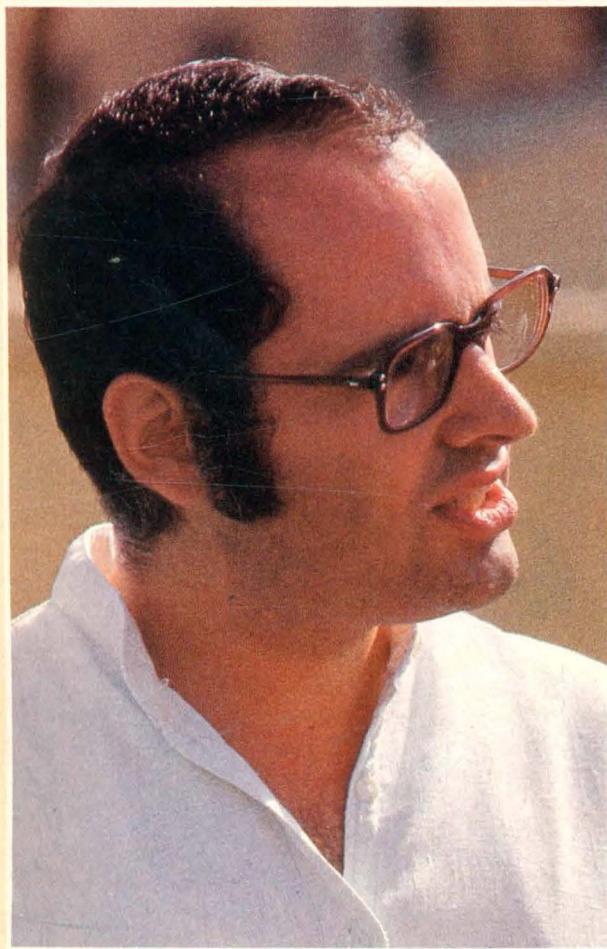


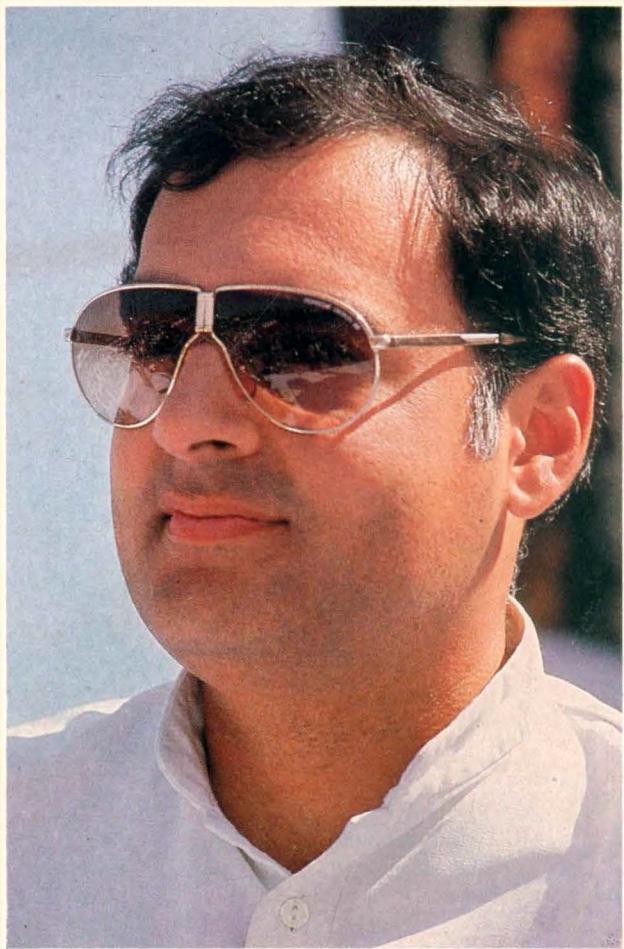
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TEN
Years After The
Emergency



SIX
Months Of The
New India



The People Want The Emergency Back
An Imprint-MARG Opinion Poll

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ON THE MARQUEE

AS A NATION, we often tend to take democracy for granted. In the years before the Emergency, it was not uncommon to hear people saying: "What this country needs is a dictator." Or "What use is freedom of the press to a hungry man?" Even after the Emergency was declared, such sentiments did not disappear. Throughout 1975, apologists for Mrs Gandhi's illegitimate regime were heard quoting the South Korean model of development or claiming that only discipline would make India great again.

It was not till Sanjay Gandhi stepped out from his mother's shadow in 1976 and the regime felt secure enough to flex its muscles, that the true nature of the Emergency began to be perceived. By early 1977, when Mrs Gandhi surprised us and the world by calling elections, the totalitarian character of the Emergency had frightened most people. Fortunately, we then had an opportunity to end India's brief flirtation with authoritarianism.

Now, ten years after the imposition of the Emergency, there are signs that we are beginning to take democracy for granted. Once again, there is loose talk about the need for a 'strong government' or a 'benevolent dictator' and there is considerable nostalgia for the Emergency. An **Imprint-MARG** poll, commissioned for this issue, reveals that 65 per cent of people feel that an Emergency should be imposed again. And a terrifying 67 per cent seem to have turned amnesic about the horrors of the 1975-77 Emergency: they think that it was, on balance, a good thing. Our cover story this month tries, in part, to dispel that notion and to puncture the nostalgia. What worries us is the willingness to rewrite history, to block out the bad and to blow up the good. For instance, it is now not uncommon to hear people say that the results of the 1977 election had little to do with a concern for civil liberties and reflected only a dissatisfaction with the sterilisation campaign.

Even if this were true — and there is no evidence to suggest that it is — such an argument is dangerously self-contradictory. A vote against enforced sterilisation is a vote for civil liberties. There was much that was wrong with the Emergency: the subversion of democratic institutions, the arrests of thousands of political activists, the handing over of all authority to the unstable grip of Sanjay Gandhi, etc. But what was perhaps most wrong was that it removed even the little control that the average citizen of India had over his own life.

We have failed dismally to provide our people with the food, clothing and shelter that are the basic requirements of existence. We have failed, also, to allow them much dignity. Most are open to exploitation and mistreatment from a variety of sources. About all we have been able to guarantee to the vast majority of Indians is the right to vote. And with that vote comes a small say in the way their lives are run.

The most terrifying thing about the Emergency was that it removed that vote, it suspended the entire democratic mechanism, and it served notice to people that they no longer had any say in what would happen to them. In the classic totalitarian manner, people became sheep, mere numbers on lists of targets to be met. They were to be thrown out of their houses to beautify the capital. They were to be sterilised because they bred too fast. They were to be exhorted to talk less and work more from a multiplicity of billboards. And when they complained, they were to be locked up, beyond the purview of any judicial authority, far away from any means of legal redressal.

Apologists for the Emergency and those nostalgic for the days when the trains ran on time and people waited in orderly queues at bus-stops, tend to gloss over this most vital essence of the Emergency. They tend to forget that India threw out the British and chose democracy in 1947, not because it wanted economic gain or a well-ordered society, but because our founding fathers took the view that all men were deserving of dignity and respect, and that any political system that did not recognise this was not worth having.

Those who think back longingly to the days of the Emergency or who desire its re-imposition would negate everything that the freedom struggle was about, and would destroy the one thing that sets India apart from the average banana republic.

And is this worth doing simply because an inefficient government can't get the trains to run on time?

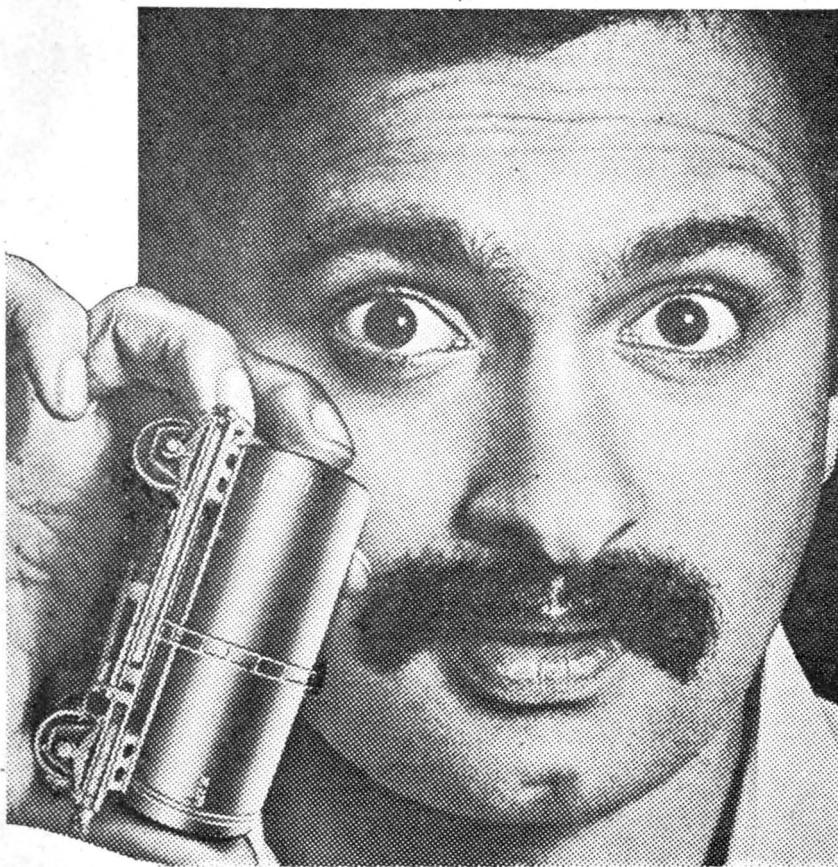
— *Vir Sanghvi*

(R V Pandit, who regularly writes this column, is on holiday.)

A

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ernment. This issue, *Imprint* looks back on the Emergency and assesses the New India.

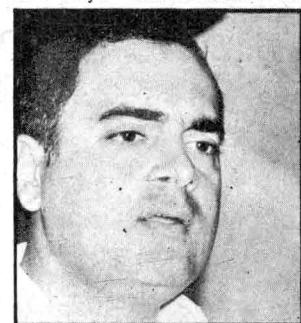
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LETTERS

The Glabrous Gadfly



The profile of Cho Ramaswamy (*The Glabrous Gadfly*, May 1985), was a well-written piece. It's simply incredible how Cho handles his three-fold assignment, doing justice to each of his functions. He has used the theatre, his pen and his piquant tongue, to express his opinions with candour and conviction.

Arvinder Singh Walia
Calcutta

The Inimitable Godman



Your criticism of Sai Baba (*The 25 Most Powerful People In India*, April 1985) has deeply hurt the feelings of millions of his devotees who will swear that he is God. To know and understand Baba, you have got to be his devotee. His miracles, which P C Sorcar could repeat, are not important. It is that aura of happiness, peace and love that surrounds him and his real devotees, which is inimitable. His followers feel his presence with them day and night. Though he has had no formal education, he is a master of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*.

He is fluent in many languages. And could you not find a better photograph of Sai Baba?

Sameer Sharma
Tirupati

The Right-Wing

The Failure Of The Right-Wing (May 1985), refers to the Forum of Free Enterprise: "The Forum of Free Enterprise, an association of Bombay business executives, together with the Madras-based All India Agriculturists Federation and disgruntled Rightist elements in the Congress, created the Swatantra Party in 1959."

This is erroneous. The Forum of Free Enterprise is a non-political and non-partisan organisation, set up in 1956, to educate the public on economic affairs, particularly on the role of private enterprise. It is not aligned to or associated with any political party.

S Divakara
Secretary,
Forum of Free Enterprise
Bombay

A Novel Feeling?

Why don't Arun Chacko and all those who see a new look and hope in our new rulers (*A Novel Feeling*, May 1985) ever mention the following facts? 1) That a few days before Operation Bluestar, Rajiv 'Young' Gandhi had called Bhindranwale a spiritual leader, thus confirming the links that he, his party and the then PM had with the man who was to destroy Hindu-Sikh amity forever. 2) That he came to power amidst large-scale violence. Such violence cannot be termed a riot — it was a carnage masterminded by our young and fresh party, by its young and fresh people. 3) When the blood settled on the roads, walls and colonies of Delhi, our 'novel', 'decisive' PM made a speech at the Boat Club. There he said that when a big tree falls, the earth shakes, thus justifying all that his partymen had done. Surely a clean, novel and decisive way to win elections — by arousing majority communalism.

Pramathesh Ambasta
New Delhi

Madhok's View Of The Right's Decline

Sundeep Waslekar's analysis of Right-wing parties in India (*The Failure Of The Right-Wing*, May 1985) is superficial. It betrays an ignorance of some basic facts about Rightist parties. Right-wing parties failed to come up, not because of a lack of response from the people, but because some of their own leaders lacked faith in their ideology.

The Bharatiya Jana Sangh, Hindu Mahasabha, Ganatantra Parishad, Ram Rajya Paksha and Akali Dal, which contested the first general election of 1952, were considered Rightist parties as compared to the CPI and Congress, which had taken a Leftist slant after Sardar Patel's death in 1950. Dr S P Mukerji, the founder-president of the Jana Sangh, gave a definite direction to Rightist Opposition when he succeeded in bringing the parliamentary wings of these parties and some independent members together under the banner of the National Democratic Party of which he was elected the leader. Thanks to the personality and vision of Dr Mukerji and its numerical strength, the NDP was soon able to eclipse all the Leftist parties in the Opposition, including the CPI.

The situation changed after the medical murder of Dr Mukerji in the Srinagar jail in June 1953. It marked the end of the NDP. The Jana Sangh, however, kept its flag flying. But it was stigmatised as 'communal' and 'reactionary' by the Congress and other Leftist parties. Therefore, when people like Rajaji and K M Munshi felt the need for a Right-wing party outside the Congress, they decided to launch the Swatantra Party instead of strengthening the Jana Sangh.

After the general election of 1962, in which the Swatantra Party got 18, and the Jana Sangh 14 seats in the Lok Sabha, Rajaji suggested a merger of these two parties under the name 'Swatantra Jana Sangh'.

I took up the idea again when I was elected President of the All India

Jana Sangh in 1965. The Jana Sangh and Swatantra made electoral adjustments for the general election of 1967, with a tacit understanding that the elected members of both the parties would sit together as the National Democratic Block in the new Parliament.

The popular response was beyond our expectations. The Swatantra Party got 45 seats in the new Lok Sabha, while the Jana Sangh took 35. About 20 Independents, including Prakash Veer Shastri, were elected with our joint support. Thus a solid Rightist block of 100 members emerged in the Lok Sabha for the first time. But it was sabotaged from



within. A B Vajpayee was keen on joining a joint Opposition group including the communists on the model of SVDs in the states. His move failed because of determined opposition from Masani and myself. But plans for the National Democratic Block were also shelved. Thus a great opportunity to provide a viable Rightist alternative was lost.

Another attempt was made to unite the Right-wing parties on the eve of the mid-term elections of 1971. The leaders of the Jana Sangh, Swatantra and Congress (O) decided to fight the elections together with a common programme. This move was sabotaged by the socialists with the connivance of A B Vajpayee. Ultimately it was decided to have an electoral arrangement between all

non-communist Opposition parties without a common programme and without any commitment to form one block in the new Parliament. It is wrong to describe it as a 'grand alliance'. It was neither grand nor an alliance. It was a poor substitute for the original plan for alliance with a common programme and joint campaigning.

The Congress victory in the mid-term elections of 1971 was primarily due to the rigging of votes in about 300 selected constituencies through the induction of about one lakh pre-stamped, chemicalised ballot papers in such constituencies. Some Opposition candidates, particularly Vajpayee, had prior information about this diabolical plan. He changed his constituency from Gonda to Gwalior at the last moment to avoid the fate that awaited most other leaders and candidates of Right-wing parties.

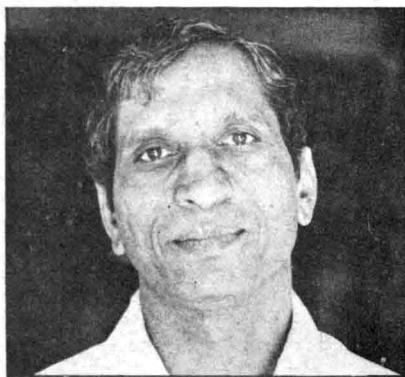
The Janata party was anything but Rightist. Sanjay Gandhi might have given a Rightist orientation to the Congress after 1980. After his sudden death, Mrs Gandhi blundered along the Leftist path until her death.

Whatever the personal predilections of Rajiv Gandhi, he has committed himself to the path of Nehru and Mrs Gandhi. He will not make any departure from the Nehru line. The new budget notwithstanding, there is no indication of any rethinking about the commanding heights of the public sector, controls and quota-permit system. At best, the new budget may strengthen the alliance between state capitalism (muscalled socialism) and private capitalism. Big business and industry in India have developed vested interests in the Leftist policies of the ruling party.

But the developing situation in and around India is putting socialism and Left-wing parties on the defensive. Time is, therefore, opportune for the emergence of a Rightist party.

Bal Raj Madhok
New Delhi

DON: THE FALL-OUT FROM AN EXPOSÉ



G R Khairnar

While appreciating your efforts to expose Varadarajan Mudaliar, the underworld king, and his notorious activities (*Don*, May 1985), I would like to clarify my position.

While working as Ward Officer, F/North Ward in the year 1979-80, I had occasion to accompany the Municipal Encroachment Removal Squad which had been sent out to demolish the few unauthorised stalls in front of Sion railway station. After a while, I left the demolition squad to collect the demolition material and proceeded to a petrol pump opposite the Ayurvedic College, Sion. On getting down from my car, I was attacked by ten *goondas* with sticks and sustained head injuries which resulted in three stitches.

Some people posing as Vardha's men approached me in my office the following day, to assure me that I need not fear an assault as they would be in a position to take care of these bad elements. They also brought Varadarajan Mudaliar to me to assure me that no harm would be done and that there wouldn't be any trouble from these anti-social elements. He further assured me that, though a strong *morcha* of about 250 people was marching to my ward office, he had made arrangements with the local police station for adequate police *bandobast* so that no untoward incident would occur during the *morcha*.

To my surprise, when the *morcha* arrived and the outsiders occupied my office, no police help was forth-

coming for a long time. At last, when the police did arrive and I came out of my chamber where I had locked myself, I was told that Vardha's men, not the police, had helped to disperse the *morcha*. I suspect that it was Vardha and his accomplices who planned the attack and arranged the *morcha* the following day. I also suspect that he had made arrangements with the local police station not to extend police help promptly to my office despite the strong *morcha*. At no time in my life have I asked for any obligation or favour from Varadarajan Mudaliar or his accomplices. At the same time, considering his influence and contacts, I preferred not to have an open confrontation with him.

After the assault, I decided to apply for a revolver licence. Again, Vardha came to know of my interest and volunteered to take me to the residence of the then Additional Commissioner of Police. This aroused my curiosity. He, however, actually took me to the residence of an Assistant Commissioner of Police who, while agreeing to arrange for a licence within a month, told me that if I wished to survive in Bombay, I had better adjust to Varadarajan Mudaliar.

There are many interesting stories about the way in which the underworld king tried to bring direct or indirect pressure on me so as to avoid any action against his illegal structures and any interference with his interests. It is not true that I asked the underworld king to see me at any time or asked for any protection and assistance. And I never availed of the protection and assistance voluntarily offered by him in spite of many dangerous situations.

It is true that he visited my residence when the question of cases filed against Pawar was raised. I never, however, prevailed upon him to withdraw the cases. I have only contended that since he was carrying on illegal activities, including the illicit liquor business, it was not proper on



Varadarajan Mudaliar

his part to cause harassment to a sincere police officer. I never told him to withdraw the court cases.

He further disclosed that his name was recommended by Ribeiro, the then Police Commissioner, for detention under NSA, and that he had managed to get his name deleted. At the same time, since his two accomplices were still on the list, and I had good contacts with an officer at the top, he wanted me to try and get their names also deleted from the list and in turn he would like to withdraw the court cases filed against Pawar. The matter, however, ended there, and there were no contacts thereafter until he approached me on site during the demolition of illegal religious temples. I have not supported any illegal construction of temples or any other work. No unauthorised religious place has come up with our blessings.

*G R Khairnar
Bombay*

My attention has been drawn to your cover story on Varadarajan Mudaliar. The story mentions the names of various Members of Parliament and Members of the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly who have allegedly been supported by Varadarajan Mudaliar. My name has also been mentioned in this regard.

LETTERS

I wish to clarify in unequivocal terms that I do not know Varadarajan Mudaliar, have never met him personally and have never sought his support or help in any manner whatsoever. Frankly, I am surprised that he mentioned my name as he admittedly functions from the Sion-Koliwada area which is miles away from Colaba, the constituency I represent. My entire election campaign was managed by active political workers of the Congress (I) and Youth Con-

gress (I) and at no stage was there any question of my seeking the co-operation or help of any outside individual or group.

M J A Patrawala
MLA, Bombay

In our country smugglers have hypnotised politicians with their money power. Honest officials like Ribeiro, Arun Bhatia, Sukthankar and Khairnar are demoralised due to political interference. Unless the

links between politicians and the underworld are broken, it will be impossible to restore social harmony.

S A Srinivasa Sarma
Bombay

The media lionise third-rate characters like Vardha and then expect the government to finish them off. Why aren't they ignored or treated like the scum they undoubtedly are?

Meera
Trivandrum

In Praise of Pradeep Shinde By Pradeep Shinde

Sheela Barse's story (*Centre Of A Storm*, May 1985), is more authentic and concrete than Amrita Shah's. She has rightly pin-pointed the policemen responsible for the growth of the mafia. But she too forgets key names. If sub-inspectors and inspectors have to be blamed, why not their superiors in the form of police commissioners and additional police commissioners?

Another bout of amnesia occurs when she mentions 'crime reporters who are kept happy by CID officers and give laudatory reports'. She forgets that there were two reporters who wrote against Vardhabhai when he was at the peak of his power: at a time when Sheela Barse had not yet started her crusading spree against the underworld. The very first story against Vardha appeared in *The Illustrated Weekly*, October 31-November 6, 1982. I wrote this story when the dock mafia was so well-entrenched, that it was grossing Rs 40 crore a year. Not surprisingly, someone eliminated Vardha's name from the story. So we had a national weekly with a cover story on the underworld and its machinations without a mention of the Don's identity.

The second story appeared two years later, in March 1984, when Lekha Dhar wrote in the *Free Press Journal* about a DRI raid on Mudaliar. I followed it up with another story in the *Indian Express*. But even in those days, Vardha was so powerful that no one dared take up this

story despite the fact that it was the first ever raid on 'the social worker of Matunga'.

Subsequently, several stories appeared, both in the *Free Press* and *Indian Express* about this Don of Sion-Koliwada; one of them was on the flesh trade run at Varadarajanagar by eunuchs. Sheela Barse took up these stories and personally investigated them and did a fine crusading job against the flesh traders. Still, no other publication followed up these stories.

But it was time for those who were writing about the Don to get harassed. Both of us got nasty letters, legal notices and threats and were even harassed at home. The water supply to my flat was cut off, electricity meters were tampered with and telephone wires were ripped off. Finally, someone even lodged a complaint with the Press Council against me. The charge: mischievous reports against Vardha.

The same reports are now being used by every magazine in Bombay as the skeleton for their stories. I find it quite thrilling that my stories have, despite underworld pressure, become gospel truth for journalists. If our work is not acknowledged or is conveniently forgotten, at least do not speak disparagingly about crime reporters, Ms Barse! We exposed Vardha when he was a strong man... all of you are writing about him when he is getting weaker.

But I am thankful that you have

been honest enough in your story and not covered up for Vardha like Amrita Shah.

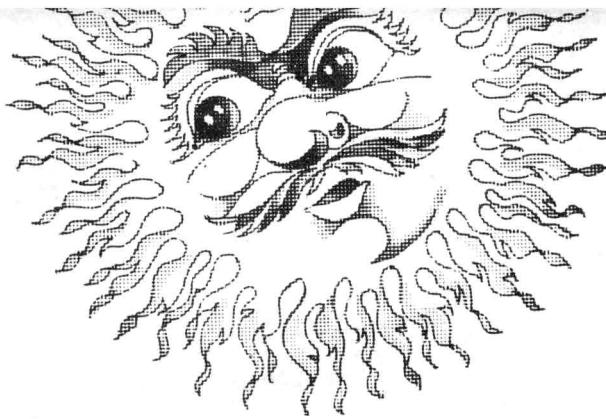
Pradeep Shinde
Bombay

Sheela Barse Replies



Pradeep Shinde is being childish, churlish, and absurd. He is only a crime reporter: since he wants to know where I was when he was writing about Vardha, well, I was busy writing investigative stories about the torture of women in police custody, dacoits of MP, children of prostitutes, communal riots, children in remand homes, tribal children in *ashram-shalas*, flaws in the laws dealing with trafficking in women etc. As for my not naming all the corrupt officers, neither *Imprint* nor I were pretending to write an exhaustive account of police corruption.

Sheela Barse
Bombay



AWAY FROM THE TORRID SUMMER... ...INTO A WORLD OF SNOW CLAD MOUNTAINS

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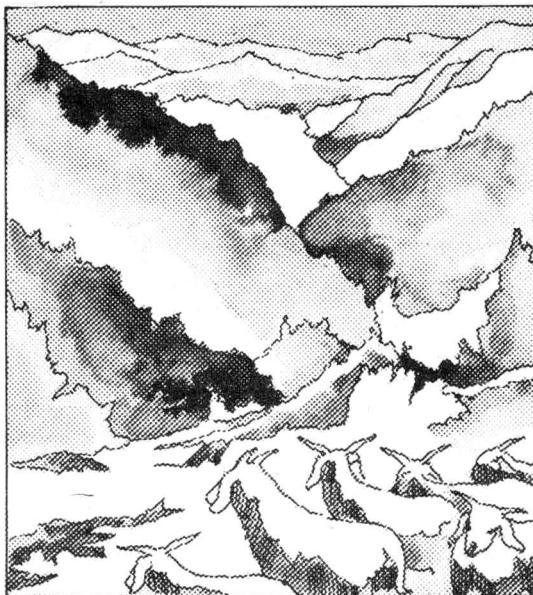
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UNCIVIL LIBERTIES

A battle within a civil liberties group, Thatcher on Gandhi, Carmen, and more.

In 1984 the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) celebrated its 50th anniversary. It had been founded in the midst of the pre-War street clashes between British Fascists and their opponents and victims. Since the '30s it has managed to remain a coalition of libertarians from all the major political parties, although usually characterised in the 'popular' press as 'Left-wing'. A few months after the birthday pink champagne bubbles have fizzled out, however, the pressure group is going through a crisis which threatens to result in its disintegration or, at best, a serious decline in the credibility stakes.

The organisation is divided in a way not dissimilar to the racking which civil libertarians in the USA have put themselves through, and it is no coincidence that this has happened soon after the appointment of a new Director of NCCL, Larry Gostin, who is an American lawyer. In the USA in the '70s, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) found itself in the difficult position of upholding the rights of US Nazis to march through Skokie, a Chicago suburb, heavily populated by Jewish holocaust survivors. In Britain, where there is no written Constitution spelling out individual rights, such a march – more prob-

ably a National Front stampede through Southall – would be banned in order to prevent a breach of the peace. But few people had objected to such limitations on the individual's freedom to go where he pleases or to demonstrate, until the advent of Gostin, whom opponents accuse of trying to bring the NCCL in line with the ACLU.

This year's annual general meeting of the NCCL had to deal with two controversial issues. The first relates to the recently ended year-long miners' strike which had been accompanied by frequent acts of violence

involving striking miners, working miners and the police. NCCL set up an inquiry into the acts of violence perpetrated against the first of these by the last, presumably in the belief that the courts and the press had dealt adequately with the others. The report was welcomed at the meeting, except for one crucial sentence which equated 'the right to strike' with 'the right not to strike'. It endorsed the right of an individual to go to work during a strike without violence or intimidation but it rejected the oversimplified view, which has no basis in international human rights law, that there is some fundamental right to strike-break, to be equated with the right to strike.

The other painful resolution was provoked by a member of the National Front, supposedly seeking

the NCCL's advice when he was prevented by the police from travelling to an anti-Asian march, but more likely seeking to split the group. The NCCL affirmed the distinction in its policy, adopted the previous year, between: "a) aiding an organisation, or an individual representing an organisation, whose known objectives involve the denial of basic rights to others, which remains contrary to NCCL policy, and b) giving advice and, where appropriate, assistance to individuals irrespective of their beliefs," which the NCCL still professes to do. This distinction satisfied



Mrs Thatcher's touching tribute to Mrs Gandhi in the current Somerville College magazine conveys the impression that it is a tribute to Mrs Thatcher herself.

UNCIVIL LIBERTIES

the majority at the annual general meeting, and pleases my conscience, but admittedly leaves NCCL officers in an impossible position in practical terms.

The central question is how to deal with conflicting 'rights' — the collective rights of employees against those of an individual worker, the rights of a racist against those of a minority group to live in peace. Larry Gostin believes in absolute rights, in a pure form of civil liberties, and thus has resigned from the NCCL, taking many libertarians with him. The NCCL has been left to those socialists who believe that society must make a choice in order to protect the weak, but unfortunately for the weak, the split has drained away much of NCCL's power to fight for them at the very time when their liberties are under greatest threat from an authoritarian government.

* * * *

I AM PLEASED to report that the Conservatives have been placed third in the last two opinion polls to which the British media are addicted. The next election is still up to four years away, but Labour spirits are rapidly unflagging and Labour leader Neil Kinnock is being taken more seriously.

Mrs Thatcher is now ever mindful of her own image, hence her touching tribute to Mrs Gandhi in the current Somerville College, Oxford magazine which conveys the impression of being a tribute to herself: "I felt that Indira Gandhi and I had something in common besides Somerville. We were both Prime Ministers; we were both fortunate in having a wonderful family; and I think perhaps we both understood what to some people is a paradox — namely that one can be warm, human, loving, knowing all of

the little things of life, and at the same time firm, determined, and decisive. We understood the loneliness of work and therefore, whenever I spoke with Mrs Gandhi, there was a quality that was not present when I spoke with other heads of government."

* * *

I HAVE OFTEN spoken of the British delight in a scandal, preferably one oozing sex, society-folk and spies. Nobody has done anything very naughty since the Chairman of the Conservative party got his secretary pregnant in 1983, and so the press dug up the totally unimportant story about a minor princeling's unpopular wife, with the unlikely name of Princess Michael, having had a father who was once an obscure figure in Hitler's SS. Much excitement was caused when there were suggestions that there had been a royal cover-up, but this died down when it became apparent that the Princess had actually been trying to conceal that she had been brought up in Australia and had worked as an interior decorator. Luckily for the government, this non-scandal almost submerged what in other weeks would have provoked a real storm, but now fell foul of the rule — royalty and blondes before spies.

A government inquiry into the activities of Michael Bettany, the Intelligence officer caught trying to spy for the Russians, revealed that the incredible Bettany had been going round for years telling people he met in pubs that he was a Russian spy, but that no one had believed him, and that it was only when he approached the Russians and they didn't believe him either, that the secret service caught up with him.

THE SORT OF REFUGEE who is liked by the British establishment and is welcomed with open arms, is a Russian dissident or even a Polish trade unionist. What they don't like is a brown or black person, kicked out of his country without money or international prestige. The rules have been considerably tightened up since the exodus from Idi Amin's Uganda, and to prevent any such influx from Hong Kong. But the UK, as part of the international community, would not dare to shut its doors publicly to genuine refugees. Hence the ridiculous situation this week when the British government declared Sri Lanka officially safe for Tamils, thus unilaterally denying Tamils refugee status. Instead of the usual four weeks given to a refugee arriving in this country to prove his need for sanctuary and to find people to fight for his right to stay, the government has given the Tamils 24 hours, hardly enough time to get over jet lag.

* * *

THE MOST POPULAR subject for films and stage productions recently, throughout Western Europe, isn't a new or nuclear version of *Star Wars*, but various revisions of a novel by a minor 19th century French writer, Prosper Merimée — the story of Carmen — the gypsy woman who belongs to no one, practises free love, and gets killed by a jealous lover with more conventional ideas. There are, currently, four film versions of the opera going the rounds, a flamenco film of the story and countless stage productions. Are men trying to tell us liberated women that they might seem to be encouraging our independence and freedom but that in their fantasies they're throttling us? ♦

RESERVING JUDGEMENT

There is not much of a case for retaining this system of reservations.

THE VIOLENCE in Gujarat and other places has shocked even the most blasé observers of the Indian scene. The Gujarat agitation against reservations in employment and education is not new. In 1981, a similar agitation had rocked the state. As things stand, the 1985 agitation is not going to be the last, because the existing reservation policy is disrupting the *status quo* and damaging vested interests.

To put an effective end to this mad agitation, there will have to be a clear-cut definition of the national reservation policy. At present, there is no national policy, and at the state level, there is utter confusion. There is no agreement on the percentage of jobs and seats that should be reserved, even though the Supreme Court clearly stated in 1963 that reservations should not exceed 50 per cent of both jobs and seats in educational institutions. At present, job reservations are 80 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 68 per cent in Tamil Nadu, 49 per cent in Bihar, and 41 per cent in Andhra, just to illustrate the inter-state differences. In educational institutions, some states have reservations for backward castes and even for Muslims; some states do not have reservations at all.

While the present reservation policy needs to be clearly defined,



able to a wider cross-section of the people.

For the evolution of this consensus, intellectuals and the more enlightened sections of our population will have to co-opt members of the scheduled castes, tribes and other backward castes through persuasion and patient argument. No amount of violence can, therefore, succeed. Violence is not only painful and destructive, but utterly futile.

To begin with, we should be clear about the scope of reservations. Some people are under the impression that there is reservation in everything. On the contrary, there is no reservation in most spheres. Even as far as jobs are concerned, only 15 per cent of all the jobs are subject to reservations. These jobs are all in the public sector and government departments. There is no reservation for jobs in the private, industrial sector, or in the self-employed categories, or in agriculture. And even in the public or government sector, reservations for scheduled castes and tribes exist only in recruitment to the Central services, such as the IAS, IFS, and IPS. And even in these services, there are no reservations for other backward castes. For about 60 per cent of the jobs in the defence services, there is no reservation even for scheduled castes and tribes. Therefore, when we talk of reservations in jobs, we are talking about a very

there is no possibility of a total abolition of reservations. Those who dream about it need to be rudely awakened from their slumber. The beneficiaries of reservations, the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, and other backward castes, constitute about 70 per cent of the electorate. And their turn-out at the polling booths is 80 per cent and above. Since our country is democratic, no party can receive a mandate to abolish or drastically amend the reservation policy. However, the realist can hope to evolve a consensus to make the policy more rational and accept-

Subramaniam Swamy is a former Member of Parliament and Visiting Professor of Economics at Harvard.

I am in favour of reservations for women, an oppressed class constituting 50 per cent of the population. Around 15 per cent of jobs should be reserved for them.

RESERVING JUDGEMENT

small segment of the economy.

But these jobs are what the vocal middle classes of our country want. When they see others jumping the queue, there is great heartburn. This is the crux of the problem. When a less qualified person gets a job or admission to a medical college, merely because he or she belongs to a backward caste, resentment wells up. When a junior officer gets promoted over his senior merely because the vacancy was reserved for the scheduled castes, the erstwhile senior feels humiliated and frustrated. Underlying this resentment is the age-old caste prejudice. After all, capitation fees for admission to medical colleges represent a form of reservation — for the rich. But we have not seen chaos and murder unleashed against this evil practice. Why? Many students obtain admissions through recommendations from influential politicians. While many grumble about it, there is no upheaval against it.

Conceptually, reservations are meant to compensate those who have been socially oppressed through the centuries. There is a vast psychological difference between a poor upper caste person and an equally poor backward caste person. The difference is in his or her psyche, ethos and capacity for risk. Social oppression has created the chasm, and to bridge it, we must create avenues whereby the backward castes can freely mingle with the upper castes, and live in the same locality. The reservation policy has contributed substantially in this respect.

