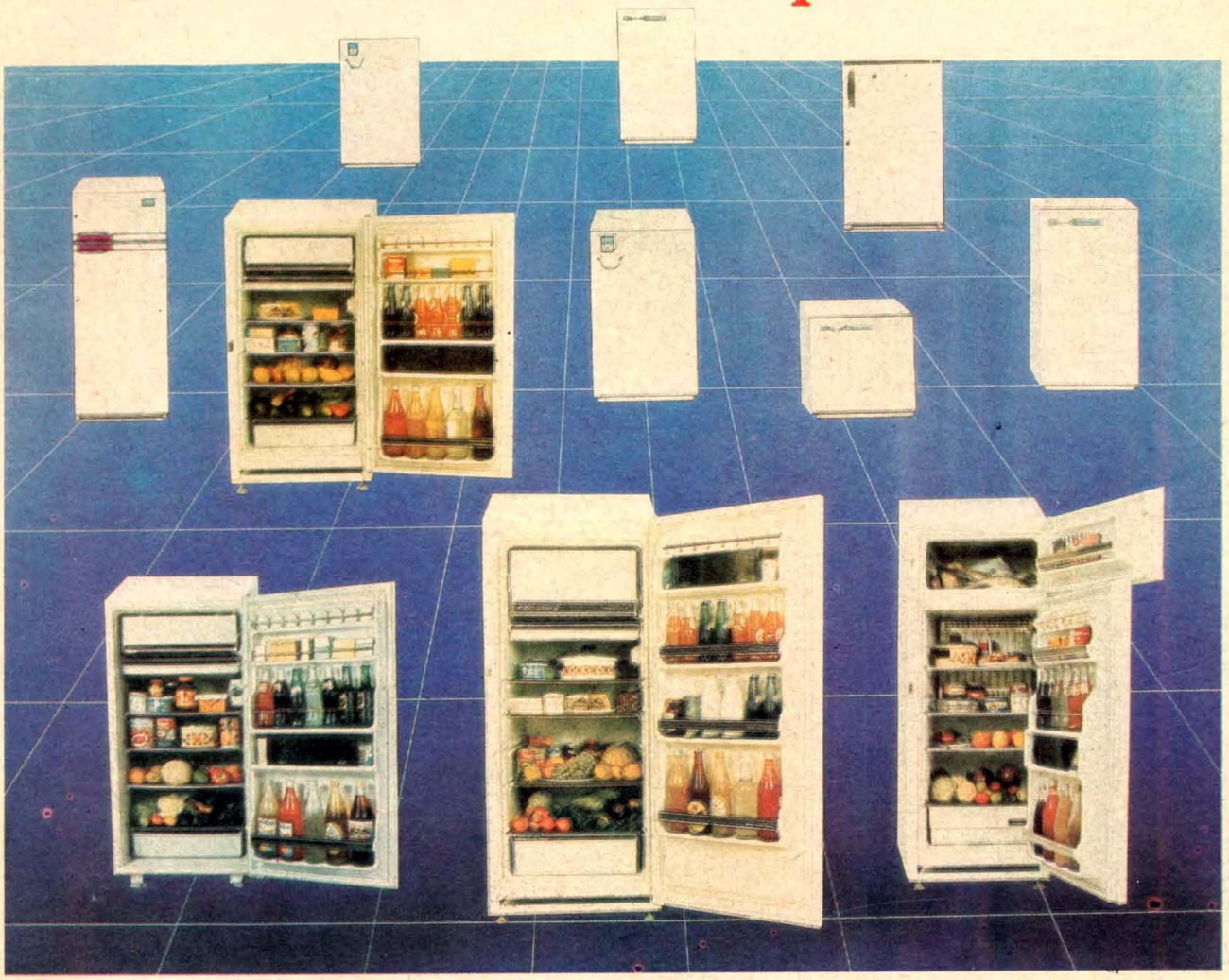
What next? "Oh, I have quite a lot to do over the next few years. There's the Hyderabad film for a start. And then I'm embarking on a very big project. I'm making a 30-part TV series on the *Discovery Of India.* It'll be based on the book and each episode will be 45 minutes in length. It won't start being broadcast till next year but it should keep me busy for the next two years at least." Does that mean there will be no Shyam Benegal feature films for the next couple of years or so? "No" says Benegal, "I'm quite certain that I'm going to make one film while I'm making the TV series."

The switch to TV is not something that one would expect. Benegal has no trouble finding finance for feature films. And at a time when most people who are making TV serials are concentrating on sit-coms and soap operas, it seems particularly daring to attempt something as ambitious as the *Discovery Of India*.

But that is Shyam Benegal. Ever the nonconformist, he has always made his own rules. The fear of rejection that obsesses most film-makers seems to play a minor part in his calculations. Moreover, like all intelligent, creative people he is easily bored and thrives on flux. And challenge. ♦

Behind every Kelvinator Refrigerator lies its best feature

The Power-Saver Compressor



Kelvinator®

REFRIGERATORS—At home, everywhere!

Behind every Kelvinator refrigerator is the POWER-SAVER Compressor. It belongs to the most sophisticated generation of compressors, currently being used by some of the world's best names in refrigerators like White-Westinghouse, Frigidaire, Gibson...

Its cooling rate is the fastest and it ensures the lowest refrigerator cabinet temperature for preserving perishables, longest.

The POWER-SAVER withstands a much wider range of voltage fluctuation as compared to any other compressor in use today.

Its perfectly balanced system ensures years and years of satisfactory and trouble-free service.

What's more, the POWER-SAVER lives up to its name with the lowest electricity consumption of any compressor.

Kelvinator refrigerators come in a range of single-door, double-door models.

Sold and serviced by:

Expo Machinery Limited

Pragati Tower, 26 Rajindra Place, New Delhi-110 008.

BRANCHES :

New Delhi, Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Ahmedabad, Alwar, Bangalore, Bhopal, Bhubaneshwar, Chandigarh, Cochin, Dhanbad, Ghaziabad, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kundli, Patna and Vijayawada.

Mutual-4105

The car that makes a lot more carsense!

Powered by the Nissan engine

This modern and fuel-efficient 1.18 litre engine makes one litre of petrol stretch through 17 kms (according to the Government of India test procedures).
The synchromesh system for all four forward gears ensures smooth gear change and easy transmission.

Takes on any road

The well-suspended body makes for good road holding. Adequate ground clearance makes it ideal for out-of-city driving.

It's got safety built into it

Fade-resistant disc brakes on the front wheels with servo assistance for reduced pedal effort and instant stopping. Large windscreen for better visibility. The door frame, roof and floor panels are individually pressed out of single metal sheets to ensure a structurally stronger body. They all add up to a safer ride.

Just the right size

It's compact enough to spell fuel efficiency and easy manoeuvring. And big enough to seat five comfortably. There's more legroom inside and more luggage space in the trunk.

The look says sleek

Clean, elegant lines. Polyurethane bumpers and steering wheel. Wraparound tail lights. A smooth paint finish. Ribbed upholstery. Contoured, reclinable front seats. Every part spells sleekness.

From Premier Automobiles, —of course!

The Premier 118 NE combines the sturdy body of the Fiat 124 and a modern, fuel-efficient 1.18 litre engine designed in collaboration with Nissan. PAL engineers have tested and perfected the model to suit Indian climates and road conditions.

After all, we've always given you the better car. Now, with new horizons opening up on the car scene, isn't it natural the better choice should come from us?

PREMIER 118 NE

PAL **The Premier Automobiles Limited**

ULKA-PNE-12-85

ARASU

The one name for all assurance: ARASU

Whether on CEMENT, ASBESTOS CEMENT SHEETS or ASBESTOS CEMENT PRESSURE PIPES... it protects you from the elements.

ARASU from TANCEM.
The brand is getting better-known. Everyday.
Because its makers believe in ever-better quality. And pack it in.

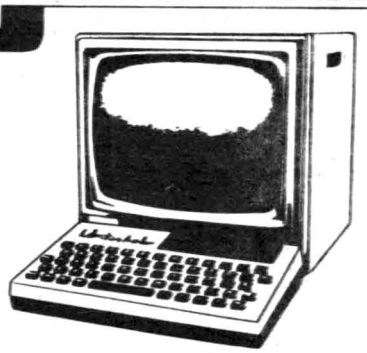
Architects, Contractors, Builders-in Tamil Nadu or elsewhere-agree on ARASU. **Strongly!**

TANCEM

Tamil Nadu Cements Corporation Ltd.
(A Govt. of Tamil Nadu Enterprise)
LLA Building, 735, Anna Salai,
Madras 600 002. Ph: 89161 (4 Lines).
Works: Alangulam 626 127, Ariyalur 621 704.
Mayanur 639 108, Tamil Nadu.
Bangalore Depot: 19E, Mysore Deviation Road,
Bangalore 560 023.
Ernakulam Depot: C/o. Kerala State Warehousing
Corpn. Ltd., Trippunithura,
Ernakulam (Dt.). Ph: 7517.

DIPR 14 85 ADWAVE TANCEM 2896 R

COMPUTERS



BY MICHAEL CRICHTON

PROGRAMMING PROBLEMS

Instructing the computer may be more complex — and tricky — than you had bargained for.

A PROGRAMME is a set of instructions to make the computer do something. But that's not a very useful way to think of a programme, since instructions purely to the machine for its own use are often brief.

The bulk of many programmes is devoted to helping people put data into the machine and get processed information back out again. One's satisfaction with a programme strongly reflects these areas of input and output.

People don't understand this. When they look at a long programme, they fail to recognise how much of it is directly geared to them. Don't throw up your hands: this stuff matters to you. And it's always the least computery part of the programme.

For example, a BASIC programme might begin with:

```
10 HOME
20 VTAB 3 : HTAB 5
30 PRINT "WHAT IS YOUR
   NAME?"; : INPUT N$
40 PRINT N$
50 PRINT "IS YOUR NAME
   CORRECT? (Y/N)";
   : INPUT A$
60 IF A$ = "N" THEN GOTO 20
70 PRINT "NICE TALKING
   WITH YOU,"; N$; "."
```

Now, this means in English:

10 Clear the screen.

20 Tab down three lines, and horizontally five spaces.

30 Print "What is your name?" and stay on the same line. Wait for something to be typed in from the keyboard. Call whatever is input N$.

40 Print this N$ back out again, whatever it is.

50 Print "Is your name correct? (Y/N)." This prompts the user to answer Y or N. Get the answer, and call it A$.

60 If the answer is N for no, then you'll need to start all over again. So go back to line 20.

70 If the answer is not N, then the name must be okay. So print "Nice talking with you," and stay on the same line. Print the name N$, stay on the same line, and print a period (.).

Notice that the BASIC programme is not mathematical. It's quite like instructing a typist. VTAB means vertical tab, HTAB means horizontal tab. PRINT means print what's in quotes. INPUT means wait for input. And so on. You don't need differential calculus to follow this.

And in any case, the whole routine is for your (the user's) benefit, to allow you to enter and check your input. Therefore you may want to modify it. You can do all this without paying any attention to the guts of the programme that appear later on.

There's a corollary to this. If you're commissioning programmers to write programmes for you, you may be frustrated at the delay between the time the programmer announces the programme is 'working' and the time it actually accepts data and spits back answers.

The reason is that the programmer is focused, at least in part, on the internal workings of the machine and how it manipulates data. This aspect is invisible to you. You're focused on what you put in and what you get back. Programmers always consider the programme to be working before the input and output routines are finished. Because these input/output routines are extensive, it may take a long time to get them right.

Documentation

Computerese for instructions. The quality of the instructions for a programme is nearly as important as the programme itself, since it determines how quickly and effectively you will learn to use the programme. Many otherwise excellent programmes have astoundingly bad instructions.

Look for several things.

First, does the documentation provide a general explanation, telling you about the programme and what it does? Such general orientation is always valuable.

Second, does it provide step-by-step examples of how to use the programme? Does it have pictures showing how the screen looks as you go step by step? It is easiest to learn a new programme by following a provided example.

Third, does it have an index? Documentation without an index will eventually drive you wild. The beginning user is most often focused on learning how to use the programme, and may ignore the fact that once learned, the documentation is then only an occasional reference– and a reference without an index is frustrating.

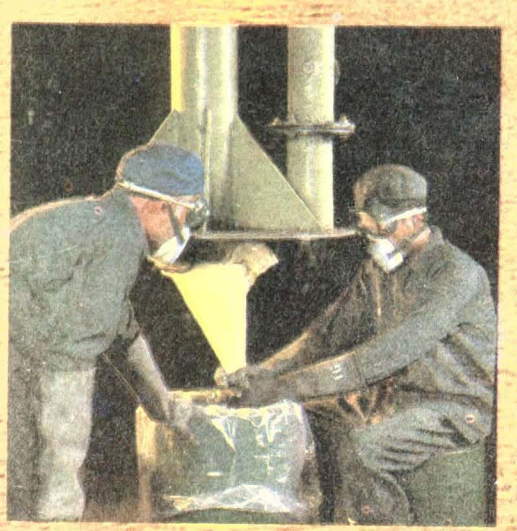
Finally, if it is a complex programme does it have a compact reference card to keep by the machine while you work?

The best documentation seems to have some sections that are absurdly

Michael Crichton is a bestselling novelist and film director. His novels include The Andromeda Strain *and* Congo.


Neycer
Neiveli Ceramics & Refractories Limited
Vadalur P.O. 607303,
South Arcot District, Tamil Nadu.
Beauty in your bathroom, beauty that lasts.

Images of achievement



Today, the Atul complex in Gujarat's Valsad District is one of the largest in India — manufacturing basic chemicals, dyestuffs, intermediates, pesticides and pharmaceuticals.

The excellent quality of our products is relied upon by a great many diverse industries. Annual turnover is fast approaching the 1000 million mark, with exports accounting for Rs.50 million.

Atul's achievements are reflected in a better way of life for people everywhere who benefit from the products.

THE ATUL® PRODUCTS LTD.

Atul 396020, Gujarat, India.
Phone: ATUL 61 to 65
Telex: 0173-232 ATUL IN
Telegram: TULA, ATUL

Interpub/APL/14/85

Documentation is important because a programme is no use if you can't pick up where the original programmer left off. Often, if you forget to document your own programmes, you can't decipher what you did a few hours before!

clear and some sections that are forbiddingly complex. If you can't understand any of it, then the documentation is probably too technical. If you understand all of it right away then it'll probably prove too superficial for long-term use.

Many people are embarrassed to admit they want idiot-simple instructions. This embarrassment is more acute if you already have some familiarity with machines and programmes. But the fact that you're a whiz with word processing means nothing when you look at an accounting package or a data-base management programme. There's no disgrace in wanting instructions that begin, "Put in the disk and turn on your machine. See the little blinking light. That is the cursor. . . ." Quite the contrary, it makes excellent sense. The simpler it is, the faster you'll learn, and the faster you learn, the sooner you'll be able to use the programme– which is the point.

Finally, ask if the programme has additional instructions written by someone else. Many popular but poorly documented programmes– such as Wordstar–now have exemplary instructions sold in book form by outside people. These are nearly always worth the money.

Just as disks are often defective, documentation is often wrong. Having another source of documentation can save hours of frustration trying to make the programme do something that is badly or incorrectly explained in the original documentation. After you've blown Sunday at the keyboard, you won't be glad to go to the computer shop on Monday and be told, "Oh yeah, the documentation is wrong on that point. You have to press Control-F-U and it works fine."

Documentation has the additional meaning of explanations inserted within the body of a programme to tell you what a given line of computer code means.

Such documentation is essential if others are to pick up where the original programmer left off. It's difficult to decipher the thinking of a programmer months or years after the original work was done.

This applies to you, too.

If you decide to programme, just wait until you work on something into the wee hours–and then try to decipher what you've done the very next morning. You won't believe it. It's like a magic trick: you haven't any idea what was in your mind just a few hours before.

This problem is not confined to novices. Terry Winograd, the brilliant author of the artificial-intelligence programme SHRDLU, was unable to modify his programme a few years later, because neither he nor anyone else could figure it out.

An undocumented programme is unmodifiable and therefore of limited value. Standards for programme documentation have become more demanding in recent years. It is now common practice to insert an explanatory comment for each line of computer instruction.

Operating System

The concept of an operating system confuses many users. Fine, there's a computer waiting to be told what to do. Fine, you load a programme into the computer and the programme tells the computer what to do. Then where does this operating system fit in?

Next you learn that certain programmes require a particular operating system, not a particular machine. Some operating systems, such as MS-DOS, are referred to as 'popular', as if the operating system was a thing to be embraced in its own right. If your machine doesn't 'run under' a particular operating system, you may be able to buy something that will see that it does. But what *is* the operating system?

It's easiest to think of operating systems as a form of government. All governments govern, but a constitutional monarchy, a democracy, and a dictatorship differ in the details of how the job is done.

The operating system governs the internal working of the computer, which is why operating systems are sometimes called an 'environment', and why computers 'run under' an operating system the way nations run under a dictatorship. By changing the operating system, you change the internal workings of the computer– in particular, you change the way the computer reads in and writes back to floppy disks.

The operating system is pretty much invisible to the user. You treat the computer the same way, no matter what you're running under. The significance of the operating system lies in the programmes that can run on your machine.

Right now, the most important operating system is probably MS-DOS, written by Microsoft for the IBM Personal Computer. The extraordinary sales of the PC have fostered a minor industry to write programmes that run on it; the newest and most sophisticated microcomputer programmes are being written for MS-DOS.

If your machine can run under MS-DOS, then you may have access to all these programmes; if not, you don't. Thus compatibility with MS-DOS–or with another standard operating system, such as CP/M or Unix– is a significant consideration when buying a computer.

Maybe you'll never need the programmes that run under MS-DOS, Unix, or CP/M. But you can't be sure – and the experience of previous computer users is that they end up

No short cuts are possible when buying a computer. If you are not clear about the programmes you want, how you will use the computer and the operating systems it can run under, you might end up with a worthless machine.

using their machines for purposes they never imagined when they first bought the machines.

Buying A Computer

It's harder to buy a computer than to use one.

This is literally true: the average buyer spends seven hours purchasing his machine, and anyone can learn to use a computer in much less time than that. To buy a computer, follow these rules:

Buy from a store, not a mail-order house. Mail-order prices are cheaper, but if you're reading this book, you need the support a store provides. A good store has salesmen who speak English; sells both machines and programmes; does its own repairs; and either has its own classes or provides training and installation.

Buy a programme, not a machine. This is the hardest rule to follow. When you walk into the store, you will see all these computers and glowing screens. Your consumer instincts lead you to focus immediately on the machines, their different designs, keyboards, screens, and so on. Resolutely ignore the machines.

You must decide the use for yourself – preferably before you come to the store. Perhaps you want to do word processing, and also to play games. Perhaps you want the machine for business accounting, but explicitly want no games because you don't want your employees wasting time playing them. (Forget that: they'll play games anyway.) Perhaps you want a machine for your family's exploration – and thus want a learning tool, or a toy.

These uses require programmes, and only secondarily, machines to run those programmes. Once you've decided what programmes you want, choosing a machine is much simpler.

Buy a flexible machine. You don't really know how you'll end up using the computer. But you can be pretty sure that once you have the machine working at its primary use, you'll want it to do more. You may not think you will, but you will.

Therefore, the safest thing is to get a machine with lots of optional hardware, programmes, attachments, and other stuff. To determine how flexible your machine is, ask these questions:

How many programmes are available? If the machine you're considering doesn't have a fat book listing programmes for sale, or if the salesman hands you a sheet printed by the computer manufacturer, think carefully about your purchase.

How many languages are available? The number of programming languages is a good indicator of how much programming has already been done on the machine, and how quickly future programmes will be adapted to it.

How many operating systems will it run under? The operating system determines the number of available programmes. Specifically, think carefully before you buy a machine that can't run under MS-DOS or CP/M.

How much hardware is available? Can you buy attachments to make the machine speak? Draw on a graphics tablet? Use a light pen or a 'mouse'? How many different manufacturers sell hardware for your machine?

How many books are available? If there's a store in your town that specialises in computer books, visit it just to look at the number of books available for your machine as opposed to others. Find out how many magazines either are devoted to your machine or carry regular articles on your machine.

You may never want any of the books, magazines, hardware, or programmes. But you can't be sure, and a limited machine costs as much as a flexible one. Keep your options open.