However, the policy to date has not benefitted a wide section of the backward castes. Ironically, even within these castes, a new 'Brahmin' class has emerged which is cornering

most of the benefits from the reservation policy. Therefore, the present policy needs to be streamlined to ensure that it is national in character and applicable to the most deserving of the backward castes. It is ridiculous, for example, to label the Vokkaligas and Lingayats backward castes. Yet, the Mandal Commission has, in its report, done precisely that. We need a new formulation. Towards that end, I suggest the following:

1) While we should reject the economic criterion for reservations, because the policy is meant to compensate social oppression and not economic backwardness, there should, nevertheless, be an income ceiling for backward castes to qualify for reservation. A rich Lingayat or a prosperous Jat should not be entitled to reservation.

2) Since the reservation policy is for the socially oppressed, it cannot be extended to cover Muslims and Christians who can claim to be poor but not socially oppressed in the sense the harijans, tribals and shudras are.

3) If three generations of a particular family have enjoyed the benefits of reservations, then subsequent generations of that family should be excluded from it. In this way, the very poor among the backward castes can get a chance to enjoy the fruits of reservations as well.

4) The government should ensure that in all states, the Supreme Court judgement of 1963, that reservations should not exceed 50 per cent, is respected.

5) I am in favour of new reservations for women, an oppressed class constituting 50 per cent of the population. About 15 per cent of jobs should be reserved for women.

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HIGH-FLIERS

A journalism award, 15 scholarships and more goodies from Inlaks.

EXPATRIATE Indians create their own legends. Most long to be recognised in the mother country and set up elaborate PR machines. Few attempt to give other Indians the chance to get where they've reached. One exception was Indoo Shivdasani, the head of the international Inlaks business empire and, at the time of his death in 1978, probably the richest Indian in the world. Shivdasani avoided publicity and even today, the Inlaks group has perhaps the lowest profile of any expatriate Indian empire.

However, two years before he died, Shivdasani set up a foundation to help others get the opportunities he had and, today, his Inlaks Foundation is probably the most important of all organisations that assist young people who wish to pursue their studies abroad. Ironically, few of the hundred or so Indians that the Foundation has helped are aware that they owe their good fortune to Shivdasani's desire to — in a sense — recreate himself.

Indoo Shivdasani was the son of an ICS officer who sent him to Clare College, Cambridge to read Economics. The young Shivdasani did not have a distinguished academic career but spent most of his time enjoying the great Cambridge undergraduate experience: playing sport and living

it up. After he came down, he joined Unilever and set about being the model executive.

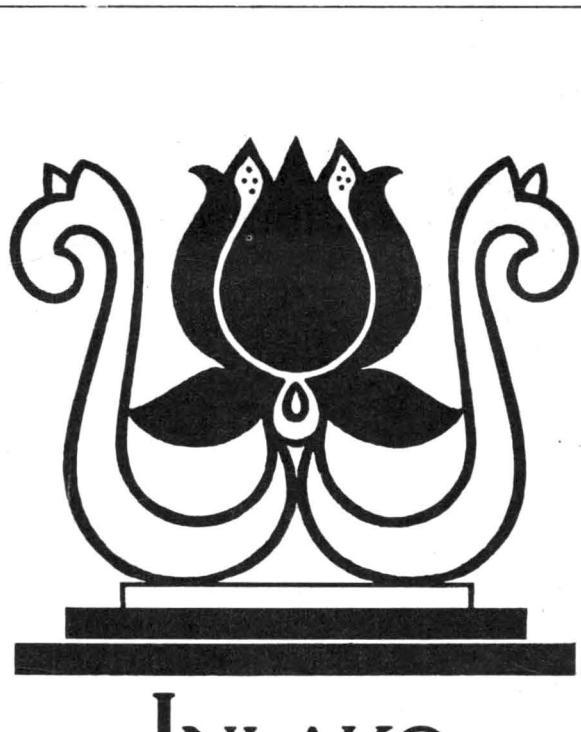
He didn't last long at Unilever: he left, some accounts have it, when his colour went against him at promotion time. Instead, he went into business for himself, much to the horror of his father who regarded commerce as being beneath his family's standards. Fortunately for Shivdasani, he was astute enough to notice both, that the Eurodollar market was opening up, and to sense the economic potential of Nigeria. He applied his considerable financial skills to both areas

and soon became an expert on the Eurodollar market and headed one of Nigeria's most significant trading and industrial groups.

In 1976, when his fortune was at its height, Shivdasani began to ponder the twists of fate that had turned him into such a rich man. Had his father not sent him to Cambridge he would probably never have had the opportunities or the nerve to make such a success of his life. And yet, in the mid-'70s, it was impossible for any civil servant's son to go abroad to study: even if the foreign exchange was available, the cost was, simply, too prohibitive. It was this sentiment that led him to put aside several million dollars for an Inlaks Foundation. (Inlaks was the name of his group: it came from his own name and Lakshmi, his wife's name.)

Initially, the Foundation took Shivdasani's wishes rather too literally and concentrated on sending students only to Oxford and Cambridge. Ironically, the early scholars were not quite millionaires-in-the-making. Many went to read for doctorates in Literature and History and returned to become academics.

Since then, however, the Foundation has changed its selection criteria. "We feel," says Count Nicolo Sella, Shivdasani's son-in-law who now heads the Foundation, "that times have changed since Shivdasani went to Clare. It doesn't make much sense restricting the scope of scholarships



**INLAKS
FOUNDATION**

The Inlaks Foundation has now launched a journalism award. Arun Shourie and Pritish Nandy will select an outstanding journalist who will get Rs 1 lakh in foreign exchange.

HIGH-FLIERs

to Oxford and Cambridge. What Shivdasani really wanted to do was to give achievers a break in life. So now, we're looking for achievers, for people with flair, not just for academic types. And we're letting them go to any university in the world provided they can convince us that the course will help them."

The Foundation changed its emphasis in 1980, and three years later, Sella decided to broaden the scope even further. As things stand now, an Inlaks scholar does not even have to attend a university. All he has to do is convince the selection committee that a stint abroad will help him. Thus, the Foundation has financed a cartoonist who wanted to go and work with some of the world's best cartoonists; a journalist who wanted to study the attitude of the Anglo-American media to India and others with similar, well-conceived but non-institutionalised schemes. "The idea is to help Indians under 27 benefit from experience abroad," reiterates Sella. "We want people with enterprise and the capacity to make an impact on one's environment. With the drive to transform ideas into reality. The essence of this scholarship is its flexibility. We are willing to let people convince us that we ought to be financing them."

Of course, the less specific the selection criteria, the more difficult the selection process. Presently, Inlaks works through a system of double- and triple-checks. Advertisements inviting applications will appear in the newspapers this month. Last year, over 6,000 people replied to such ads. Of these, over 3,000 were interviewed in over five cities. Of these 3,000, a final short-list of 60 emerged. And of these 60, 15 students were awarded scholarships

after a final, formal interview in Delhi.

Most of the weeding out is done during the first interview. Admits Vir Chauhan, the former Rhodes Scholar who is Secretary of the Selection Committee: "Because the first interview is crucial, we try extra hard to make sure that we don't discriminate against anyone at this stage." But surely, some very bright people are simply not good at interviews? "Yes," says Chauhan. "We are acutely aware of this, and we try to guard against this. Usually, an outstanding candidate, no matter how nervous he or she is, will have done something of note in his or her life. This will show up on the application form and we will take it into account."

The Foundation is also conscious of the fact that it offers one of the most generous scholarships available. It spends over \$ 25,000 on each of the 15 to 20 scholars it sends abroad every year. And yet, despite this huge investment, there are few real checks on the scholar. Once he has got the scholarship, there is no obligation — except for a moral one — for the scholar to excel in what he does. Nor does he ever have to return to India or pay back the amount. Says Sella: "We don't really worry too much about what people do after their scholarship period is over. The idea is to give them a break. What they do with that break is their business. But we find that most of the people we select are quite aware of how big a break this is. Few people would want to squander such an opportunity."

This year, the Foundation is launching a journalism award. Open to any journalist under 35, the award will consist of Rs 1 lakh in foreign exchange, paid abroad. The idea is to

let outstanding journalists benefit from travel abroad. The award will not be judged by the usual Inlaks Selection Committee but by a panel of judges who will change every year. This year, Arun Shourie and Pritish Nandy will be on the panel.

How does the journalism award fit in with the Foundation? "Well," says Sella, "we found that many of the achievers we were looking for were journalists. But it made no sense to give them scholarships and send them to journalism school in the US or England: most of them were too advanced for that. So, an award of this nature made the most sense."

But on what criteria is the award to be based? "We are looking for people of exceptional ability," says Sella. "Originally, we had wanted to set the age limit at 30. Then Arun Shourie pointed out that an award of this nature must be based on a body of work. And perhaps 30-year-olds have not had the opportunities to build up a body of work. This is why we raised the age to 35. We are confident that our judges will be able to select somebody who has displayed exceptional ability and produced some outstanding work. And while we will advertise the award, we will not consider ourselves restricted to the applications we receive. The judges will be free to award it to whoever they like — regardless of whether he or she has applied." Ads asking for applications for the award will appear this month, and a third judge is also likely to be appointed.

Would Shivdasani have approved? "Yes," muses Sella. "His idea was to open the world to young Indians. He had tremendous faith in India and was keen to assist as many talented, young people as he could. I think we are now helping carry out that legacy." ♦

ONLY OBEYING ORDERS

Germany is quite unwilling to accept the guilt for the genocide forty years ago.

FORTY YEARS AGO, World War II came to an end in Europe. It wasn't a particularly distinguished period in the history of man. Fifty-five million people were killed defending their countries against the German onslaught. A whole generation of European males died battling for and against the expansionist aims of a very dubious regime.

Millions of other Germans died too. Jews and gentiles suffocated in Hitler's gas chambers. There were socialists, Christian priests and conscientious objectors. Anyone opposing the hateful National Socialist Party was destined for Auschwitz, Buchenwald, Bergen-Belsen, Dachau or the many other concentration and extermination camps suddenly dotting Eastern Europe. But that was 40 years ago.

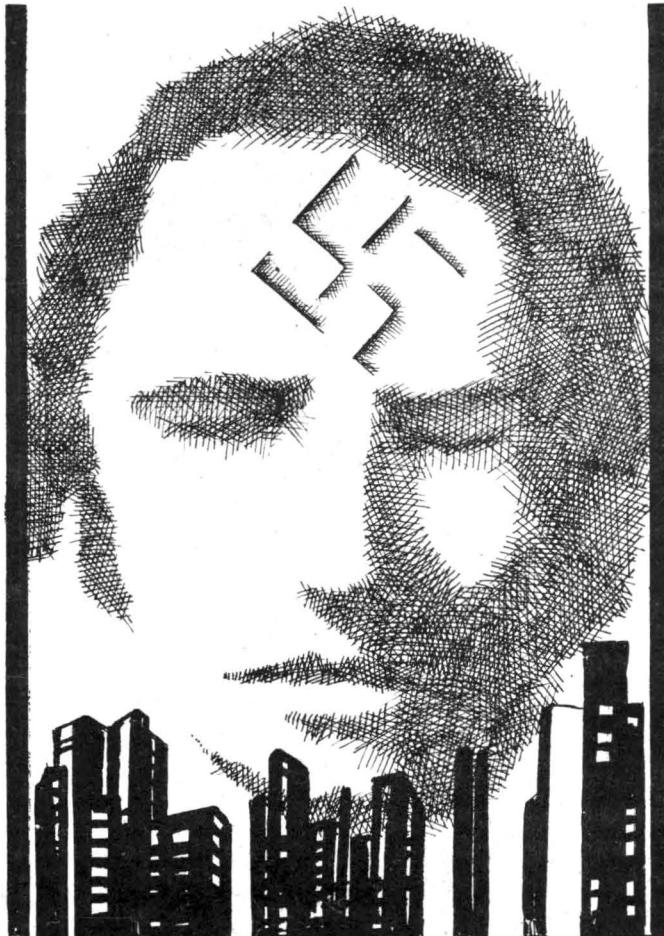
At the end of various ceremonies accompanying the 40th anniversary, and a renewed Allied effort to continue to blame the entire German nation for the sins of their forefathers, it becomes relevant to ask whether this is justified.

If 25 years is the accepted life of a generation, at least two generations were either non-existent then, or too young to take any of the blame. Many of the others who went into the trenches were teenagers forced

by the authorities or social pressure to fight for their country. How, indeed, were even these youngsters responsible?

Theodor Heuss, West Germany's first President, eloquently described the peculiar German situation when he wrote that May 8, 1945 "would remain the most tragic and ambivalent paradox in history for each of us. Why? Because at one and the same time we experienced deliverance and annihilation."

A German writer, Karl Dietrich Bracher, succinctly explained the problem: "The prevailing features of



the situation in 1945 were the guilt and dire distress of a population which had, to a large extent, succumbed to the totalitarian enticements of the Hitler regime, and had proved itself incapable of freeing itself from the shackles of a criminal leadership. As late as 1944, after a succession of abortive attempts, a courageous resistance movement was still seeking to overthrow the government despite the hopelessness of the situation. Yet, by contrast with the countries under German occupation, these resistance fighters were regarded less as heroes than as traitors."

This, indeed, was the crucial issue. Far too many Germans supported Hitler and the Nazis. Possibly, vast numbers knew nothing of the extermination camps, generally in Poland and elsewhere, and what went on inside them. But there was enough evidence of the criminality of the regime, and the unspeakable manner in which it was treating its opponents and innocent Jews.

Unfortunately for the German people, too few people decided to oppose it, even though arrest then would most certainly have meant torture and a painful death. Today, that failure continues to haunt the German nation, and hangs like an albatross around its neck.

So much so that President Reagan's visit to the Bitburg Cemeteries evoked a violently hostile reaction

Arun Chacko is Associate Editor of The World Paper. He is based in Delhi.

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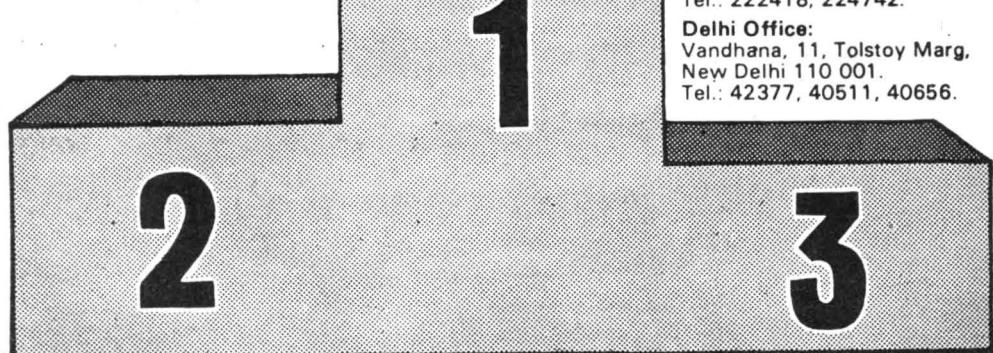
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MOTIVATION



The Germans have forged a very prosperous society in the forty years since the six million died in the gas chambers. This generation claims it is blameless.

ONLY OBEYING ORDERS

from people all over the world. The Jews, in particular, found his decision to honour the 47 SS soldiers buried there, in extremely bad taste.

* * *

FOR A PRESENT-DAY GERMAN, however, it is extremely difficult to be apologetic about anything. Germany, today, is one of the most successful societies in the world, and has been for close to three decades. There is more equality and less poverty there than anywhere else. The social system is superb. The country is stable, highly prosperous and works with clockwork precision.

And what does today's German youth think of the collective guilt theory, and the attempt of the developed world to hold them responsible for the sins of Hitler, the Nazis, and, perhaps, their grandfathers? Very little.

While they are interested in, and willing to learn from past history, they certainly don't accept any responsibility for it. And quite rightly too.

In particular, they don't think anything of American and Soviet attempts to blackmail their nation, especially since the superpowers, too, have blood on their hands. There is Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland or Afghanistan in the case of the Russians. Or Vietnam or Nicaragua in the case of the Americans.

But obviously, the American attempt rankles more since it is now supposed to be an ally. But for many Germans, America remains a highly visible occupation army in their country with its own television and radio stations. In fact, the anti-Americanism remains fairly intense, and President Reagan's visit to the Bitburg Cemetery has not helped.

The accompanying controversy

has squashed hopes of a reconciliation, while the insensitive and often rude behaviour of American security personnel, protecting their President, has left a trail of anger and disgust. But if Germany has its problems with the superpowers, as indeed it does, it has World War II to blame.

Much of the rivalry in the world today can be traced back to that conflict. It marked the beginning of the end of British and French colonialism, and the dominance of those two countries. It also led to the creation of an increasingly muscular Third World, pioneered by a newly independent India. But more fateful for the rest of the world was the emergence of two superpowers who, give or take a few countries, virtually carved up the world between them.

* * *

JOSEF JOFFE, now Foreign Editor of Munich's *Suddeutsche Zeitung*, recently observed in an article in the *Washington Post*: "If you are a West German, however, you will probably want to remember V-E Day, Bitburg, Bergen-Belsen and all the rest as a day to forget. May 8, 1945 was not a 'splendid moment in our great history and in our small lives', to quote Churchill's famous words. It was a day of pain as well as of deliverance, because rebirth could only be had at the price of total prostration.

"West Germans did not choose the easy ideological escape route taken by the East Germans, which is why they are celebrating May 8 with all the fervour of a former gangrene victim commemorating the removal of a limb...."

According to a recent opinion poll, 54 per cent no longer want the media to regurgitate the Nazi past. Yet, among the 18- to 25-year-olds, six out of ten want to hear more about

what V-E Day undid. The young are either willing to face what their parents and grandparents would rather forget, or the new interest indicates a curiosity about a now exotic past.

"And yet there is a haunting flaw," Joffe adds. "Liberation and democracy were not 'Made in Germany'. Those blessings came on the bayonets of invading Western armies. It was not the Germans themselves who rose up to slay the Nazi beast; indeed, both nation and army fought until the last minute to prevent what they are now supposed to celebrate."

As Bracher notes, "For the preponderant majority of Germans, the significance of May 8, 1945 is, today, 40 years later, measured in terms of the unforeseen opportunity for a democratic rerun which seemed to have been forfeited through dictatorship and war. Germany will continue to be answerable to the tribunal of history for the atrocities of the Hitler era — above all, the systematic murder of millions of Jews and the unleashing of the greatest war ever to have engulfed the world. On the other hand, the Federal Republic has proved itself capable of learning from failure and making good use of the new opportunities for international co-operation....

"Only incorrigible German nationalists continue to regard May 8, 1945 as the blackest day in German history," he added. "For the vast majority, from whom the flourishing and stable second German democratic state draws its strength, that date represents both the final catastrophe of the Hitler regime and, at the same time, the *sine qua non* of the most liberal states which Germany has ever known throughout the vicissitudes of its history."

THE STYLE OF

Sanjay Gandhi manufactured his own crisis

TEN YEARS AGO, on June 25, 1975, Sanjay Gandhi talked his mother into declaring an Emergency, locking up the Opposition, censoring the press and adopting his unorthodox solutions to India's problems. Six months ago, on December 29, 1984, Rajiv Gandhi talked the electorate into giving him the largest mandate in the history of Indian politics and into believing that his new methods were the solutions to India's problems.

As brothers go, the two Gandhis could not have been more unlike each other. While Sanjay was brash, impatient, ambitious and intolerant of the mechanisms of democracy, Rajiv is cool, democratic, patient and still a little shy. There is no evidence that the brothers got on and much to suggest that they did not. In Sanjay's heyday, Rajiv was rarely seen or heard. And now, Rajiv hardly ever refers to Sanjay or acknowledges his role in Mrs Gandhi's come-back.



And yet, despite the differing styles of the two Gandhis, there are some parallels in the situations they find themselves faced with. In 1975, Indira Gandhi, egged on by her younger son, told the nation that it faced a grave threat from within. She pointed to the murder of Railway Minister L N Mishra, the bomb attack on the Chief Justice of India, the alleged call to mutiny that Jayaprakash Narayan had directed at the armed forces, and the breakdown in law and order throughout the country. In such a situation, went the argument, democracy needed to be sacrificed. Preventive detention, the suspension of civil liberties and censorship of the press were the only solutions.

That crisis, we know now, was bogus. The few acts of terrorist violence that had occurred had been easily contained, JP had not really asked the army to mutiny, and the breakdown in law and order reflected more on the ineptness of her state governments than on any general slide towards anarchy. The Emergency served only to prop up Indira Gandhi, whose own political career faced a grave crisis after the Allahabad High Court judgement; and it allowed her to raise to power her younger son, a failed manufacturer-of cars.

Ironically, if the Sanjay Gandhi era represented an opportunistic response to a bogus crisis, the Rajiv Gandhi era has been ushered in during a very real crisis. At no time since Independence has the threat to the State from acts of individual terrorism been so persistent. At no time since 1947 has a section of the Indian people been so alienated from the national mainstream. And never before have situations shown a tendency to turn so violent, so quickly: Gujarat being one example.

Obviously, given our recent political history, the imposition of a state of Emergency must have been one of the options that the Prime Minister considered in the days of communal madness and massacre that followed his mother's assassination. Even after his massive electoral victory, speculation that he might resort to an Emergency has not entirely died down. One supporter of the regime, R K Karanja, called for another Emergency in a signed front page editorial in *Blitz* and as Om Mehta, Minister of State for Home in the Sanjay era, says: "Things are not so different now from what they were in 1975, when the Emergency was declared."

It says something about the differing styles of the two Gandhis that Rajiv has so far acted as though the imposition of an Emergency is something that he will never do. Instead, he has used the democratic process to his

THE GANDHIS

but can his brother cope with a real one?

advantage, projecting himself on TV and appealing to people's deepest fears in the hope of winning their votes. When Sanjay said that the country was in danger of breaking up, this meant that he wanted to lock up the Opposition. When Rajiv says it — and he says it more often than Sanjay ever did — he means that he wants your vote. Even if both brothers are concerned with power, Rajiv's greater sophistication ensures that he does it through clever marketing and not through brute force.

His respect for democracy is nationally perceived. Imprint commissioned Marketing And Research Group (MARG), a respected opinion research organisation, to conduct a four-city opinion poll on questions connected with the Emergency. MARG found that only 37 per cent of all respondents in Calcutta, Delhi, Madras and Bombay thought that it was likely that an Emergency would be declared soon. Clearly, Rajiv is not seen as a Sanjay-like figure.

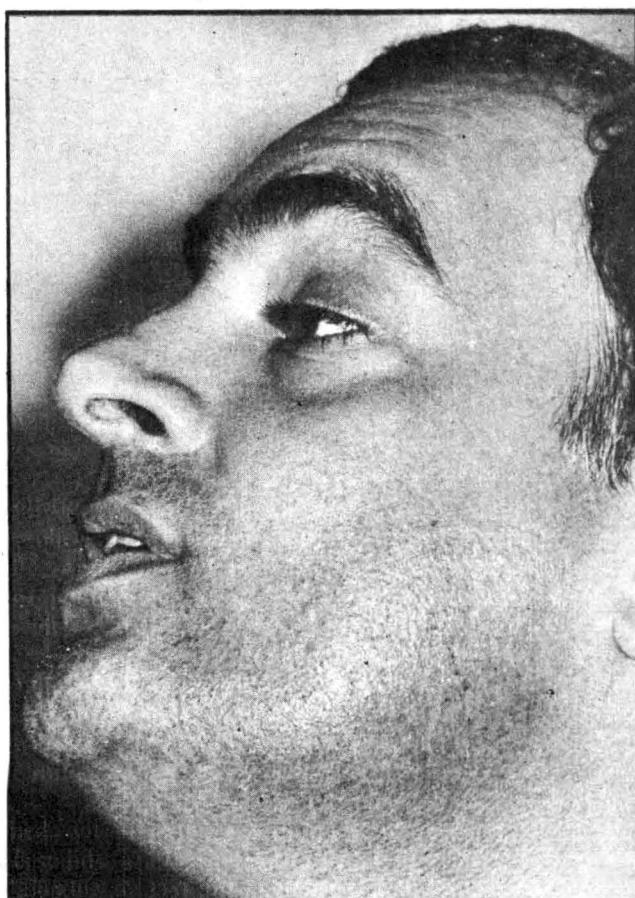
On the other hand, MARG found that most respondents were gravely concerned about the crisis in the country. An astonishing 65 per cent said that they would support the introduction of another Emergency. Obviously, they thought that the situation warrants strong action. That they should feel that Rajiv would not impose an Emergency, despite their believing that it was necessary, says something about the manner in which his democratic credentials have been established.

However, the democratic credentials of the rest of us are still in doubt. Among the most worrying results of the Imprint-MARG poll was that 67 per cent of all respondents (and a clear majority in every city) were convinced that, everything considered, the 1975-77 Emergency was a good thing for the country. This bizarre nostalgia runs entirely contrary to the strong anti-Emergency feeling that caused the Congress to lose the 1977 elections and reveals a terrifying amnesia about the horrors of Sanjay Gandhi's Emergency.

This month, Imprint remembers Sanjay's reign ten years after it began. And we assess the first six months of Rajiv Gandhi's promised New India. In the pages that follow, we tell the saga of the Emergency in the words of the people who lived through it. People like Nanaji Deshmukh and Mrinal Gore who organised resistance to the repression till they were arrested; others like Om Mehta and Ramrao Adik who still sing its praises; and those like Bakul Patel who were initially its uneasy supporters, till they saw it begin to go wrong. Subramaniam Swamy recalls who walked tall and who crawled during that testing time for India.

And L K Advani, emphasising that of the present regime Rajiv had the least to do with the Emergency, considers whether it could happen again.

It is more difficult to assess what Rajiv has achieved in the first six months of his reign. Nevertheless, Imprint spoke to members of the Opposition as well as ministers in Rajiv's government to judge his performance. We found that while there have been dramatic changes of style and approach — changes that neither Sanjay nor Mrs Gandhi would have contemplated — the substantial achievement is still ahead. However, as Vinod Mehta points out, no Indian Prime Minister has ever mastered the mass media with the skill and ease of Rajiv Gandhi. With the terrorist threat showing few signs of receding, Sheela Barse examines the Prime Minister's security and comes to some disturbing conclusions.



EMERGENCY

Ten years later, our poll shows that the people liked the Emergency and want it imposed again.

AMONTH AGO, when Imprint commissioned Marketing And Research Group (MARG) to conduct a four-city opinion poll on the Emergency, we were fairly sure that the results would confirm what we thought we already knew: that most people dreaded a repetition of the Emergency.

When the results came in, however, we were amazed to find that not only was Sanjay Gandhi's 1975-77 Emergency popular, but that a majority of respondents actually wanted the government to impose another Emergency. Perhaps the only reassuring result was that a majority thought it unlikely that an Emergency would, in fact, be imposed in the near future.

The figures are such that even allowing for an error factor, there can be no quibbling with the results. MARG conducted its survey between June 3 and June 9 and interviewed a total sample of 1,124 respondents in Bombay (sample size: 327), Delhi (sample size: 250), Calcutta (sample size: 252) and Madras (sample size: 295). In order to ensure a balanced representation in the sample, 20-25 geographically dispersed street corners were chosen in each city and an equal number of men and wo-



men were interviewed at each location.

There were some interesting regional variations. Only 53 per cent of respondents in Calcutta approved of the 1975 Emergency; only 47 per cent wanted another one. On the other hand, 81 per cent of Delhi respondents approved of Sanjay's Emergency and 84 per cent wanted another one. Nearly half of all Delhi respondents (49 per cent) thought that an Emergency was likely to be declared.

The Emergency was popular in Madras, where 73 per cent of respondents said that they had approved of it and 71 per cent wanted another one — a predictable response perhaps, when one considers that the South voted for the Congress in the 1977 elections. But even Bombay seems to have changed its mind about the Emergency.

What is one to make of these results? One explanation could be that the present instability in the country — the unrest in Punjab and the violence in Gujarat for instance — has made people so insecure that they long for a well-ordered, disciplined society. And that, perhaps, when these troubled times pass, so will the Emergency nostalgia.

NOSTALGIA

Q: Everything considered, do you think that the Emergency was a good thing for the country?

A: Yes. 67 per cent thought that the Emergency was a good thing.

REGIONAL BREAK-UP

BOMBAY:

	TOTAL	SEX	
		Male	Female
Base:	327=	163=	164=
	100%	100%	100%
Good	62	67	58
Bad	22	20	23
Difficult to say	11	12	10
Can't say	5	1	9

DELHI:

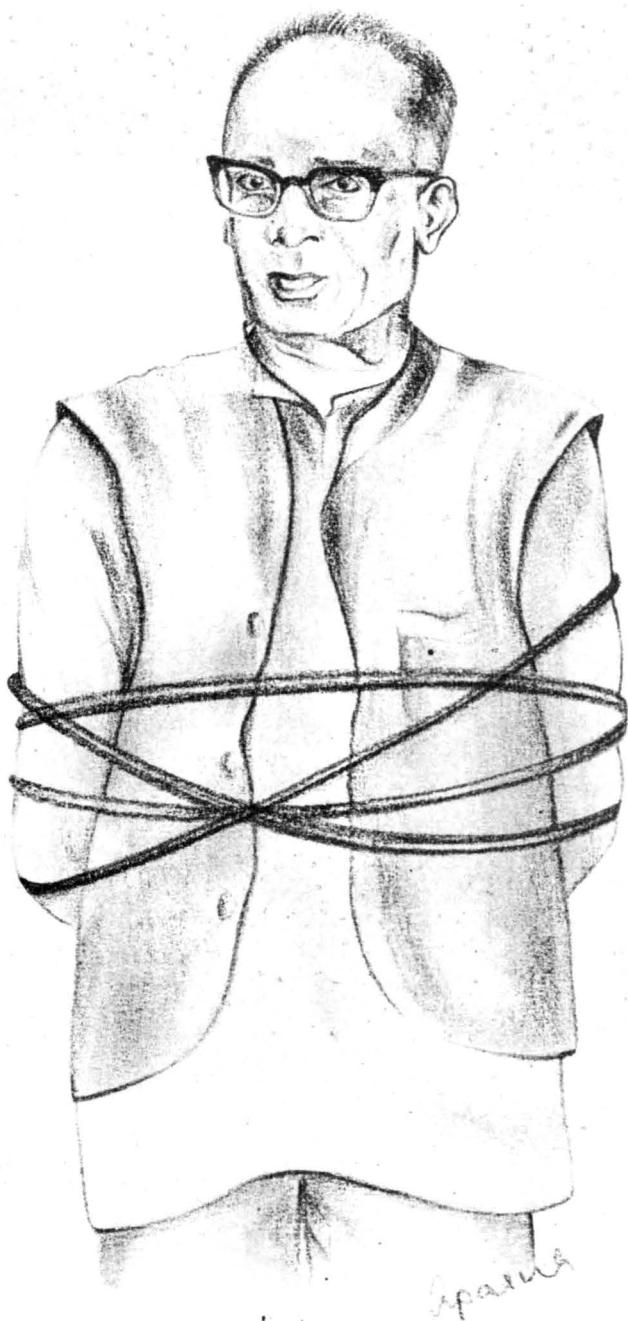
	TOTAL	SEX	
		Male	Female
Base:	250=	125=	125=
	100%	100%	100%
Good	81	82	80
Bad	8	10	5
Difficult to say	9	8	10
Can't say	2	—	5

CALCUTTA:

	TOTAL	SEX	
		Male	Female
Base:	252=	126=	126=
	100%	100%	100%
Good	53	56	50
Bad	28	25	31
Difficult to say	17	16	17
Can't say	3	4	2

MADRAS:

	TOTAL	SEX	
		Male	Female
Base:	295=	160=	135=
	100%	100%	100%
Good	73	73	73
Bad	17	17	17
Difficult to say	9	8	9
Can't say	1	2	1



COVER STORY

Q: Would you support, or would you be opposed to, the introduction of another Emergency in India at present?

A: Yes. 65 per cent would support another Emergency.

REGIONAL BREAK-UP

BOMBAY:

	TOTAL	SEX	
		Male	Female
Base:	327=	163=	164=
	100%	100%	100%
Support	58	60	57
Oppose	25	25	24
Can't say	17	15	19

DELHI:

	TOTAL	SEX	
		Male	Female
Base:	250=	125=	125=
	100%	100%	100%
Support	84	85	84
Oppose	8	8	7
Can't say	8	7	9

CALCUTTA:

	TOTAL	SEX	
		Male	Female
Base:	252=	126=	126=
	100%	100%	100%
Support	47	54	40
Oppose	45	38	52
Can't say	8	8	7

MADRAS:

	TOTAL	SEX	
		Male	Female
Base:	295=	160=	135=
	100%	100%	100%
Support	71	72	70
Oppose	21	21	22
Can't say	8	7	8

COMMENT:

The only city in which a majority of respondents did not say that they would support another Emergency was Calcutta. And yet, even there, fewer people would oppose an Emergency than would support it. It is astonishing that only eight per cent of Delhi respondents would oppose an Emergency. Obviously, the recent terrorism has terrified them.



Q: Some people say that an Emergency may be declared soon in India. Others say that an Emergency is not likely to be introduced in the near future. What do you think?

A: No. Only 37 per cent thought that an Emergency would be imposed.

REGIONAL BREAK-UP

BOMBAY:

	TOTAL	SEX	
		Male	Female
Base:	327=	163=	164=
	100%	100%	100%
Likely to be introduced	24	24	25
Not likely to be introduced	51	51	49
Can't say	25	25	26

DELHI:

	TOTAL	SEX	
		Male	Female
Base:	250=	125=	125=
	100%	100%	100%
Likely to be introduced	49	48	50
Not likely to be introduced	27	27	26
Can't say	24	25	24

CALCUTTA:

	TOTAL	SEX	
		Male	Female
Base:	252=	126=	126=
	100%	100%	100%
Likely to be introduced	29	33	26
Not likely to be introduced	56	52	58
Can't say	15	15	15

MADRAS:

	TOTAL	SEX	
		Male	Female
Base:	295=	160=	135=
	100%	100%	100%
Likely to be introduced	46	45	48
Not likely to be introduced	37	41	32
Can't say	17	14	20

COMMENT:

The large number of 'can't says' in Bombay and Delhi is significant. A quarter of Bombay and Delhi respondents had no opinion. Obviously, people are unsure about the future.



TEN YEARS AGO

The lessons of the Emergency should not be forgotten says L K ADVANI.

FOR AN ACTIVE participant in the political goings-on in New Delhi, this last decade has been so crowded with dramatic happenings, and the pace of change has been so breathtaking, that it takes some effort to realise that the Emergency is only ten years old.

The years 1975-85 have been packed with history. The trauma of the Emergency is, of course, unforgettable. So is the angry electoral earthquake it generated in 1977. The Janata's early months of achievement aroused high hopes. But it did not take long for the unseemly squabbles to begin. Then came the disintegration, and the collapse. In 1980, Mrs Gandhi returned with a bang. So did the Sanjay cult. An aerial misadventure transformed the scene once again. Rajiv was forced to step into the vacuum, almost like a reluctant bridegroom.

Meanwhile, both in the north-east and north-west, the situation worsened with dangerous rapidity. A farcical election forced on Assam occasioned the bloodiest holocaust witnessed since Partition. In Punjab, terrorism, with official patronage, grew into such a monster that Operation Bluestar was needed just to immobilise it. Then came the tragic assassination of the country's Prime Minister, and the carnage that followed. The ground swell of sympathy produced by the tragedy, coupled with anxiety for the country's unity, which the events precipitated, gave Rajiv a spectacular electoral triumph and an absolutely unprecedented parliamentary majority. The ups and downs



of this last decade have been truly momentous.