Never buy a machine unless it does the job now. The salesman may promise that a machine will have just the piece of hardware or exactly the programme you want next month. But it may not come next month. It may not come for a year. It may not come ever.

This harsh fact has always been true of computers. In many respects, the history of an established, reputable company like IBM is a chronicle of salesmen managing to keep customers happy despite the fact that the machines arrive late and don't perform as promised.

Don't buy a brand-new machine or programme. Computers and programmes are complex creations, and new ones have bugs – sometimes severe bugs. The Apple III computer was released prematurely, and then withdrawn for a time because of its problems. A great many programmes have been hastily released, and just as hastily 'updated' as the manufacturers correct the bugs.

If you wouldn't buy a new-model car for at least a year, then you don't want to buy a new machine or programme until it's been out and tested for a while either.

Don't save money on monitors or printers. Beginners often imagine monitors or printers are less important than the computer itself. They're not. Your experience of the computer is largely determined by how the type looks on the screen or on the printed page. Fuzzy type and blurry print are a drag.

It is much easier to add than to upgrade equipment. Unless the store allows you to try out a monitor or a printer, don't accept a cheap one. You'll soon wish you had something better, and you'll find nobody wants your cheap equipment any more than you do. ♦

Every month, in the privacy of your own office, thrill to an international fair of the latest in industrial products, processes and services.

Come to think of it, that is exactly what **Industrial Products Finder** is all about.

Month after month, it delivers authentic data on the very latest in industrial products, processes and services. Some 332 per month, based on our 1984 average.

From all over India. And, then, some from the rest of the world.

All facts, no frills.

Carefully vetted and checked by our editors who write with knowledge and caution....

So what you get each month is an invaluable

sourcebook, on who is making what and where.

It is like visiting an international trade fair without the expense and hassle that goes with it.

Industrial Products Finder. At an incredibly low price of Rs. 130/- a year, in 12 regular issues and an annual number of over 600 pages, normally priced at Rs. 100/- for news-stand sales.

Industrial Products Finder. It always finds you customers.

The Circulation Manager,
Industrial Products Finder,
Business Press Private Limited,
Maker Tower 'E', 18th Floor,
Cuffe Parade, Bombay 400 005.

AVAILABLE ONLY THROUGH SUBSCRIPTION

Please begin my/our subscription for **Industrial Products Finder** including the Annual Number, with the _____ (write month applicable) issue at ☐ Rs. 130 for 1 year ☐ Rs. 235 for 2 years ☐ Rs. 330 for 3 years in favour of the following address.
☑ Tick what is applicable.

Name _____

Address _____

_____

_____ Pin Code _____

I/We enclose payment of Rs. _____ in favour of **Business Press Private Limited** by "A/c. Payee"
☐ Bank Draft. ☐ Cheque.
☐ Money Order (receipt enclosed). ☐ Postal Order.
☐ Cash (if hand-delivered).
☐ Send my/our first copy by VPP at Rs. 7 extra for VPP charges. ☑ Tick what is applicable.

Please add Rs. 3 bank charge if you are paying by outside-Bombay-cheque.

Date _____ Signature _____

A. Design-IPF2

Bejan Daruwalla's Predictions

ARIES: March 21 to April 20: The good things of life – money, comforts, diamonds, rubies, and a mind-blowing experience – await you in December. Collaborations and ties are the other salient features for Arians around the 12th, when the new Moon falls in your ninth sector. Also, December is the launch pad for a period of evolution and growth.

TAURUS: April 21 to May 21: The Sun-Uranus conjunction helps you in terms of joint finance, religious ceremonies, rituals, funds and trusts. There is a possibility of health hazards, and this could be due to an accident. So, watch your step. Many Taureans will find long distance travel unavoidable this month. A month for the bizarre and the unusual.

GEMINI: May 22 to June 21: A slightly uneasy month, in the sense that your mate, colleagues and business partner might behave in a contrary manner. The sparks will fly. This could affect your health, specially in terms of nervous tension and stomach ailments. A Venus-Jupiter sextile aids you in romance, an alliance or a trip. The last week reveals an upward trend in finance.

CANCER: June 22 to July 22: Sustained hard work and added responsibility will be your lot now. While you will succeed in your endeavours (Cancerians usually do), the toll will be in terms of health. This is not the right time to lend money, though most Cancerians will be borrowing money this month. After the 15th, you'll have your share of fun.

LEO: July 23 to August 23: This is a month for happiness and fun. Your creativity, too, will be fully manifest. You will earn the applause of critics and experts. An important month for matters pertaining to children, hobbies, speculation, entertainment. Writers, singers and musicians will make it big. A Sun-Jupiter sextile could mean wedding bells around the 10th.

VIRGO: August 24 to September 23: Home, property, renovation, alteration – that's where the emphasis lies in December. A spate of buying and selling, therefore, should be anticipated. The health of parents and in-laws could cause concern. After the 15th, you receive important news and messages as Mars flits into your third sector. It could change the course of your life.

LIBRA: September 24 to October 23: A time to reach out to people and places. A Mercury-Uranus union leads to contacts, contracts, assignments and opportunities for Librans. Do not vacillate: grab them. For those of you interested in collaborations, export and import, now is the time to act. In the last week, the focus shifts to property.

SCORPIO: October 24 to November 22: As Saturn is now out of your sun-sign by Western astrology, the going should be easier. A business deal, a major contract, a loan, should come through before the end of February. That will open up new avenues. Mars in your sign from the 15th gives you the pep and confidence to make a kill. Marriage is probable.

SAGITTARIUS: November 23 to December 21: Personal ties are emphasised in December. As Saturn is now in your sign by Western astrology, it would be best to mix caution with your undoubted enthusiasm. Be pragmatic, in other words, and success will be yours. If there are a few problems to be ironed out, do it now or in February. Strange, sudden contacts are your fate.

CAPRICORN: December 22 to January 20: Expenses will mount now. This could be for a worthy cause. You will be altruistic. Despite being in a crowd, you will be lonely and in an introspective frame of mind. A visit to a hospital, clinic or social welfare centre is destined around December 12. Anything to do with foreign countries should prove pleasurable.

AQUARIUS: January 21 to February 18: Friends and well-wishers will rush to your aid. Your prestige and social standing soar. December is the month to reap the harvest of the last few months' work. Applause and accolades await you. There will be lots of social activities and a promotion, too. At group meetings, you will be at an advantage.

PISCES: February 19 to March 20: Let not ambition mock your useful toil. Victory is definitely yours, provided you do not overdo a good thing. The middle of the month is best for a fling, an adventure. Your efficiency shoots up. There is a possibility of a promotion in December and January. The last week is favourable for socialising. It will help you launch the New Year royally. ♦

THE COLUMNIST

The Indian columnist bears no relation to his Western counterpart. A self-proclaimed 'saviour of democracy', he rehashes the same material for several publications. Should we take him at all seriously? VIDHUSHAK asks.

ONCE UPON A TIME, not so long ago, Indian journalism consisted of reporters, sub-editors and editors. The reporters reported, the subs edited the copy, and the editors wrote editorials for the elite and the faithful. Everyone was happy with the arrangement and there were few ripples in journalism.

After Watergate and the publicity it generated, Indian journalism woke up to the significance of investigative reporting. Woodward and Bernstein's *All The President's Men* became a bestseller and then a popular movie. Journalists watched in wonder Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman portraying . . . of all people . . . reporters!

So, like the hippie cult, blue jeans and the generation gap, investigative reporting came to Indian journalism. Reporters walked with their heads held high, a gleam in their eyes, as they excitedly discussed their 'scoops' about 'an alleged official having alleged links with alleged smugglers and reportedly receiving alleged kickbacks'!

Then came the Emergency, a godsend for journalists. For months, they sulked, and persons who contributed two paragraphs every day to their paper stopped even that because of 'censorship problems'. With the lifting of the Emergency, the defeat of Indira Gandhi and the coming of the Janata rule, there was a feeling of 'let 100 flowers bloom, let 1,000 publications come out'. And thus

Vidhushak is a regular contributor to this column. His last victims were Vijay Amritraj and Kabir Bedi.

ILLUSTRATION BY APARNA SINGH

PAPER TIGERS

The columnist usually has it easy. It's not necessary for him to be original provided he can write in a particular manner. And for good measure, he can make the most ordinary of his stories an 'exclusive'.

began the age of the latest paper tiger, the columnist.

Of course, columnists had flourished in the West. Walter Lippman wrote a sensitive, sober and objective column on national and international affairs. Jack Anderson, in his syndicated column, exposed corruption at all levels, irrespective of the party in power. But the Indian columnists were neither Lippmans nor Andersons.

Most of them were senior journalists or 'special correspondents'. Others were foreign correspondents of the big papers, or had trained in the hallowed premises of *The Sunday Times*.

Columnists are of two types: syndicated and non-syndicated. The syndicated columnist produces stuff (mostly political stories) that is reproduced in a number of dailies and magazines, while the non-syndicated columnist writes slightly different stories for different publications. One member of this species, from Bombay, recently praised the Punjab accord in a Calcutta daily and, a couple of days later, blasted the same in a Bombay eveninger! This is called a 'columnist's privilege'.

What are the qualifications of a columnist? It goes without saying that he should be a newspaper man of some seniority. More important, he must have the feeling that he is a 'saviour of democracy', upholding the ideals of a 'free and fearless press'. These credentials can be established by systematically attacking Mrs Indira Gandhi, her family, and the Congress party. Here's how the columnists analyse some national problems:

What is the root cause of the Punjab problem?

Mrs Gandhi's divide-and-rule policy. She hob-nobbed with Bhindranwale and this led to Operation Bluestar. The Sikh extremists can sit inside the Golden Temple and take pot-shots at everyone, but the Sikhs' wounded feelings must be assuaged. Time and again, the Akalis came to the negotiating table with very reasonable proposals, but Mrs Gandhi always politicised the issue, postponing a solution.

Who is responsible for the stagnant pool of dirty water on 17th Road, Khar, Bombay?

Mrs Gandhi was, of course, and now it's Mr Clean, who is not all that clean, and that explains the continuing presence of the pool of stagnant water.

Who cannot collect funds?

Congress (I) leaders. Antulay can't collect funds. Charan Singh can, George Fernandes can, Sharad Pawar can, Rajni Patel could, Ram Nath Goenka can. Columnists should not probe into the Amritkosh Fund, *kisan* funds and George's Sikh Rehabilitation Fund.

How is our judicial system?

Some judges are good, others bad. If they indict Antulay they are as wise as Solomon, if they throw out charges because of lack of evidence, then they are bad. Justice Hegde can resign from the Supreme Court, join the BJP and contest the poll, but Justice Beg cannot resign and accept the Congress (I) ticket to contest from Assam.

Whose meetings always spell trouble?

The Youth Congress's. They loot, molest women, destroy property and then shout – "Indira Gandhi *zindabad,* Rajiv Gandhi *zindabad*!" from the roof-tops, so that journalists can identify them. And in Moscow, only the Congress (I) youths played postmen in the city's gardens; the Janata, CPI and CPM youths were at the conventions 24 hours a day!

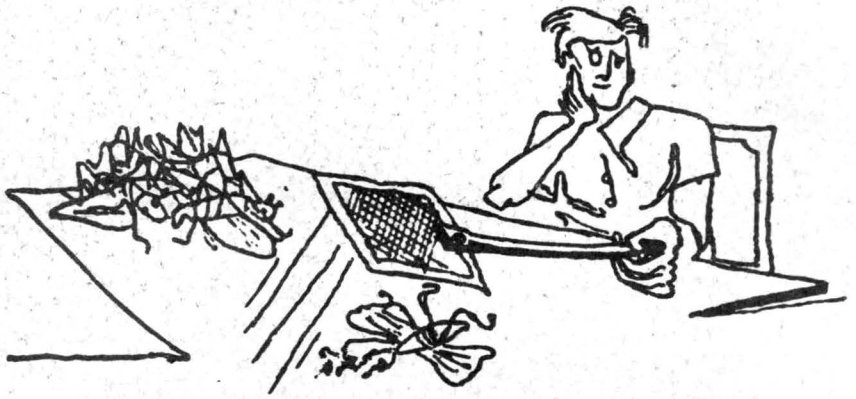
Once you can learn to think and write like this, it's easy to be a columnist. It's not necessary to be original, and you can borrow words and phrases from abroad – gang of four, corridors of power, mother and son, computer boys and so on. And in case the syndicated columnists write books, you can bet they would be titled *All The Prime Minister's Men, All The Janata Men*, or something like that.

Columnists have become paper tigers because, like magicians pulling out rabbits from hats, they can pull out 'exclusives' any time they want. Everything they write about is 'exclusive', even if it is only the transfer of a junior stenographer from the Industries Ministry to the Tourism Ministry.

Columnists are highly reliable too, because they are able to 'feel the pulse of the nation'. For instance, if they say that a Cabinet shake-up is imminent, you can bet your last paisa that the Cabinet will not be reshuffled. If they predict a swing towards the US and the likelihood of the PM's visit to that country, it will be safe to assume that a big trade and defence treaty will be signed with the Soviet Union and the government will announce the PM's visits to Moscow, Warsaw, Prague and Budapest. And such is the political sensitivity of the syndicated columnists that not one of them could predict the Rajiv-Longowal accord on Punjab. Of course, after the accord was signed, some of them shook their heads wisely and declared: "I was aware of what was going on but, for the sake of the nation's future, kept quiet."

And thus, this new type of paper tiger marches on, growling a bit, roaring a lot, gossiping *Stardust* style, cheering the PUCL-PUDR hit-lists and jealously guarding the precious freedom of the press. ♦

You're good.



How good is your work ?

You are young, qualified, dynamic. You are also under-utilised. You've pushed enough files, you want to move the mountains.

The EKS Advanced Management Correspondence Course shows you how to start with the molehills and not stop there, when to push, when to pull, when just to nudge. You may even learn that mountains move best when they move on their own steam.

Baroda Productivity Council is a non-profit training institution affiliated to the National Productivity Council and conducts the EKS (Energo-Cybernetic Strategy) diploma course in association with Mewes System of Frankfurt, West Germany. Minimum qualification : ONLY AN OPEN MIND.

For the course prospectus please mail your bio-data and Rs. 10/- (postal order or money order) to :

EKS Division
301, Baroda Productivity Council
Productivity House, Productivity Road,
Baroda-390 005.

TV ADS

Guest Column / by Nirmal Goswami

THE URBAN MIDDLE CLASS MELANCHOLY

THERE IS an initial paradox. Arguably, India is poised for an industrial renaissance. The official fortune-tellers in the corridors of New Delhi churn out optimism from every platform. Yet, a sombre melancholy weighs on urban middle class souls.

Only a few intelligent cynics are alarmed by the euphoria of the Seventh Five-Year Plan investment programmes. The rapidly expanding urban middle class succumbs to their lures through a conditioned reflex. The prospects of more noodles and pizzas focus popular attention on multiplying shop-shelves. The urban elite is no longer alone in this mission of consumption: it's been swelled by tens of thousands of emulators. They have stepped into the magic realm of disposable income.

But look closely.

Beneath the forced smiles and laboured cries of jubilation lie weary minds exhausted by the stubborn struggle. It is a struggle for imitating success. The effort has wasted the protagonists, distorted their values, swept away points of reference and left them bewildered in a welter of emotional and intellectual chaos. The result is that they find it bad form to praise the world and life openly. The worst casualties are the middle class values and conventions of courage, love, passion and faith. This is the private tragedy of the urban middle class.

At another level, these acquisitive instincts have blurred social barriers, obscured strong impulses and created a dull, colourless society that is incapable of laughter.

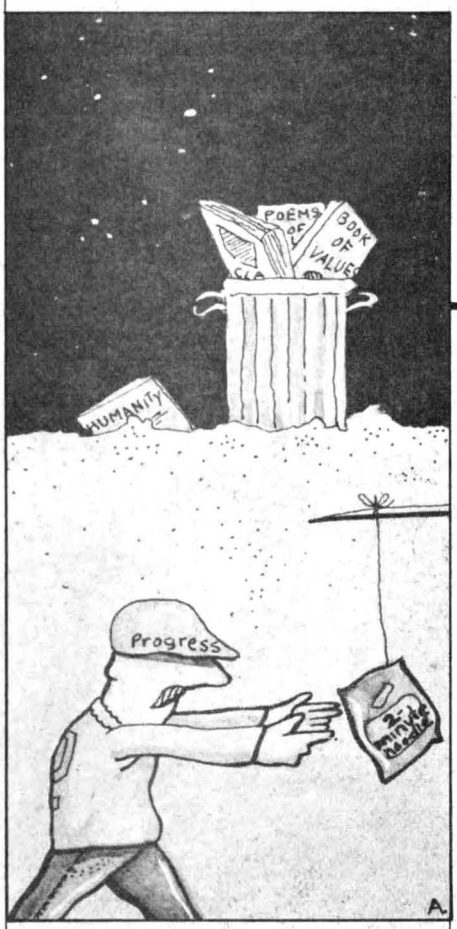
Only a few generations ago, the middle class rejoiced in violent contrasts. Experience of pleasure and pain was direct and absolute. Events and actions were embodied in solemn forms which raised them to the dignity of rituals. The great facts of birth, marriage and death, were elevated to mysteries. Even trivialities – like a journey, a task, a visit – were attended by formalities and ceremonies. There was a keener appreciation of honour and riches. A warm shawl, a soft bed, or a glass of fruit juice were avidly enjoyed. Today, these are *passé*. There was a sharp contrast between silence and sound, darkness and light. Today, the urban middle class hardly knows the effect of a solitary light or a single distant cry. It has lost its points of reference and the approaching chaos has blunted its sensibilities. Uprooted from its moorings, it has been transplanted into a wilderness of incomprehensible imagery.

People live a dense and concrete life, filled with external imagery. The imagery is structured by the new uses of literacy, the information explosion, the overflowing shop-shelves and the new discount stores. Mixers, grinders, electric irons, toasters, egg-beaters, tape-recorders, television sets, refrigerators, washing-machines, vacuum cleaners and video recorders populate popular imagination. Two-wheelers, safari suits, leather shoes, exotic cosmetics, tantalising lingerie, cheap discos, dinner after Saturday night shows, glossy magazines, TV serials, cable TV and commercial films, exert a spectacularly debilitating effect on the middle class sensibility. Each person behaves like a deprived child who is in a desperate hurry to catch up with the good life.

There are casualties in this new ethos. Romantic love is no longer possible. The cities have become crowded slums. Open space and greenery have disappeared under the builders' bulldozers. Public transport is a nightmare. Garbage coagulates under a merciless sun. Intolerable living conditions have brutalised the urban psyche. Intra-personal relationships have been reduced to the trading of dispensable emotions. There is a pervasive tendency to be clever and correct. One must be smart and, therefore, must never make silly mistakes or take stupid risks. This aridity requires relationships to be mutually convenient. So middle class love in urban India today is an affirmation of practical virtues. This anxiety to be smart drains out the more authen-

Nirmal Goswami writes frequently on theatre, poetry and social trends.

PHOTOGRAPH BY GAUTAM PATOLE



Culturally, the Indian working class is far more advanced than the urban middle class. It has a stronger bargaining power and a highly evolved group sense. The middle class, on the other hand, expands only to accentuate its dispensability.

tic constituents of a relationship and denies the validity of joy, courage, passion or faith. An indifference to injustice, a callousness to chaos and disorder and a disdain for logic sum up the abdication of courage and passion from middle class life. Joy cannot survive this intense emptiness.

The Hindi commercial cinema is a unique commentary on this ennui. The films are usually grotesque, absurd and quite ridiculous. But observe some of the human relationships and the underlying values. They depict, however crudely, ideas of romantic love, passion, courage and faith. These have withered in real life. But older promptings still urge a yearning for these values. The cinema is a nostalgic memory of a once-stirring past and the atrophied values live a mythical existence on the screen. Millions of urban Indians are grateful for this great service performed by the commercial cinema. It brings a healing touch to the immense sense of loss.

Stories in popular magazines and novels regenerate the same lost world. They allow the readers to wallow in nostalgia for what it was like to be intensely alive. The significance of this is the failure of the modern middle class to evolve a contemporary culture of its own.