On June 25, 1975, I boarded a plane for Bangalore, where a meeting of a parliamentary committee was being held, looking forward to a two-day respite from the capital's sweltering heat. Even in June, Bangalore is cool. Little did I imagine that I would enjoy the cool breeze of Bangalore for 19 months! That night, the Government of India proclaimed a state of Emergency. In a sudden swoop, tens of thousands of political activists, including senior leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan, Morarji Desai and Charan Singh were rounded up and jailed.

Early on the morning of June 26, a police jeep arrived at the MLAs' hostel, Bangalore, where members of our parliamentary committee were staying. The police personnel had instructions, *not warrants*, to arrest

A B Vajpayee, Madhu

Dandavate, S N Mishra and myself – all of us members of this committee. We were transported to the High Grounds Police Station until formal warrants issued under MISA arrived in the evening. It was late night when we were finally entrusted to the custody of the Superintendent of the Bangalore Central Prison.

IN ESSENCE the Emergency was a systematic assault on the three principal pillars of democracy – the Judiciary, the press and the Opposition.

For each of these, the government had one main instrument. For the Opposition, there was the Maintenance of

L K Advani, Vice-President of the Bharatiya Janata Party, was arrested during the Emergency.



Hindustan Lever Limited

BIOTECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURE

**Abstract of speech
delivered by
Dr. A.S. Ganguly,
Chairman,
Hindustan Lever Limited,
at the Annual
General Meeting
held in Bombay on
Tuesday, 18th June, 1985.**

Among the economic priorities of the country is determining the choice of future technologies. Development is no longer leisurely and chronological. The first industrial revolution was fuelled by coal and steam power and the second by chemical and electrical industries. Now change is being catalysed by the microprocessor on the one hand and genetic engineering on the other. These are the frontier areas of development which will usher in the next century.

The choice is not between the two, but on what priorities should be given to each one of them so that the country would be optimally served. The 'Green Revolution' was the beginning of agri-biotechnology application in its early days in India. The spread of satellite communications, weather forecasting and the extension of the television network over the last three or four years is an indication of the magnitude of manageable change.

India, compared to many nations of the South, is better equipped to undertake work in these areas which require a scientific and engineering base. While much is being written and discussed about electronics and telecommunications, the scope and potential of biotechnology in improving agricultural productivity needs to be brought into focus as well. Rapid advances have already taken place in Western Europe and the U.S.A. in this field. However, we know that exclusive dependence on imported technology has its own drawbacks since a certain level of national technology competence is necessary for more economical and acceptable global interaction.

As far as agricultural productivity improvements are concerned, the commendable advances which started in the sixties must continue. These include increase in fertilizer production and the use of new dwarf varieties of seeds, increased

irrigation and cropping intensity, and specific inputs for dryland and marginal land farming. The quality of agricultural research in universities, and the transfer of information from laboratory to land have made phenomenal progress and must be further intensified. This has been matched by the response of farmers in adopting new methods and technologies. Several chemicals which have greatly enhanced field productivity are likely to improve in safety, versatility and effectiveness in the coming years. There are also areas of concern. The production of pulses and oilseeds has remained static; so has milk and fish output. Some of these represent critical deficiencies in the national dietary.

NEW FRONTIERS

For today's address, I have chosen a few areas of the application of science to agriculture. The topic is of interest to the Company and is also a national priority. These frontier areas of science are likely to supplement the stupendous national effort being made to increase agricultural output. It is necessary to reiterate the term 'supplement', because the bedrock of the agricultural economy has been well established by a series of technological and economic measures; we will have to continue to improve their effectiveness and extend them. As satellite communications are unlikely to replace surface mail in India, it would be unwise to expect that the application of 'new biology' will overtake traditional and well-tested methods in agriculture.

There are certain lessons to be learnt here from the West. With the discovery and production of Interferon over ten years ago and subsequent discoveries in genetic engineering and monoclonal technology, there grew a belief that traditional techniques of treating human disease would undergo a radical change. In spite of these explosive developments, progress has been less enchanting in business terms. There is, however, no doubt whatsoever that many of these dreams are likely to be realised before the turn of the century. In the meantime, traditional organic chemical drug therapy continues to make spectacular advances. In the final analysis it will be an interweaving of the traditional with genetic engineering techniques which will emerge in the battle against major diseases. Similarly in agriculture it will be a combination of the well-tested with new scientific inputs which will usher in the next era of progress.

Hindustan Lever's history of the application of science and technology in its business is well-documented. Following the successful use of chemistry and technology to further traditional areas of business, new vistas are now being explored as part of our agri-business strategy. In this area, the achievements of Unilever research are very impressive indeed. It is this combination of a local science base and access to global developments which places the Company in a unique position for venturing into this area.

Biotechnology research has been in progress in a few laboratories in the country and more is planned, including a very ambitious national programme in collaboration with international agencies. But in order to be in the forefront of the fast developments that are taking place, greater coordination is necessary. I believe that industries dealing in agricultural products have a unique role to play both in the contribution they can make, and for the enormous opportunity they can provide in the longer term.

We recognise that an unassailable and strong agricultural economy is going to be a major factor in ushering in a more prosperous and confident future. Neither industry nor agriculture can thrive in isolation in this scheme of things. Nor will the developments envisaged follow the patterns long established in the well-endowed, sparsely populated and prosperous parts of the world. As in many other areas, development will have to match local conditions. In Hindustan Lever, we believe that there is now a growing interface between the agro-industry and agriculture which provides exciting opportunities for growth.

In the rest of this paper, I have dealt with broad issues associated with accelerating the application of frontier areas of science and technology research to agriculture and have cited specific areas of research and application which are important for successful agri-business development and growth in the Indian context.

PRESENT POSITION

Improvements in agricultural productivity, particularly during this century have been science-led. Nowhere have the developments been as spectacular as in the U.S.A. The establishment and contribution of the Land Grant Colleges in that country was a consequence of the science pull in agricultural development. Af-



BIOTECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURE

ter World War II, these developments rapidly spread to Western Europe and certain other parts of the world. Advances took place in crop agriculture as well as in animal husbandry and pisciculture. This has created enormous surpluses of agri-products, milk, fish, animal protein and edible fats.

In India, change began after Independence, first through import substitution, and then through the 'Green Revolution.' Education in agriculture, extension programmes, block development, increasing use of dwarf hybrids, fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides, and progressive coverage through irrigation all helped in these efforts. In spite of all this, agro-productivity is still predominantly monsoon-dependent.

As a result of intensive scientific research undertaken in the sixties, the industrial use of non-conventional oils such as ricebran, castor, kusum, mowrah, sal, neem and karanja increased and released the pressure on edible oils to some extent. However, per capita availability of indigenous edible oils has steadily decreased in spite of several steps taken, and imports have continued to increase. In 1984, a seminar was held in Delhi under the auspices of the Hindustan Lever Research Foundation (HLRF) at which eminent agricultural scientists from all over the country discussed the steps required to overcome this major problem.

An earlier HLRF seminar in 1982 discussed the problems of pulse production in India, which has been more or less stagnant for the last decade, thus reducing the per capita availability of protein to our largely vegetarian population.

The production of paddy, wheat and sugar has increased spectacularly through the application of scientific agriculture, and the progressive increase in the use of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. These have been supplemented by increasing investment in irrigation, storage and distribution facilities. But there are signs of levelling off and decrease in the value of incremental output compared to input costs.

Milk availability has increased modestly through cooperative dairies and government milk schemes in larger towns and cities. The introduction of crossbred cows has had limited success and the buffalo continues to be the main milch animal.

As for availability of animal protein, goat and lamb meat has been supplemented by increase in poultry farming. But per capita fish availability is steadily decreasing every year, which in turn is reflected in prices increasing much ahead of the general level of inflation.

Thus, in spite of many noteworthy achievements, there are several areas of concern as well. I believe that further strengthening of proven technologies and interweaving these with selective application of biotechnology will be the catalyst to improve agricultural productivity in India.

BIOTECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE — A PRIORITY ACTIVITY

I mentioned earlier that there is a lot to be learnt from the experience of new biology in Western Europe and the U.S.A. During the last twenty years, there has been a veritable explosion of discoveries comparable only to what happened in particle physics and wave mechanics earlier in the century. The development of the atomic bomb was rapid, but peaceful applications of the new physics came much slower. Witness the controversy about nuclear power plants all over the world. Similarly, the commercial exploitation of the new biology has been slow. The noteworthy exception is the development of human insulin by the genetic manipulation of bacteria. As with all major discoveries, we are passing through a phase of greater hopes than results. While it is necessary to take a cautious view of the speed with which the new biology will yield results, there can be no debate that our country has to plunge into it as an act of faith. We cannot afford to miss this unique opportunity to develop competence in a vital field which will soon be a major factor in geo-economics. It is also important to realise that as in any other scientific endeavour, global cooperation will be imperative. In order to participate in these developments of the twenty-first century, we have to prepare ourselves as partners rather than as supplicants.

As a result of the already high level of agricultural productivity and surpluses in the western world, biological and genetic research will continue to be predominantly devoted to human health in preference to agriculture. Furthermore, scientific applications in agriculture are not readily transferable unless there are suitable receiving agencies. Differences in agro-climatic conditions and plant types are also important factors.

With our limited resources, the choice of frontier areas of science for application, particularly to agriculture, must be selective. However, even within a limited scope, the costs and risks are going to be enormous and an exceptional order of skills required, so it is necessary to approach the issue as one having economic pre-eminence in the country's list of

priorities. It would be my plea that all scientific and technological activities which lead to increased agricultural productivity should be considered to be of Core Economic Priority, not unlike many other areas where progress came only after such priority was given. In India, we have a well-established system of signalling economic priorities in the form of policy declarations and notifications. This has happened because major activities are state-funded, and especially as the scope of work and its costs would be beyond most university laboratories and many private industries.

Currently, the only activities meant exclusively for agricultural output and recognised as core industries of economic priority are inorganic fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides. They happen to be included in their own right as inorganic chemicals and heavy organic chemicals. The list now needs to be extended to include hitherto unconsidered activities related to agro-productivity which require modern techniques of biology, genetics and biotechnology.

AREAS OF RESEARCH

Biotechnology is sometimes erroneously thought to refer to genetic engineering. While genetic engineering is the specific technique of transferring gene expression through laboratory intervention, biotechnology involves converting discoveries in new biology into industrial and agricultural applications. These include a whole series of disciplines such as biofuels, nitrogen fixation, fermentation, plant hydrocarbons, antibiotics, vaccines, microbial insecticides and biomass production. In India the National Biotechnology Board has chosen genetic engineering, photosynthesis, tissue culture, enzyme engineering, alcohol fermentation and immunotechnology as areas of immediate interest.

It is, however, important to realise that although the potential is unlimited, the scientific and technological infrastructure required to exploit this vast field is equally formidable. Fermentation and enzyme technology or bio-catalysis have possibly made the greatest advances in industrial terms. This is manifest more in Japan than anywhere else. As a matter of fact, Japan regards biotechnology as the 'last major technological revolution of this century'.

In India we already have a reasonable base to produce fermentation products such as antibiotics and organic acids, and in spite of the resource constraints in the country, the scope is indeed unlimited. For example, the use of enzyme technology to produce a number of high value fine chemicals and developing energy conservation processes has hardly been looked into. There is one particular area in which HLL scientists have achieved considerable success. Oils and fats are the major raw materials of our business. While new avenues for enhanc-



BIOTECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURE

ing output continue to be explored, we investigated the question of using genetically modified bacteria to produce edible quality oil and glycerine for industrial use. Economically, such a proposition can only be of interest to a perennially oil-short country like India.

Although the developments are still at an early stage, the results are encouraging. Scientists in our laboratory have manipulated genes of two edible varieties of yeast to produce a hybrid cell capable of not only producing and accumulating high amounts of fats of the order of 50% of the biomass, but also capable of utilising sugar at high rates and producing fat within 3-4 days. This unique feat has been accomplished by a novel technique of protoplast fusion and gene technology. Our chemical technologists have succeeded in growing this newly engineered species of yeast in pilot fermenters and successfully extracting good quality edible fat from the biomass. Although the investments in industrial scale-up are rather high, our scientists estimate that we could one day produce good quality edible fats from molasses at a cost of Rs.9000 — 10,000 per tonne.

We are also engaged in the production of a number of other chemicals via this route, although progress, by its very pioneering nature, is slow and the high costs of scale-up make it imperative to evolve cost-effective engineering design. The work of selecting and modifying micro-organisms to produce a whole series of highly valuable chemicals economically will become one of the primary foci of biotechnology research and development programmes in this country. This is also true of the development of enzyme technology where a beginning has yet to be made. Our initial forays into this field appear promising but will have to await successful industrial scale-up.

SOME PRACTICAL ASPECTS

To us in India, agriculture-related biotechnology is of exceptional importance. This encompasses key areas ranging from bio-insecticides, growth promoters/regulators and photosynthesis improvers to tissue culture, hybrid seeds production, genetic engineering and others including augmentation of edible fats and milk output and fish farming.

India owes its dramatic increase in cereals output to new hybrids such as the cross between Mexican dwarf and the Indian varieties. Indeed hybrid seeds today represent a big business opportunity in the country. The result of the union of two genotypes, hybrids are more efficient

than their parents under a variety of agro-economic conditions. Developed on systematic lines on a large scale, the spread effect and economic outcome will be quite significant. India is the first to produce hybrid cotton seeds by the novel 'hand pollination' method, evidence that the country has the capability to successfully forge ahead in this field.

Tissue culture is the tool in the propagation of true progenies of the parent plant with uniform growth and productivity characteristics for each species in a given agro-climatic environment through successive generations. The advantage of the technique in ensuring that commercial crops such as oil palm give the best possible yields is obvious. Unilever has achieved a breakthrough in the clonal propagation of oil palm. Begun 15 years ago, it is a successful commercial reality today. At Hindustan Lever's Laboratories, research is progressing with coconut palm. The tissue culture method, unlike the conventional methods of breeding, leads to obtaining increased genetic variability relatively rapidly. Fusion of cultured plant cells permits the development of unique hybrid plants. The technique could be valuable in achieving a breakthrough in the production of pulses and oilseeds.

Can the cells of cereal plants be genetically so altered that they use atmospheric nitrogen and thus become more productive? Can they be made to yield more with lower use of fertilizer? Can they thrive under conditions of moisture and salinity stress? Scientists are convinced that these will be achieved. Another area is the use of micro-organisms to aid the farmer harvest a better crop. Researchers know that the symbiotic nitrogen-fixing bacteria boost yields of pulses and certain oilseed crops. Attempts must now be made to enhance their nitrogen-fixing ability several-fold through genetic manipulation and also make them crop-and soil-specific. This is a highly sophisticated scientific field. HLL's scientists have carried out research work and field tests with encouraging results for pulses and oilseeds.

95 per cent of the weight of plants comes not from the soil but from atmospheric carbon dioxide and water. Apart from the genetics of plants, the major criterion determining the dry weight of the plant and the yield of the crops is photosynthesis. Scientists of Hindustan Lever have discovered a mixture of organic compounds which even in one ppm doses increases photosynthesis by 100 per cent or more. They believe that this route of enquiry is not only unravelling many new aspects of plant physiology but may yield other compounds which can be more readily transferred to farm practices.

Besides photosynthesis improvers, growth promoters/regulators are assuming considerable importance in the U.S.A. and Europe and even in South East Asia. Most of these mimic the natural substances present in plants such as hormones and oxins. Norms for manufacturing and using these unique chemicals are being constantly revised to ensure their overall safety. We must adopt the latest technology in this sphere, the cost of which would be insignificant compared to the benefits to be derived.

Another new field is bio-insecticides which are of bacterial, fungal or viral origin. These, and pheromones — insect sex hormones, many of which are synthesized — if adopted, will be of considerable benefit to India's agriculture. Our researchers have succeeded in synthesizing certain pheromones and these are being tested.

CONCLUSION

The discoveries in new biology are spectacular. Like the micro-processor and the computer revolution, they hold out enormous promise. Countries around the world are busily engaged in preparing their base to move into the forefront of what has been described as the 'technology of the next century'. After the initial euphoria there is a sense of cautious optimism. The conversion of laboratory discovery into commercial success has turned out to be more tortuous than anticipated. Nevertheless progress has been made.

While we gear ourselves to catch up in computers and telecommunication, biotechnology is a new challenge at the starting line. We have the science base to undertake this exciting journey and our need is also great. While I believe that increasing traditional inputs will further improve our already spectacular achievements in agricultural production, the application of biotechnology will be the catalyst for the next leap. Shorter term gains are to be had in areas where progress has been lagging, e.g. oilseeds, pulses and fish farming.

In a resource-short country like India, biotechnology has a major contribution to make. This has been demonstrated successfully in Japan. Secondly, while much of global biotechnology will be engaged in tackling problems of human health and disease in the more affluent nations, agricultural productivity will be the prime concern of the developing countries. Even here, once a research base is set up, the fallout could be significant in areas other than agriculture. For example, some useful work has already been done in India on the application of immunobiology in the detection disease; future applications could be in treating diseases such as hepatitis, leprosy and malaria, and even for contraception.

The economic importance of research in new biology cannot be over-



BIOTECHNOLOGY AND AGRICULTURE

stated; at the same time, there is the danger of understating the problems associated with it. The National Biotechnology Board has formulated certain schemes. Private industry has begun exploring opportunities. What is needed is a unified national approach interweaving the plans of the government and private industry into a tapestry of national goals. The tasks are too complex and the stakes too high to attempt any piece-meal approach. Only large goals and efforts are likely to produce results that bring real benefits as well as recognition in the international

community in order to enable exchange of ideas and sharing of discoveries. This is how the great technology of the future is likely to evolve. We are ideally placed to ride the crest of this wave into the future. In recognition, this group of technologies must be accorded a place amongst the list of top economic priorities of the country.

Biological research and commercial application is a major strength of Unilever. In Hindustan Lever Limited, work on biochemical and agricultural research has been under way for several years. Some of

the first discoveries are now entering the marketplace. Much more remains to be done. It is the combined strength of Unilever's global reach and HLL's scientific record which gives us the confidence to commit ourselves to the application of biotechnology to agriculture as a part of the Company's long term strategy.

Note: This does not purport to be a report of the proceedings of the Annual General Meeting.

The full text of this speech is available in booklet form. Anyone who wishes to have a copy may please write to:
Communications Department,
Hindustan Lever Ltd., P.O. Box 409,
Bombay 400 001.

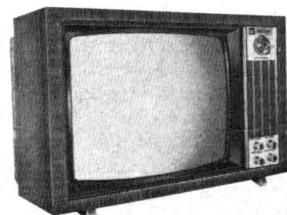
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ELECTRONICS**

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THANA, (MAHARASHTRA).
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COVER STORY

Internal Security Act (MISA) nicknamed 'Maintenance of Indira and Sanjay Act' by angry detainees. As many as 34,988 persons were detained under MISA. Besides, 75,818 were held under DIR.

The imposition of strict pre-censorship effectively muzzled the press. Papers which refused to truckle were banned, and harassed their owners until they were forced to fold up. Even a cartoon journal like *Shankar's Weekly* was compelled to wind up. In a moving last editorial, titled *Farewell*, Shankar wrote: "In our first editorial, we made the point that our function was to make our readers laugh — at the world, at pompous leaders, at humbug, at foibles, at ourselves. But, who are the people who have developed a sense of humour? It is a people with certain civilised norms of behaviour, where there is tolerance, and a dash of compassion.

"Dictatorships cannot afford laughter because people may laugh at the dictators, and that wouldn't do. In all the years of Hitler, there never was a good comedy, not a good cartoon, not a parody, not a spoof. From this point, the world, and sadly enough India, have become grimmer..."

For political parties and banned organisations like the RSS, normal activity was just not possible. So, those who could keep out of the MISA and DIR net carried on an anti-Emergency campaign underground. Anti-Emergency literature was also circulated underground. The only institution that could openly resist, at least for a while, the anti-democratic designs of the government, was the Judiciary.

A fierce battle raged between the executive and the judiciary all through the Emergency. And Parliament's voice was completely silenced. Far from being chary of doing anything that might be construed as contempt of Parliament, the government of the day seemed to revel in such actions.

A WIDELY PREVALENT view has been that the injustices perpetrated during the Emergency were the

It is a myth that over-zealous bureaucrats exceeded their authority. My own experience was that the lower and middle levels of the administration were co-operative and helpful. It was the politicians who were zealous.

handiwork of an over-zealous bureaucracy, and that it was for their sins that the political leadership was punished. Facts do not substantiate this thesis. The experience of my own family may be relevant in this context.

I was in the Rohtak jail for a couple of months. In the earlier weeks, interviews with MISA detainees were banned altogether. Later, following a court directive, one interview per month with family members was allowed. My wife applied to the Home Ministry for the requisite permission for herself, my son (then nine years old) and my daughter (then seven). A permit was sent to her, but 'for two persons only'.

A parliamentary colleague of mine, Jagannath Rao Joshi, who had not been arrested then, volunteered to have the permit changed to three persons. He personally spoke to a senior minister, and was shocked to receive a cold reply: "I am sorry, that's the rule." My wife brought the two children along nevertheless and the Jail Superintendent allowed both the children into the audience room along with her, the 'two persons only' embargo notwithstanding!

Government officials at the lower and middle levels of the administration were generally extremely co-operative and helpful. Officials at the

higher levels were inclined to help, but timidity was a constraint. It was mainly the politicians who acted as Emergency zealots.

OF ALL the senior leaders in the Congress (I), Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is the only one who was not tainted by the Emergency. In fact, there is a widespread belief that he disapproved of all that happened then. I wonder if he appreciates that this is one important factor which makes people in general, and Opposition parties in particular, react differently to him and differently to Mrs Gandhi.

In his able analysis of the Watergate episode, *The Fall Of Richard Nixon*, Theodore H White has made this perceptive observation: "The true crime of Richard Nixon was that he broke the faith that binds America together, and for this he was driven from power.

"The faith he broke was critical — that somewhere in American life there is at least one man who stands for law. The faith holds that all men are equal before the law and are protected by it; and no matter how the faith may be betrayed elsewhere by the ugly compromises of daily striving, at one particular point, the Presidency, justice is beyond the possibility of a fix."

By imposing the Emergency Mrs Gandhi, too, like Nixon, broke the faith that, at least at the level of the Prime Minister, 'justice is beyond the possibility of a fix'. In June 1975, there was no terrorism, no violence, no anarchy anywhere in the country which could in any way be described as 'internal disturbance'. Viewed in perspective, the Emergency was nothing but a desperate strategem resorted to stifle the public clamour for Mrs Gandhi's resignation following the Allahabad High Court judgement against her. Thus, without doubt, it was a 'fix' and a fraud.

On the tenth anniversary of that sad event, let the entire nation, including the Chief Executive, vow never to let anything similar happen ever again. ♦

MEMORIES RECALLING THE EMERGENCY

Here, in their own words, are memories of the Emergency from the people it affected. Men like Nanaji Deshmukh who went underground. Like Om Mehta who ordered the arrests. Or Rusi Karanjia who supported it.

NANAJI DESHMUKH: (RSS Leader)

I was in Delhi on the 13th of June. I was expecting news of Mrs Gandhi's resignation in the morning. But instead, the papers were full of stories about truckloads of people going to her house asking her not to resign. This dramatic manoeuvre made me suspect that she wouldn't resign.

I contacted Opposition leaders who were in Delhi, and we met the President and said this is unconstitutional, but he dilly-dallied. We requested Morarji Desai to preside over a combined meeting of Opposition parties. Then we formed the Lok Sangharsh Samiti with Morarji Desai as Chairman, me as the General Secretary and Ashok Mehta as the Treasurer.

On the 25th evening we had a big rally in the Ram Lila grounds. JP was also present. JP, Morarji and I addressed the meeting. After the rally, I was at a friend's place. Someone came and told me, "You will be arrested. I think that an Emergency is going to be declared." I tried to hide myself. We heard reports that JP, Morarji etc had been arrested. The same night I decided to go underground and tried to contact our workers.

RAVI NAIR: (Then student activist and now trade unionist)

I was asleep in the then Socialist Party office at Subedar Chatram Road in Bangalore on the night of 25th June, 1975. The early dawn saw me running down a back-lane having been woken up by a local party comrade and told that the police were raiding the houses of important party activists. After a couple of hours at a tea-stall at the nearby central bus-stand I walked across to the party office to scout around. On the way I bumped into Madhu Dandavate, who informed me that an Emergency had been declared and that JP had been arrested. He then proceeded

to his guest-house to pack and catch a flight to Bombay. He was arrested at the guest-house. The gravity of the situation had not yet sunk in.

SADANAND VARDE: (Socialist leader, now Secretary of the Bombay unit of the Janata party)

When the Emergency was declared, I was in Bangalore, for personal reasons. Vajpayee, Dandavate and others were attending a parliamentary committee meeting there. I got a call from Mrs Dandavate in Bombay saying that Mr Dandavate had been arrested. The full implications were not known then. I came back and found that many people had been arrested and that work had started. Mrs Gore had gone underground. People asked me what to do. I said, so far as active workers are concerned, the fact that they've escaped will keep the feeling of resistance alive.

MRINAL GORE: (Socialist Party leader, now Janata MLA in Maharashtra)

I came to know about the Emergency early in the morning of 26th June, 1975 and I rang up a few friends and we decided to meet at the Sarvodaya office. Among others, G G Parikh, P B Samant, and Govindrao Shinde came and we all decided to hold a public meeting at Flora Fountain that very evening, to condemn the Emergency. We had a hunch that we would be arrested after the meeting. So I left before the meeting, but did not go home. That night, Ahilya Rangnekar and many others were arrested. I was saved because I didn't go home.

DARRYL D'MONTE: (Then Assistant Editor at The Times Of India, now a freelance writer)

The news hit us as soon as we walked into *The Times* that morning.

This feature was researched by Amrita Shah, Rajni Bakshi and Shiraz Sidhva. It was compiled by Rajni Bakshi.



The jailers: Sanjay Gandhi with Home Minister Om Mehta.

The first reaction was stunned silence: it just couldn't be true, we thought. Nothing like this could ever happen in Independent, democratic India. The editors were in a quandary: What should they carry as editorials for the following day?

Later that afternoon, the management called a meeting to announce the imposition of press censorship. Though the meeting was meant to be restricted to editors, many journalists squeezed in. The management blandly announced that it had decided to comply with the government's regulations. I remember K R Sundar Rajan, then an Assistant Editor of *The Times*, speaking up and asking if that was all the management had to say, what was the point of calling the meeting in the first place? It ended in confusion and consternation.

R K KARANJIA: (Editor of Blitz)

The Emergency plan was actually formulated by Mohan Kumaramangalam—six months before his death. He realised that we needed economic discipline, that for some time democracy should take a back seat to development.

Kumaramangalam died but his successors — Rajni Patel, Borooah, S S Ray — wanted to convince Mrs Gandhi that India needs a radical change. As I was a friend of both

sides they consulted me and we drew out a 20-point programme.

The question was how to implement it. They wanted an Emergency. I was against it. But after the railway strike — which I supported — where poor people were left jobless, I told Rajni we need an Emergency.

Then came JP's movement — I decided that an Emergency was necessary. Three weeks before the Emergency I ran a campaign, saying that the Opposition was planning a *coup d'état*, with the help of the foreign hand, and that Mrs Gandhi *must* take radical steps. The Emergency was necessary and unavoidable, because democracy had failed — that was obvious from the railway strike and JP's call to the police and the army. It was impossible for the government to function. And frankly, I was not in favour of people like George Fernandes taking over the country.

BAKUL PATEL: (Wife of the late Rajni Patel, then Congress power-lord in Bombay)

I was the first person to know about the Emergency in Bombay. My husband rang me up from Delhi at around five in the morning. The Emergency had been declared and they wanted the Chief Minister in Bombay to know, but not through the official channels.

People say my husband was consulted before the Emergency — that is all wrong. He was summoned by Mrs Gandhi and informed that Emergency had been declared.

I rang up the Chief Minister. I didn't know the implications then. In the beginning it was generally made out that the country was going towards anarchy. One thought it was a temporary measure in the interest of the country. As the days went by one got to know what it was being used for.

RAMRAO ADIK: (then Advocate General of Maharashtra and now dethroned Congress (I) leader)

Apart from being a Congressman, as an independent citizen, the only conclusion I could come to, was that the Emergency was more than justified. In Gujarat, they had the Navnirman movement. What was Navnirman? Provoking students to remove a constitutionally elected government. Because of Morarji Desai's threat of fast, the Assembly was dissolved. In Bihar, JP was openly provoking the police and the army people.

DARRYL D'MONTE:

Eventually, if I remember correctly, an innocuous editorial about French foreign policy was carried as the lead the next morning (after the Emergency was declared).

That afternoon, some journalists called an impromptu meeting in the news room of *The Times*. The most impassioned speaker, strangely enough, was Khushwant Singh, who warned everyone present that any attempt to defy censorship regulations wasn't something to be treated lightly. "It's a matter of life and death," he went on to say. "At my age, I can afford to take risks but each of you here should think twice before doing anything." It was as

COVER STORY

if someone had thrown a bucket of cold water on the agitated journalists: we were reminded of the gravity of the situation.

RAVI NAIR:

My thoughts wander to a night in August 1975. A meeting of student activists was to be held at the house of Mr P N Lekhi. We were betrayed by an informer. I spent six hours in a sewage canal into which I had dived to evade arrest. My friend, Ajay Natrajan, was not so lucky. He was nabbed and spent a week in a police lock-up. He was not able to sleep on his back or walk properly for the next three months. His crime – he didn't know my whereabouts.

SADANAND VARDE:

Our first job was to get places for Mrinal Gore to stay in. Overnight, the complexion of people in political life had changed. Underground literature mentioned that these people are going underground; we made copies and distributed them to give evidence that people had not accepted the Emergency. One night, I got Mrs Gore to come to my house because she said: "What is the use of my being underground. I must meet people." So I got 40 to 50 people to meet her here. She came, talked to them and went away. The next day, an ACP, Mokashi, came to my house with a warrant. He looked around and went away.

MRINAL GORE:

For the next six months I was underground. I lived in 72 different places, changing every three days or more, moving all over Maharashtra and Gujarat. During this period I tried to organise a satyagraha in Bombay, along with friends who were still out. To enthuse people to protest against the Emergency and put up some sort of resistance, we produced bulletins and circulated them.

Sometimes I wore disguises, like a bob-cut wig and *churidar-kurtas* or a Gujarati style sari with my face covered.

OM MEHTA: (*Home Minister during the Emergency*)

No, I have absolutely no regrets. The Emergency was good – not once was the army called out – the law and order situation was very good. The price line was tightly held, people felt safe.

I think the Opposition overplayed the excesses. There were some excesses, but those were due to over-zealous officers – they didn't listen to us. At any point when the excesses were brought to our notice, we ensured that the people responsible were punished.

Indiraji was very upset that the violence was attributed to her. I have been on record many times now, and many commissions have 'tried' me – but I'm glad to say that none of them have found anything to hold against me. I was just doing my duty.

NANAJI DESHMUKH:

The government did not let people know where the arrest-

ed people were put. For the first three months no one knew where their family members were being detained. There was no trace of a person as important as Morarji Desai.

RAMRAO ADIK:

What is wrong if fundamental rights are suspended? Who has conferred them? If they are conferred by the Constitution, they are subject to other provisions of the Constitution.

INDER MOHAN: (*Social worker with long experience in Old Delhi and slum colonies of the capital*)

On September 19, 1975, I returned from the Jama Masjid area by 9 a m. At about 12.15 a m I heard the doorbell ring. As I opened the door, seven persons in mufti rushed in. Two of them nabbed me and pushed me against the wall. One held me by the neck and another put his heels on my toes. I managed to scream and asked them what they were up to. One of them shouted: "We are the police." At this point, eight persons in uniform, who had waited outside, entered. I relaxed and told them that I was expecting them earlier. Four of them lifted me by my shoulders and four by my legs and brought me up to two police jeeps waiting on the road. I was picked up in my lungi, without shoes. Before opening the door I had taken care to put on a shirt. I was arrested under DIR and not detained under MISA. Soon after, I was shoved into a lock-up. It was stinking. When I looked around, I found that the open lavatory, which is always a part of police lock-ups, was filled with piles of excreta and muck.

RAVI NAIR:

My thoughts go back to October 2, 1975 at Rajghat in Delhi at the Mahatma Samadhi. A packed prayer meeting was being held, presided over by Acharya Kripalani. The prayers were over and Kripalani had started his discourse. The police had surrounded the gathering and a special branch officer recognised me. I was arrested along with two socialist comrades from Maharashtra. I was taken to the nearby Daryaganj police station where I was joined by Mahatma Gandhi's grandsons, Rajmohan Gandhi and Ramu Gandhi, along with H V Kamath and Sushila Nayar. A few phone calls later, Mr Kamath chose to remain with us three 20-year-olds. The others left. I wonder how many Kamaths we have today.

The same night, there was a barbaric lathi charge in Ward 15 of Tihar jail against those who were protesting against the overcrowded conditions and inedible food. I saw fractured limbs and bandaged heads. A few days later I was shifted from the *pagal chakki*, a set of cells where insane prisoners and reputed trouble-makers were kept.

SADANAND VARDE:

A police officer came and searched my house. They found underground literature – bulletins. On that basis they



Their Master's Voice: the Cabinet turns up at Palam to receive Sanjay and Menaka.

came to arrest me on August 17/18. The officer said he was sorry. It was under DIR. As I was getting into the jeep, the contract bus for the Bhabha Atomic Centre was passing by. There were at least half a dozen people I knew in that bus — so I waved. None of them returned my gesture, except for one, who surreptitiously fluttered his fingers.

VIREN SHAH: (Industrialist and ex-MP)

In 1976, my wife and I were at the home of B K Nehru, the High Commissioner in London. Someone who had come from Ahmedabad came in and said, "Viren Shah is arrested." We laughed. But when we returned to the hotel, my secretary called to say that I was now involved in the Baroda dynamite case because some arrested persons had mentioned my meetings with George Fernandes. We were advised by people not to return to India, but we did, on the scheduled date (the second week of May 1976).

Within two days, our group had the most massive income tax raid. It is till today the most well-planned, well-publicised raid ever conducted by the Income Tax Department.

On June 5, 1976, I was arrested under MISA and put in the Arthur Road jail. The Superintendent was a little embarrassed because the only place available was a ward which had all the trade unionists — Datta Samant, R J Mehta etc. I told him I wouldn't be at all uncomfortable.

DATTA SAMANT: (Trade unionist — who was in the Congress fold in 1975)

During the Emergency I was behind bars for a year and two months. At the time there were 15 strikes on the bonus issue. The Chief Minister and the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee (BPCC) president told me that I should withdraw these strikes. And the management took

advantage of the Emergency and went back on the settlements we had arrived at. I refused to withdraw the strikes, so I was sent to jail.

NANAJI DESHMUKH:

I toured the whole country. I was arrested on August 28 because of the folly of my colleagues. Some people in Punjab were supposed to meet me and they asked the Intelligence men for directions to the address. The Intelligence men came and caught me. When I was arrested I said, "I'm Nanaji Deshmukh." They refused to believe me because I was in disguise. I had big, dyed moustaches and white hair. Then, this man, who had been in the UP government in 1967, said, "I can recognise Nanaji from his voice," and he confirmed it was me.

DATTA SAMANT:

After three or four months some strikes fizzled out and others were withdrawn (by workers). Then I was released.

After a month I was again arrested, this time under MISA, so no specific charges were necessary.

I was arrested from my union office (both times). Throughout my career — four murder cases, one MISA case and one under NSA — I never went underground. I personally went and got arrested. I can't run the movement from the underground. I am also not timid and not afraid of arrest. I had been arrested three or four times before. I am not bothered about jail food. Isolation does make you a little frustrated and disturbed. But (during the Emergency) many educated people were together and we could have a lot of discussions.