In India, the electronic circuit has not overthrown time and space as it has done elsewhere. Instead, it has drawn the urban middle class into cocoons of psychic, social and political parochialism. Possession of gadgets and dreams of higher consumption are the new symbols of erotic pleasure. Collective participation in this private experience is still taboo. Neighbours and acquaintances can only acclaim it from a sulking distance if they can subdue their jealousy.

This false individualism acts as a deterrent to freedom. And the absence of freedom inhibits the growth of culture. Culturally, the Indian working class is far more advanced than the urban middle class, because the former can exercise greater choice in nurturing its own genius. It has a stronger bargaining power at the barricades. It has a highly evolved group sense. The middle class, on the other hand, expands only to accentuate its dispensability. Thus, it is psychologically vulnerable – even prone – to perversions. And there is an abundance of perversions, both moral and intellectual. These do not consist only of bad manners. The perversions reside in the mindless pursuit of alien responses, uncritical attitudes and flabby fantasies. The information explosion and the ever-increasing exposure to distant, dimly coherent mores have taken a heavy toll of the middle class equilibrium. An entire generation has been reduced to emulators.

The intellectual lethargy of the middle class demonstrates the despondency of this situation. The theatre, once a virile creative outlet for these people, is being steadily undermined and vulgarised by a mounting influx of soap operas. Television spews out comic fairy-tales and worse inanities. Powerful films made by intensely aware directors cannot find distributors and waste away in cans. The middle class simply refuses to be disturbed.

Cities which once produced *kababs*, mutton rolls, *idli sambar*, *dosas* and *paneer samosas* within minutes, in ramshackle eateries, now chase the imported fast food fad. This food – lurid pizza and baleful spaghetti – is devoured by men and women in Levi's jeans and Lacoste T-shirts. Ironically, these people have all the time in the world to lounge around in these *fast* food establishments!

Raymond Williams has traced the history and semantic structure of five words to analyse social change in his part of the world between 1780 and 1950. The words are: industry, democracy, class, art and culture. I have followed roughly comparable terms of reference in this inordinately brief examination of a class which carries within itself enormous power to destroy itself. More important, it also has the capacity to legitimise itself. In my view, the urban middle class today is an illegitimate child of an uninformed democracy and breathless industrialism. This is the source of the middle class melancholy and all its morbid overtones.

I am no prophet of pessimism. But I await an abler mind to explore the spacious optimism which seems to redeem the middle class experience today. ♦

ILLUSTRATION BY APARNA SINGH

WHOSE RIGHT IS IT ANYWAY?

The first of a new series on civil liberties. This month, a discussion on the State's right to curtail movement by impounding passports.

A YOUNG INDIAN Muslim fancied himself a crusader for the cause of his community. He chanced upon a little-known, London-based monthly sheet devoted to the situation of Muslims in Asia and soon began sending dispatches which were ordinarily critical of the Indian government's policies. A couple of years later, he travelled to London on an Indian passport which he legitimately held as an Indian citizen. While in London, he submitted the passport to the Indian High Commission for an extension. To his dismay, he found that the passport had been impounded on the grounds that it was not in the 'public interest' to allow him to retain a passport. The action was ostensibly taken under Sections 6 and 10 of the Passports Act, 1967.

The young man made an appeal to the appellate authority, a Joint Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry. At the hearing of the appeal, the young man's lawyer endeavoured to persuade the appellate authority to disclose the basis for claiming that it was not in the public interest to allow his client to retain a passport.

Of course, the Passports Act, which devotes more time and space to the impounding and revocation of passports than to the right to hold a passport, states in several places that reasons may not be given if it is not in the interest of the 'sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of India, friendly relations of India with any foreign country or in the interests of the general public to furnish such a copy'. But, undaunted, the lawyer proceeded to cite the legendary case of Menaka Gandhi Vs Union of India in which the Supreme Court, sitting at the Constitutional Bench, devoted more than 166 printed pages to the subject of the right to hold a passport. It virtually created a new jurisdiction for judicial review which has since been termed the Indian version of the 'Substantive Due Process' clause. In other words, but for Menaka Gandhi's case, many recent developments in Indian law, including much of public interest litigation, would not have been possible.

It seems that, whatever be the opinion of the Supreme Court, the Government of India is yet to be convinced that constitutional principles demand that a full-fledged right to travel and, therefore, the concomitant right to hold a passport, be recognised. It is precisely because of this obdurate approach that, time and again, persons who appear to be thorns in the flesh of the government find themselves in the unenviable position of the young Muslim who still awaits the wisdom of the appellate authority.

So whose right is it anyway? In a country which professes to follow the democratic pattern, and which has a written Constitution which clearly specifies the rights of its citizens, does the State have the power to curtail our movements? It is fortunate that, despite what the government may say or do, the Supreme Court, which *is*, ultimately, the final authority on rights, has very clearly stated that the right to travel and to hold a passport is a fundamental right and is included in the right to personal liberty. If anyone raises questions on this position, throw the Menaka Gandhi case at them.

BEFORE GIVING you some juicy, quotable quotes, perhaps a brief review of the facts of that case would be in order. We are talking about a time which was post-Emergency – a time when Menaka Gandhi and her mother-in-law were out of power. Menaka's passport had been issued on June 1, 1976, and though valid for five years, she received a letter from the Regional Passport Officer in Delhi on July 4, 1977, intimating her that the Government of India had decided to impound her document under Section 10(3)(c) of the Act 'in public interest'. She was required to surrender it within seven days. Menaka wrote back, asking for reasons. She was informed that these could not be given, again 'in the interest of the general public'. She there-

(Continued on page 105)

Louise Fernandes, a former Sunday *magazine staffer, is now a Delhi-based freelancer.*

After the over-whelming response to its first draw

CHANDRA AGENCIES
FOR PROSPERITY

CHANDRA AGENCIES

announce the

2nd Draw of

VAIBHAV SHALI

The 21st Century Bumper

Ticket: Rs. 1000/-
Draw: 23.12.85

To be sure you get the tickets, fill in this coupon, mail it to:
CHANDRA AGENCIES
C-89, South Exten., Part II, New Delhi-110 049

Please send me ....rs.....tickets of the Vaibhavshali Bumper draw to be held on 23.12.85. I am enclosing a Demand Draft/Cheque/MO Receipt for Rs..... I understand each ticket costs Rs. 1000/- only and the postal charges will be borne by you.

Name

Address

Signature

10 First Prizes
of Rs. 15 lakhs
each on matching
last 4 digits

Just 1 lakh tickets only

90 Second Prizes
of Rs. 5 lakhs
each on matching
last 3 digits

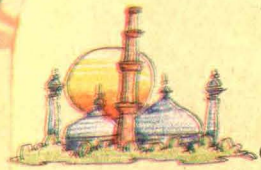
prize guaranteed
on every ticket

Issued by: Chairman,
Vaibhavshali Raffle Committee,
39, Vasudeva Nagar, Indore

Remember!
only one lakh
persons are entitled
to participate in the Draw

In a city which housed grand Moghul Emperors... a hotel that treats you like one!

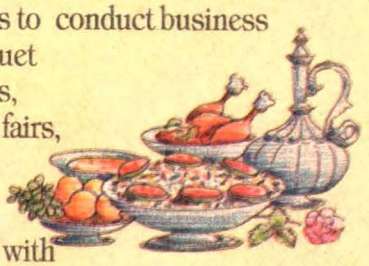
THE TAJ MAHAL HOTEL, NEW DELHI.



Delhi. India's elegant capital city where ancient monuments and artistic mausoleums stand testimony to historic magnificence. And springing from the heart of such splendour is the Taj Mahal Hotel.

Built of pink Dholpur sandstone, as were the Moghul monuments of old, you feel like a king from the moment you step in. Enamelled brocade domes welcome you in a virgin-white marble lobby. Traditional Indian warmth and hospitality starts with a smile at the reception. And the journey through royal luxury carries on and on. In the exquisitely tasteful rooms and suites. In the five speciality restaurants offering Continental, Indian, Italian, French and Chinese delicacies.

In the swinging discotheque. And in the very modern facilities and amen- - ities that the Moghuls would have been grateful for! Including in-house movies in all rooms, a well-equipped Health Club and Beauty Parlour, an exclusive 'treasure house' of Indian crafts and gifts, a Business Centre and back-up facilities to conduct business efficiently, banquet rooms for parties, functions, trade fairs, receptions and conferences.



And all this with the style of the Taj. To make your stay in Delhi an experience...in royalty.

For reservations and enquiries contact:

• **Taj Sales Offices:**

	Bombay	Delhi	Calcutta	Madras	Bangalore	Cochin	Secunderabad
Telephones	2023366	322333	443795	474849	29281	6646	72240
	2022524	322256	443721				

THE TAJ GROUP OF HOTELS

R.V. Pandit
the Publisher of **Imprint***,
(now based in India)
invites applications from competent writers
for senior editorial positions
on the following new monthly magazines
he is launching in early 1986

BUSINESSMONTH

ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS FINDER

INDIAN ARCHITECT & BUILDER

THE INDIAN AUTO JOURNAL

THE TAILOR & CLOTH SHOP RETAILER

STARFRAME**

The Publisher (founder in Hong Kong in 1968 of the business magazine concept you are familiar with now) provides the working environment, goals, rewards, freedom, and a high standard of supportive expertise in related areas like photography, layout, production, printing, circulation and advertising, to achieve excellence in magazine publishing.

Telephone: R.V. Pandit
215350/217415
Or write to him at:
Business Press Private Ltd.,
Maker Tower 'E', 18th Floor,
Cuffe Parade,
Bombay 400 005

---

* Who also publishes Industrial Products Finder, The Indian Textile Journal, Chemical Products Finder, Products From India, Who's Who In India, All India Textiles Directory, and The Architectural & Building Directory of India.

** An exciting new format for carrying life-size colour pictures of your favourite movie stars and other beautiful people by daring young Indian photographers.

(Continued from page 101)
on filed a writ petition in court, challenging both the action and the subsequent refusal to give reasons.

Among other contentions, she argued that the right to go abroad was part of 'personal liberty' within the meaning of that expression as used in Article 21, and that no one could be deprived of this right except according to the procedure prescribed by law. Also, that there was no procedure prescribed by the Passports Act for impounding or revoking a passport and that, even if some procedure could be traced in the Act, it was 'unreasonable' and 'arbitrary' inasmuch as it did not provide for giving the passport-holder an opportunity to be heard against the making of the order.

She had further argued that Section 10(3)(c) was violative of the fundamental rights guaranteed under Articles 14, 19(1)(a) and (g) and 21 and that the impugned order had been made in contravention of the rules of natural justice and were, therefore, null and void. Amplifying the latter argument, she had pointed out that the order had the effect of placing an 'unreasonable restriction' on her right of free speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a), as also the right to carry on the profession of a journalist conferred under Article 19(1)(g). The order, she added, could not, consistent with these provisions of Article 19, be passed on mere information of the Central government with the proceedings before the Shah Commission of inquiry still on at that time. In the matter of public interest, she contended that in order that a passport be impounded under Section 10(3)(c), public interest must actually exist in the present and the mere likelihood of public interest arising in the future did not provide grounds for impounding the passport.

In bald, basic terms, the passport authorities must provide specific reasons and a chance of appeal if they impound a passport. If these rights are violated, throw the Menaka Gandhi case at them.

Concurring with Justice P N Bhagwati (now Chief Justice of the Supreme Court), then Chief Justice, M H Beg, forcefully stated that the tests of reason and justice could not be 'abstract'. There were no pressing grounds for the immediate action of impounding the petitioner's passport, he said, regretting the 'rather cavalier fashion' in which the disclosure of any reason for impounding the passport was denied.

Justice V R Krishna Iyer, also concurring, was even more emphatic on the issue of personal liberty. The right to free movement, he said, was a vital element of personal liberty. It included the right to travel abroad.

However, Justice Bhagwati, who wrote the main judgement, disagreed with the petitioner's contention that the power conferred on the passport authority to impound a passport under Section 10(3)(c) was 'discriminatory'. "...It can be safely assumed that the Central government will exercise the power in a reasonable and responsible manner. When power is vested in a high authority like the Central government, abuse of power cannot be lightly assumed and, in any event, if there is abuse of power, the arms of the court are long enough to reach it and strike it down..."

As to the applicability of Article 19 to the case at hand, Justice Bhagwati observed that the right to go abroad could not be regarded as included in the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) on the theory of peripheral or concomitant right. The right to go abroad could not, he said, be treated as part of the right to carry on trade, business, profession or calling, guaranteed under Article 19(1)(g). The right to go abroad was clearly not a guaranteed right under any clause of Article 19(1), and Section 10(3)(c) of the Act, which authorised imposition of restrictions on the right to go abroad by impounding of passport, could not be held as offending Article 19(1)(a) or (g), as its direct and inevitable impact was on the right to go abroad and *not* on the right of free speech and expression or the right to carry on trade, business, profession or calling.

But that, however, did not mean that an order made under the abovementioned Section of the Act may not violate Article 19(1)(a) or (g). Where a statutory provision empowering an authority to take action was constitutionally valid, action taken under it may offend a fundamental right and, in that event, though the statutory provision was valid, the action may be void. Therefore, even though the Section in the Act was valid, the question whether an order made under it was invalid as contravening a fundamental right would always remain, the judge said. "The direct and inevitable effect of an order impounding a passport may, in a given case, be to abridge or take away freedom of speech and expression or the right to carry on a profession, and where such was the case, the order would be invalid..." he said.

AND WHERE does that leave us? In bald, basic terms, you and I have the right to travel and, if that travel takes us abroad, the right to possess a passport. The passport authority does have an equal right to revoke or impound our passports, but not without giving specific reasons and a chance of appeal. Denial of this opportunity would be violative of our rights and we have 'Menaka Gandhi' – the case, not the person – to back us up. ♦

From early 1986.

Businessmonth,
month after month after Businessmonth.

From Business Press.
The Information Company.

A.Design-BM-85

CASTEISM AND THE NOVEL

We continue to let caste determine who we speak disparagingly of. The scavenger and the hide-flayer may be exempt from ridicule today, but a sweet-seller becomes an ideal target.

SOMEDAY, someone should do a piece on the *halwai* and the grocer in the Indian novel. I remember the Nayantara Sahgal book where the *halwai*'s son becomes a Chief Minister. Kamala Markandaya starts *The Golden Honeycomb* with the British selecting a 'victualling' *bania* for a maharajah's vacant throne. That ended the novel for me. The British can be accused of many things, but certainly not of unawareness of the finer gradations among the Indian aristocracy. Any novel which starts with such an absurdity does not deserve to be read. So this lovely hardback New York edition remains a decorative piece on my shelf despite Paul Scott's excellent review of the book in the London *Times*.

In both the above cases, the man was despised not because of his own failings, but because he was a *halwai* or a grocer. We continue to let caste determine the targets of our scorn. It wouldn't do to speak disparagingly of the scavenger and the hide-flayer today. But a sweet-seller, with his rolls of fat, sitting on the floor in his banian (which lexicographers define as a vest worn by a *bania*) becomes an ideal target.

And now comes an entire novel on a *halwai*'s family, *Nation Of Fools*, by Balraj Khanna (Penguin), a gently humorous, often-ribald book about growing up in Punjab. (I would have called the humour Rabelaisian, if I had read Rabelais.) This is the story of Shadi Lal Khatri's family, after they migrated from West Punjab to Baldev Nagar, a refugee township which came up between the city and cantonment of Ambala. Khatri opens a sweet shop in Panchkoola and, whenever he comes back home, he is 'double hungry' for home-cooked food and his wife, Paro. The son, Omi Prakash, is 'matric-failed', as people in the Punjab put it.

Keki Daruwalla is India's foremost English language poet. This is a regular column.

The book is built around non-essentials. It is vulgar, coarse-grained and crude. But then life in a small Punjabi town *was* vulgar and crude. School meant sexual fantasies, an exchange of obscenities and vicious beatings from burly schoolmasters. Word gets around that Omi's father is opening another sweet shop. The master, Tirathram, corners him in class the next day. Where is Vladivostok? The other boys get into the act. "He doesn't have to know it now, sir," Bali said. "He will be sitting in his own shop soon soon soon, sir," Des said. "Rich man now, sir. Don't need geography now, sir," another boy said. "Maybe Lalaji will be making *jalebi* tomorrow. Even *barfi, peda* and *chum-chum* sweets. That's tomorrow. Today geography. Question number two. Vladivostok – is it a mountain, jungle, lake, volcano?" the master asks. Volcano, comes the answer, and in Australia at that. "Australia, *hain*?" taunts the master. "Sure it is not under your father's arse?" The dispute comes to a head with the boy asserting that Vladivostok lies in a particular part of the master's mother's anatomy.

Omi avoids a public flogging by scampering off to Panchkoola. The family shifts to Chandigarh, and the story is all about how they progress from sweet-vendors to restaurant-owners, how Omi learns to speak good English, about his affairs with the 'Simla Pinks' (convent-educated) and eventually, his arranged marriage.

Light and effervescent as the book is, it reflects the times and highlights its absurdities. Stendhal called the novel 'a mirror walking a road'. *Nation Of Fools* gives us seemingly distorted images in its mirror. But, if most of us had the author's sense of humour and if we were less impassioned about the causes which swept Punjabis off their feet, the images would not have appeared abnormal. It is our vision which has been distorted, a vision which never saw a warped object for what it was, but mistook it for something wholesome. A mile-long procession starts from Sector 22 shouting "Khalistan for the Khalsas" and "Punjab for the Punjabis." The whole city comes out to watch them. A short passage needs to be quoted in full, for it is the by-standers who are speaking, and in Punjab that would mean both protagonist and Greek chorus. The prejudices which led to the later tragedies also come through.

"Look at the sea of black beards and blue turbans," Omi said.

"Turbans, turbans, everywhere, but not a head underneath them," Kapoor said in English in the inimitable style of Professor Gupta.

"They have struck their 12 o'clock and lost their senses. Why do they want an independent Sikh State? And right next to Pakistan,

their greatest enemy. Doesn't make sense," Paro said.

"No, Ma. They want Punjabi as the official language for the Punjab." This has everyone nonplussed. The search to find out the official language starts. Some say it is Hindi, some English.

"Doesn't make sense. We speak Punjabi at home. Children speak it at school, boys and girls at college, men in offices. Why can't we write official letters in it?" Paro asked.

This question should have been put to an entire Hindu generation in Punjab.

A few days later comes another procession, of the Brahmins this time, in their orange robes and 'clean-shaven heads', and their crash-helmet-like hollowed-pumpkin begging bowls. "They walked slowly and looked half asleep as if they had breakfasted on opium." "*Matri bhasha, Hindi bhasha*," they shouted.

"Where do you come from, guru maharaj?" asked Omi, detecting a slightly non-Punjabi lisp about his speech.

"Banaras."

"But that is in UP. And this is Punjab."

"Everyone knows that," the holy *shishya* (disciple) said, shook his *dumru dum-dum,* and walked on.

"What is the bastard doing in Chandigarh then?" Khatri said angrily.

Crooks in disguise, someone calls them. And the passage ends with Kapoor saying: "Brahmins, Brahmins, everywhere, but not a man among them."

Very crass and very crude, perhaps. Thought-provoking, nonetheless.

Nobody says that it is the outsider who made a mess of Punjab. But perhaps the original sin was committed when the Punjabi non-Sikh stated that his language was Hindi.

The book seethes with a unique energy and a vigorous adolescent sexuality. The Punjabi vitality is transmitted to the narrative through a liberal dose of Hindi/Punjabi words – *ishk, bakwas, raunak, bewakoof, phulian* (roasted rice grains) and *marunda.* All this helps in giving the book an authentic, earthy flavour.