K R SUNDAR RAJAN: (Then Assistant Editor of The Times Of India, and now a columnist)

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When my house and office were raided on June 10, 1976, there was no hint it would be followed by a series of interrogations. Again, during the many interrogation sessions the 'incriminating' evidence was not shown till the last moment.

VIREN SHAH:

In Tihar, the 22 accused were kept in the maximum security ward. It was next to the death ward and a search-light was constantly trained on it. We were handcuffed when taken to court. For 22 of us there used to be more than 20-25 vehicles, with wireless cars, over 120 policemen with Sten guns and no one was allowed to come near us in court.

On my first visit to the Tis Hazari court, George Fernandes read a prepared speech to which we responded by raising our handcuffed hands every few minutes.

Though a number of foreign correspondents attended, not a single Indian correspondent was present — that was the level of fright.

NANAJI DESHMUKH:

In jail I was interrogated for five days. After that I was not tortured or troubled. The officers had more sympathy for me than for Mrs Gandhi.

DATTA SAMANT:

Many people who were arrested for the first time were very disturbed. R J Mehta was very disturbed — he started worshipping God. The most committed people were the RSS. I totally differ with their ideology but their perseverance is admirable. Every morning, at five o'clock, they got up to parade and exercise. Of course, we didn't join them but we must learn from them...

S C Goyal often got sweets in jail. One day *bhang* was mixed in the sweets. All of us took it and there was a big disturbance. Some felt very happy and some got very depressed. I got so depressed that at night they had to call in doctors. But there was no manhandling or abuse in this jail (Arthur Road).

INDER MOHAN:

During the next two days, I discussed our problems (of demolitions in Old Delhi) with Om Mehta, Khurshid Alam Khan and Jagmohan who was the Delhi Development Authority Vice-Chairman at that time. They were all ridiculously unconvincing and kept saying that Mrs Gandhi alone mattered and would set everything right. Jagmohan's shifting stand, his obedient role towards Sanjay, all contrasted with his authoritarianism towards the people.

BAKUL PATEL:

After two to two-and-a-half months, disturbing news of people being harassed came through. After three months, my husband decided to see Mrs Gandhi and bring to her notice that the Emergency was being misused. People used to come and see us but would be scared of talking in the

rooms or on the phone. Even senior ministers were scared. The behaviour of some of them was shocking, frantic, off-balance, terribly frightened. I thought it was all too unnatural.

At one high level meeting, (where Swaran Singh, S S Ray and others were present) Rajni told Mrs Gandhi, "Madam, if you want to win the next election, you must free Opposition leaders, withdraw censorship, and let the media be non-partisan." She didn't like that and since then the rift between them began to grow.

My husband didn't mince words — he used to tell her that this was not the right thing.

It was a living horror. I hope we don't go through this state of things again. Rajiv didn't approve of them — he is more balanced than Sanjay.

NANAJI DESHMUKH:

We used to cyclostyle pamphlets and distribute them throughout the country. There was a network of RSS people in villages, towns. Every citizen came to know what was going on. Pamphlets were the only media available.

MRINAL GORE:

Except for the two months when I was alone in jail, we (other Emergency prisoners) had a good time — reading, playing games in the open like *kho-kho*, and singing songs. We used to cook by rotation. Mrs Kamala Desai taught us handicrafts and embroidery. After so many years of hectic activity it was a period of rest. I even put on weight — about four or five kgs.

On the one hand, we had leisure and on the other hand, we didn't know what would happen to us. Would we be released at all? For some this uncertainty was traumatic: some of them used to cry for a month after their arrest.

NANAJI DESHMUKH:

During the Emergency people used to speak of efficiency and discipline — all wrong. Only thing that happened was that people came to office on time. Every policeman was the emperor in his area. They would snatch money from people, even meetings in jail were bribed. So, corruption increased. The whole administration was corrupted at practically every level. Fear was everywhere. To some degree it was more in the north because of the family planning programme. Everywhere there was havoc, panic and extortion.

INDER MOHAN:

Another gory aspect of the Emergency was the setting up of a sterilisation centre in the basement at Dojana House near Jama Masjid. This centre was frequented by Sanjay, Jagmohan, the then Lieutenant-Governor Kishen Chand Rukhsana and DIG Bhinder. Here, men herded into trucks were brought and put on the tables without explaining anything to them. They were rounded up from the parks and from among beggars. They used to yell and scream.



Sanjay Gandhi tours the streets of Old Delhi to review the progress of his sterilisation campaign.

Many among them were migrant labourers and rickshaw-pullers. As no one bothered to explain things to them, the operation victims went back convinced that they had lost their manhood. It was a terrible psychological reaction.

RAMRAO ADIK:

Only because powers were abused, does not mean that the declaration was wrong. To some extent, there is bound to be an abuse of powers. It is there even now. They (the Janata government) did not even get evidence to charge-sheet Mrs Gandhi. In fact, abuse of power was in arresting Mrs Gandhi.

BAKUL PATEL:

Two or three months after the declaration of the Emergency things started going wrong. Not just that trains were running on time and people going to office on time. People would complain to Rajni about harassment and sometimes he would intervene. Once, P C Sethi was very rude to a man on his flight and threatened to have him arrested — Rajni intervened. Industrialists, supposed to be in sympathy with the Opposition, would be raided or threatened.

R K KARANJIA:

I opposed censorship. *Blitz* was the first paper to be put under pre-censorship on December 31, 1975 — ironic because *Blitz* was the paper that had asked for the Emergency. It was because of Menaka that it was imposed on *Blitz*. I supported the Emergency but within the framework, criticised it where necessary. We resorted to all kinds of tricks. For instance, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed made angry remarks about a Muslim exhibition not being arranged properly because of Sanjay and we were told not to carry this. So I wrote a letter to the editor under a pseudonym, criticising Ahmed for his conduct.

NANAJI DESHMUKH:

The main person was Sanjay. He practically organised the Emergency. The others had no guts — V C Shukla, Bansi Lal. When Sanjay was in power they were with him and when he was out they were against him.

R K KARANJIA:

All that we had planned was reversed by Sanjay and Menaka, against Mrs Gandhi's wishes. She was bullied into taking many steps. Rajiv was totally against all this.

Rajni was a fellow victim — he was called again and again and asked what *Blitz* was up to. He did tell Mrs Gandhi, like me, that things were going wrong. But you could see Mrs Gandhi was helpless.

BAKUL PATEL:

Obviously, relations between Rajni and Sanjay were not good. He was one of the persons resentful of Rajni. If there was a widening of the Right, he is responsible. He felt strongly that Rajni was not guiding his mother properly. (He also hated Leftists — P N Haksar, Borooh, Kumaramangalam, Rajni, S S Ray, G Parthasarathy.)

Rajni told Mrs Gandhi that perhaps she should restrain Sanjay. Apparently, she did resent that.

At Shivaji Park, Sanjay said something to the effect that funds should be given directly to the Centre — hinting at Rajni. Rajni told Mrs Gandhi about it but she feigned ignorance.

OM MEHTA:

The situation is very similar to what it was in 1974. I think it was necessary at that point of time to call an Emergency.

I don't know if an Emergency would help at this point. They haven't called one yet, there must be some reason. ♦

BOGUS HEROES?

SUBRAMANIAM SWAMY offers a characteristically controversial account of who did what in the Emergency.

DURING the entire Emergency, I was underground — in India, between June 25, 1975 and January 8, 1976, and again between August 5, 1976 and November 22, 1976. For the rest, I was abroad. During this period, I saw what the pressure of the Emergency did to people, especially the leaders. I saw several of them crack under the tension and uncertainty about the future. The euphoria of the subsequent Janata wave hid the ignominy of what the leaders were up to on the sly during the Emergency. The quickies that were churned out post-Emergency, to chronicle the 'excesses', glossed over or just blacked out the sordid aspects because now the leaders with the feet of clay had become ministers in the new government and the patrons of the quickie writers.

During the Emergency, many brave fighters fought unsung. I, too, fought but earned the title of an Emergency hero. I was rewarded with public adulation and ministerial office. But a chronicle is necessary to tell it like it was, and some day, not far off, I hope to author it. Among the sung heroes stand, undoubtedly, JP and Morarji Desai. JP stood firm in his resolve and defiantly refused to issue a statement withdrawing the agitation he had launched in 1974 and which had petered out in the Emergency. Mrs Gandhi had wanted such a statement for the international propaganda value it would represent. Her Gestapo would have made it appear to be a surrender

document. But JP did not give in. His resolve was all the more admirable because he was continually pressured by Opposition leaders to issue such a statement. Some, like N G Goray and S M Joshi, urged JP out of genuine conviction. Others, like Vajpayee, pressured him because of their private deals with Mrs Gandhi. Still others, like L K Advani and Madhu Dandavate, wrote from jail asking him to withdraw the agitation, not out of conviction or because of private profit, but because they have all their lives been man Fridays. JP was hurt by all this but he did not yield.

Credit should also go to Morarji Desai for not cracking up in solitary confinement at the age of 80. I am no more an admirer of Morarji and now feel that all his moral pontification is humbug which I had to discover the hard way while many others had found him out long ago, less painfully. Nevertheless, he is a man of great personal courage and this is attested to by the fact that he spent 20 months in solitary confinement at the fag end of his life. When he came out he was none the worse for it. He contemptuously spurned the offers made to him. Had he yielded, Mrs Gandhi would have been emboldened. But he didn't, and therefore, Morarji deserved credit.

While JP and Morarji are sung heroes of the Emergency, Madhavrao Muley of the RSS died without due recognition. Muley looked after me throughout the Emergency. He himself was underground but he went to great personal risk to see that I was safe. Muley was General Secretary of the RSS but also in charge of the

underground. Towards the end of 1976, the RSS began cracking, and Muley appeared to be in the minority. But he did me a great favour. Vajpayee — the only political leader in the whole of India to be allowed to stay in his own house — was sending me imperious letters demanding that I surrender to the police to pacify Mrs Gandhi. Vajpayee's claim was that if I did so, she would lift the Emergency. By going into Parliament and disappearing, after making a short speech on the floor, I had put Indira to shame internationally. The embarrassment was compounded when, week after week of my disappearance, Indira's police failed to find a trace of me. Thus, Vajpayee was mobilised to save Indira's honour. His peremptory letters had no effect because Muley asked me to ignore them. But Vajpayee would not leave it at that. He sought parole from the government on a written undertaking that he would eschew political activity while out of his residence, and sent word that he wanted to meet me in my hide-out. I was ready, but Muley would not hear of it. He told me that Vajpayee would lead the police straight to me and hence I should decline to meet him. I did decline.

Muley's contribution to the struggle against the Emergency was not only personal. He set up a communication network in every nook and corner of the country. In this he was aided admirably by another RSS leader, Moropant Pingale. As a result, he defeated the censorship. RSS men say that this is not Muley's work but the RSS's as an organisation. But I know that, but for the morale and

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A B Vajpayee.



Chandrashekhar.



Ram Jethmalani.

spirit that Muley exhibited, the RSS boys would not have shown so much enthusiasm. Muley died of cancer in 1978 and with his death died my enthusiasm for the RSS.

While JP and Morarji stand out for their steadfastness, there are those who, through friends in the press, made out that they played a great role and showed exemplary courage in the struggle against the Emergency. The role of Vajpayee I have already given an indication of above. In the case of Chandrashekhar, whatever he did was involuntary. He was not against Indira Gandhi continuing as PM after the Allahabad Court's verdict. Despite that, Sanjay Gandhi ordered his arrest and had him expelled from the Congress. When he was released from jail in mid-January 1977 he had half a mind to seek a settlement with Indira, but two of his young Turk associates, Mohan Dharia, and Lakshmi Kantamma, raised objections and did not allow that to come to pass. Through no real commitment of his own but by circumstances, Chandrashekhar came to be an opponent of the Emergency.

I remember meeting Ram Jethmalani in May or June 1976 in London. I was taken to see him by the now Gujarat BJP leader, Makarand Desai. Jethmalani was safely enscon-

ced in the five-star comfort of the Hilton Hotel as the lawyer of the Narangs, who had an unorthodox business in antique exports. Fighting the Emergency was far from his mind. What was on his mind I discovered later, when I met him in New York, in December 1976. He had taken political asylum from the United States government by disowning India. Those of us who had struggled against the Emergency abroad had resolved not to seek or accept asylum because we did not consider the Indira Gandhi government as illegal. During his entire stay abroad, Jethmalani did not lift a finger to assist the struggle against the Emergency. On the contrary, he demoralised those who were trying to fight.

When the Lok Sabha elections were declared, I immediately packed my bags to leave for India. Not Jethmalani. Instead he telephoned to urge me not to go because the 'elections would be rigged' he said. After I had left the US he contacted the Indian Embassy to demand a guarantee that if he returned he would not be arrested upon arrival. It was only after he saw that nothing happened to me upon my arrival in India, that he picked up courage to leave the United States. Upon arrival in Bombay he declared that because of the strug-

gle abroad that he had led, Mrs Gandhi was forced to declare the elections.

I should put on record that there were some intellectuals who fought the Emergency with all their might, while abroad. One of them was Nayantara Sahgal. They got little recognition after the Emergency was over. But then, that was the saddest part of the whole Janata period.

In retrospect, I feel that the nation had a really close call as far as the future of democracy was concerned. I am sure that, besides five or six leaders, most would have signed surrender documents not later than mid-1977. The RSS had finalised the surrender terms with Indira's emissaries and was waiting for Mrs Gandhi to set a date. The CPM had become dormant for fear of its members' lives. And people like Asoka Mehta, Nana Goray and others were working for a compromise — called national reconciliation — on Indira's terms. But Indira miscalculated and from her selfish point of view called for the elections at the most inopportune time and lost badly.

I still do not know what made Mrs Gandhi call the Parliament poll when she did. Call it destiny. Ten years later we are a democracy because of that.

STYLE OR SUBSTANCE?

It is six months since Rajiv Gandhi promised us a new India. Has he delivered on his promise? Or are his achievements ones of style and image-building?

AS HONEYMOONS GO, this one has been unusually successful. Six months after the General Election that put him into power, Rajiv Gandhi remains a popular, largely non-controversial figure. The press likes him, magazines queue up to do sycophantic interviews, and the foreign media act as though he is the last hope for India. Political observers, too, are generous with their praise. Hardly anybody suggests that the politicians he trounced in January — men like Chandrashekhar or Charan Singh — would have made better Prime Ministers; and nobody longs nostalgically for the rule of Indira Gandhi.

Nevertheless, there are few tangible achievements and few big breakthroughs (like, say, Bangladesh in the first few months of his mother's reign) to Rajiv's credit. And now that he has had six months, perhaps the time has come to take a critical look at the kind of governance Rajiv Gandhi has brought to India.

He won last year's election partly because of the sympathy factor, and partly because of the fragmented nature of the national Opposition. Nevertheless, the main reason for that historic victory was Rajiv Gandhi's own appeal. It was an appeal that worked on two levels. There were, first of all, the issues. In Rajiv's

case, these were the unity and integrity of India (i.e. Punjab), and a promise of economic betterment through pragmatic, high-tech policies. And on the second level, there was the style. Essential to Rajiv's appeal was the promise of a change of style; a shift away from the corrupt, imperial court politics of old, and towards a more democratic, more honest, more open style of government.

Has Rajiv, despite his availability and general popularity, delivered on the expectations he aroused at both levels? The substantive change is difficult to detect. The obvious instance is Punjab, where the government seems to have veered between two approaches and failed with both. Throughout the Lok Sabha election campaign and during the campaign for the Assembly elections, Rajiv adopted a hard line that went down well with the Hindu voters but distressed many of his more thoughtful supporters. The Akalis were made out to be dangerous secessionists, the riots following Mrs Gandhi's assassination magicked away with clumsy analogies ("When a big tree falls, the ground is bound to shake,") and even P N Lekhi, Satwant Singh's lawyer, was described, quite inaccurately, as the same man who defended Godse.

Then, with the election campaigns out of the way, came the famous Bai-

sakhi initiative, the release of Akali leaders, the long-overdue announcement of an inquiry into the riots, and a shift to a softer line. While most people welcomed the new approach, it appeared to have been mistimed. As K P Unnikrishnan, a vocal Congress (S) MP says: "If only he had come out with this package in the first week he entered office, it would have made a difference. Punjab is not a peripheral issue. It is going to affect our future existence as a nation and our secular ethos. It should not be treated as a vote-getting device."

Of course, it is easy to be critical with hindsight. Few people could have predicted the emergence of Baba Joginder Singh and the curious turn that Akali politics have taken in recent months. Nevertheless, Punjab has not been one of the Prime Minister's great successes. BJP Vice-President L K Advani probably sums it up best: "During the elections, the PM promised to solve the Punjab problem. He may not have indicated any time frame, but his speeches suggested that he had solutions up his sleeve which would sort things out without much delay. But the last few months have indicated that at least till now, there is no light visible at the end of the tunnel. The rhetoric has not matched the achievement."



Is the New India a mere marketing ploy? Or is there substance to it?

SIX MONTHS is too short a period to judge the economic performance. Nevertheless, Rajiv has begun to deliver on some of his promises. The new computer policy, in keeping with his 21st century orientation, will result in cheaper computers. The textile policy, announced last month, represents a clear break with the past and commits the industry towards a multi-fibre ap-

proach, while shifting the burden of the controlled cloth obligation to the handloom sectors.

The one area of controversy, however, has been the budget. Widely hailed when it was first introduced, it has since come under attack from two distinct directions. It is seen by socialists as ignoring the interests of the majority for the benefit of the urban elite. And even among city-

dwellers, the income tax relief has been all but wiped out by the severe inflationary impact of its provisions.

Fumes K P Unnikrishnan, "For the first time, a PM has let the consideration of market forces be the primary consideration in the evolution of his economic policies. The budget makes a frontal assault on the basic assumptions of the planning process. It reflects an urge for superficial modernisation. The interests of vast sections of the country — the rural and urban poor, the landless, and the small peasants — have been sacrificed for the small gain of buttressing the role and position of ten per cent of the population."

On the other hand, the response from the political Right has been flattering. Despite the odd dissenting voice (Subramaniam Swamy slammed the budget in **Imprint**, May 1985), the likes of Nani Palkhivala have sung the Prime Minister's praises. But even they failed to accurately gauge the inflationary impact of the budget. In the three months since it was introduced, the retail price index has shot up by 4.5 per cent and the annual increase could be 20 per cent.

Even within those on the right of the Congress (I) there is a feeling that the budget was mishandled. "This is essentially a budget to stimulate production," says one minister privately, "but it hasn't been presented as such. Instead of telling the urban middle class that it would take two years for the impact of the budget to be felt, they were given the impression that they would be better off at once. Nobody told them to watch out for inflation or took steps to keep prices down. Even so, had they raised the income tax exemption limit to Rs 30,000, they would probably have silenced the most vociferous of their middle class critics. It was just badly thought out."

Rajiv Gandhi's other achievements have been in fields where they are difficult to quantify. It is too early to assess fully the impact of his foreign policy initiative though he has his admirers. Says K Natwar Singh, Minister of State for Steel and

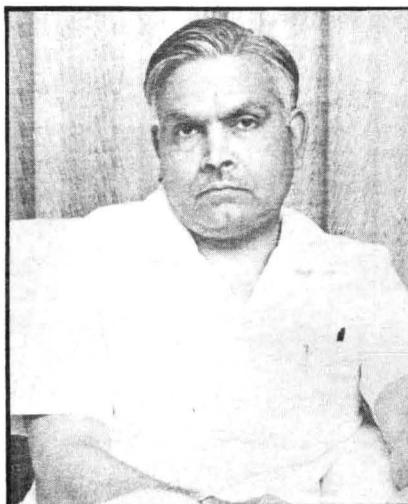
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Mines, and former member of the Indian Foreign Service: "His handling of foreign policy has been superb. I mean, not many leaders in the world today can go to Moscow one month and Washington the next. His self-assurance, confidence, courage, humility and clarity are most inspiring and encouraging."

Adds P Chidambaram, one of the more articulate members of the Congress (I) Parliamentary Party: "In five months, Rajiv Gandhi has got a primary position on the world scene. Our friendship with the USSR has never been stronger and we have never been more wooed by the US. He has been accepted on the international scene as an authentic interpreter of non-alignment. His role in the peace movement will grow and India will become an important factor on the world scene."

Some of this may sound like Congress (I) hyperbole, but it is certainly true that Rajiv has proved more adept at handling foreign policy than his period as AICC (I) General Secretary suggested. The trigger-happy pronouncements about Sri Lanka have been halted and he no longer seems obsessed with predicting the date and place of the Pakistani invasion of India. The shrewd even-handedness of his mother persists: despite his pro-US cultural bias, he was discreet enough to keep quiet about Russian involvement in the South Block spying scandal. And with the emergence of Foreign Secretary, Romesh Bhandari, as Rajiv's shuttle-diplomacy specialist, G Parthasarathy, who was closely identified with the Soviet bloc has been effectively sidelined.

More worrying is Rajiv's apparent inability to maintain law and order in the states. A day after he inherited his mother's *gaddi*, riots broke out in many North Indian towns. He mishandled them and finally, the army restored order after many deaths and much destruction. Since then, there has been no indication that the gov-



Not many leaders in the world today can go to Moscow one month and Washington the next. His handling of foreign policy has been superb.

— Natwar Singh

ernment has learned how to keep the peace. Rajiv inherited a peaceful Gujarat, and yet, has not been able to prevent it from turning into a bloody battleground for caste and communal forces. Three months after the violence started and despite the presence of the army, the arson and the slaughter continue. Worse still, the Central government acts as if it doesn't care. It is too obsessed with Punjab and Rajiv's foreign policy initiatives to come to terms with the fact that one of India's most prosperous states has witnessed a breakdown of law and order.

PERHAPS MORE IMPORTANT in the long run is the style of Rajiv's Prime Ministership. Is the New India reflected in the way he runs the government?

Predictably, Rajiv's younger ministers seem to think that things have changed. "The atmosphere prevailing

today is one that is charged with confidence," claims Ashok Gehlot, Minister of State for Tourism and Civil Aviation. "I think the PM's main achievement has been the new direction he has shown the nation," raves Natwar Singh. "Rajiv has created a new consciousness all over India," insists Arif Mohammed Khan, Minister of State for Industry.

But what is this 'new consciousness', and where will this new direction take us? Answers Chidambaram, "Rajiv's principal achievement has been that he has reassured the people that their hope and vision of India will not disintegrate. We underestimate the importance of this. Moreover, he has impressed upon every government organisation that they will be held accountable. The government had gone down in people's esteem because people thought that it was not accountable to them. Rajiv has changed that."

There are several instances of this new spirit of accountability. One obvious manifestation is the newly-introduced *Janwani* TV programme in which ministers face members of the public who ask them searching and often openly hostile questions about their performance. The Prime Minister watches every programme and ministers live in dread of botching it up. Such an innovation would have been unthinkable in Mrs Gandhi's time.

There is also an increased air of efficiency in government offices. As Arif Mohammed Khan points out, "The Prime Minister has succeeded in removing red tapism and simplifying procedures. In my ministry, people have never before been able to get their projects cleared in 90 days. The emphasis now is on delivery — on showing results." Rajiv's personal preference is for time bound result-oriented projects. He has retained charge of the Civil Aviation and Tourism Ministry and Ashok Gehlot, his Minister of State, is hard put to

keep pace with his speed. "All the projects we inherited from the last government have now become time-bound," says Gehlot, "and we are going full speed ahead on ambitious new plans to start a helicopter corporation."

All of this could be honeymoon enthusiasm: similar noises about accountability and efficiency were made by the Janata in the first six months of its rule. But Rajiv's attempts to resurrect Parliament and to introduce a sense of democracy and consultation in party affairs do suggest a certain sincerity.

Recalls Vishvjit Singh, a Congress (I) member of the Rajya Sabha: "When the Anti-Defection Bill was being discussed at a party meeting, true to form, nobody wanted to get up and criticise even those provisions which would obviously lead to authoritarianism. But Rajiv exhorted them to speak up without fear or favour. When some members got up and started criticising certain clauses, he didn't stop them — he asked for more criticism and a show of hands. Nobody has ever done this before. As the majority didn't want those clauses, they were discarded. That, according to me, was the rebirth of democracy within the party."

Other MPs share this view. "Yes, the institutions of democracy have been strengthened," says Chidambaram. "There are livelier debates in Parliament. Because Rajiv is young, naturally people are willing to ask more questions. They are willing to be more open with him. And part of greater accountability is more demanding questioning in Parliament."

In fact, Parliament is the one institution that has made a dramatic comeback under Rajiv. The government pays a lot of attention to what the Opposition says, and Congress (I) members themselves function as an Opposition bloc in the House, asking ministers searching questions. Even as hardworking and knowledgeable a



The institutions of democracy have been strengthened. There are livelier debates in Parliament. Because Rajiv is young, people are more open with him.
— P Chidambaram

minister as Madhav Rao Scindia was left at a loss for words under close questioning from A B Ghani Khan Chaudhary, and Lalit Maken forced the government to change its stance on the closure of the DCM unit in Delhi. The Prime Minister, too, intervenes frequently in debates and appears to take the advice of members.

The committee system has also been rejuvenated. "Parliamentary committees used to be a ritual more than anything else," concedes Vishvjit Singh. "Now, it is a completely different ball game. Earlier, a committee sat for a maximum of two hours. Now, the Chemicals and Fertilizers Committee, which I co-ordinate, has three-day meetings. Finally, the committees have teeth. We are given a chance to really influence policy."

Rajiv's attitude to the press also suggests that he is willing to consult more widely. It is easy to get inter-

views with the PM, and he has gone out of his way to encourage journalists to talk to him.

That all of this adds up to a substantial change of style of governance seems clear. Ministers, too, have begun to follow their leader's example. As Vishvjit Singh points out, "Now, ministers sit in their offices till 11 p m and midnight. Earlier, only V P Singh and Janardhan Poojary did it. Now everybody has started doing it. It shows the change of style."

SIX MONTHS AFTER the mandate that turned him into the most powerful man in India, Rajiv Gandhi still remains something of an enigma. There is no doubt that he has done many of the things he was expected to: cut down on the bureaucracy, increased governmental efficiency, re-introduced a measure of intra-party democracy, thrown out Mrs Gandhi's hangers-on and brought in his own Doscos, Stephanians, Cantabrigians and Oxonians, passed an Anti-Defection Bill, promised to raise judges' salaries and so on. In the process, he has become amazingly popular ("He is the darling of the Indian youth," says Natwar Singh, perhaps laying it on a bit too thick) and has begun to be perceived as a leader.

And yet, some questions do remain. A year ago, before the assassination, the public image of Rajiv Gandhi was very different. He was seen as being not very imaginative, weak rather than decisive, too easily influenced, and irresponsible in his public utterances ("Bhindranwale is the most important religious leader of the Punjab. . ."). After his victory, people began to stop noticing any traces of these qualities in Rajiv's actions. So, what had happened? Were those who said that the pre-assassination Rajiv was largely a triumph of marketing and image-building, wrong? Or had Rajiv grown into

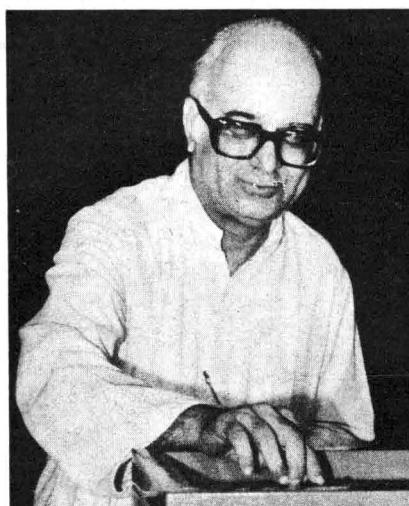
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a great leader after the assassination?

L K Advani is still a little sceptical about the new Rajiv. "I have a feeling that there is an obsession with image-making and little concern for substantial improvement in the administration." As for the irresponsible public utterances, he points to the Prime Minister's campaign speeches. "When Rajiv mentioned the Anandpur Sahib resolution, the Akali Dal or the Punjab issue in his speeches, he betrayed an obsession with political advantage. Little concern was evident of the likely impact such speeches would have on social cohesion and national unity."

Advani finds that this obsession with image has persisted through Rajiv's first six months. "The concentration has been on projecting a new kind of PM — cleanliness and integrity in public life. The Anti-Defection Bill was passed to underscore this image. And yet, the substantive Bill — one to reform the electoral structure — has yet to be introduced. Even the budget was an exercise in image-building and that too only for a small but articulate section of society. Of course, the tax reforms were overdue, but the manner in which proposals that were blatantly inflationary were pushed through, suggests that it was not the interests of the country at large that were being considered."

To Advani, the contradictions in Rajiv's behaviour can only be explained if one accepts that he will say anything for political gain — or because his image-makers tell him to. Few Prime Ministers have consulted with the Opposition the way Rajiv has. At such meetings, says Advani, "he is very cordial, very polite and very warm. And yet, the public contempt he displays for the Opposition is in complete contrast. He uses words that even Mrs Gandhi would seldom use. He calls us unpatriotic and anti-national." Why would anyone who believed in consultations with the



There is an obsession with image-building and with political advantage. Not much of substance actually gets done.

— L K Advani

Opposition suddenly change his tune on a public platform?

There are other instances of this approach. He steadfastly opposed an inquiry into the anti-Sikh riots till the interests of political expediency had been served, and then introduced one at once. Similarly, his critics point out that though it is worthwhile to have ministers face the public on TV, it is much better to simply hand TV over to an autonomous corporation so that this kind of broadcast-accountability can be institutionalised. And yet, there is no talk of any such substantive change.

Many of the old criticisms of Rajiv have begun to surface in recent months. The old charge of weakness, of being easily influenced, in particular, has been resurrected. The obvious instance is the row over socialism. Clearly, this is not a concept that Rajiv has much time for. And yet, at the AICC session, when the budget came under criticism, he did

something of an about-turn and noisily reaffirmed his faith in socialism.

His attitudes to individuals have also seemed indecisive. He snubbed Pranab Mukherjee by not letting him know till the very end that he would not be a member of the new Cabinet, and then changed his mind about Pranab and rehabilitated him by appointing him to head the West Bengal PCC, a post to which Mukherjee is ill-suited. The same indecision was evident when Arjun Singh was appointed Governor of Punjab shortly after he had been sworn in as Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh.

In recent weeks, another old criticism is also being heard: lack of imagination. So far, little that Rajiv has done has shown any vision or brilliance. His achievements are essentially ones of style, and they are achievements mainly in the sense that he is setting right the damage that his mother did. His actions — going to Moscow and Washington, the Punjab package, the budget, the Anti-Defection Bill, etc — are not the results of bold personal initiatives. Generally, he has done what people have been advising for years or, at least, months.

Where flair, imagination and initiative have been required — to solve the Gujarat crisis, to defuse the Punjab situation and so on — little has been done. Could it be, people are beginning to ask, that Rajiv is a mere manager, and not quite the bold leader his image-builders claim he is?

This may seem like asking for too much, and expecting the Prime Minister to do it all in just six months. As Ashok Gehlot says, "Maybe people are expecting too much. As a result, everything that is happening seems not enough." Perhaps. But as the honeymoon ends and the changes in the style of government begin to be taken for granted, these are questions that critics will be asking in the months ahead. ♦

COVER STORY

HOW SAFE?

The PM's security remains slip-shod, says SHEELA BARSE.

INDIA is fast turning into a nation obsessed by the Prime Minister's security. His new residence has been designed to withstand assaults from tanks, and his every move is shadowed by hundreds of armed men seeking to protect him from assassins. His children, Rahul and Priyanka, have been taken out of school, the security arrangements for the family's protection have been revamped, and a stringent Anti-Terrorist Act passed.

This obsession with security has led to a steady trickle of news about arrests, preventive actions and the timely discovery of terrorist plans. Much of this is designed to give the impression that the government is getting on top of the situation. Unfortunately, despite the number of security men and agencies involved, the reality is not reassuring.

The terrorist movement is alive and well and basing itself in foreign countries. It has not run out of steam, there is no shortage of recruits, and the authorities have failed to penetrate the various terrorist groups. Because the Indo-Pakistan and Indo-Nepal borders are almost impossible to police effectively, the security agencies are unable to prevent these terrorists from entering or leaving the country.

The government has attempted to clamp down on terrorist bases within the country and as a result, Gurdas-

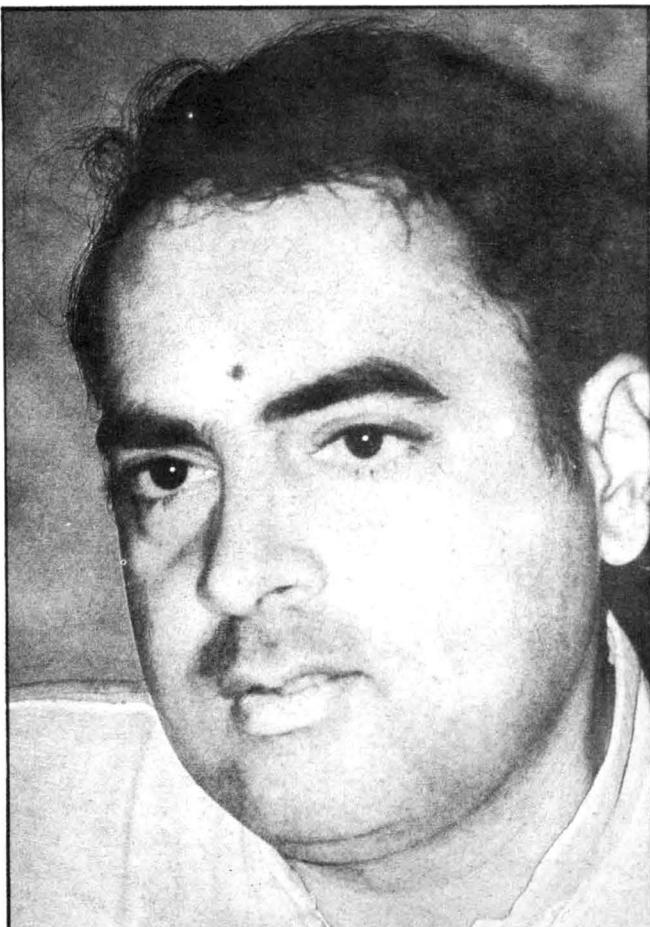
complice, who has now taken over as leader of one terrorist group. It is believed that Seva Singh, who runs the Terai camp, was involved in the transistor bomb explosions in Delhi.

Part of the security problem stems from the botched nature of Operation Blue-star. After the Operation was over, the dead were not identified, their families were not located and their links with terrorist organisations were not traced. As a result, nobody is really sure who died during Blue-star.

Worse still, the 150-strong Babbar Khalsa group slipped out of the Temple and vanished into thin air. Members of this group now lead terrorist cells all over the country. And even after Blue-star, 13 persons arrested during that operation, and wanted in connection with the 359 prosecutions launched then, have fled. New recruits continue to

join these men. Gurdas Singh, an IAS officer who has, for all practical purposes, disappeared, is said to have enlisted with the terrorists.

All of this makes the threat of political assassination seem more frightening. VVIP security in India has always been largely a matter of quantity rather than quality. The lawmen assumed that by surrounding Indira Gandhi with armed men, they could protect her. When two of these men turned their guns on the Prime Minister, the security agencies even botched up arresting them. Since October 1984, matters have improv-



pur, formerly a centre of such activity, has quietened down. Nevertheless, the terrorists have shifted their operations to locations in Jullundur and a training camp has been set up in the Terai region on the Indo-Nepal border.

The security agencies have some ideas about the men running these operations, but are unable to find them. They arrested Simranjit Singh Mann, an IPS officer from the 1967 batch, and accused him of masterminding terrorism. Nevertheless, they were unable to catch Seva Singh, Mann's head constable and ac-

SLOPPY SECURITY TECHNIQUES

How Bhindranwale eluded arrest in Bombay.