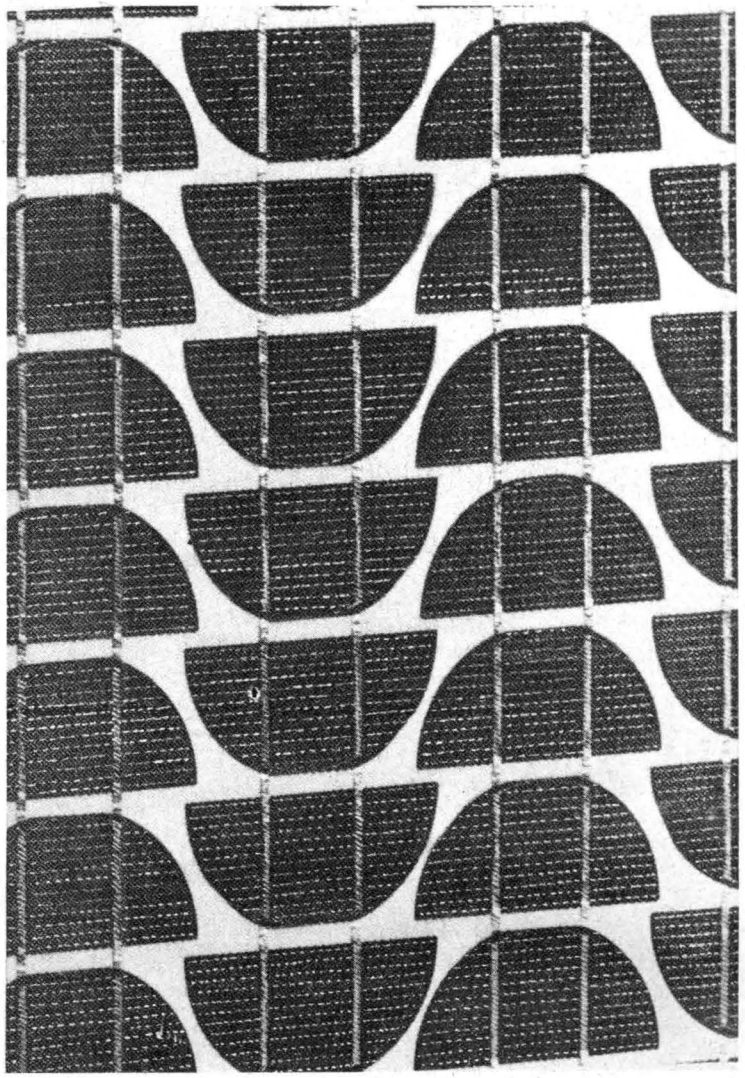
Talking of language, H S Gill uses a staccato style in *The Commitment,* a novel about an inconsiderate husband whose thoughtlessness drives the wife, Summi, to adultery with a doctor, Sajay. Sajay betrays her in the end, returning from Cambodia, where he had gone on an assignment, with a bride. She comes back dazed from the airport, where she had gone to receive him. "Someone passed by, honking like mad. Not his fault, because there I was, standing right in the middle of the road, not knowing where to go or what to do. I couldn't see anything. I think there was rain in my eyes." The novel, which starts with rain, ends with rain as a metaphor.

Of course, the army jargon intervenes at places (Himmat Singh Gill is a serving Brigadier). We are told that Rajiv 'passed out' from the IAS Academy. For the last 50 years, this term has only implied lapsing into unconsciousness. Unfortunately, our military institutions have not kept pace with the changes in language. Hence, year after year, from Kharakvasla and Dehra Dun, hundreds keep 'passing out'. Wouldn't a simpler term like 'qualify' or 'graduate' be a better substitute?

The Punjabi in the author shows up when we hear of Mrs Siri's 'Madrassi chatter', instead of 'Tamil chatter'. 'Madrassi' was one omnibus word or concept into which the Punjabi packed all the people, languages and cultures south of the Vindhyas. Certain 'Indianisms' creep into the narrative unconsciously. Children are described as 'those innocent representatives of God'. 'High society', an expression confined to Indian movies, also finds a place in the narrative.

But the enduring quality of the novel is its spartan simplicity, a graphic plot that lingers in your memory because of its sharply defined strokes, and a style that is syncopated and tense. ♦

EPF



THIS MONTH

Electronics is products, products, and more products. And EPF is your source of information, and your star salesman!

Memo to Electronics Manufacturers

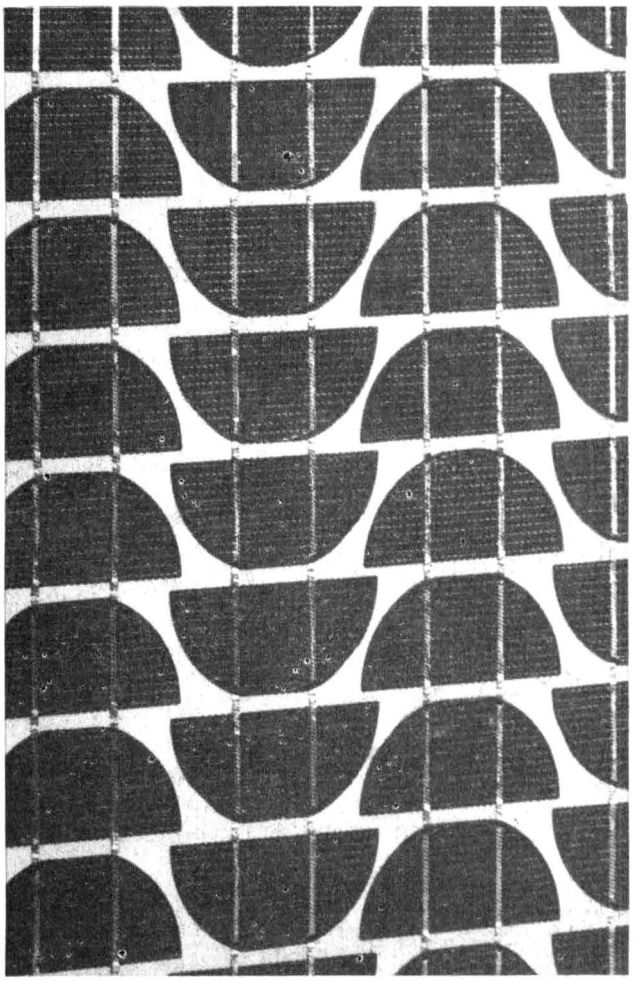
New Products: The electronics industry is products, products and more products. Send information for publication in 'Electronic Products Finder' (EPF) in the same manner and style as you do to the 'Industrial Products Finder'.

Circulation: You know Business Press means business. Through direct mail promotion and through advertising (like the one you are now reading) in the national press, we will secure approximately 6,000 subscribers, most of them from the inaugural issue. With such a circulation, we hope to cover the electronics industry just as efficiently as the IPF covers the industrial manufacturing industry.

Advertising: For all the issues of 'Electronic Products Finder' to be published until December, 1986, we will accept your advertising exactly at 50% of the 'Industrial Products Finder' advertising rates, as given in IPF Rate Card No. 8, currently applicable. Production details, artwork requirements, sizes etc. are exactly as applicable to the 'Industrial Products Finder.'

Electronic Products Finder is a product news magazine: it will carry descriptions of anything and everything new in the electronics market of India. The journal seeks for publication information about any new product, device or service manufacturers in India and abroad develop and offer to the Indian market. Such information is considered for publication without any cost or obligation whatsoever to the manufacturer or to the distributor of the product. Only information on new (for India) products, devices and services is considered for publication.

ELECTRONICS MANUFACTURERS OF INDIA
ELECTRONIC PRODUCTS FINDER
OFFERS YOU THE ALL INDIA ELECTRONICS MARKET!



The Circulation Manager,
Electronic Products Finder,
Business Press Private Limited,
Maker Tower 'E', 18th Floor,
Cuffe Parade, Bombay 400 005.

AVAILABLE ONLY THROUGH SUBSCRIPTION

Please begin my/our subscription for **Electronic Products Finder** with the_____(write month applicable) issue at ☐ Rs. 130 for 1 year ☐ Rs. 235 for 2 years ☐ Rs. 330 for 3 years.
☑ Tick what is applicable.

Name_____

Address_____

Pin Code

I/We enclose payment of Rs._____in favour of **Electronic Products Finder** by "A/c. Payee"
☐ Cheque. ☐ Bank Draft. ☐ Cash.
☐ Money Order (receipt enclosed). ☐ Postal Order.
☐ Cash (if hand-delivered).
☐ Send my/our first copy by VPP at Rs. 7 extra for VPP charges. ☑ Tick what is applicable.

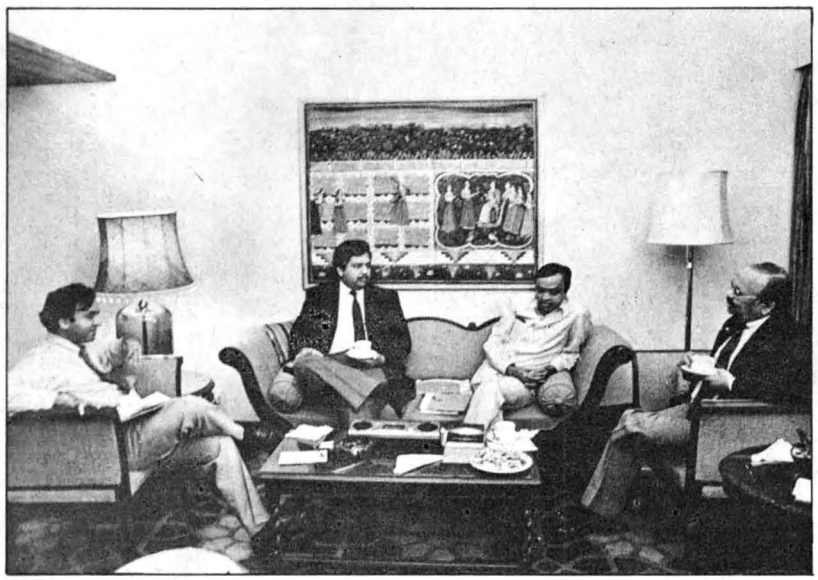
Please add Rs. 3 bank charge if you are paying by cheque drawn on a bank outside Bombay.

Date _____ Signature _____

A-Design-EPF-1-85

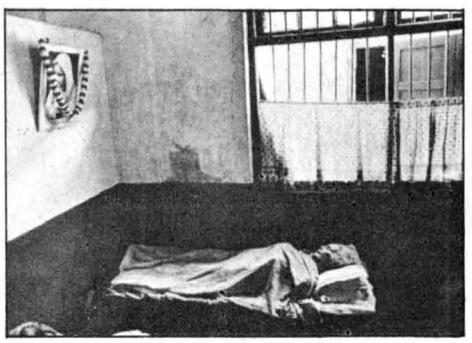
NEXT MONTH

Is the Indian economy ready for the 21st century? An **Imprint** discussion between Murli Deora, MP, Vinod Doshi, Chairman of Premier Automobiles, Gurcharan Das, President of Richardson Hindustan, and Dilip Piramal, Chairman of Blow Plast on this important issue.