A PLAIN RECOUNTING of the facts, including those undisclosed so far, of two cases linked by one man, will reveal how inefficient our law enforcement agencies have been since 1981.

The link between the two cases is a deserter, police Head Constable Seva Singh, orderly to Simranjit Singh Mann, of the Indian Police Service (batch of 1967). The Punjab government knew that Mann, then posted in Amritsar, was an active sympathiser of his relative, Bhindranwale. The government sent Mann to Bombay as Commandant of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), but did not keep him under surveillance.

In early 1982, Bhindranwale came to visit the *gurdwara* in Dadar, Bombay. Mrs Gandhi wanted him arrested there. Since four guards armed with automatic weapons travelled atop the Sant's bus, the Bombay police decided to arrest him outside the precincts of the city, after his bus reached the highway. Armed policemen awaited the bus on all the roads radiating from the city, but the bus never came by. Someone had tipped off Bhindranwale, who drove away to Indore in a taxi. Mann's possible role in Bhindranwale's escape was never checked.

Mann liaised with the terrorists through an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) and Seva Singh. A training camp was set up in the Terai region (Indo-Nepal border), but though it is still operational, it remains untraced.

After Operation Bluestar, Mann openly criticised the government's action. It was some weeks before the government passed an order for his dismissal. Mann disappeared, but he and the ASI were later arrested. The police learnt of the extent of Mann's involvement and about the training camp from the ASI, after his arrest.

Seva Singh went to Delhi in May 1985 to plant the transistor bombs. He is one of three important separatists, active since the pre-Bluestar



Bhindranwale: tipped off.

days, who is yet to be arrested in connection with the May conspiracy.

About 34 men and women from Jullundur, Amritsar, Terai, Delhi and elsewhere, some of them old hands, others new recruits wanting to avenge the November riots, were sent to plant the bombs by persons still unknown to the lawmen (who include the uniformed police and a number of other law enforcement agencies). It is not known if Advocate Kartar Singh Narang's house was offered as the operational headquarters for the May conspiracy by his son, Ravindra Pal, because the lawmen do not know if Ravindra is dead or alive. He disappeared about one-and-a-half years ago, and surfaced during the hijacking of the Indian Airlines plane to Dubai. His wife claims he died in Operation Bluestar, while his father states that he died in Bihar during a business trip.

Kartar Singh's wife was involved in making the bombs in their house. The activity had been going on in their two-roomed 83, West Patel

Nagar home for about 22-25 days. On May 12, the police swooped down on their house and arrested Kartar Singh, but his wife and the second son, Mahendra, escaped the police dragnet. They are still missing.

Two of the arrested terrorists died in police custody. Though the Delhi police, being the visible law enforcement agency, are being blamed for everything, from not keeping the Narangs and other known extremists under surveillance, to the death of Mohinder Khalsa and Mohinder Pal, others like the Delhi CID, the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and Special Security Bureau (SSB) are equally responsible.

Within a day of his arrest on May 12, Mohinder Khalsa died of mysterious injuries, fatigue and hunger. He was being incessantly interrogated by ten agencies: RAW, IB, SSB, the Delhi police, the VVIP Security Wing of the Delhi police, and the CID wings of the Delhi police and the police of the states where the bombs were planted. All of them just forgot to keep Khalsa alive.

On May 26, the other important accused, Mohinder Pal, hung himself by his turban after writing an unfinished four-page confession. Nowhere in the country is a prisoner allowed to keep anything, (not even the cord in his pyjama) which he can use to strangle himself, tie up someone else, or escape.

At every press conference, Delhi's Commissioner of Police earnestly announced that the details of the investigation would not be disclosed by anyone. He has scrupulously observed the rule. Nevertheless, every day the press managed to get all the details they wanted from 'sources'.

After 30 arrests and two deaths in custody, lawmen still do not know who planned the conspiracy, what their intentions were, or how the activities of about 40 persons were orchestrated.

— Sheela Barse

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ed somewhat, but only just. There are still too many agencies trying to protect the Prime Minister. His security is entrusted to six different organisations: the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), the Intelligence Bureau (IB), a special wing of Delhi police concerned with VVIP security, the Special Protection Unit (SPU), the local police of whichever state the PM visits, and the Special Security Bureau (SSB).

Even this is an improvement on the situation prevailing during Mrs Gandhi's reign. Within the government, the formation of the SSB and the emergence of the Delhi police's VVIP security wing are seen as 'dramatic developments'. The Prime Minister himself is said to repose great trust in the capabilities of his cousin, Gautam Kaul, who heads the VVIP wing. Nevertheless, there is criticism of Kaul from within the police force. It is felt that his last posting, a desk job with the Bureau of Police Research and Development, makes him unsuited to a specialised job of this sort. The SPU is headed by another desk-man, Subramaniam, who was Deputy Inspector-General of Tamil Nadu before. He has spent most of his working life with the Intelligence Bureau, and has no experience of protecting VVIPs. None of these men were given any kind of specialised training.

The staffing pattern for lower ranks gives serious cause for concern. Despite the fact that two of Mrs Gandhi's police bodyguards killed her, the government has not re-thought its staffing policy. The key security personnel continue to be police constables (PCs), head constables (HCs) and sub-inspectors (SIs). PCs and HCs are still intimidated by VIPs and are hesitant to check them. In Mrs Gandhi's time, regular visitors used to tip the security staff, and yet, nobody prevented the PCs from accepting this money. In any case, PCs and HCs are straightforward policemen who lack the sophistication required for the job and cannot react quickly.

One solution — and one that

HAUNTED BY DEATH

It is tough being protected from the terrorists.

The *Punjab Kesari* is the best known publication of the *Hind Samachar* group — which has the largest circulation in the North (combined circulation 4,78,000). Its editor, Minha, 28, is the grandson of the paper's founder Lala Jagat Narayan, who was, despite his close ties with Tohra and Longowal, very critical of their weak stand. He was one of the first persons to report on the birth of the separatist movement and the misuse of the Golden Temple by the Akalis. Predictably, he was killed by extremists in 1982.

The paper, under his son Ramesh Chandra, continued to criticise the Akalis and Mrs Gandhi. It was also the first to report on the training of terrorists in Punjab. On May 12, 1984, Chandra too was killed. When his son Ashwini Minha took over,

many police officers recommend — would be to avoid staffing the SPU with PCs, HCs and SIs. The US Secret Service for instance, uses only highly qualified and well-educated agents to guard the President. It would not be difficult to find well-informed, sophisticated, gazetted officers who could guard the Indian Prime Minister. Such men could form part of an elite corp like the US Secret Service, and could be paid special allowances. Sadly, in India, the philosophy of quantity rather than quality continues to prevail and this is unlikely to happen.

Even if it did happen, it would still be difficult to protect the PM from a terrorist attack. As the grand old man of the police force, K F Rustamji points out: "If a group of persons decides not to care for their lives and does not mind how many others get killed in an operation, the ability of security personnel to protect the PM diminishes."

In such a situation, it is Intelligence, rather than protection, that makes the difference. As is now widely accepted, the capacity of the

one of his reporters, Roshan Singh Soj, suggested that he discuss the paper's policy with Bhindranwale. "Go and tell Bhindranwale that I will carry my father's torch," Minha exploded.

Not surprisingly, retaliation followed in the form of an attempt on Minha's life. Since then, 30 commandos and powerful flashlights guard his Delhi residence. Visitors are screened by a metal detector. Minha himself carries arms. "I don't know whether I will have time to use them," he shrugs.

This is despite the fact that Minha, a former test cricketer, is less political than his predecessors. As his wife points out, "It seems that we and our son must live like prisoners all our lives."

— *Sheela Barse*

Indian Intelligence services to penetrate the Punjab terrorists, is severely limited. After 30 arrests in connection with the transistor bomb conspiracy, the lawmen still do not know how many groups are functional, how they are linked, or how they are organised. The self-righteousness of the Delhi police ensures that suspects often die before anybody can ask them any questions.

One theory about the transistor bombs is that the locations of the bombs were significant — they were intended to explode in cities like Meerut, Moradabad and Aligarh where there is a large Muslim population. The explosions, it is speculated, were intended to set off communal riots between Hindus and Muslims and lend substance to the Khalistani claim that only Hindus could live safely in India.

This is all pure speculation, but it shouldn't be. By now, the government should have worked out who planted the bombs and why. That it still hasn't, says something about the manner in which security remains a nightmare in this country. ♦

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE

Rajiv's Washington visit proves that he has mastered television, says

VINOD MEHTA

WITH IMAGES of the Washington National Press Club still flickering fresh in our minds, I begin an evaluation of the Indian Prime Minister. When he was sworn in six months ago, the country was on the verge of disintegration as it faced the single most serious crisis of its young and effervescent life. Six months later, the national scenario has not altered and the crisis has deepened, but there is a faint feeling that someone sober and sincere, thoughtful and energetic, is minding the shop. Optimism, always a scarce commodity here, is back in business.

Those of us who write on politics tend to look down on images. (Remember Harold Wilson and his remark that the only image he trusted was the one he saw in the mirror every morning?) And yet, in a sense, contemporary politics is about images. This is the message sent out by the most powerful and, allegedly, the most sophisticated democracy in the world, which reaffirmed its faith in an ageing film star last year, purely because the electronic vibrations he conveys to his people are reassuring.

I don't think it is a coincidence that Rajiv Gandhi's trip to the USA is being pronounced, officially and unofficially, an unqualified success on the basis of how he 'came across'.

Vinod Mehta is the Editor of Bombay's The Sunday Observer. This is his first column for Imprint.

In America, they tend to judge competence, talent and enterprise on these serious scales. Therefore it was vital that Rajiv Gandhi came out all right in front of the all-pervasive microphones and television cameras. He did.

I am not suggesting that the Indian Prime Minister is necessarily a well-meaning, pleasant moron. What I am saying is that he understands the paramountcy of public perception in public life. It is not what you do, but what you are *seen* to do, that is vital — and there can be a big divide between the two.

It is interesting to note that, besides research in communicable diseases, forestry and anti-pollution, nothing of substance has emerged from the current Indo-American encounter. The communique which was issued did not even mention India's concern over Pakistan's mounting nuclear prowess and conventional capability; did not mention Afghanistan, concessional lending, the Indian Ocean. By all accounts, then, the Rajiv-Reagan summit should be recorded as a modest failure; the areas in which the two countries agreed to co-operate are so peripheral and insignificant that the respective under-secretaries could have signed the papers without fanfare or fuss.

But, we are told, Rajiv Gandhi's visit heralds a new beginning, a break with the past. The days of suspicion

and mistrust are over.... Clearly, such monumental gains have accrued because the Indian Prime Minister has a nice manner on the box, speaks well — and without notes! — at official banquets and, most crucial, 'looks sincere'. Wherever he is, Marshal McLuhan must be a happy man.

I don't know enough about what goes on in the private conclaves that Rajiv presides over in Delhi, when late at night he, Arun Singh and the other chums decide the fate of the nation. According to Sonia, Mozart and Bhimsen Joshi lull the background, but in the foreground, the discussion must frequently veer towards 'images'. Like Kennedy, Rajiv seems to have received some very good advice (from whom, I don't know) on how to execute his new job, the essence of which was to convey the impression of a man in quiet but firm command.

Someone in the Rajiv camp (perhaps, Rajiv himself) seems to have stumbled onto the fact that Mrs Gandhi's eldest son was a TV natural. He wasn't 'hot', he was 'cool'. In other words, his reticence, shyness, unobtrusiveness and calm were ideal for a medium which rejected shrillness and over-confidence. It may be that Rajiv Gandhi, in the privacy of his home and office, is a person who screams and shouts at people, dominates every discussion, and has (like his brother) an answer to every problem. However, if you told anyone in

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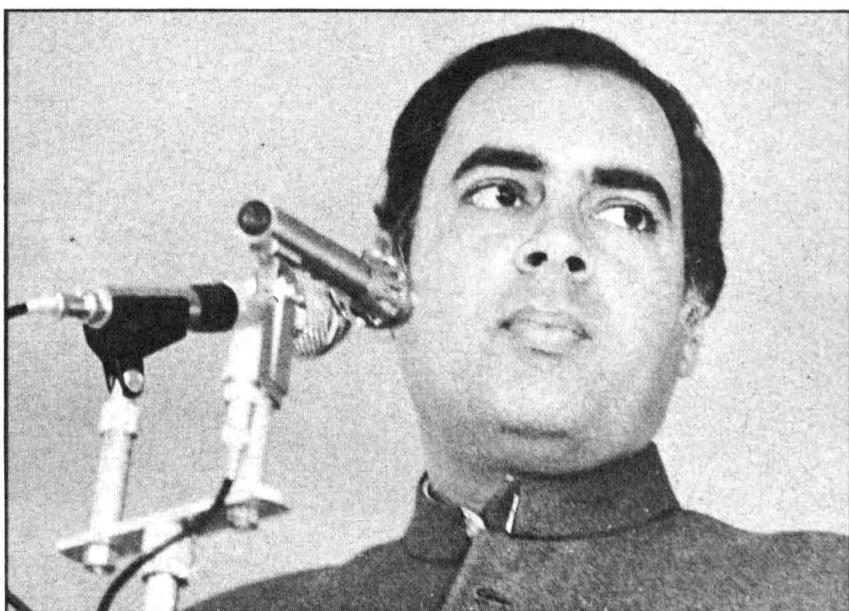
India this, he would think you are either a lunatic or a relation of Menaka Gandhi.

Rajiv Gandhi confirmed his hold on the top job in the land in the first two or three days after Mrs Gandhi's assassination. Who will forget those pictures on Doordarshan: father and son in tight embrace, son sorrowfully but serenely lifting the body, son on historic mission, scattering his mother's ashes from an aircraft. . .? "What courage, what strength of character!" we all exclaimed as we marvelled over his ability to hold back his tears. (Mr P N Lekhi, incidentally, used this 'unnatural behaviour' in court to claim that the three men he was defending were not guilty!) For all we know, Rajiv Gandhi howled every night till his pillow was as wet as a towel. But few in the country would believe that such emotional outbursts were possible from such a visibly brave man.

A parallel comes to mind. Jacqueline Kennedy, too, during the funeral ceremonies of Jack Kennedy (televised extensively) displayed similar, if not greater, dignity. Everyone expected her to break down. She didn't — and suddenly, in the eyes of America and the world, she became 'heroic'. Her name was mentioned for the Democratic presidential ticket, and if she was to be denied that, some other high federal office had to be found for her so that America could benefit from her qualities which had so effectively been seen on television. But once the camera and arc lights were switched off, what did she do? She went and married a rich, crude, vulgar Greek, thirsting for class. The myth was shattered. How let down America felt.

Rajiv Gandhi has not let us down. Not yet. Indeed, in his case it is possible that image and reality are one and the same. However, we cannot and should not, discount the possibility of disappointment. If you live by the image, you fall by it too. One bad speech delivered at prime time. . .

For the moment, Rajiv Gandhi has no fears. If anything, he has reinforced his positive image. His 'perform-



Somebody on the Prime Minister's staff seems to have discovered that Rajiv is a television 'natural'. And in this media age, appearances count for a lot.

mance' improves day by day, as it did when he first addressed the nation. Just 24 hours or so later, he had obtained a better speech writer and he was himself delivering copy with panache. History will make its own judgement on Rajiv Gandhi, but one thing is incontestable: He uses the electronic media more effectively than his grandfather and mother. And that is quite something!

The other thing to remember about the 'youthful' Prime Minister is that he represents a new class — the managers, the technocrats, the time and motion people. Jawaharlal Nehru represented, in a vague, but also concrete way, the India of the Fabians, the ideologues, the intellectuals. Mrs Gandhi professed to stand for the 'common man' and to further her constituency she propagated all kinds

of populist, yet bogus, slogans. Meanwhile, Rajiv, as we are incessantly told, carries no ideological baggage. He represents the young, pragmatic, 21st century India.

I know there are a lot of people who are alarmed by the 'managerial' ethos which has come to dominate national life today. Rajiv Gandhi and his Doon School chums are said to have 'no roots', 'no sense of history' and, above all, no idea of how a political party works. There is some truth in all these complaints but, for the moment, the Doon School boys have captured the imagination of the country. And their record in the last six months, if not a catalogue of triumphs, is not a line of disasters either.

Ever since 1947, we have tried a variety of leadership. One obsessed with ideology and another obsessed mainly with power and power politics. Now we have a leadership which perceives India as a large company with diverse products to sell and diverse employees to manage. India Limited is a new company and it says it will attempt to use the latest management techniques for its survival and prosperity.

Before we discard it for the older, more trusted models, we should give India Limited a chance. At least it makes better television programmes. ♦

PUNJAB JOURNEY

What does the future hold for this troubled state? JUGNU RAMASWAMY travelled extensively through the villages of Punjab and spoke to Akali leaders to file this report.

TO WALK INTO the Darbar Sahib complex is to feel the chill of a battle already a year old. The two battered victory towers that were once lethal, sandbagged machine-gun nests, still dominate the skyline. The buildings stand gaunt and silent — the many pillars of the congregation hall at Manji Sahib, where Bhindranwale had harangued rapt audiences; the pavilion atop Guru Ram Das Langar where he had so often sunned himself; the charred walls of Guru Nanak Niwas, where he had resided before shifting to the Akal Takht. They still seem to radiate heat. Almost in a reflex action, you look carefully at the tiled *parikrama* that has long since been repaired, expecting to find tank treads. A few years ago, Darbar Sahib had an ambience of serenity; today, as a brief power failure suddenly plunges it into darkness and muffles the sounds of *kirtan* from Harmandir Sahib, it is for a fleeting moment a place of grave peril, and the silence, the lull before the storm.

Over the last three tumultuous years, the number of visitors has also dwindled — one index is the sale of *kara parshad* which was once the

mainstay of the SGPC's revenues from Darbar Sahib. Photographs are infinitely better business and teenaged boys run a thriving itinerant trade with shoulder-bags of supplies, and samples fanned out in the palms of their hands, hoping to catch some of that endangered species of honest-to-God tourists or secret sympathisers or, commonest of all, curious scribes. At Rs 5, Bhindranwale's picture is the costliest, but you can get a two-in-one bargain — half close-up and half standing, complete with a *kesari* sash and a 12 bore gun.

The 'Sarkari' Akal Takht in all its white and gold glory, stands virtually deserted in a blaze of light. The Nishan Sahib stands tall and proud. Its two great curving crossed swords, symbolising Takht architect Guru Hargobind's assumption of spiritual and temporal authority, now bereft of its original intent, are being used by some to legitimise communalism and terror. A morbid curiosity propels the visitor to the locked basement, down a curving staircase, where the bullet-riddled bodies of Bhindranwale, Shubeg Singh and Bhai Amrik Singh were found. It is silent save for the swish of a long-handled broom

wielded by a lone, middle-aged woman sweeping the corridor. It is hard to realise — amidst the drone of the *path* from the *Guru Granth Sahib* — that the *shamiana*-covered area right in front of the Takht was the main fighting ground, ankle-deep in shell casings after it was all over.

All around, to the rear of the Takht, lie heaps of rubble in a newly-created no man's land. The maze of *katras* — shops below, homes above — that had traditionally thrived cheek by jowl with the Takht, have been





demolished and pushed back some 50 yards. A high brick wall now segregates the spiritual from the temporal; like Bhindranwale's defences, it too has slatted 'eyes' that glare outwards balefully.

TAKE A WALK on the outside of this wall, down a winding *gully*, stooping low under arches with exposed brickwork that dates back hundreds of years, side-stepping mounds of dirt and mortar, past the ruins of what was once a

bustling bazaar and you know what a bombed-out city looks like after a war. The mood is sullen and uncommunicative. A middle-aged Sikh in his *kachha* and *banian* stands inside the shell of his former home, supervising repairs. The floors have all collapsed and, standing on the ground, you can see through to the roof of the third floor. A clerk in government service, the rent from tenants in his building had come in handy. Today, he can't afford a rented house and most of his household possessions are destroyed

or missing.

Compensation has been negligible. No one could have been insured against army action. Whatever has been given to a few is the consequence of a political decision that decreed a maximum relief of Rs 50,000 or 50 per cent of the assessed loss, whichever is less! Inside another house, the sweat-streaked face of an old mason perched on a scaffolding turns to meet the voyeuristic gaze of the stranger and vents his impotent fury against 'them' in a stream of vituperative curses. "They stripped, raped and paraded our women in Delhi and didn't allow a single one to escape," he shouts as the blows of his hammer attack the obdurate beam before him with renewed anger. But the defining mood is fatalistic. "Why do you want to know how we feel? What more can be done to us that has not already happened? All that remains is to kill us. Now, whatever the *Vahe Guru* wills, will happen."

In its own way, such resignation, too, can be ominous. But on the surface, at least, it makes Amritsar a near-normal city. Until you begin to notice that pillion riding has been banned on all two-wheelers — the pillion rider could be a terrorist. Everywhere there are guns and the CRPF. They stand in twos and threes or sprawl in groups on charpoys at various *chowks*. It is not that they are systematic in their searches; but it is twice as likely that they'll stop you if you wear a turban and sport a beard. They are a whimsical lot, empowered to pull you from a crowd, frisk you, open your bag, be business-like about it or prolong the humiliation with taunts that make your patience wear thin with each passing day.

By sundown, the police *nakabandi* (roadblock) starts and the same routine is repeated on cars and autorickshaws — passengers are asked to step down, boots opened and bags poked into. By six, the buses stop plying all over Punjab. Which means that if you are an hour's drive away from home, say, at Jullundur, and happen to miss the last bus, you will have to

wait for over two hours at the railway station to catch the Flying Mail as it comes in from Delhi on its way to Amritsar. If the train is late — as it often is — the waiting can stretch to over four hours.

On the way back to Amritsar after one such ordeal, my fellow passenger is a young Sikh who earns a living welding heavy plastic containers used for storing acid. His is the curious case of a *mona* (shaven) Sikh who was compelled, six months ago, by the pleading of an increasingly apprehensive family, to grow back his hair, tie a turban and share the burden of their religious identity for better or worse. He has stopped smoking, drinking and even chewing *paan*, and talks about the fear psychosis that grips his community today.

"Before Bluestar, curfew used to be imposed at 9.30 p.m. On one particular day, I was running a high fever. I knew I was late on my way back from the factory, but I was very unsteady on the bicycle and drove with my head on the handlebars. I told them the truth when I was stopped at a roadblock but they laughed in my face and said, 'Are you trying to make fools of us?' I was made to stand on the side with one leg and one arm raised until I fell down trembling with exhaustion. Finally, an army officer rescued me, put my bicycle in a van and took me home. He asked me to relate what had happened and what I felt about the army presence in my city; but I told him, 'Sahib, if I told you the truth, you would either get angry with me or take it out on those *jawans*. Either way, I will suffer the consequences. So just drop me to the end of the lane and I will go home.'"

Turning to me, he says, "Today no 18-year-old Sikh youth feels safe on the streets and our parents fear the worst if we are even slightly late, getting back at night. Tell me, do you think people here feel that these are our own security forces doing their duty protecting all innocent citizens from the terrorists?"

The bitterness is evident for all to see.

ALL BUSINESS in Amritsar is down by half. In particular, the hotel industry is in dire straits with occupancy down to less than five per cent. The city has long ceased to be a destination for both foreign and domestic tourists.

Business circles estimate that the Rs 300 crore textile industry which was the mainstay of Amritsar and the Hindu trader — who today is as aggressive a Congress (I) supporter as he was a fanatic Jana Sanghi — has collapsed to less than Rs 150 crore annually. If this very real economic scare is primarily responsible for hardening communal attitudes among the city's large Hindu population, then this change in mood is perceptible as you walk into Shastri Market, the hub of Amritsar's textile trade.

Walk down a *gully*, peering into the dark interiors of tiny cubby-holes or even larger premises with high ceilings and a godown at the rear, and they could all be in the moneylending business for all you see. Low desks with slanting tops that would do a Marwari anywhere proud, sit on thick mattresses covered with white sheets; there are no stocks in sight. The shrewd, appraising stare of an individual leaning back on a bolster, sizes you up. These are the key middlemen who buy and sell without ever touching the goods they deal in. Meet Hansraj Aggarwal, who was the secretary of the Amritsar Piecegoods Association from 1946 to 1978. His argument is simple: their business runs solely on good faith and credit. No security to life and property means no trust, and therefore no credit — the crisis is inevitable.

He digresses to subtler attitudes. Yes, he admits, today the feeling that Hindus are Hindus and Sikhs are Sikhs, has entered our hearts and minds though this has still not vitiated close relationships or found expression in personal vendettas. It is a refrain that is fated to be echoed by his entire fraternity down the line.

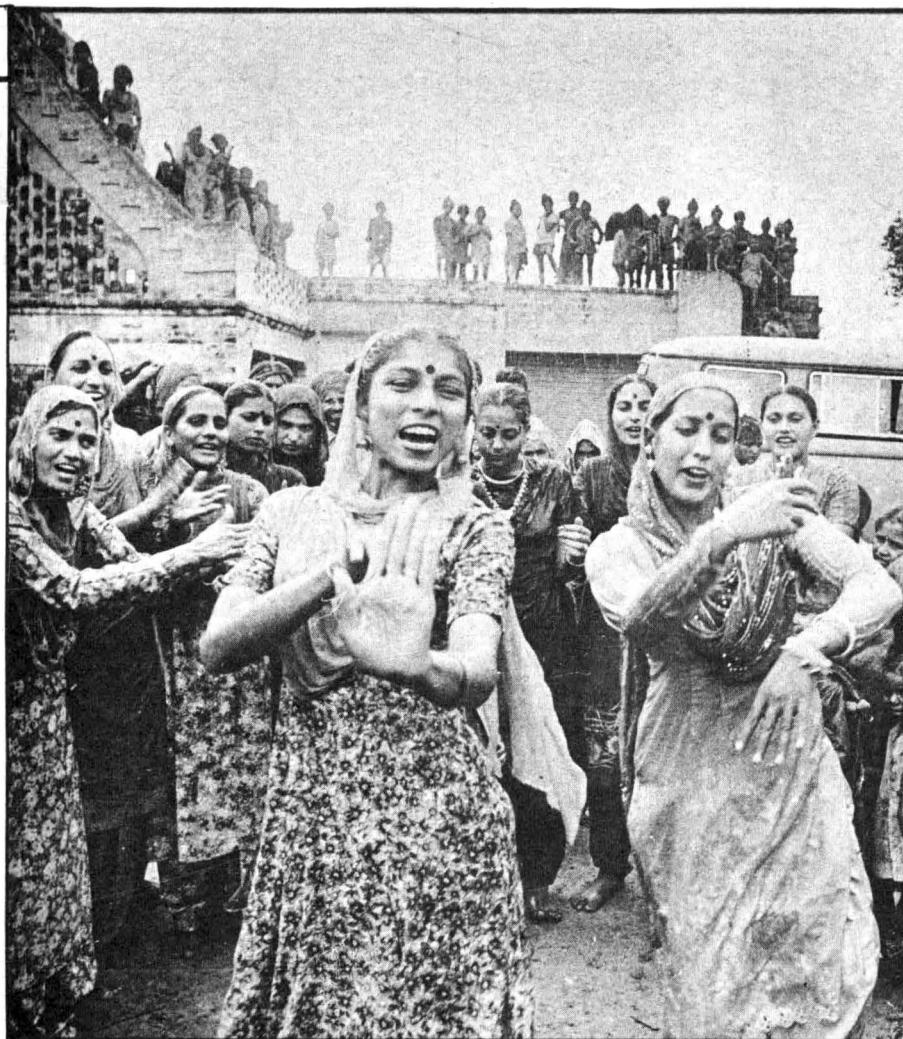
But if the sinister design of the terrorists is to force all Sikhs living outside Punjab back to their home state, Pyarelal Seth, President of the Cloth

Dealers' Association, has a diabolical answer: "Unless the Sikhs in Punjab are taught a lesson at least once, those living outside won't learn that Punjab can be as hot."

He adds warningly, "The Congress (I), which used to win elections with minority support, has now come to power on the shoulders of the majority. It must now pay out what is due. Otherwise, it will be thrown out of power, if not in the next five years, then ten. They (the minorities) must be shown their place." The *quid pro quo* could hardly have been put more clearly. Even Harbans Lal Gupta, Secretary of the Punjab Pradesh BJP, who joins the gathering subsequently, has a spot of advice for Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi from a party that has been totally outmanoeuvred but can still claim to be the voice of experience. "Why doesn't he go and meet Balasaheb Deoras and avail of the experience of the RSS cadres?" asks Gupta.

What is as disturbing as the matter-of-fact nature of these comments is the enthusiasm with which those present discuss the ongoing renovation of a small, old temple just outside the Khazana Gate to the walled city — the Phadar Kali *mandir*. Quite carried away by his exhilaration at this symbol of resurgent Hinduism, one of them asserts that it is 20,000 years old; others, however, moderate the figure to a certainly more credible 2,000 years. A decision to renovate Amritsar's famous Durgiana Temple has also been taken recently, and an estimated 50 shops and 50 houses are likely to be demolished to provide a clear view of the temple. Meanwhile, Surinder Kumar Billa, President of the Punjab Hindu Rashtriya Sangathan, has announced a scheme for imparting *trishul* training to two lakh Hindus, who will subsequently become *Amritdhari* after drinking Ganga *jal*. Even though his organisation is said to exist on paper only, the scheme could well take off.

THE BORDER DISTRICT of Gurdaspur is a sea of *kesari*. Everywhere there are *kesari*



Happier days in Patiala: now the atmosphere is hostile.

turbans; even men driving tractors wear shawls in that colour of protest. Trouble-prone and notorious for border crossings, especially in the Dera Baba Nanak sector, Gurdaspur is said to have the lowest per capita income of all Punjab's districts, at a time when large numbers of unemployed youth are being attracted to extremism. Bhindranwale's Mehta Chowk is not far from here and this region provided him with his largest following. Smuggling of all kinds is common; everyone, as they say euphemistically, is in the 'dry fruit business'.

The Divisional Magistrate's Court at Batala is chaotic. Sitting behind a railing in an unkempt room with yellowing walls, the Senior Divisional Magistrate briskly remands detenus into judicial custody. In the din of appeals, petitions, submissions, that are being shouted all at once, it is impossible for either an eye witness

or those who have been arrested to know what is being decided and on what basis. But the SDM knows the ropes and, apparently, so do the lawyers.

Jostled about, the suspected extremists stand heavily handcuffed, with chains that lock onto the belts of the escorting constables. They are strapping youths in their 20s, wearing *kesari* turbans, who look you straight in the eye without a hint of supplication. One of them shouts at the magistrate: "You have already kept us in jail for 10 months without finding the evidence to convict us. Release us or you'll turn all of us into extremists anyway." The point is well taken but the belligerence is nevertheless startling.

The scene outside the court is equally amazing. Bordering the building on two sides sit over 100 lawyers. The office equipment is identical — a

table with a battered typewriter and a bench, shielded from the sharp summer sun by a canopy supported by four poles stuck into the ground. Most of them wear the same kind of clothes too — white shirts, black ties and black turbans (though there are some *kesari* turbans here too).

A Sikh Lawyers' Forum has been formed here to provide free legal aid to Sikh youths who have been falsely implicated in cases. Says Kashmira Singh Ghoman, one of the office-bearers: "The police are fabricating most of the cases. People are being arrested from their homes and being charged with false encounters which fall under remote police stations. Today you are no longer safe if any of your family members or even friends turn out to be on the wanted list. They can take you away and interrogate you brutally." The examples he provides, with dates, names and places, are never-ending.

The Forum also has examples of the growing communalisation of the police force which, they charge, uses a different yardstick in dealing with the majority community. About one-and-a-half months back, they allege, some 100 illegal pistols were recovered by the Amritsar police from Batala's Hindu community. But in exchange for Rs 8 lakh, no cases were registered. Again, in the rioting that came in the wake of terrorist shooting at a Congress (I) worker and his son at Dhariwal, some 28 Hindu youths were arrested under Sections 506 and 436. These were scheduled offences to be tried at Special Courts, but the cases were withdrawn in a week.

Senior police officers say that some miscarriage of justice is inevitable when a lot of groping in the dark is involved. "Prior to Bluestar, we used to get tip-offs and knew who was behind what. Now the atmosphere in the villages has become so hostile that no one volunteers any information. For example, at Dhariwal on May 6, five men carrying Sten guns entered the town and killed three people. It was eight in the evening and yet not a single person saw any-

thing. The police have got caught in a vicious circle —whatever we do is going to alienate the people further and compel us to clamp down even harder. Though the prospect of a political solution is bleak, if it doesn't happen soon, this alienation we are creating could well sustain insurgency in the countryside. Already, out of either fear or a gathering resolve, some 2,000 boys are across the border receiving training; in fact, a recent survey of villages we undertook indicates that some 150 are missing from this district. All of them have burnt their boats and have nothing to lose any more."

In the same vein, a police officer in Patiala district admits that cooking up false cases is sometimes necessary. "Every once in a while, we are able to crack a particular case through the interrogation of various convicts but lack the evidence for a conviction. If you know that the man is guilty and dangerous, wouldn't you rather that we use a false encounter to put him safely behind bars?" But on his own admission, this *modus operandi* cuts both ways. In one such instance, the Patiala police nabbed a man who was also responsible for several cases with the Amritsar police. But the Amritsar cops didn't want him because they had already 'solved' those cases.

SANT Harchand Singh Longowal lives a modest bachelor's existence in a small, sparsely-furnished room in a *gurdwara* at Kembowal, a half hour's drive down a bumpy village road, 20 kilometres from the district headquarters of Sangrur. The unpretentious little cluster of buildings stands completely isolated, surrounded on all sides by dusty, harvested fields which at sunset are the colour of rust.

Standing on some eight acres of land, the Sant's *gurdwara* is relatively new. It was built less than ten years ago during the Emergency and except for a boundary wall on one side, it is open to fields. The Sant is out visiting a neighbouring village and as a power failure snuffs out the only powerful light placed atop the 80-

foot pole of the Nishan Sahib, an eerie darkness engulfs the place, broken only by streaks of lightning that are soon drowned in sheets of rain.

There is no emergency lighting and there are obvious security risks for a man who ranks high on the terrorist hit-list. Politically speaking, the Sant can hardly afford to lose face by accepting police protection; he has declined the offer in writing. Nevertheless, there is a police guard of six constables and two inspectors — all Sikhs. A wireless crackles in an inside room and a jeep stands with its hood stripped away from the sides to make firing easy. In a *kurta-pyjama* and *kesari patka*, Inspector Nirmal Singh could easily pass off as a militant Akali. His confident reaction to his difficult assignment would be regarded as bizarre anywhere but in Punjab.

The day was May 21 — one day before the 26 Akali district *jathedars* met at Amritsar to reject Longowal's resignation. As a handful of men sat on the floor eating the *Guru ka langar* and *parshad* (*rotis*), their faces calm and cheerful in the glow from the earthen stove, it was incongruous to field a sudden query directed at the stranger — "Will this government let the Sikhs live?" Just then, a snake was killed in the courtyard and everyone tittered with amusement as an imaginary newspaper headline was solemnly enunciated: 'Sant kills snake'. You don't know whether the allegory was directed at the rival Baba Joginder Singh Akali Dal or at the Congress (I).

But even in this region, which is undoubtedly the Sant's stronghold, popular political responses have a characteristic built-in ambivalence. Said a cab driver at Sangrur bus-stand: "People feel that Sant Longowal is the leader of the Dal and he did wrong in resigning. But they also respect Bhindranwale who died for what he believed, where the Sant surrendered."

I met Sant Longowal the next day at a *gurdwara* in Longowal village. Sitting on a charpoy reading a news-

paper, surrounded only by village elders on this crucial day when the responsibility of leading the 'real' Akali Dal was going to be transferred back onto his unassuming shoulders, the Sant looked every bit the wary preacher in his natural habitat — a respected man with few possessions and no overweening ambition.

The events of the last one year, which saw a widening communal divide, had put the Akali Dal (Longowal) in a tight corner. As the Sant remarks angrily: "The problem of Punjab was turned into the problem of the Sikh. Instead of solving it, the government deliberately brought the decision to exterminate one community before the people. This decision has caught the Sikh in a dilemma. He (the Sikh) wonders: 'Today the government of the country, for whose freedom Punjabis made 80 per cent of the sacrifices, looks at me with hate. How will I live in this country?' This thought is in every Sikh's mind. It is this that has made him very angry — not at any community but at the government.

"Terrorists, murderers, dacoits and Khalistanis have all come from the Congress (I)'s house. Hold an inquiry into the last seven years of Congress history — they created Dal Khalsa, they gave Khalistan slogans, they fought elections with this and lost their deposits. We opposed them in the last *gurdwara* elections and won." (It is undeniable that in the 1978 SGPC elections, Bhai Amrik Singh was the Congress-supported candidate against the Akali *jathedars* Jeewan Singh Umranangal; the latter won. But then, it is equally important to remember that the latter is the only Akali to resign from the SGPC in protest against the Dal leaders' inability to stand up against Bhindranwale and prevent the desecration of their *gurdwaras* at a time when, in his own words, 'Sikh bodies could be found in the gutter of Guru Nanak Niwas'. He quit in April this year.)

It was obviously this situation that predictably forced the Akalis — like all 'good' politicians — to woo the mood of the resentful Sikh masses.



Longowal: "The leaders of the Sikhs are revered and loved."

Through gestures like giving *saropas* to the families of Mrs Gandhi's assassins or rallying under the symbol of the 'martyr' Bhindranwale — his father, Baba Joginder Singh. But whatever the nature of the political compromise that on paper assured them control over Baba's committee and prompted Longowal to hand over the cause of *panthic* unity to an octogenarian in writing on April 3, that compromise rapidly broke down.

It was only later that they realised the danger of joining hands behind a faction that not they, but the extremists, were going to dominate. This was clearly not power politics of a parliamentary variety as the Dal has known, and practised, for the last 65 years of its history. This was the confusion that led Longowal backwards and forwards through a series of ludicrous postures before he retired to the quiet of his village to allow the political forces to align anew.

Even today, Longowal not only refuses to explain his shifts but directs all queries to Badal. It is criminal, given the seriousness of the situation, going by his own words, that the Sant should choose to retort to Imprint: "Ai ghar da masla hai, akhbari nahin (This is our internal

household affair, not for newspapers to write about.)"

Currently, it is clear that the moderates have regrouped with unexpected support from their cadres and Longowal can at least assert that "the leaders of the Sikhs are revered and loved. All three leaders tendered their resignations but the people didn't accept them. The Sikh youth (read the Dal's youth wing) is determinedly behind us."

But Badal had no comments to offer to the suggestion that their considerable organised strength can offer little solace in a situation in which the only coherent and real political initiative rests with the terrorists who are under nobody's control. It is they who have the capacity to not only accelerate the communal polarisation, but to also freeze all initiative by reducing the situation to a law and order problem.

Whatever extremist credentials Baba's faction is presumed to possess, in terms of formal political initiative, both the Dals are, in fact, sailing in uncharted waters in which headcounts of their supporters don't matter any more. If Longowal — however extreme his charges against the government — carefully talks the language of state autonomy and true federal-

ism 'from which other states will also benefit', the Baba's negotiable demands do not extend very much beyond the Anandpur Sahib resolution.

The only option for the moderates would be to use their cadres and take the fight against the extremists to the countryside. But if they couldn't do this against Bhindranwale, they are far less likely to do this today, given the popular mood. Neither side can risk being branded traitor to the Sikh cause and the political isolation it might entail.

Ironically, for a way out, they are dependant more and more on the Centre and a party whose political present is as grimy as theirs. Both sides have opted out of moral responsibility for the present crisis. This is clear when Longowal says, "If the government does wrong things, the anger is bound to grow. A responsible government would ask the people what is bothering them, instead of handing Punjab over to the army and trying to crush us. If the British couldn't do this, does this government think it can? We are fighting for justice; they say we won't give you justice, we will beat you into submission. The consequence of this policy will be the same as it is the world over. If the people's anger wells over, it is the government's responsibility. Why should it let it burst?" Suddenly, the argument of terrorism being Congress-sponsored seems to pale before the admission that the dangerous process at work is turning people into extremists.

Politics has reduced itself into the art of convincing repartee in which both sides can score points because both sides are culpable. But if police apprehensions are well-founded, then escalating violence could well push the state over the brink. The tragedy of Punjab today is that, if this dormant majority is angry and fearful for the future, it still desires that peace and prosperity return to a state that was once known for enterprise and good living. But if this rudderless situation takes a turn for the worse, there is no saying how it will be forced to act. ♦

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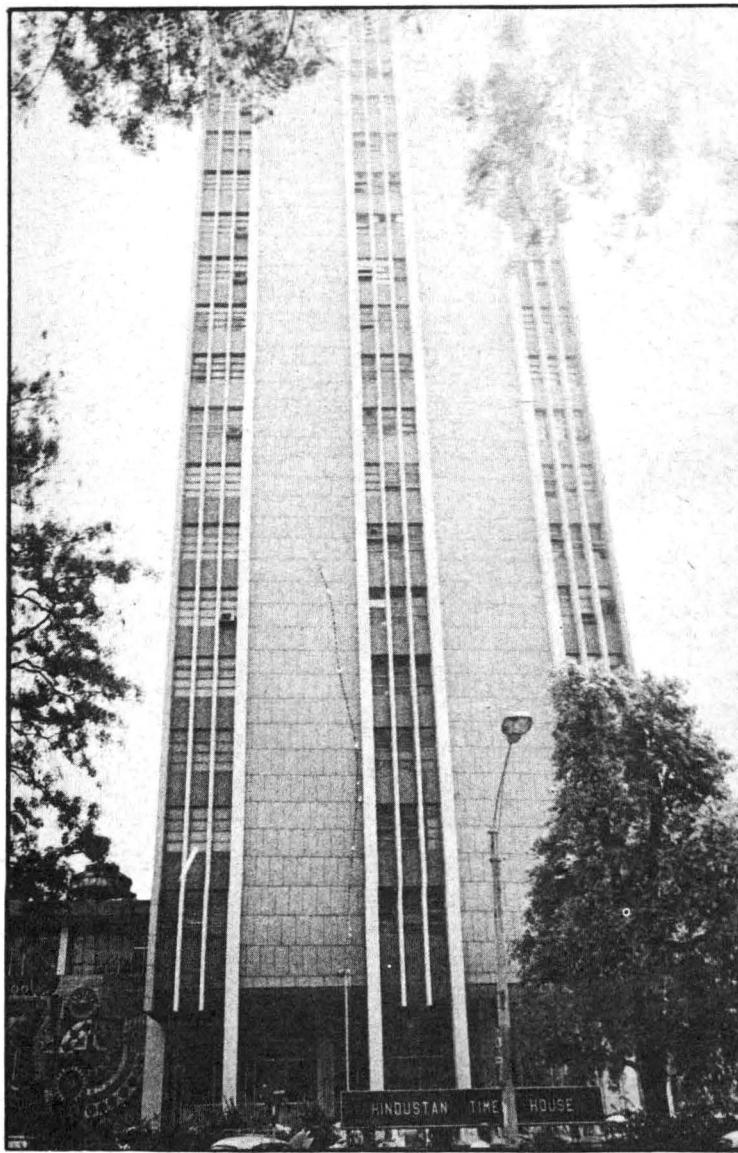
EDITORIAL STYLES

Khushwant Singh, B G Verghese, S Mulgaokar and so many others. They've all edited 'The Hindustan Times'. This is an insider's account of their reigns.

BY K N SUD

EDITORS ARE often the butt of jokes within the journalistic fraternity. Some invite ridicule when they exhibit their ignorance of the mechanics of newspaper production, not having come up through the mill. A few are so keen to hear words of praise that a wily sycophant can make them do patently stupid things. Most have some weakness or whim that sometimes lands them in comical situations.

Among the editors of *The Hindustan Times* was, for example, the portly Devdas Gandhi, who, when faced with an appetising dish, could be rendered totally inattentive, even if he were conversing with the highest in the land. Hiranmay Karlekar would bare his leg to display a bullet scar he allegedly received as a student activist. Khushwant Singh, of buttocks and bosom fame, dismissed an editorial



K N Sud retired recently from The Hindustan Times. This article is based on his memories of his editors.

meeting on being told that a woman was waiting to see him.

During my 35 years' stay at *The Hindustan Times*, I had the opportunity to watch ten editors at work or avoiding work. Two died in harness while most others were eased out by the proprietors.

DEVDAS, who joined the paper in the early '40s, would visit the newsroom around midnight. In the beginning, when he was unfamiliar with press jargon, he would often say things that amused the staff. The chief sub would write HO (hold over) on galley proofs of stories he did not intend to use in the edition under preparation. "Good HO," Devdas would remark, without realising that it was being held over for possible use in a later edition.

As he gained experience, Devdas began spotting errors in the

newspaper. Through an oversight, 'Birla' was printed as 'Girla' in a double-column headline. Devdas lined up all those who had worked on that page. "Don't you know Birla owns this paper?" he asked. "Always keep a dictionary by your side," he advised.

Such howlers occur even in the best-edited publications. It is stated that many years ago, the word 'passes' got printed as 'pisses' in the London *Times* in a story about the Queen. When the venerable Madan Mohan Malaviya died, the *Leader* of Allahabad printed 'Malaria' in the banner headline in place of 'Malaviya'. The *Sind Observer* of Karachi headlined Sarojini Naidu's remark at a public meeting. She had said: "The pen is mightier than the sword." In the headline, the words 'pen' and 'is' appeared without a space in between!

Nobody could beat Devdas in stinginess. In private, the staff called him 'Money Editor' instead of Managing Editor. If a candidate for a job was hard up, he would be given a lower salary than one offered to a person who could bargain. Also taken into account were the subsidised lunch and tea.

Devdas was a voracious eater. According to a story making the rounds among the staff, food was stacked on either side of his bed at night so that whichever way he turned, he could reach out to it easily. During the hearing of his defamation case against *Blitz*, he took a flask of mango juice to the court and sipped it during his cross-examination.

His love of food is affirmed by J N Sahni who edited the *National Call*. The latter writes in his book, *The Lid Off*: "Unlike his father (Mahatma Gandhi), Devdas liked good food and rarely refused it at any time of the day. I also shared with Devdas a healthy appetite. We were sitting

opposite each other at a lunch with Mountbatten. . . . Devdas was shocked when of the three courses, I passed off two, took very little of the third, ending with a small helping of the dessert. I soon lit up a cigar and over coffee kept up the conversation, carefully watching every gesture and every move of Mountbatten. . . . Devdas was too engrossed managing rice, *rasam*, dal and a variety of vegetables and snacks."

When he was in England with Gandhiji for the second Round Table Conference, Devdas regularly visited

a dairy close to Knightsbridge where they stayed. Agatha Harrison, their hostess, writes: "Shortly after they left, I happened to go into a dairy nearby and they asked affectionately after him (Devdas)."

Devdas died of a heart attack in Bombay in 1957. Immediately, a war of succession began in *The Hindustan Times*. His second-in-command, Durga Das, was then in Europe. A junior assistant editor, V Balasubramaniam, outsmarted his seniors by grabbing the plum post, reportedly with the help of C Rajagopalachari, father-in-law of Devdas Gandhi.

Balasubramaniam's tenure as editor lasted no longer than 13 days. Durga Das cut short his foreign tour and persuaded the Birlas to make him editor. He, in turn, was replaced by S Mulgaokar as editor, but to please him, the Birlas made him editor-in-chief.



Devdas Gandhi, son of the Mahatma, was a voracious eater. Food was stacked on either side of his bed at night so that whichever way he turned, he could eat.

his exit from *The Hindustan Times* about six months after the arrival of Mulgaokar.

But Mulgaokar had nothing but contempt for the Birlas, with the exception of G D Birla. He would make the lesser Birlas, who came to see him, wait for at least an hour. Once Nehru visited the Birlas' home town, Pilani, to inaugurate a function. I was in charge of the city edition that night. Around 11 p m, in walked Mulgaokar. "Sud, what's the space

position?" he asked. "Very tight, sir, but there are some photographs of the PM with the Birlas which the news editor wants me to carry," I said. "Throw them out, but don't miss any important story," he told me.

Mulgaokar had sued the Editor of *Blitz*, R K Karanjia, for defamation. One evening he came to my desk and handed me a single-para report on the day's hearing of the case. "This must go as it is, no change," he said and left. Karanjia's counsel had asked Mulgaokar his father's name and the latter had said that he did not know. The counsel had then asked him if he was a bastard. The story, written by Mulgaokar himself, contained just that part of the evidence. The report passed from hand to hand in the newsroom before being sent to the press for composing.

Behind his grim countenance, Mulgaokar hid a generous nature. An out-of-job journalist once approached him for a writing assignment. The article he submitted was rejected. He was told to try another subject. This too, did not make the grade. However, a very brief version of his next write-up was used, for which he was paid Rs 1,000. "For two paras used and two articles rejected," wrote Mulgaokar on the voucher for payment. A VVIP, then without a governorship or ministership, was sanctioned Rs 3,000 for his article when the going rate was Rs 100-150. The chief accountant thought that there had been a mistake and took the voucher to the editor. "Can't you read the figure?" thundered Mulgaokar.

Mulgaokar had a powerful pen and a fascinating style. His weekly column and editorials often sent shock waves among those in power. During the Indo-China war of 1962, he lambasted Krishna Menon for neglecting the country's defences and

manufacturing consumer goods for civilian use in the ordnance factories. He also attacked K D Malaviya for injecting communist ideology into the government's economic policies. Nehru was forced to drop from his Cabinet, both Menon and Malaviya.

MULGAOKAR chose to quit after the Birlas made him chief editor and appointed Ajit Bhattacharjea as editor. They were out to dislodge Mulgaokar and the last of India's great, fearless editors decided to leave.



Mulgaokar had too much integrity for the Birlas. If there was an important news story, he would carry it and throw out photographs of the Birlas.

Bhattacharjea was not fated to rule *The Hindustan Times* for long. B G Verghese had completed, in 1969, his three-year tenure as Indira Gandhi's press advisor. Earlier, he had distinguished himself as assistant editor and war correspondent for *The Times Of India*.

He had introduced the concept of development journalism in India and believed in constructive criticism. All this suited the Birlas in the new scenario that had emerged following Mrs Gandhi's complete domination of the government and the Congress party. The editorship of *The Hindustan Times* was offered to Verghese and he accepted.

Bhattacharjea was *ipso facto* relegated to the number two position. He felt hurt beyond measure and after scouting around for an editorship elsewhere, settled for the resident editor's post at *The Times Of India*.

The initial reaction of the staff to Verghese's appointment was one of relief, as he was easily accessible and a gentleman to his fingertips. His 'boy scout' image provided comic relief to his hard-pressed colleagues. The staff, however, began to feel bored by the all too frequent conferences he held and his endless briefings. In money matters, he was as stingy as Devdas.

The Birlas soon discovered that Verghese was not likely to promote their business interests through the newspaper. But they could

not do a thing to him due to his reputation for forthrightness and incorruptibility. Their chance came after Mrs Gandhi declared the Emergency. Some of Verghese's editorials, especially the one denouncing the 'annexation' of Sikkim, angered the government. A hint, reportedly from the Prime Minister's secretariat, enabled the proprietors to get rid of him.

N C Menon, a junior assistant editor, took over from Verghese as

acting editor. As Verghese was leaving the office one evening, the general manager, Santosh Nath, and Menon accosted him on the staircase and took him to the canteen where he was handed a letter terminating his services. What happened subsequently is well-known and on record. Ironically, Menon owed his meteoric rise in the profession to Verghese.

Menon acted as editor for about a month. Nothing significant happened during this period, except that the gossip-mongers had the time of their lives.

The Birlas sprang a surprise on the staff by pitchforking into the editorial chair a nonentity in the profession, Hiranmay Karlekar, a junior assistant editor of *The Statesman*. Fair and flamboyant, 37-year-old Karlekar looked more like a film actor than an editor. Menon, who had helped the proprietors overthrow Verghese, needed to be mollified. He was sent to Washington as the paper's correspondent.

Though politically well-connected, Karlekar felt extremely insecure and frequently turned to Santosh Nath for advice. At night, Karlekar would ring up the news editor to ask if his job was safe. He did not want a word of criticism of the government to be published in the paper. He would rather carry stories from Indian mythology on the front page than anything that reflected the working of the rulers. *The Hindustan Times* did feature legends and poetry on page one during the Emergency.

Then came the 1977 Lok Sabha elections. As the results started pouring in, Karlekar positioned himself at the side of the teleprinter. Soon it became clear that Mrs Gandhi's party was losing the poll. It was time for him to change sides. "Serves them right, bastards," he declared and feigned elation at the Janata's success.

Overnight, the paper's look and policy changed. It began carrying long, eulogistic write-ups on the new rulers, and their photographs now replaced those of the Emergency caucus. Karlekar is reported to have told his confidants that he was an undercover agent of the Opposition during the Emergency! "A sycophant trying to be too clever," was a typical comment heard in the office. He did, however, succeed in winning the confidence of the new rulers.

Karlekar found himself in yet another dilemma when Mrs Gandhi re-

turned to power in 1980. He could not do another somersault and there was no alternative for him but to quit.

AND LASTLY, there came Khushwant Singh, also called Khushwant Singh by his detractors. He became editor of *The Hindustan Times*, courtesy the 'Son of India'. He brought with him his servility to the Nehru family. To the list of his benefactors to be served and praised, he added the name of K K Birla. "God (meaning K K) wants it," he would often tell his colleagues when he wanted them to write an article or display a story in a particular manner. Asked why he called Birla God, he would say, "Because he pays us for our daily bread."

After a month of his taking over the editorship, Khushwant re-lit his bulb column titled *With Malice Towards One And All*. In his first piece in *The Hindustan Times* he took the readers into confidence as to why he was a philanderer and an agnostic, how he entered Parliament 'by the back door', why he ogled at the comely ladies and why the French wash their bottoms in bidets prior to making love.

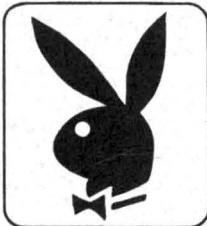
Khushwant Singh's exit from *The Hindustan Times* was as infamous as that of Verghese and Karlekar. He wrote a front-page edit on Sanjay Gandhi's death, back-

ing Menaka vis-a-vis Rajiv Gandhi on the issue of the inheritance of the dead leader's mantle. He called her Durga astride a tiger while describing Rajiv as unambitious and ill-suited for a political role. This reportedly upset the people who mattered at No 1, Safdarjang Road. Later, when Mrs Gandhi and Menaka fell out, Khushwant had to pay the price of backing the wrong horse (or mare). Promptly came the marching orders from the proprietors. ♦



Verghese was dismissed after the Prime Minister's secretariat sent word that his editorials on Sikkim had angered the government.

THE BEST OF THE PLAYBOY INTERVIEW



It is the most famous interview spot in the world. Presidential candidates, Oscar-winning actors and champion sportsmen all bare their souls to Playboy. Here are extracts from some of the best interviews.

CASSIUS CLAY/MOHAMMAD ALI

(September 1964 and November 1975)

PLAYBOY: What *other* direct confrontations did you have with Liston before the fight?

CLAY: Well, another time was just before we signed to fight. It was in Las Vegas. I was there to be on *David Brinkley's Journal*, and it didn't take me time to find Liston at a gambling table. People were standing around watching him. He was shooting craps, and I walked up behind him and reached and took some of his chips. He turned around, and I said, "Man, you can't shoot dice!" But he was good-humoured. Maybe it was because the people were watching, and maybe he was seeing me helping build up a gate for the fight we were about to sign for — or maybe he was *winning* something for a change. I don't know *what* it was that put him in good spirits, but I just kept right on him. I'd snatch up the dice from him. I could see I was beginning to get to him a little, but not enough. Finally, I had to shoot a loaded water pistol on him. That did it. But he still played it cool, trying to show the people he was trying to humour me. Naturally, the word had spread and people were piling around us. But then very suddenly, Liston *froze* me with that look of his.

He said real quiet, "Let's go on over here," and he led the way to a table, and the people hung back. I ain't going to lie. This was the only time since I have known Sonny Liston that he really scared me. I just felt the power and the meanness of the man I was messing with. Anybody tell me about how he has fought cops and beat up tough thugs and all of that, I believe it. I saw that streak in him. He told me, "Get the hell out of here or I'll wipe you out."

PLAYBOY: What did you do?

CLAY: I got the hell out of there. I told you, he had really scared me.

PLAYBOY: There was a controversy about the honesty of your failure to pass the three army pre-induction qualification tests that you took shortly after the fight. Any comment?

CLAY: The truth don't hurt nobody. The fact is I never was too bright in school. I just barely graduated. I had a D-minus average. I ain't ashamed of it, though. I mean, how much do school principals make a month? But when I looked at a lot of the questions they had on them army tests, I just didn't know the answers. I didn't even know how to *start* after finding the answers. That's all. So, I didn't pass. It was the army's decision that they didn't want me to go in the service. They're the boss. I don't want to say no whole lot about it.

EXTRACT

PLAYBOY: Was it embarrassing to be declared mentally unfit?

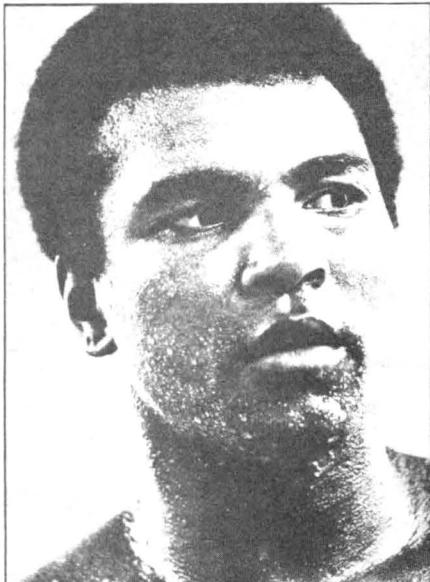
CLAY: I have said I am the greatest. Ain't nobody ever heard me say I was the smartest.

PLAYBOY: Does your claim of being the greatest mean that you think you could have beaten every heavyweight champion in modern ring history?

CLAY: I can't really say. Rocky Marciano, Jack Johnson, Joe Louis, Jack Dempsey, Joe Walcott, Ezzard Charles — they *all* would have given me trouble. I can't know if I would've beaten them all, but I do know this: I'm the most talked-about, the most publicised, the most famous and the most colourful fighter in history. And I'm the fastest heavyweight — with feet and hands — who ever lived. Besides all that, I'm the onliest poet laureate boxing's ever had. One other thing, too: If you look at pictures of all the former champions, you know in a flash that I'm the best-looking champion in history. It all adds up to being the greatest, don't it?

PLAYBOY: Do you think you'll be remembered that way?

CLAY: I don't know, but I'll tell you how I'd *like* to be



"I'm the most talked-about, and the most colourful fighter in history. Besides, I'm the onliest poet laureate boxing's ever had."

remembered: as a black man who won the heavyweight title and who was humorous and who treated everyone right. As a man who never looked down on those who looked up to him and who helped as many of his people as he could — financially and also in their fight for freedom, justice and equality. As a man who wouldn't hurt his people's dignity by doing anything that would embarrass them. As a man who tried to unite his people through the faith of Islam that he found when he listened to the Honourable Elijah Muhammad. And if all that's asking too much, then I guess I'd settle for being remembered only as a great boxing champion who became a preacher and a champion of his people. And I wouldn't even mind if folks forgot how pretty I was.

MEL BROOKS

(February 1975)



"Before Blazing Saddles America had not come to terms with the fart. In every cowboy picture you never hear a burp, let alone a bloozer."

PLAYBOY: What was the point of the vulgarity — the farting scene, for example — in *Blazing Saddles*?

BROOKS: The farts were the point of the farting scene. In real life, people fart, right? In the movies, people don't. Why not? When I was in high school, I knew a kid, won't mention his name — Robert Weinstein — who when he let one go, you could get in it and drive it away, that's how firm. But before *Blazing Saddles*, America had not come to terms with the fart. Wind was never broken across the prairie in a Ken Maynard picture. In every cowboy picture, the cowboys sit around the campfire and eat 140,000 beans, and you never hear a burp, let alone a bloozer.

PLAYBOY: Oh. Was anything cut out in the interest of good taste?

BROOKS: Yes. A scene between Cleavon Little, the black sheriff, and Madeline Kahn. The scene takes place in the dark. "Is it twue vot zey say," Madeline asks him seductively, "about how you people are built?" Then you hear a zipper. Then you hear her say, "Oh! It's twue! It's twue! It's twue!" That much is in the picture. But then comes the line we cut. Cleavon says, "Excuse me, ma'am. I have to disillusion you, but you're sucking my arm."

JOHN WAYNE

(May 1971)

PLAYBOY: Many militant blacks would argue that they have it better almost *anywhere* else. Even in Hollywood, they feel that the colour barrier is still up for many kinds of jobs. Do you limit the number of blacks you use in

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your pictures?

WAYNE: Oh, Christ no. I've directed two pictures and I gave the blacks their proper position. I had a black slave in *The Alamo*, and I had a correct number of blacks in *The Green Berets*. If it's supposed to be a black character, naturally I use a black actor. But I don't go so far as hunting for positions for them. I think the Hollywood studios are carrying their tokenism a little too far. There's no doubt that ten per cent of the population is black, or coloured, or whatever they want to call themselves; they certainly aren't Caucasian. Anyway, I suppose there should be the same percentage of the coloured race in films as in society. But it can't always be that way. There isn't necessarily going to be ten per cent of the grips or sound men who are black because, more than likely, ten per cent haven't trained themselves for that type of work.

PLAYBOY: For years, American Indians have played an important — if subordinate — role in your Westerns. Do you feel any empathy with them?

WAYNE: I don't feel we did wrong in taking this great country away from them, if that's what you're asking. Our so-called stealing of this country from them was just a



"I've directed two pictures and I gave the blacks their proper position. I had a black slave in The Alamo. But it can't always be that way."

matter of survival. There were great numbers of people who needed new land, and the Indians were selfishly trying to keep it for themselves.

PLAYBOY: Weren't the Indians — by virtue of prior possession — the rightful owners of the land?

WAYNE: Look, I'm sure there have been inequalities. If those inequalities are presently affecting any of the Indians now alive, they have a right to a court hearing. But what happened 100 years ago in our country can't be blamed on us today.

ALBERT SPEER

(June 1971)

PLAYBOY: Did Hitler disapprove of Goebbels's private life?

SPEER: Not as long as it didn't create a public scandal. In his own way, of course, Hitler exploited women as callously as Goebbels did.

PLAYBOY: Are you referring to his relationship with Eva Braun?

SPEER: Yes. He treated her very badly. He never publicly acknowledged their relationship and went to absurd lengths to disguise it, even within his own circle of intimates. When she accompanied Hitler on trips or public appearances, she was never allowed to be seen in the motorcade or in close proximity to Hitler; and at Berchtesgaden, she was banished from the Fuehrer's presence whenever official guests arrived. On these occasions, Hitler exiled her to her small room on the second floor, with a connecting door to his own bedroom, where she would sit in sad isolation while the festivities carried on downstairs. Why Hitler kept up this transparent pretext, I don't know. Everyone knew she was his mistress. He never displayed any consideration for her feelings and was consistently callous towards her in public. This was painful to witness, because she was obviously devoted to him and easily hurt by his indifference.

PLAYBOY: What kind of person was she?

SPEER: Neither a dim-witted slut nor a scheming Madame Pompadour, but a sweet, gentle and quiet woman. She was completely apolitical and never attempted to intervene in affairs of state or influence any of Hitler's decisions. She loved sports, particularly skiing, and had a pleasant, unmalicious sense of humour; she teasingly referred to herself as 'Mother of the Country'. She came from a simple lower-middle class Munich family and neither she nor her parents ever seemed to benefit financially from her relationship with Hitler. His only gifts to her were birthday and Christmas presents of rather tasteless costume jewellery, and she lived on a frugal allowance doled out begrudgingly by Bormann. She alone, of Hitler's inner circle, remained unspoiled and unpretentious to the end. She was a sad, lonely person, the one member of that entourage who did not deserve her doom.

PLAYBOY: Why did Hitler treat her so shabbily throughout their relationship?

SPEER: I think there were several reasons. He used to discuss the question of marriage at the dinner table, while Eva sat next to him, her eyes lowered. "I could never marry," he would say with total insensitivity. "Think of the problems if I had children! In the end, they would try to make my son my successor, and the chances are slim for someone like me to have a capable son. That is almost always how it goes in such cases." He always cited the example of Goethe's son, who was a cretin, to explain his

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distrust of a hereditary succession. On other occasions, he would expound on his cynical disregard for women in general, just as if Eva were not there: "A highly intelligent man should take a primitive and stupid woman. Imagine if, on top of everything else, I had a woman who interfered with my work!" Eva's face would remain expressionless; only her eyes betrayed her pain. There was never any outward manifestation of tenderness or regard for her in his manner.

PLAYBOY: There were stories that Hitler was a homosexual. Do you think there was any truth in them?

SPEER: I think that was just wartime propaganda, rather like the stories that he was of Jewish ancestry or chewed the carpets in epileptic fits or was a syphilitic. No, Hitler was sexually normal; his perversion was of the soul, not of the body. But I don't believe he was capable of real love. Perhaps once in his life he may have been. As a young man, he had an incestuous affair with his niece, Geli Raubal, whom he drove to suicide. But as long as I knew Hitler, there was an ultimate coldness about him; on a deep level, he was devoid of all feelings of empathy and tenderness. He was an inhuman being.

JERRY BROWN

(April 1976)



"Sometimes even powerlessness has a power of its own. Who is it who took India? Some guy in his underwear."

PLAYBOY: Can you really regulate excessive materialism without also regulating advertising and the corporate system behind it?

BROWN: I recognise that we are going through certain economic and environmental changes. Our system worked

well when the country was less developed and the air was cleaner and fuel cheaper. But until people begin to recognise the extent of our present dilemma, there is not much we can do about it. So much of what I am doing is attempting to enhance awareness of the fact that the country is changing. Until we are sufficiently awake, there is no point in talking about what we can do about it.

I don't see leadership as just passing laws. The fascination with legislation as the big solution to everything is overplayed. A person in a significant position of power can lead by the questions he raises and the example he sets. A lot of political energy comes from a certain vision, a faith that communicates itself to other people — as with Martin Luther King and other leaders, whose ideas and the way they presented them had a great influence on government. People who stand for an idea that has energy connected with it, that's power.

PLAYBOY: What do you mean by that, precisely?

BROWN: Just that sometimes even powerlessness has a power of its own. Who is it who took India? Some guy in his underwear. Gandhi seemed a pretty strange, powerless character. And yet because of the idea and the moment, he was able to galvanise millions of people. Power may be an idea, a style, things we haven't thought of before. Look at Vietnam. We thought we had the power, but events proved we didn't. The Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese had an idea and a collective purpose.

PLAYBOY: Who do you think has power today?

BROWN: Cesar Chavez has power. George Meany. Perhaps Ivan Illich. The women's movement. The *Whole Earth Catalog*. Bob Dylan is a person with power.

JIMMY CARTER

(November 1976)

PLAYBOY: Thanks for all the time you've given us. Incidentally, do you have any problems with appearing in *Playboy*? Do you think you'll be criticised?

CARTER: I don't object to that at all. I don't believe I'll be criticised.

PLAYBOY: Do you feel you've reassured people with this interview, people who are uneasy about your religious beliefs, who wonder if you're going to make a rigid, unbending President?

CARTER: I don't know if you've been to Sunday school here yet; some of the press has attended. I teach there about every three or four weeks. It's getting to be a real problem because we don't have room to put everybody now when I teach. I don't know if we're going to have to issue passes or what. It almost destroys the worship aspect of it. But we had a good class last Sunday. It's a good way to learn what I believe and what the Baptists believe.

I try not to commit a deliberate sin. I recognise that I'm going to do it anyhow, because I'm human and I'm

EXTRACT



"I try not to commit a deliberate sin. I recognise that I'm going to do it anyhow, because I'm human and I'm tempted."

tempted. And Christ set some almost impossible standards for us. Christ said, "I tell you that anyone who looks on a woman with lust has in his heart already committed adultery."

PAT MOYNIHAN

(March 1977)



"When India ceased to be a democracy our interest plummeted. I mean, what does it export but communicable disease?"

PLAYBOY: Did you see Nixon during Watergate? You were in India then.

MOYNIHAN: Well, I knew that the settlement of India's rupee debt to the US was going to be the biggest thing I would do in India. And I just had to get to the President to do so. But first I would have to see Kissinger. He was going to go out to see Nixon at San Clemente and said I could see him there. I knew if I hung around there long enough, I would eventually see Nixon. And, as it turned out, I just happened to spot him coming in on a golf cart

and I rushed out and ran after him into his office. Nobody shot me. "I'd like to see you." "Oh, how are you?" "I'd like to talk with you a moment, if I could." "Fine, come in at 11 o'clock."

So I went in at 11 o'clock with Kissinger and there was talk about Brezhnev's visit that week. It was also the week in which young John Dean was testifying.

We did our business and all that and I said to the President, "Will you do me one favour?" "Yes, what is that?" "Will you turn that goddamn flag right side up?" His flag was upside down on his lapel, and that's a naval distress signal. He said, "Oh, goodness, yes, you're a navy man, too, aren't you?" His cuff links were upside down, too. There were signs of internal disorder.

PLAYBOY: Let's turn to the subject of India, since you spent a term as ambassador to that country. What is your view of Mrs Gandhi?

MOYNIHAN: The culture of India is so extraordinarily complex that wrong notions can be as plausible as right notions. In the '30s, at Oxford, Mrs Gandhi acquired a very, very vague Left view of the world in which the United States was seen as an ominous power acting out of capitalist, imperialist, racist motives. A caricature. And she just trundled all that junk home with her and nothing much was added later.

But she combined that with an intense and tactical knowledge of how individuals can be manipulated, frightened, enticed, intimidated. And she has the great sense that she gets from her father of her right to rule India. She is the spokesman of the masses. They are hers and she is theirs. You have to be born with that.

PLAYBOY: What was her effect on how the US sees India today?

MOYNIHAN: While the second most populous nation in the world was a democracy, the United States had an enormous ideological interest in the prosperity and the success of that country. We want the world to know that democracies do well. So they've given up the one claim they had on us. When India ceased to be a democracy, our actual interest there just plummeted. I mean, what does it export but communicable disease?

DOLLY PARTON

(October 1978)

PLAYBOY: Since we're on the subject of names, let's get your opinion of some of your contemporaries. We'll start with the woman you think is the true queen of country music, Kitty Wells.

PARTON: She was the first extremely popular female country singer. She was like a pioneer for all the rest of us. She sold all kinds of records to soldiers and juke-boxes and honky-tonks. She is such a natural, pure and authentic singer. She sings from the heart and she don't worry about

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"I never did meet Elvis. But I always felt like we were kin. I feel like I know exactly how he was."

what the noise is goin' to sound like.

PLAYBOY: Janis Joplin?

PARTON: Her voice was like mine, you either liked it or you didn't. I never particularly cared for it. It was different. But I do appreciate what she left behind in the world of music.

PLAYBOY: Linda Ronstadt?

PARTON: She is one of the greatest female voices I ever heard.

PLAYBOY: Emmylou Harris?

PARTON: I love Emmy's voice, it's so delicate and so pure.

PLAYBOY: Did you ever meet Elvis?