Early next year, the Bombay Municipal Corporation plans to evict the city's pavement-dwellers. Will it be justified in doing so? Why has the move attracted so much controversy? An in-depth report.

Do people have a right to die? Many distinguished persons would support the legalisation of euthanasia. On the other hand, many doctors oppose it. **Imprint** examines the issues involved.



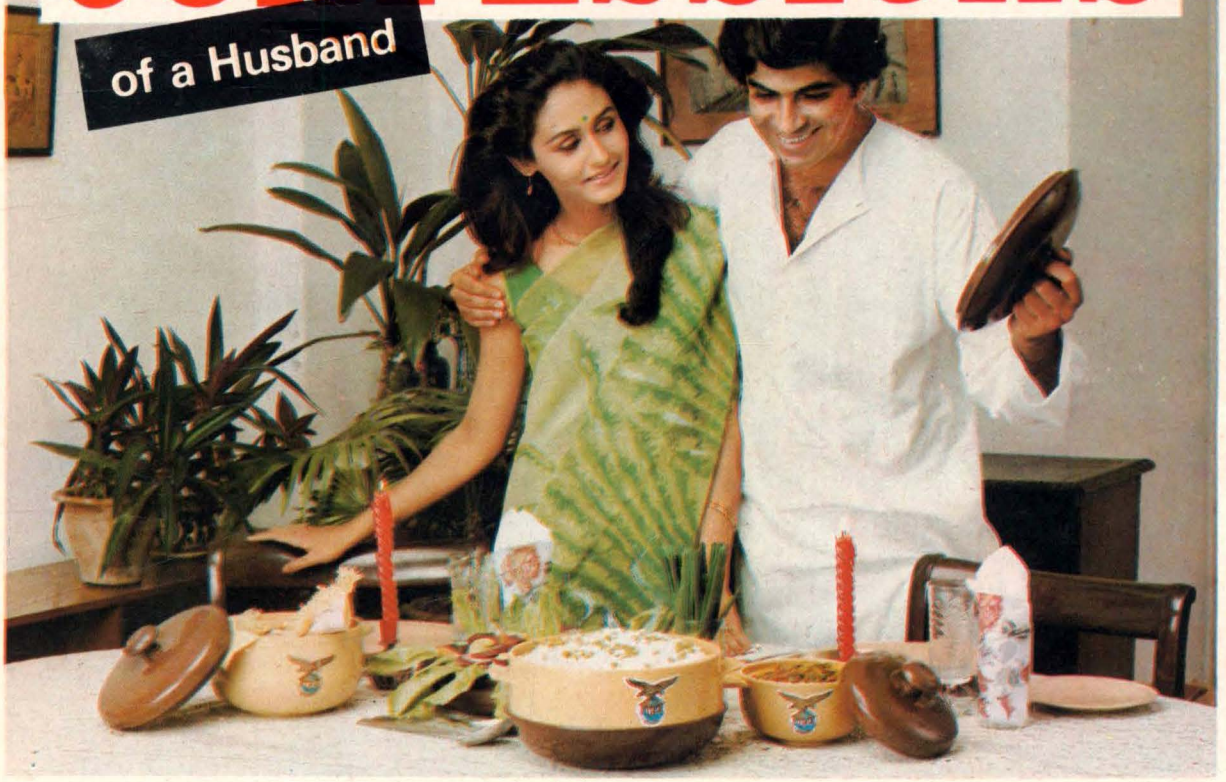
IN imprint

LOOK OUT FOR IT EVERYWHERE!

Edited by Vir Sanghvi; published for Business Press Private Limited, Surya Mahal, 5 Burjorji Bharucha Marg, Bombay 400 023, by Vir Sanghvi and printed by him at Western India Art Litho Works Private Limited, 107, Marol Co-operative Industrial Estate, Andheri Kurla Road, Sakinaka, Bombay 400 059, by photo-offset.

CONFESSIONS

of a Husband



"I came home every evening dog-tired... only to find my *biwi* busy in that damned kitchen.

UNTIL - I decided to put my foot down and purchased a set of Casseroles - Eagle's Insulated Serving Dishes.

And what a change! Food cooked hours before I'm home, straight in the Casseroles and on the table - and then it was just *garam-garam khaana* and *naram-naram* conversation.

And that made me and my *biwi maha khush,* because once I was home from office we had all the time in the world together.

No interruptions for heating. No deserting me on the dining table to get a *garam chappati.*

The Eagle Casseroles took care of all that. Not only did they keep food hot until we were ready for it, but they looked great!

And my business instincts tell me, that the amount saved on heating/re-heating fuel costs will make the Casseroles completely cost-**FREE** in a few months time.

It sure has put the *masala* back into our marriage!!"

Part of the virtually unbreakable Eagle Thermoware range, Eagle Casseroles come in a variety of shapes, sizes and colours; with sturdy 'kunststoff' bodies and easy-to-clean stainless steel inners. Perfect for keeping anything hot–from chappatis to curries, anything cold–from custard to curds.

CASSEROLES

For best temperature retention fill to capacity.

Note: Only Eagle Thermoware is insulated with patented polyurethane poly-insulux; hence these products may be imitated, but can never be duplicated.

There's a lot you can do with Eagle

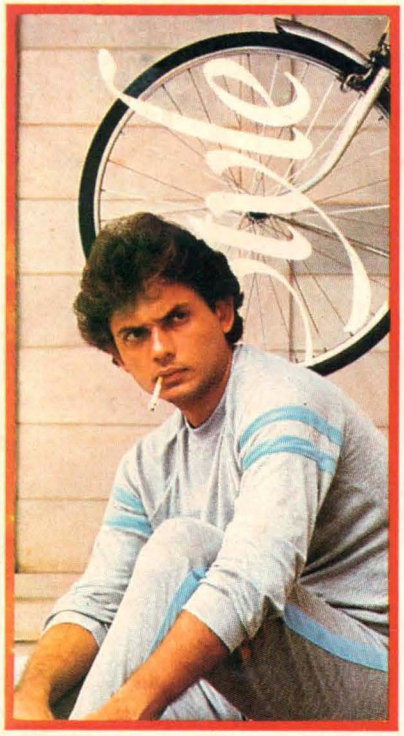
EAGLE FLASK
® PRIVATE LIMITED

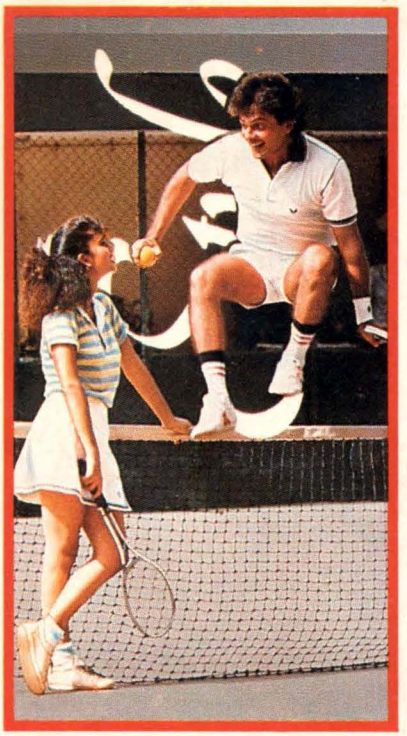
Talegaon 410 507, Dist. Pune, (Maharashtra)
Grams: 'EAGLEFLASK', Pune 410 507.
Tel: 321-5, Tlx: 0145-296 EGLE-IN
Bombay Tel. 322096/97, Tlx. 011-73297EGLE-IN
Depots: Delhi 3315066 * Calcutta 267350 *
Bangalore 223299 * Madras 24270 *
Hyderabad * 65356 * Ahmedabad 399028 *
Ranchi 22446

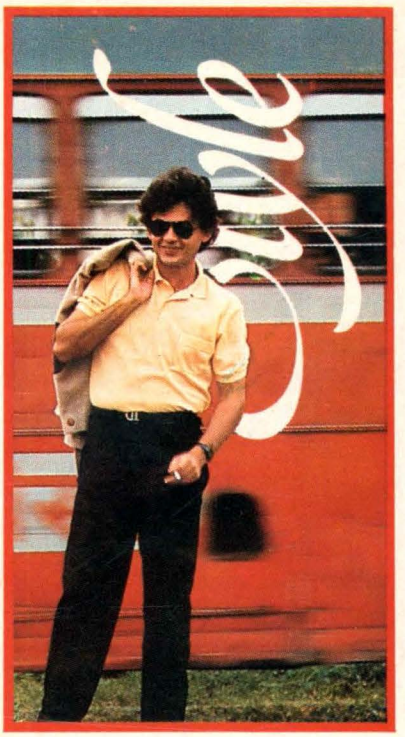
DART/EF/1439

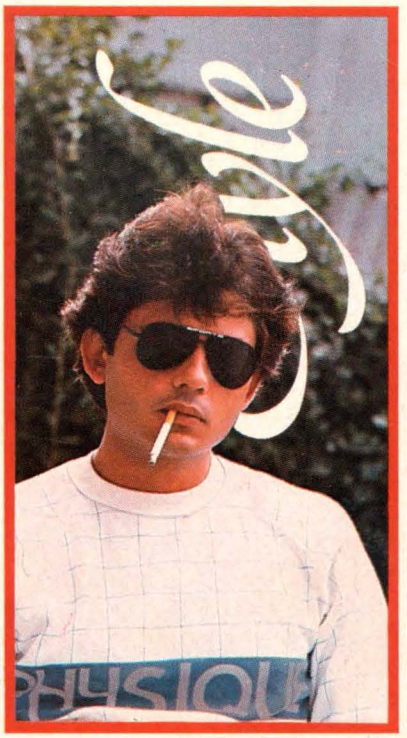
Registered Number
MH–BY/South 411

Registered Number
MH–BY/South 411









Good taste never goes out of style

Govan/SK/4/85

STATUTORY WARNING: CIGARETTE SMOKING IS INJURIOUS TO HEALTH