PARTON: No, I never did. But I always felt that we were kin. I feel like I know exactly how he was. Every time he'd come in town, even if I was home, I just wouldn't go, somethin' always kept me from goin'. There were other people I liked to hear sing better, but there was nobody that I ever related to more.

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW INTERLUDE

My reaction to porn films is as follows: After the first ten minutes, I want to go home and screw. After the first 20 minutes, I never want to screw again as long as I live.

ERICA JONG, SEPTEMBER 1975.

MARLON BRANDO

(January 1979)

PLAYBOY: Have you ever just walked through a part?

BRANDO: Certainly. Yeah.

PLAYBOY: Often?

BRANDO: No.

PLAYBOY: What about *A Countess From Hong Kong* directed by Charles Chaplin?

BRANDO: No, I tried on that, but I was a puppet, a marionette in that. I wasn't there to be anything else, because Chaplin was a man of sizeable talent and I was not going to argue with him about what's funny and not funny. I must say we didn't start off very well. I went to London for the reading of the script and Chaplin read for us. I had jet lag and I went right to sleep during his reading. That was terrible. (Laughs.) Sometimes sleep is more important than anything else. I was miscast in that. He shouldn't have tried to direct it. He was a mean man, Chaplin. Sadistic. I saw him torture his son.

PLAYBOY: In what way?

BRANDO: Humiliating him, insulting him, making him feel ridiculous, incompetent. He (Sydney Chaplin) played a small part in the movie and the things Chaplin would say to him. . . I said, "Why do you take that?" His hands were sweating. He said, "Well, the old man is old and nervous, it's all right." That's no excuse. Chaplin reminded me of what Churchill said about the Germans, either at your feet or at your throat.

PLAYBOY: Was he that way with you?

BRANDO: He tried to do some shit with me. I said, "Don't you ever speak to me in that tone of voice." God, he really made me mad. I was late one day. He started to make a big to-do about it. I told him he could take his film and stick it up his ass, frame by frame. That was after I realised it was a complete fiasco. He wasn't a man who could direct anybody. He probably could when he was young. With Chaplin's talent, you had to give him the benefit of the doubt. But you always have to separate the man from his talent. A remarkable talent but a monster of a man. I don't even like to think about it.

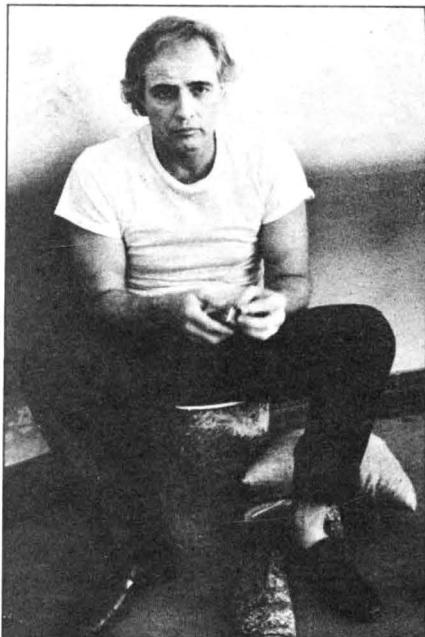
PLAYBOY: Are there any recent films that have made you laugh?

BRANDO: I haven't gone to that many movies. I liked *High Anxiety*. Mel Brooks makes me laugh. They had a Laurel and Hardy festival on television; boy, I laughed at that. It went on all night long; I was up half the night laughing. I like comedy.

PLAYBOY: Even Bob Hope's?

BRANDO: Bob Hope will go to the opening of a phone booth in a gas station in Anaheim, provided they have a camera and three people there. He'll go to the opening of a market and receive an award. Get an award from Thom McAn for wearing their shoes. It's pathetic. It's a bottomless pit. A barrel that has no floor. He must be a man who has an ever-crumbing estimation of himself. He's constantly filling himself up. He's like a junkie — an applause junkie, like Sammy Davis, Jr. Sammy desperately longs to be loved, approved of. He's very talented. What happens to these people when they can't get up and do their shtick, God only knows. Bob Hope, Christ, instead

EXTRACT



"He was a mean man, Chaplin. Sadistic. I saw him torture his son. You always have to separate the man from his talent."

of growing old gracefully or doing something with his money, be helpful, all he does is he has an anniversary with the President looking on. It's sad. He gets on an airplane every two minutes, always going someplace. It didn't bother him at all to work the Vietnam War. Oh, he took that in his stride. He did his World War II and Korean War act. "Our boys," and all that. He's a pathetic guy.

PLAYBOY: What about Woody Allen?

BRANDO: I don't know Woody Allen, but I like him very much. I saw *Annie Hall* — enjoyed it enormously. He's an important man. Wally Cox was important. Wally Cox was a lifelong friend of mine. I don't know why I put them together. They're similar to me. Woody Allen can't make any sense out of this world and he really tells wonderful jokes about it. Don't you think it was remarkable that his time came to get his door prize at the Academy Awards and he stayed home and played his clarinet? That was as witty and funny a thing as you could do.

PLAYBOY INTERVIEW INTERLUDE

I figure if a sucker don't wanna get himself capital punished, he shouldn't get the death penalty put on him. I mean, any damn fool that's stupid enough to get sentenced to death, what the hell's he got to shivel about afterwards?

—GARY GILMORE, APRIL 1977.

JOHN LENNON

(January 1981)

PLAYBOY: When you talk about working together on a single lyric like *We Can Work It Out*, it suggests that you

and Paul worked a lot more closely than you've admitted in the past. Haven't you said that you wrote most of your songs separately, despite putting both of your names on them?

LENNON: Yeah, I was lying. (Laughs.) It was when I felt resentful, so I felt that we did everything apart. But actually, a lot of the songs we did eyeball to eyeball.

PLAYBOY: But many of them *were* done apart, weren't they?

LENNON: Yeah, *Sgt Pepper* was Paul's idea, and I remember he worked on it a lot and suddenly called me to go into the studio, said it was time to write some songs. On *Pepper*, under the pressure of only ten days, I managed to come up with *Lucy In The Sky* and *Day In The Life*. We weren't communicating enough, you see. And later on, that's why I got resentful about all that stuff. But now I understand that it was just the same competitive game going on.

PLAYBOY: Just a quick aside, but while we're on the subject of lyrics and your resentment of Paul, what made you write *How Do You Sleep?* which contains lyrics such as: "Those freaks was right when they said you was dead" and "The only thing you done was yesterday/And since you've gone, you're just another day"?

LENNON: (Smiles.) You know, I wasn't really feeling that vicious at the time. But I was using my resentment towards Paul to create a song, let's put it that way. He saw that it pointedly refers to him, and people kept hounding him about it. But, you know, there were a few digs on *his* album before mine. He's so obscure, I just get right down to the nitty-gritty. So he'd done it his way and I did it mine. But as to the line you quoted, yeah, I think Paul died creatively, in a way.

PLAYBOY: How about *She Came In Through The Bathroom Window*?

LENNON: That was written by Paul when we were in New York forming Apple, and he first met Linda. Maybe she's the one who came in the window. She must have. I don't know. *Somebody* came in the window.

PLAYBOY: *I Feel Fine*.

LENNON: That's me, including the guitar lick with the first feedback ever recorded. I defy anybody to find an earlier record — unless it is some old blues record from the '20s — with feedback on it.

PLAYBOY: *When I'm Sixty-four*.

LENNON: Paul completely. I would never even dream of writing a song like that. There are some areas I never think about and that is one of them.

PLAYBOY: *A Day In The Life*.

LENNON: Just as it sounds: I was reading the paper one day and I noticed two stories. One was the Guinness heir who killed himself in a car. That was the main headline story. He died in London in a car crash. On the next page was a story about 4,000 holes in Blackburn, Lancashire. In the streets, that is. They were going to fill them all.

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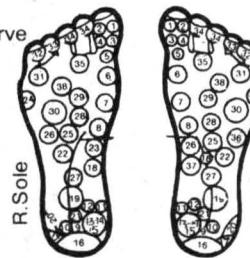
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"I was using my resentment towards Paul to create a song. But, there were a few digs on his album before mine. He's so obscure."

Paul's contribution was the beautiful little lick in the song, "I'd love to turn you on." I had the bulk of the song and the words, but he contributed this little lick floating around in his head that he couldn't use for anything. I thought it was a damn good piece of work.

PLAYBOY: How about *Strawberry Fields Forever*?

LENNON: *Strawberry Fields* is a real place. After I stopped living at Penny Lane, I moved in with my auntie who lived in the suburbs in a nice semi-detached place with a small garden and doctors and lawyers and that ilk living around — not the poor slummy kind of image that was projected in all the Beatles stories. In the class system, it was about half a class higher than Paul, George and Ringo, who lived in government-subsidised housing. We owned our house and had a garden. They didn't have anything like that. Near that home was *Strawberry Fields*, a house near a boys' reformatory where I used to go to garden parties as a kid with my friends Nigel and Pete. We would go there and hang out and sell lemonade bottles for a penny. We always had fun at *Strawberry Fields*. So that's where I got the name. But I used it as an image. *Strawberry Fields forever*.

PLAYBOY: And the lyrics, for instance: "Living is easy — "

LENNON: (Singing.) "With eyes closed. Misunderstanding all you see." It still goes, doesn't it? Aren't I saying exactly the same thing now? The awareness apparently trying to be expressed is — let's say in one way I was always hip. I was hip in kindergarten. I was different from the others. I was different all my life. The second verse goes, "No one

I think is in my tree." Well, I was too shy and self-doubting. Nobody seems to be as hip as me is what I was saying. Therefore, I must be crazy or a genius — "I mean it must be high or low," the next line. There was something wrong with me, I thought, because I seemed to see things other people didn't see. I thought I was crazy or an egomaniac for claiming to see things other people didn't see. As a child, I would say, "*But this is going on!*" and everybody would look at me as if I was crazy. I always was so psychic or intuitive or poetic or whatever you want to call it, that I was always seeing things in a hallucinatory way.

It was scary as a child, because there was nobody to relate to. Neither my auntie nor my friends nor anybody could ever see what I did. It was very, very scary and the only contact I had was reading about an Oscar Wilde or a Dylan Thomas or a Vincent van Gogh — all those books that my auntie had that talked about their suffering because of their visions. Because of what they saw, they were tortured by society for trying to express what they were. I *saw* loneliness.

PLAYBOY: How about Paul's song, *Hey Jude*?

LENNON: He said it was written about Julian. He knew I was splitting with Cyn and leaving Julian then. He was driving to see Julian to say hello. He had been like an uncle. And he came up with *Hey Jude*. But I always heard it as a song to me. Now I'm sounding like one of those fans reading things into it. . . Think about it: Yoko had just come into the picture. He is saying, "Hey, Jude" — "Hey, John." Subconsciously, he was saying, go ahead, leave me. On a conscious level, he didn't want me to go ahead. The angel in him was saying, "Bless you." The devil in him didn't like it at all, because he didn't want to lose his partner.

PLAYBOY: What about *Because*?

LENNON: I was lying on the sofa in our house, listening to Yoko play Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* on the piano. Suddenly, I said, "Can you play those chords backwards?" She did, and I wrote *Because* around then. The song sounds like *Moonlight Sonata* too. The lyrics are clear, no bullshit, no imagery, no obscure references.

PLAYBOY: *Give Peace A Chance*.

LENNON: All we are saying was give peace a chance.

PLAYBOY: Was it really a Lennon-McCartney composition?

LENNON: No. I don't even know why his name was on it. It's there because I kind of felt guilty because I'd made the separate single — the first — and I was really breaking away from the Beatles.

PLAYBOY: Why were the compositions you and Paul did separately attributed to Lennon-McCartney?

LENNON: Paul and I made a deal when we were 15. There was never a legal deal between us, just a deal we made when we decided to write together that we put both our names on it, no matter what.

UNUSUAL PEOPLE

KEEPERS OF



BY HAVOVI DUBASH

THE DEAD



The Parsi pall-bearers spend their lives with the dead but are shunned by the living.

THE PHONE RINGS in the *nassakhana*, where the pall-bearers congregate at the Towers of Silence, announcing the death of yet another Zoroastrian in the city of Bombay. Lounging figures in white pyjamas and *sudras* rise to pull on their white muslin tunics and caps. The gleaming white hearse, big enough to take the corpse and a dozen bereaved relatives, collects the pall-bearers and rolls silently down the hill of the Towers of Silence. Twice, sometimes three times a day, the pall-bearers set off to retrieve the dead.

Soon after the break of dawn, the mourners begin to trickle through the gates, dressed in white, filing past the *nassakhana* where the *khandiyas* have returned after performing the *sachkar*. The body has been collected and deposited at the *bungli*, the hall where the funeral will be held. The *khandiyas* have washed the body, clothed it in white, muslin garments, and laid it out on a marble slab in one corner of the hall. Its hands have been folded over the chest; a white sheet has been drawn up to shroud it. Only the face is exposed. An oil lamp has been lighted near the body.

The *nassesalars*, who will perform the death rituals as the priests pray over the body, change at the *nassakhana* and retie their *kustis*. Then, eerie white figures in the early morning, they walk up the hill to the *bungli*.

Inside the quiet hall, scented with burning sandalwood, there is the swish of white saris and paper fans as the ladies settle into chairs and stir the disquieting, sombre air. There is a low hum of reverent voices. Outside,

on the verandah, the men wait for the priests to appear in the doorway near the body.

The chanting of the first *Gatha*, the *Ahunavario*, begins. The priests make way for the two *nassesalars*, dressed, down to their flannel footwear, in white. They enter with an iron bier. With their entry, a few subdued sobs break out, heaving shoulders are clasped in sympathy; their white presence beside the white-shrouded body on the cold, marble slab, brings to the mourners in this room the ultimate reality of death.

As the sonorous chant fills the hall, the priests swaying from foot to foot, the *nassesalars* prepare the bier — lining it with strips of torn *sudras* and encircling it thrice with string around the four corners to define the area within which no one can now enter. The *sagdid* ceremony is now performed. A dog, held on a tight leash by one of the *nassesalars*, circles the body, sniffing at it uninterestedly. This is an old Irani custom, continuing from the days when the dog was supposed to detect the slightest signs of life in the body. Then the dog is led outside to wait with the *khandiyas*, who will hoist the bier onto their shoulders for the last journey of the dead.

While the chant continues, the pall-bearers, their dark faces completely immobile, lift the body onto the bier. When the prayers are done, the mourners, first the women, bow at the feet of the body, touch their foreheads briefly to the ground. This is the last time these women shall see this face, but the eyes do not linger: they flicker over the body in grief, in awe and in fear. Then the men file in,

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starched tunics rustling as they bend to pay their respects. Eyes mist over, noses turn red, but emotions are held in check, for there must be dignity, at all costs, in death. And then the *nassesalar* draws the sheet up to cover the face.

As the body is carried away, restraint snaps and the women walk weeping to the verandah to watch the waiting *khandiyas* carry away the bier. The men follow in pairs, a white cloth, the *paiwand*, held between each pair to reinforce the strength they need to counter the evil forces. The grim, white procession, that once traversed miles on foot, from the suburbs and neighbouring towns to the Towers of Silence, now makes the brief journey from the *bungli*, up the steps carved into the hillside, to one of the *dokhmas* (towers) above. The bier is laid down on a marble platform outside the circular grey walls. The face is revealed one last time. The dog is brought forward one last time. Then the *nassesalars* take over from the *khandiyas* again, and carry the bier across the short ramp that leads to a little doorway in the circular grey walls. Then the keepers of the dead enter the *dokhma*, where not even a priest may enter, and walk between the three concentric circles of sections (the outermost for males, then females and then children) and lower the corpse into a vacant slot.

The vultures wait and watch while the pall-bearers rip the clothes off the body. And then the body is left to the vultures, the eagles and even the crows.

The pall-bearers make their way down the peaceful hill, where the silence is undisturbed despite the skyscrapers of the city that loom overhead. Along the little paths through the trees and the bushes, among the flowers, the stalking peacocks, the dead, rustling leaves, and the other *dokhmas*, some in disuse.

The afternoon will bring them up again, in the same silent white procession, to the same vultures, the same sight of decaying flesh, the same smell of death.

NOTHING HAS CHANGED within the gates of the Towers of Silence, although outside, the city rushes to keep pace with the changing times. Here, the rituals and prayers remain unchanged, the vultures still wait on the walls of the *dokhmas* that were built and consecrated 300 years ago; and generations of pall-bearers have shouldered the iron bier – first with their fathers, and then with their sons.

In the *bungli*, the women wait for their men to return from the fire temple near the *dokhmas*. And then the mourners return – some solemn, some chattering animatedly about trivialities – death, a brief, unpleasant interlude, already in the background. But every face is turned in passing to the *nassakhana*. Curious eyes stare at the dark, unshaven faces, the figures in white that lounge around on the benches – these men who work in such close proximity with death.

When the mourners have gone, only the bereaved relatives remain to pray in the *bungli* for the next four days, while the soul hovers over its body and its loved ones – reluctant to leave – until Sarosha (divine intuition) leads the soul to Chinvat, the bridge of judgement, where Rashnu holds the scales of justice and Mithra pronounces judgement. And at the end of the fourth day, while prayers are chanted in the quiet darkness preceding dawn, the soul is freed of all its worldly attachments; judgement is pronounced; and the soul proceeds to its destination.

But the pall-bearers are not concerned with the immortal – only with the gross, mortal remains. After a few days, the *nassesalars* enter the *dokhma* to sweep the bones into the depression at the centre where they will, eventually, crumble and turn to dust.

When the pall-bearers return to the *nassakhana*, it is invariably to bottles of country liquor that will keep them going through the evening and into the night, while a small bulb burns before a picture of Zarathustra and the holy fire over the threshold. Sometimes, the men grow bawdy,

and drunken brawls are sparked off by petty rivalries and jealousy. But usually, a pack of cards, a forbidden cigarette and snorts of snuff provide satisfying accompaniments to the liquor that flows each night. Drinking is an age-old tradition here, a tradition that gave the *nassakhana* – home of the pall-bearers – its name.

Conversations centre around their work – the weight of the body they carried that day, the tips that have paid for tonight's liquor, and how many men it took to carry the body in. "And remember the time it took eight men to carry that fatso!" There are reminiscences of the old days, when 50-60 men were employed at the Towers of Silence, when the pall-bearers would walk to the home of the deceased, where the death ceremonies would be held. And of how they carried the body back, all those miles, quickly, before the sun positioned itself overhead or sank too low in the sky, and the auspicious hours drew to a close.

And then the conversation invariably turns towards the future. With the decrease in numbers of the Parsi community, this band of pall-bearers has diminished too – there are now hardly 14 working men, not counting the old and retired, who still live here. There will come a time when non-Parsis will carry the bodies – sacrilege! – or even a time when relatives will have to do the distasteful job themselves.

This secluded hill in the middle of the city, is the pall-bearers' world. What goes on outside has little bearing upon their lives. Their society is closely-knit – generations of young men taking up the family profession without question, marrying the daughters of their colleagues. Newspapers are hardly ever read here and the only politics that concern them are the politics of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, which runs this place, and their *mukadam*, Mr Marolia, highest in the hierarchy of pall-bearers, with over 60 years of service.

When the old men retire, they stay on at the *chawls*, their sons providing for them. If they are un-

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married, they continue to live at the *nassakhana*, sleeping on the stone platforms or benches, their belongings locked up in a trunk, their clothes hanging in bundles from the walls, a pillow and a couple of sheets rolled up in a corner. Each man brings along his contribution to the *nassakhana*: another picture of Zarathustra, or another calendar, or a picture of Laxmi or Sai Baba, or a couple of Commando comics, or a new pack of cards.

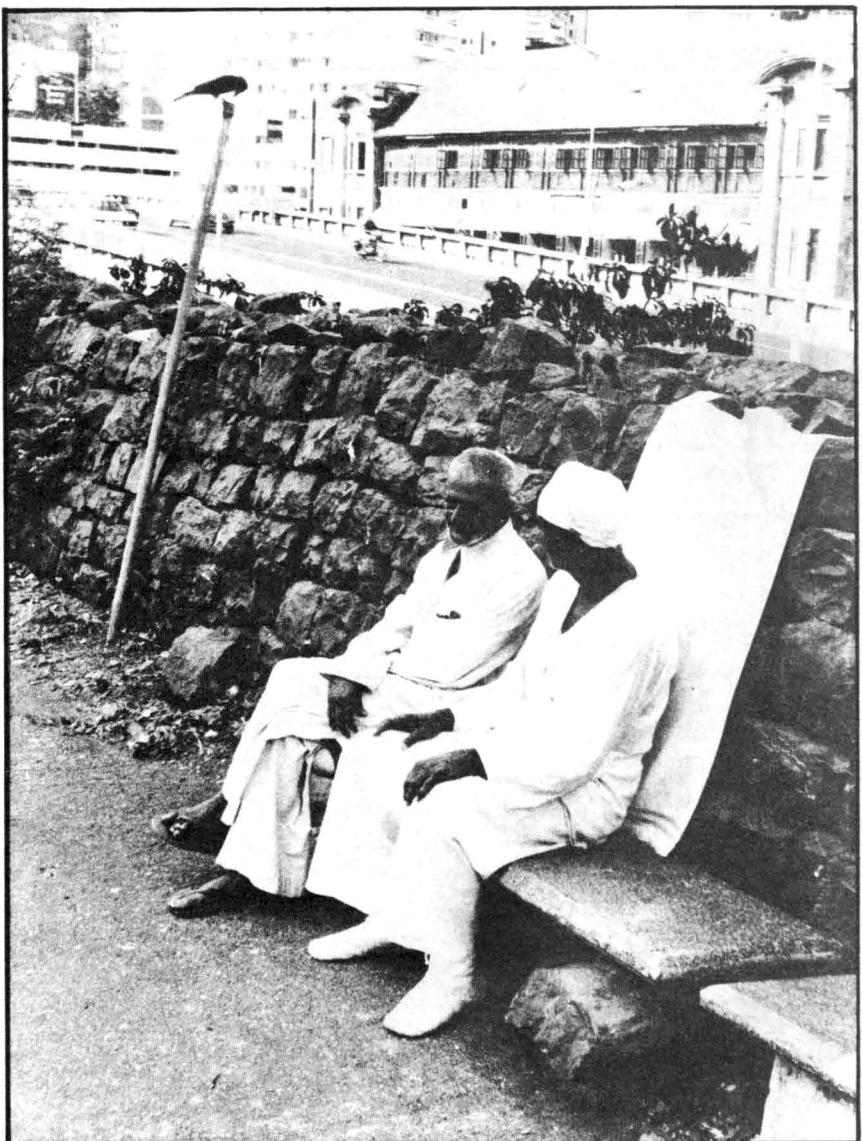
More often than not, those who stray into other professions, return at some stage in their lives, like prodigal sons, to the Towers of Silence, to the work their forefathers have done. So, the bus-driver with impaired vision, the lame handcart-puller, the retired mill superintendent, the unemployed graduate, have returned.

It is rare, however, for a pall-bearer to leave this secluded hill for the outside world of which he knows so little.

"What can we say about this work?" says Pervez Vachcha, the former bus-driver, with bloodshot eyes and greying hair. "We are poor people doing the work of God. One day they will take us, and put us in there. What difference does it all make?" And here, the young and the old have a standard reply when asked how they can carry corpses every day of their lives. Have they never dreamt of doing anything else? "*Aadat pari jai*," they will say. "*Ne avhe apre kohn jaiye?* (It has become a habit. And anyway, where can we go now?)"

For there is nowhere they can go. Most of them are drop-outs from school, unskilled, unused to hard labour, with just enough money to live on, given to drink, and driven deeper into isolation by a society that shuns them.

No self-respecting Parsi family, however poor, will associate with the family of a pall-bearer. No son of a pall-bearer is welcome at his friends' homes. No daughter of a pall-bearer can ever hope to marry a boy from a 'respectable' family. Their children at school are left



Bharucha (left) with a friend: "Where can we go from here?"

alone if word gets around that they live at the Towers of Silence. Pall-bearers cannot enter a fire temple until they have undergone a nine-day purification ceremony — for death is impure, and the keepers of the dead unclean.

Most of the pall-bearers will affirm this aspect of their lives with a nod and a shrug of their shoulders. But there is resentment in their tones as they tell you about Parsis who sit down beside a pall-bearer in a bus, but hurry away on recognising him; or about Parsis who cross the street when they see a pall-bearer.

And Keki Wadia, a genial man, laughs with scorn and sarcasm each time he tells the tale of a woman who peered into the *nassakhana* from a distance, pointed to the black, stone slabs that serve as beds, and exclaimed to her companion — "Look, what lovely beds they've made for the *khan迪yas*!"

Minoo Cooper, a pall-bearer who retired recently after 30 years at the Towers, says: "Some people have greater understanding — but the rest? What can you do? Recently we all went for a *ghambar* (public meal for Zoroastrians), and I got talking to

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some man. For a while, he was so nice to me and then, when he heard that I was from the Towers of Silence, he got up suddenly, and left." These little incidents crop up everywhere, and the bitterness, tempered with acceptance, simmers. Visitors to the *nassakhana* are invited in hesitantly; a cup of tea is proffered with a nervousness that turns to relief when the cup is accepted. Most Parsis, it would seem, detect the aura of death around the pall-bearers, and keep away from their 'unclean' presence. Yet, one day, these same 'dirty' men will carry them away.

PHIROZE BHARUCHA, his old, wrinkled face dotted with white bristles and dominated by a huge, pitted nose, lazes at the *nassakhana* all day. He is the handcart-puller with the twisted foot. It was a job that he prized. Then, his cart rode over his left foot. Soon after, he left his wife and home, and, with nowhere to go, took up his father's profession. That was in 1969, and three months ago he retired as a pall-bearer. Once again, there is nowhere to go. So he stays at the *nassakhana*, cackling at the occasional bawdy joke, shuffling around talking about the old days, or sweating on the floor on hot summer afternoons, his feet cooling against the wall.

Phiroze keeps a small, blue diary in the breast pocket of his shirt. He will produce it fumblingly for anyone who stops to talk. Between its pages is the visiting-card of a well-to-do relative. Behind is scribbled the missive: "Received from Mr Phiroze Bharucha the sum of Rs 9,000 for safe-keeping." This is all that remains of his retirement benefits: not nearly enough to buy or rent a house and live off for the rest of his life. The rest of the diary is filled with small, black figures: what he spent his pension on, and a record of the amounts he has withdrawn from his capital — in tens and fifties and hundreds. Phiroze adds, subtracts and tots up his figures to make sure that all is well. Tucked away into the front cover is a photograph of his grand-

children, who he hasn't seen for several years, and a picture of Zarathustra and Sai Baba pasted so that they appear shoulder-to-shoulder. There is also a clipping from the *Jam-e-Jamshed*, announcing the funeral of a young girl called Parveen, dated 1983. "She was a lovely lady," sighs Phiroze, with a sad smile. Lovely, because she visited Phiroze at the Towers of Silence when no one else did; lovely, because she sat up with him in hospital when he needed her and no one else came. "You know the old saying? Strangers are better than relatives," he says, tucking the clipping away.

Sitting on the bench outside and fanning himself in the afternoon is Sam Makhaniya, a 'good Zoroastrian boy from a respectable family', wondering at the fate that has brought him here. "What brought me here? Luck," he says, tapping his forehead. "And to tell you frankly, when I first came here, I was really scared. Now it has become a habit."

But the misgivings of the afternoon are forgotten when the evening sets in, and Sam Makhaniya, debonair young man, going grey very subtly, dresses up for the evening. There are several good-humoured jibes about Sam's many girl-friends, as he marches out of the *nassakhana* in a snazzy black shirt, a silver chain around his neck, smelling strongly of eau-de-Cologne.

THERE ARE some who feel that the pall-bearers have 'a low mentality' — because they drink and gamble; because their small world is full of rivalry, superstition and ignorance; because they are known to demand a tip each time they leave a body to the vultures.

One victim of superstition is Rusi Marolia who has not carried a body for the last eight years, spending his time sitting on the wall or loping up and down the hill, hanging onto his loose, stained pyjamas. His colleagues still remember him as a brash young man, a man who organised the lives of the other pall-bearers, who was always obeyed. Then, eight years ago,

somebody decided he was getting too big for his boots, and had him beaten up outside the Towers of Silence. There were rumours that an evil spell had been cast upon him to weaken his spirit and strength. Whether it was true or not, Rusi came to believe in the rumour. "They have ruined my career," says Rusi, his strong brown face very solemn. "They gave me such a shock eight years ago, that now I cannot work." Every day brings a fresh resolve to approach the Panchayat and ask for his job back. But there's something that keeps him from asking, something that keeps him from working. And the thought of leaving the Towers of Silence never even occurs to him.

UP AT THE *CHAWL* the pall-bearers' children play amidst the tall trees and the banana plants, while their parents sit flapping at the flies or dozing in the sunlight. Nargish Cooper, wife of Minoo Cooper, stands on her verandah with her washing drying all around her, watching the children play. She is tiny and white-haired, and quite deaf. Irrespective of what you seem to be saying, she will tell you about Maneck, her son, a pall-bearer too, whose smiling photograph she wears inside a locket: "He committed suicide — nine litres of kerosene — and lighted a match. And he was wearing terrycot pants. Nine litres of kerosene — in two days he was finished." She smiles at you and her son smiles too, from her bosom. Then she goes back to watching the children play.

And the children will grow up to carry the dead into the *dokhmas*, to marry their neighbours or their cousins. Or perhaps they will grow up and leave the Towers of Silence, for already, through the resignation and acceptance, you can discern an odd grumbling remark — "This is worse than a slaughterhouse" — and a shame-faced dissatisfaction when a pall-bearer says: "Ajeeb chay. Jhore bijaon na ghero bare, tohre apra choola bare (It's strange. When another person's fortunes burn, that is when our stoves are lighted)." ♦

'CHAMCHA' BIOGRAPHIES

I HAVE OFTEN wondered why autobiography is an almost non-existent genre in Indian literature. The only remarkable work in this field is Gandhiji's *My Experiments With Truth*. Perhaps biographies did not fit into the oral traditions of Indian literature in the pre-Muslim era. We were not a nation of scribes. We were a mantra-memorising, mantra-chanting people. Even ceremony and ritual went against the maintenance of records. You burnt to ashes and faded away without even a commemorating stone. Where was the question, then, of competing with Western tradition, with its tomes of records at the Town Hall?

Perhaps the philosophic catchwords, *maya* and *mithya* – everything as illusory and false – also militated against the genre of biography and autobiography. If life itself is an illusion, why jot down its main events? In any case, the script itself will be no better than an illusion. If you are going to return to the world over 80 times, as the karmic law dictates, is there any point in keeping a record of your asthmatic fits and your bouts of insomnia and constipation? Moreover, 82 autobiographies would be too much for the most egotistical of *atmans*, apart from being an absolute bore, if you ask me.

The Moghuls, of course, wrote with *élan*. Babur's memoirs (*Tuzuk-i-Baburi*) are a splendid record of the times, containing just and fair portraits even of his adversaries. The narrative is packed with incident and insight, and the style is crisp and unadorned with any flowery embellishments. He stands out both as an aesthete and a soldier, a lover of beauty and nature as well as of battle.

Keki Daruwalla, the subject of a recent controversy in the Times Literary Supplement, is a regular Imprint contributor.

The autobiography is an almost non-existent genre in ancient Indian literature. But today, things should be different. In a country where hero-worship is so common, surely there should be more biographies?

Certain flashes of intolerance appear now and then, but all in all, it is a remarkably humane document.

Akbar, unlettered himself, had to employ Abu'l Fazal to write his *Akbar Namah*. *Tuzuk-i-Jehangiri* bore testimony to Jehangir's excellent style and his knowledge of painting, poetry and architecture, not to speak of botany and zoology. He had, he himself tells us, such a keen eye for painting that if one artist had painted the face and another had worked on the eyes and the eyebrows, Jehangir was able to tell which particular painter had done the face and which had painted the eyes.

But with Jehangir, this aberration in Indian literature, this short saga of biographies and autobiographies, came to an end. Aurangzeb considered even the recording of history un-Islamic, so that Khafi Khan had to write his history in secret. The later Moghuls were too busy moving from one female slave and fratricide to another to tabulate their erotic or murderous exploits.

BUT TODAY, things should be different. Granted that the great, since they never retire, never have the time to write their autobiographies. But what about bio-

graphies? In a country where the response to the most fleeting glow of charisma is so adulatory, where hero-worship of the most self-abasing kind (elevating the hero/heroine or lowering yourself before him/her are aspects of the same syndrome after all) is so common, it is rather surprising that there is a dearth of biographical literature. The only biographies that are being written are on political figures. Even among them, there is considerable discrimination. Go to the biographical section of any library and you will find it dominated by books on Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru and Mrs Gandhi. The books on Mrs Gandhi are legion. A random sampling shows *Dear To Behold* by Krishna Hutheesing, *The Cult Of The Individual, A Study Of Indira Gandhi* by R K Murthy, *No Kin To The Mahatma* by Susana Heradia, and the two Uma Vasudev books, one to celebrate her rise and the other to celebrate (I use the word intentionally) her fall. There were a host of others, needless to say.

The lesser political fry are written on by lesser fry. These books are badly written. *Sheikh Abdullah Then And Now* by Satish Vashishta starts thus: "Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah is one of the controversial personalities in (sic) the Indian political scene today... In 1938, he came to limelight and since 1947 he has almost been hitting headlines. (The reader starts thinking of Kapil Dev hitting sixes here.) He has maintained himself as a focus of attention. (How on earth does one manage that, I would like to know?) Viewing his origin and early circumstances, this is not an insignificant achievement." It is not just poor language. Notice his value system. To be in the limelight seems to be a value in itself.

A book on N T Rama Rao by

S Venkat Narayan is equally shoddy. The author starts his preface by telling us about his numerous political prophecies that turned out right. He then says: "I stuck my (*sic*) guns regarding Mr Rama Rao even when the *India Today* poll predicted a clear victory for Mrs Gandhi in the January 1983 election." Talking of the Congress(I) defeat later, he asks: "How did this come about? There was hysterical euphoria for her in this state. . ." Please make your choice, Venkat Narayan. You can either have euphoria or hysteria. You cannot use them in the same breath to denote the same state of feeling; just as you can't marry two wives in one *mandap*.

This biography also makes forays into fiction sometimes. A novelist can tell us what a protagonist is thinking about; a biographer cannot, unless he can cite a statement in support. Talking of Mrs Gandhi's devotions before Lord Venkateshwara and her last official engagement before the polling in Andhra, the author writes: "She went through the function without any enthusiasm. Her thoughts went back to election day. Dark fears lurked in her mind about a possible defeat. Could this have been avoided? Everybody kept telling her that she would win, that her charisma was still intact. They all seemed to be telling her lies. Each one had his own axe to grind and they were saying things only to please her. . . Rajiv did not seem to be getting anywhere. . . If only Sanjay had been around." This would be bad enough as fiction. But it can certainly have no place in a biography.

I picked out a book on Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan by Pyarelal, who had been a secretary to Gandhiji. Pyarelalji has written the book as if he is addressing himself to children. The book starts thus: "Who is the Frontier Gandhi? How does he come to be known by that name? What does he stand for? 'Frontier Gandhi' is the name the people of NWFP gave to their beloved leader, Khan Abdul

The few political biographies are badly written, and make forays into the realm of fiction. But the point at issue is their dearth. Why can't there be biographies of musicians, painters, writers?

Ghaffar Khan." There is no hope for a book that begins at this ludicrous level.

But the point at issue is not good or bad biographies, but their dearth. What of fields other than political? Why can't people write biographies of musicians? Wouldn't it be fascinating, documenting a lifetime devoted to music, bringing out the traditions of a *gharana*, and the relationship between the vocal singer, the tabla player and the others? Why aren't there books, and many of them, on Ravi Shankar and Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, and Bismillah Khan, the *shehnai* maestro? Why couldn't Indian language writers have written about them? There should have been over 20 biographies of Bankim Chander Chatterji and Tagore. Has anyone collected all the letters, notes and diaries of C V Raman? Discipline, scholarship and tenacity of purpose have a lot to do with it. Sifting documents, rummaging among moth-eaten papers, endless interviews with the protagonist, or, if he or she is dead, with colleagues and the family, require a lot of patience, singleness of purpose and grants from universities and foundations. Yes, grants enable one to work on a book instead of lecturing to uninterested students or writing columns for the scrutiny of liverish editors.

At the risk of repeating myself, I still shake my head in wonder as to why somebody is not writing about living writers like R K Narayan, Raja

Rao, Vatsyan, Harivanshrai Bachchan or scientists like Narlikar and Khrana.

I will take up the spate of biographies that are coming out in the West in my next column.

GOOD WRITING needs to be appreciated wherever one sees it. I would consider *A Brush With Indian Reality* by Girilal Jain (*The Times Of India*, May 7) worthy of praise. Though it is too pontifical in tone, it does manage to build up an argument, brick by brick. "There is inevitably a clash between the ideology of the Indian state as embodied in the Constitution and the ideology of the ruling party which the Nehruite slogans of socialism, secularism and non-alignment, a euphemism for national pride and independence, sum up. But we cannot do without either. We cannot have a state without the first and a stable political order and government without the second."

Another good piece was the editorial entitled *Anchor Basic Values* in the *Indian Express* (March 25). One may or may not agree with the thread of the argument here, but the language is honed to a purpose and yet used moderately, though effectively. "While many have welcomed the Union budget with superlatives, as marking a major directional change that will get the economy moving, others are concerned that it leaves the poor of India out of the reckoning. . . A change of strategy is clearly in order, provided the basic objectives and underlying values are sound. The Prime Minister did well to react cautiously to the slogan of 'India Limited' (on the model of Japan Incorporated) advocated at a recent meeting of the Association of Indian Engineering Industries. A partnership between the government and industry is desirable. But the larger and more fundamental partnership must be between the government and the people." ♦

KABIR BEDI

We put him on our cover last month. But were we giving him too much importance? VIDHUSHAK thinks we were.

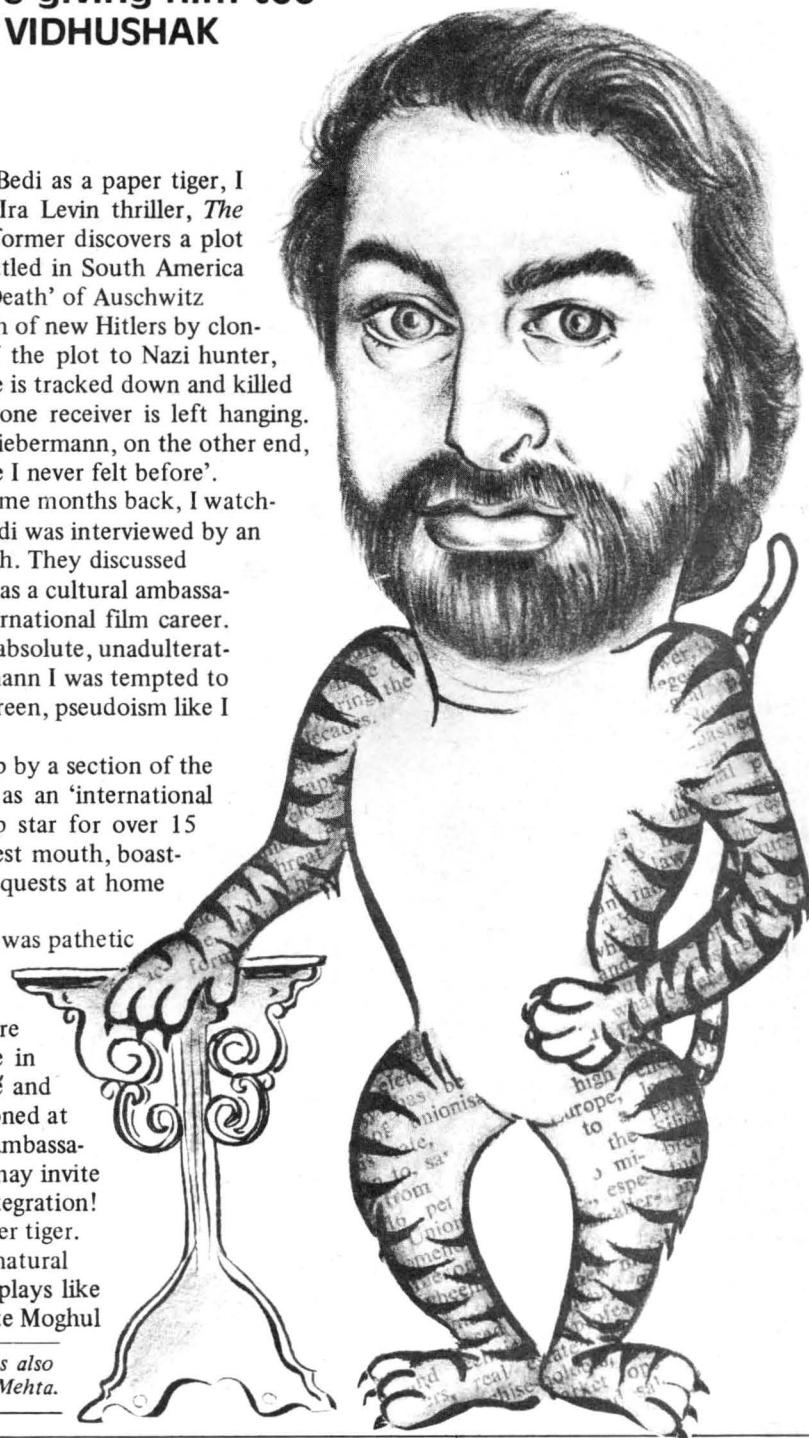
WHEN I THOUGHT of Kabir Bedi as a paper tiger, I recollected an episode in the Ira Levin thriller, *The Boys From Brazil*. A Jewish informer discovers a plot hatched by a group of Nazis settled in South America and headed by Dr Mengele, 'the Angel of Death' of Auschwitz concentration camp fame, to create a batch of new Hitlers by cloning. The informer recounts the details of the plot to Nazi hunter, Yakov Liebermann, over the telephone. He is tracked down and killed by Mengele and his assistant. The telephone receiver is left hanging. Mengele picks it up and breathes into it. Liebermann, on the other end, feels 'hate coming over the phone, hate like I never felt before'.

A similar feeling came over me when, some months back, I watched a television programme where Kabir Bedi was interviewed by an unabashed admirer, journalist Tavleen Singh. They discussed Indian culture, Kabir's self-appointed role as a cultural ambassador to the West and his national and international film career. No hate came through the TV screen, but absolute, unadulterated 'pseudoism' certainly did. Like Liebermann I was tempted to exclaim, "Pseudoism came over the TV screen, pseudoism like I never felt before."

Well, that is Kabir Bedi for you. Built up by a section of the media as the 'star of the '70s' and later as an 'international superstar', Bedi has been the hottest flop star for over 15 years. Still, he continues to have the biggest mouth, boasting about his cinematic and romantic conquests at home and abroad.

In yet another television programme, it was pathetic to watch Bedi matching wits with tabla wizard Zakir Hussain, explaining to the audience how both he and Zakir were interpreting and spreading Indian culture in the West. Bedi did not miss a single cliché and one wondered what kind of brains functioned at Doordarshan to rope in such a 'cultural ambassador'. Who knows, one of these days they may invite Longowal and Tohra to discuss national integration!

Let's analyse Bedi's credentials as a paper tiger. A magnificent-looking specimen, he was a natural model who also appeared on the stage in plays like *Tughlaq* and *Vultures*. Like the unfortunate Moghul



Vidhushak, a frequent Imprint contributor, has also done hatchet-jobs on H N Bahuguna and Madhu Mehta.

PAPER TIGERS

In *Octopussy*, Bedi was a glorified extra, playing a bit part, opening doors and bowing and scraping. It was all a big joke.

king who is remembered only for shifting his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad, Bedi has flitted from Delhi to Bombay, and then on to Rome and Beverley Hills, all with disastrous results.

Bedi made some eminently forgettable Hindi films — *Seema, Hulchul, Maa Bahan Aur Biwi*. It was clear that the magnificent model just could not act. Wooden-faced, he moved around like a robot, and when he stood in a room with tall pillars, the pillars looked more expressive.

A flop actor in India can only hope to survive if he gets talked about in the press, at least in film magazines. The era of *Stardust, Eve's Weekly* and *Star & Style* was tailor-made for Bedi's emergence as a paper tiger.

Married to publicity-crazy Protima, Bedi and his wife vied with each other for cheap gimmicks, and their 'beautiful relationship' was talked about and written about constantly. But such publicity could not last. Listen to Bedi after his break-up with Protima: "Protima and I were celebrities in our own rights. Romance among celebrities is worst of all. In the fame game, the closer the two names are linked, the more they are compared with each other." Isn't it a bit like Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton discussing their relationship? Okay, Mr Bedi, how can you call yourself a celebrity, and that, after a couple of flops? Mind you, you didn't even streak to deserve the celebrity status! A king-sized ego was thus utilised to cover up a total lack of talent. All you had were the good looks you were born with.

But the chap appeared to have some initiative. Perhaps the playboy reputation helped to land him the lead role in *Sandokan*, an Italian TV series, not even in the class of the Italian spaghetti western! Listening

to Bedi, one would have believed that this hottest TV role was sought by Peter O'Toole, Robert Redford and Paul Newman. A couple of years back, Bedi's friends at Doordarshan screened *Sandokan*, a cheapie stunt film where the lead role needed no histrionic talent.

But a section of the Indian press was still projecting Bedi as a major star. His affairs were always 'beautiful relationships'. He lived with Parveen Babi and in an interview to S N Khosla in *The Evening News Of India*, he mentions that she was sponging on him. Tut, tut, Mr Bedi; Babi was more successful than you on the Hindi screen, and don't forget, she appeared on the cover of *Time*, while you had to be content with *The Evening News*!

According to Bedi, he worked in *The Black Pirate*, *The Thief Of Bagdad* and *Fugitive From The Empire*. I don't know what type of TV films these were or how popular they were abroad.

Let's now come to *Octopussy*, the silliest James Bond film ever made, over which there was much ballyhoo because some parts of it were shot in India. Bedi, in the seventh heaven of delight, addressed a series of press conferences, making it clear that his role was the greatest ever offered to an Indian by Hollywood.

In *Octopussy*, which actually ridicules India and Indians, Bedi was a glorified extra, playing a bit part, opening doors and bowing and scraping. It was all a big joke. For many months Bedi went on claiming that it was an exacting role in an exciting film. But as ridicule was heaped on the movie, he was forced to confess, "*Octopussy* and films like that are part of a larger battle to get known in America. This is a film done for strategic reasons and not for artistic reasons."

But the strategy seems to have got Bedi nowhere. Another third-rate film, *Ashanti*, followed: another bit role, another flop. These days Bedi talks a lot about a TV serial, *The Moghul*, as if it's going to be yet another *Raj Quartet*.

A likeable man who should have stuck to modelling, something happens to Bedi once he opens his mouth. When asked in the same *Evening News* interview how it felt to work with Hollywood heavyweights (not that he ever worked with any), Bedi replies, "My competition is me! It's your own equipment." Can you beat that?

Bedi's concept of a good actor is — believe it or not — Roger Moore! That may be because both of them have won the Golden Otto award of Germany. Ever heard of it? Bedi professes great admiration for Moore: "He spends a long time looking at his script before he faces the camera and he's not just learning the lines." Maybe Moore can't read very well!

As his career limps along, Bedi's 'beautiful relationships' continue — Persis Khambatta — and then marriage with someone called Susan Brown. And when the marriage didn't work out, *Stardust* came out with a scoop: "Has Kabir Bedi abandoned his wife and absconded with her money?"

What is the great star doing when he is not 'shooting in three continents'? Obviously, he still has some connections in New Delhi. And that explains his being asked to compere the awards ceremony at the recent New Delhi film festival. It's also reported that he holds press conferences abroad explaining the Punjab situation to foreigners. These are dangerous waters for Bedi and I would suggest he stick to acting. There, according to him, he's only competing with himself and really, it should be a cakewalk. ♦

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SOVEREIGN?

As talk of the rift between the Prime Minister and the President hits the headlines, K S VENKATESWARAN offers some background information.

HOW DOES ONE remove the President? Can Giani Zail Singh frustrate Rajiv Gandhi's efforts to run the country? Is the President bound to do what the Cabinet tells him to?

In recent weeks, there has been much speculation in the press about a breakdown in communication between South Block and Rashtrapati Bhavan. There have been rumours to the effect that the President may resign.

The purpose of this brief is not to fuel the speculation but to provide hard information about the role of the President and the precedents regarding his relationship with the Cabinet.

PROCEDURE FOR ELECTION

The President of India is elected by an electoral college consisting of a) the elected members of both Houses of Parliament; b) the Legislative Assemblies of the states; using the method of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote.

Given the large majority that the ruling party normally commands, both in the Houses of Parliament and in most of the state Assemblies, the prospect of an Opposition candidate being elected as President is ordinarily bleak. However, it is theoretically possible for an Opposition



candidate to become President if the ruling party has a majority only in the Lok Sabha. Such a situation existed when the Janata party came to power in 1977.

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE PAST

All Presidential elections in the past, barring three, have been, by and large, free of controversy. They have each followed the predictable pattern, with the officially sponsored candidate being elected with a comfortable majority. Only in 1967, when the Opposition parties decided to field the then Chief Justice of India, Dr K Subba Rao, against Dr Zakir Hussain, did a questionable occasion arise. Dr Subba Rao's sterling qualities notwithstanding, his nomination to the highest office in the land was seen by many as unfortunate, because he was still a sitting judge. The episode also gave the Congress party

and its supporters – whose allergy to an independent judiciary is well-known – another stick to beat the judiciary with. Besides, it resulted in all sorts of charges being made against Dr Subba Rao personally, which caused incalculable harm to his reputation as one of the finest judges the country has seen.

Then came the Presidential election of 1969 which saw the unseemly spectacle of the Congress stabbing its own official nominee, Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy, in the back, electing instead, a 'boneless wonder', V V Giri. The architect of this legerdemain was Mrs Gandhi who, in her characteristic fashion, and out of sheer political expediency, called upon her partymen to vote according to their 'conscience'. This election also saw a vertical split in the Congress.

The third major controversy erupted during the last (1982) Presidential election when the Opposition persuaded Justice H R Khanna – another distinguished judge whose independence and courage cost him the office of the Chief Justice of India in 1976 – to contest the ruling party's nominee, Giani Zail Singh. In the campaign that preceded this election, an attack of the most vicious and disgraceful kind was made on Khanna by the Chairman of the Minorities Commission, M H Beg, a former judge who superseded Khanna as the Chief Justice of India. Beg, whose admiration for Mrs Gandhi and the ruling party is well-known, launched a

vituperative personal attack on Khanna, even going so far as to fabricate an 'interview' in one of the sensational tabloids and having it disseminated through a leading news agency. All this, while he was holding a government post — an impropriety that only compounded the original lapse. Khanna, of course, lost the election, but maintained a dignified stance throughout, which stood out in sharp contrast to the behaviour of his opponents.

RE-ELECTION

Unlike the American Constitution, there is no provision in the Indian Constitution for a limit on the re-election of the President. As a result, it is constitutionally permissible for a President to seek re-election any number of times, although it is worth noting that, in a speech delivered in Parliament in 1967, the late Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, suggested that a *convention* be adopted that no person shall occupy the office of the President for more than two terms. In actual practice, with the exception of Rajendra Prasad (who was President for two consecutive terms from 1952 to 1962), no person has occupied the office for more than one term.

FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT

According to Article 52 of the Constitution, the President is the Chief Executive of the Union. Article 53 vests in the President the supreme command of the defence forces of the Union.

As to what the term 'executive power' signifies, it is difficult to lay down any comprehensive definition. Even the Supreme Court of India said as much when it observed in the case of *Ram Jawaya vs Punjab* (1955): "It may not be possible to frame an exhaustive definition of what executive power means and implies."

According to the Constitution, these are the President's powers:

Administrative Power: Being the



The Chairman of the Minorities Commission launched an unprecedented personal attack on H R Khanna. It showed how low our politics had sunk.

formal head of the administration, all executive acts are taken in the President's name. He has the power to appoint and remove the Prime Minister, the Attorney-General, judges of the Supreme and High Courts, the Finance Commission, the Union Public Service Commission, the Chief Election Commissioner and others.

Military Power: Though the supreme command of the defence forces is vested in the President, the exercise of this power (eg the declaration of war) is regulated by law under the Constitution. Unlike the USA, therefore, the President's powers as Commander-in-Chief cannot be construed as being independent of legislative control.

Legislative Power: a) The power to summon or prorogue the Houses of Parliament; power to dissolve the Lok Sabha; power to summon a joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament in case of a deadlock between the Houses (Articles 85, 108).

b) The power to address either or both Houses of Parliament at any time and to require the attendance of MPs for this purpose; power to send messages to either House of Parliament, either in regard to any pending Bill, or to any other matter, which the House must consider 'with all

convenient despatch' (Article 86).

c) The power to address both Houses of Parliament at the first session after each general election, and at the commencement of the first session of each year (Article 87).

d) The power to nominate 12 members to the Rajya Sabha (Articles 331, 334).

e) The power and duty to cause certain reports to be laid before Parliament.

f) The power to give previous sanctions/recommendations for introducing legislation on certain matters, eg, a Bill for the formation of new states or the alteration of boundaries of existing states (Article 3); a Money Bill (Article 117(1)); state Bills imposing restrictions upon the freedom of trade (Article 304).

g) The power to give/withhold assent to Union legislation: In the case of Bills other than Money Bills, he can return the Bill for reconsideration in both Houses, with or without a message suggesting amendments. (If, however, the Bill is passed again by both Houses of Parliament with or without amendments, and again presented to the President, he has no option but to declare his assent to it (Article 111). A few points need to be noted in this context:

i) Normally, the power of veto would be exercised only in the case of a 'private member's Bill'. In the case of a government Bill, if the ministry resigns and the subsequent ministry advises the President against giving his assent, he can rightly exercise his power of veto.

ii) Since there is no time limit prescribed by the Constitution for the President to declare or withhold his assent to a Bill, or for the return of the Bill, it is theoretically possible for the President to simply keep the Bill on his desk indefinitely.

Incidentally, the President has exercised his veto power only once, in 1954, with the PEPSU Appropriation Bill.

h) The Governor of a state has the power to reserve, for the assent of the President, any Bill passed by both

Houses of the state legislature. In cases where the legislation in question derogates from the power of the High Court, such reservation is compulsory.

The President may, in such a case, if it is a Money Bill, either declare or withhold his assent.

This power of the Presidential veto serves as a powerful weapon in the hands of the Centre to thwart certain kinds of state legislation. For instance the power to issue ordinances when either of the two Houses of Parliament is not in session (Article 123). This power is to be exercised on the advice of the Cabinet, and the ordinance must be laid before Parliament as soon as it reassembles. If Parliament does not approve of the legislation within six weeks of its reassembly, the ordinance lapses.

This power has been shamelessly misused by successive governments at the Centre.

The Supreme Court in the Bank Nationalisation Case (1970) decreed that the genuineness of the President's satisfaction before issuing an ordinance could be challenged in a court of law.

Judicial Power: The Constitution (Article 72) has conferred upon the President the power to grant pardon, reprieve, respite, suspension, commutation or remission in respect of: i) all cases of punishment by a court martial; ii) offences against laws made under the Union and Concurrent Lists; iii) all death sentences.

Miscellaneous Powers: These are largely residuary in nature and include:

a) The power to make rules and regulations on various matters, eg the tenure and conditions of service of members of the UPSC; the procedure relating to joint sittings of the Houses of Parliament, etc.

b) The power to refer any question of public importance for the opinion of the Supreme Court (Article 143).

c) The power to draw up and notify the lists of scheduled castes and tribes in each state and Union territory, etc.



Is the President to be a mere figurehead like the British monarch or is he not always bound to follow the advice of the Cabinet? There is no agreement on this.

Emergency Powers: i) The power to make a proclamation of Emergency, either for the whole of India or for a part thereof, on the grounds of threat to the security of India or a part thereof, external aggression or armed rebellion (Article 352).

ii) The power to make a proclamation that the government of a state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution (President's Rule, Article 356).

iii) The power to declare a Financial Emergency on the grounds that 'the financial stability or credit of India or any part thereof is threatened' (Article 360).

THE ACTUAL ROLE/POSITION OF THE PRESIDENT

The view expressed by several jurists, that the President of India is a mere figurehead, whose position corresponds to that of the British sovereign, has sometimes been challenged on the grounds that, since the President, before entering office, swears to defend the Constitution and the law, he is not always bound to follow the advice of the Council of Ministers. Besides, the office of the Indian President is an elective one, unlike the hereditary nature of the British

crown.

The position that has emerged from the Supreme Court in the leading case of Samsher Singh vs Punjab (1974) is that the President is obliged to act on the advice of the Council of Ministers. There are, of course, a few well-defined situations where he can act in his discretion.

Despite the Supreme Court's unequivocal assertion that the President of India is a mere constitutional head of government, the Emergency regime of Mrs Gandhi thought it necessary to embody this fact in the Constitution itself. It therefore added, *vide* the 42nd Amendment, a provision in Article 74(1) that the President 'shall, in the exercise of his functions, act in accordance with such advice', i.e the advice tendered by the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister. The Janata government added this proviso to the amended article, 74(1): "Provided that the President may require the Council of Ministers to reconsider such advice, either generally or otherwise, and the President shall act in accordance with the advice tendered after such reconsideration."

PRESIDENTIAL BEHAVIOUR (THE ACTUAL EXPERIENCE)

As for actual instances involving the controversy regarding the position of the President, the first salvo was fired by Dr Rajendra Prasad on September 18, 1951, when he sent a note to the then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, expressing his desire to act solely on his judgement, independent of the Council of Ministers, when returning Bills to Parliament for reconsideration. This was inspired by the fact that the Hindu Code Bill, to which Dr Rajendra Prasad was opposed, had just been introduced in the Provisional Parliament.

The Prime Minister promptly sought the legal opinion of the Attorney-General, M C Setalvad, and another eminent jurist, Sir Alladi Krishnaswamy Aiyer, both of whom refuted the President's thesis. Setalvad opined that 'by Article 74(1), the President is required to act in all matters with the aid and advice of his

Council of Ministers', while Sir Alladi observed that if Dr Prasad's arguments are conceded, 'it will upset the whole constitutional structure envisaged at the time when the Constitution was passed (and will) make the President a kind of dictator...'. And there the matter rested.

Dr Rajendra Prasad was not, understandably, convinced by these arguments. Addressing the Indian Law Institute on November 28, 1960, he revived the debate by stating once again that 'there is no provision in the Constitution which in so many words lays down that the President shall be bound to act in accordance with the advice of his ministers'. He also expressed concern over attempts 'to invoke and incorporate into our written Constitution, by interpretation, the conventions of the British Constitution, which is an unwritten Constitution'. His successor, Dr S Radhakrishnan, while not adopting Dr Prasad's stand, nevertheless censured the government publicly on a number of occasions, much to the embarrassment of the ruling Congress party.

Successive Presidents have, of course, been so colourless and so pliant that they have almost unquestioningly gone along with the government on all matters. Even the bare minimum rights they had — the right 'to be consulted, the right to encourage, the right to warn' (of which Bagehot spoke in connection with the British sovereign) — have seldom been exercised. The greatest erosion came during the Presidency of V V Giri, whose deferential, almost servile attitude towards the government of the day let some of the most disgraceful executives pass muster. His successor, Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed, was hardly any stronger. The nonchalant ease with which he put the imprimatur of his approval on the Proclamation of Emergency and all the monstrous laws that followed, more or less consolidated the constitutional dictatorship of Mrs Gandhi, the foundations of which were laid in Giri's term.

Although the election of Neelam



Rajendra Prasad fired the first salvo by opposing the government's Hindu Code Bill. Nehru maintained that Prasad was obliged to sign the Bill.

Sanjeeva Reddy as President in 1977 raised hopes that the dignity attached to the office would be restored, it was not long before those hopes were dashed. In a shocking act of rank partisanship, Reddy went out of his way to ensure the collapse of Morarji Desai's government and allowed Charan Singh to form a government which was incapable even of establishing its majority in Parliament.

As for Giani Zail Singh, his nomination to the Presidency was, not surprisingly, greeted with disappointment and apprehension among thinking people. Given his questionable record as a politician (both in his home state of Punjab and at the Centre) and, worse still, his sycophantic, almost obsequious, attitude towards Mrs Gandhi, it was generally felt that his ascension to the Presidency would lead to a further decline in the dignity of that office. While it would be too much to say that his conduct after being elected President has undergone a radical change, there can be no denying that he has, within the limitations inherent in his office, displayed a maturity that would have been impossible to imagine in him a few years ago. (It is said, for example, that privately, Zail Singh has not hesitated to express his

resentment and anguish over some of the steps the government has taken on Punjab.)

EXCEPTIONS TO THE RULE

There are a few clearly identifiable situations where the President would be required to act solely at his discretion: 1) Under Article 60 of the Constitution, the President is required to swear to 'preserve' protect and defend the Constitution and the law'. And under Article 61, he is liable to be impeached 'for violation of the Constitution'. It necessarily follows, therefore, that should the Council of Ministers tender advice to the President to take any action that is clearly contrary to the Constitution, the President should reject such advice and, if necessary, dismiss the ministry if it persists in its advice.

2) Under Article 75(1), the Prime Minister is to be appointed by the President, implying a discretionary power on the latter's part. If, after a general election, no party with a clear majority is returned to the House, then it will be incumbent upon the President to exercise his discretion and satisfy himself regarding a) the party or combination of parties that can form a stable government; and b) the acceptance of one of the candidates vying for leadership within these parties.

3) A similar discretion would have to be exercised by the President on the death of the Prime Minister. His choice is restricted by the requirement that the new leader must command a majority in the House.

4) If, at a general election, the erstwhile ministry is defeated and it advises the President to dissolve the newly elected House and order fresh elections, the President would be justified in disregarding such advice.

REMOVAL OF A PRESIDENT

The President can be removed from office by the process of impeachment provided for in Article 61, for 'violation of the Constitution'. The charge will have to be preferred by either House of Parliament. The pro-

posal to prefer such a charge should be contained in a resolution moved after at least 14 days' notice in writing and the resolution must be signed by not less than one-fourth of the total number of members of the House. Such a resolution will also have to be passed by a majority of not less than two-thirds of the total membership of the House.

The charge so preferred will then be investigated by the other House, and the President is entitled to appear and to be represented at such an investigation. If thereafter, the House investigating the charge passes a resolution by a majority of at least two-thirds of its total membership, declaring that the charge has been sustained, the President will stand impeached from the date the resolution is passed.

A reading of the procedure provided for impeachment indicates that, despite the safeguards, there is nothing to prevent a ruling party, which commands the requisite majority in both Houses of Parliament, from pushing through a resolution to remove the President from office.

THE PRESIDENT'S RIGHT TO INFORMATION

According to Article 78, it is the Prime Minister's duty to communicate to the President all the decisions of the Council of Ministers relating to the administration of the affairs of the Union and proposals for legislation. He is also bound to forward to the President such information relating to the administration of the affairs of the Union and proposals for legislation as the President may call for. Also, the President may require the Prime Minister to submit, for the consideration of the Council of Ministers, any matter in which the decision has been taken by a minister, but which has not been considered by the Council.

Constitutionally, the Prime Minister is not expected to confer with the President on matters of government policy. But during Morarji Desai's Prime Ministership, Desai's alleged refusal to hold informal discussions



The campaign against Zail Singh has been sustained by the ruling party's MPs and its pet journalists. Clearly, all is not well.

with Sanjeeva Reddy became a bone of contention between the two.

The breakdown in their personal relationship clearly contributed to Reddy's unwillingness to let Desai continue as Prime Minister.

THE PRESENT CONTROVERSY

Morarji Desai regretted that the Janata chose as President a man with political ambitions and interests (Sanjeeva Reddy). He felt that only somebody who was above politics could perform the job honestly and fairly. Some members of the Congress (I) seem to think that their party repeated the Janata party's error by selecting Giani Zail Singh, the wiliest of all Punjab politicians.

It is no secret that Zail Singh's role in the creation of Bhindranwale is dubious, but it was assumed that he severed all political links after entering Rashtrapati Bhavan. At least one Congress (I) MP seems to think that this is not the case. In April, K K Tewari, an MP known to be close to the Prime Minister, made allegations against the President in the Lok Sabha.

In 1983, Tewari maintained, the Rashtrapati Bhavan had as its guests two Sikhs, now reportedly involved with extremists abroad. Tewari further claimed that a public relations

officer attached to the President had passed on classified information regarding Operation Bluestar to people in Amritsar.

The allegations were closely followed by suggestions of the President's hand in the recent coup in the Akali Dal which led to the ouster of Longowal, Tohra and Badal. There were reasons to suspect his involvement. For the coup was engineered by Inderjit Singh Sekhon, who had been Zail Singh's political agent for years. Moreover, Longowal, Tohra and Badal are known to be the political antagonists of the President.

Tewari's efforts were supported outside Parliament by R K Karanja and his two newspapers, the weekly *Blitz* and Bombay's *The Daily*. *Blitz* carried a front page story suggesting that the President had intervened to get Buta Singh excommunicated, and implying that he had terrorist links. Later, after the transistor bombs went off in Delhi, *The Daily* printed its own front page story claiming that Delhi was full of rumours to the effect that the President had been asked to resign.

Other newspapers too, have repeated these allegations, leading *India Today* to point out that the whole thing was beginning to look suspiciously like an orchestrated campaign. But who would initiate such a campaign?

The government has done little to silence the speculation. Home Minister S B Chavan took two days to reply to Tewari and even then, all he did was read out a denial issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan.

It does not take much to conclude that relations between South Block and Rashtrapati Bhavan are somewhat strained. But it is not yet clear exactly what the government's attitude to Zail Singh is. Certainly, even if the Cabinet did believe that he was meddling in the Punjab situation, there's not much it could do. Were impeachment proceedings to be launched against Zail Singh, he would at once become a hero to the Sikh extremists and the situation in Punjab would worsen. ♦

STAR!

The Once And The Forever Legend

**He has been a star so long that on-screen and off-screen personae have merged.
AMRITA SHAH probes the legend of Dev Anand.**

IT IS DARK and very cold inside the Studio SeaRock. Shadowy figures look expectantly at the blank screen. The screen lights up and the silence is broken.

The scene is a familiar one — a college function, the kind seen only in Hindi films. The students are shouting for 'Professor Hans'. And suddenly the professor arrives. Checked shirt buttoned up under sleeveless white jacket, hands folded, arousing cheers from reverential teenagers on either side, he makes his way to the stage.

Head aslant, eyes blazing, the charismatic professor takes the mike. But he is not allowed to say more than a few words.

Conventional logic in Hindi films has it that where there is a college, there must be a college bully. And now the bully interrupts the good professor. The *chamchas* begin to heckle. And then to whistle.

"No, no," says Dev Anand. The image blurs, the sound trails off and the screen goes blank. "The whistles should be louder," he tells the soundmixer.

Professor Hans has stepped out from the screen and now he is standing by the mixing console, boosting

the volume of his hecklers. His high-collared checked shirt is buttoned all the way up, his head half-slanted and his accent exactly as it was on the screen. In sleeveless denim jacket, brown polyester trousers, red socks, red belt and brown shoes, he slouches over the console.

The figures raise their heads. The sound-mixer chews on his *paan*. A whispered conference takes place. Dev Anand does not speak. He listens, head aloft, eyes crinkled hard.

One of the shadowy figures goes out to find people to whistle for the scene. He returns with four urchins and lines them up before a microphone. Their whistles ring through the room. Dev turns to look at them. He laughs softly. "Whistling sound, whistling sound, gangsters, gangsters," he says gleefully. His eyes are twinkling.

Any moment now, he could break into a song.

DEV ANAND is slumped in a chair next to his desk. The desk is piled high with papers, letters and files. For over the last five months Dev, the director, has kept Dev, the manager, fully occupied.

Large colour pictures of Christine O'Neil, the American heroine of *Swami Dada*, sit atop a sofa. Dev talks animatedly about his search for the actress. How he went to Trivandrum to interview a Canadian girl and then to New York, where he interviewed hundreds of girls.

His eyes open wide as he begins to tell the story of his life in filmland. It was on a rainy day in 1943 that he first arrived in Bombay. And for the teenager from Gurdaspur, the sight of high-rise buildings and horse-driven Victorias was an exhilarating one.





His arms slice the air in a variety of gestures as he recalls his early days of struggle. Nostalgically, he talks of the room he occupied in a Parel *chawl* and the clerical job he took up to keep himself going.

His feet take him on a brisk tour of the room as he comes to the crucial point in the story — his decisive visit to the Prabhat Theatre. The peon tried to get rid of him. But Dev Anand insisted on meeting the Chairman, Baburao Pai. His persistence was rewarded — he was called for a screen test. Pai was impressed and

gave him a role in *Hum Ek Hai*. Dev Anand now comes to a halt. Feet apart, thumbs in pockets, lips pursed, he delivers the climactic line. "Then, then, then," he says with characteristic zest. "I have never looked back."

The scene takes on an air of unreality. The feeling that one has stepped out of the real world and into a film — a Dev Anand film — persists. For Dev Anand off-screen, walks, talks and looks exactly like Dev Anand on-screen.

"Ultimately, one is always oneself," smiles Dev Anand revealing the

gaps in his teeth that once gave his producers nightmares. "I can't change my voice, my smile, my walk, can I?"

Obviously he hasn't needed to either. For, as film producer Gulshan Rai admits, "Dev Anand's pictures could always run on his personal charm."

The couple of occasions on which Dev departed from the conventional screen image, as in *Insaniyat*, where he played a dhoti-clad rustic, proved disastrous. And so, Dev went back to playing Dev again. "Why shouldn't I?" he asks. "The greatest of Holly-

wood actors have been themselves because roles were conceived for them." As for himself, he concludes, "When roles are given to me, they are conceived because of my charm."

This is quite believable. For the last 15 years, Dev Anand has written his own roles. And acted mainly in films produced, directed, and scripted by himself.

And with every film the package has remained unvaryingly similar.

He has insisted on playing the central lead always — even in *Anand Aur Anand* which was supposed to launch his son. The buttoned-up shirts, the colourful jackets, the hair swept forward, recur in every film. And in a conscious effort to remain young, he has always picked subjects requiring younger heroines. The famous Dev mannerisms — the quick sidelong walk, the speedy dialogue delivery — have become even more integral to his screen personality than before. Everything that was present in Dev's earlier films has appeared in a magnified form in his own productions, making his screen personality almost a caricature of the man.

But something seems to have gone wrong. In 1970, Dev Anand had his biggest hit as an actor with *Johnny Mera Naam*. Since then, only one film that he has made for another director, *Amir Garib*, has succeeded commercially. *Hare Rama Hare Krishna* was Dev Anand's first and last real directorial hit. Seven films followed but only one — *Des Pardes* — fared reasonably well at the box-office.

WHAT WENT WRONG? Dev Anand ponders over the question from a sofa in his 'working suite' at the Sun 'n Sand Hotel. He has asked himself this question before and now, looking reflectively at his coffee cup, he answers, "Audiences couldn't accept the boldness of my themes."

"Who else," he asks, warming to his subject, "would make a film about illegal immigrants like I did with *Des Pardes*?" Then again, he adds, "People couldn't digest the



In his office: "Roles are conceived because of my charm."

concept of a foreigner seducing a godman in *Swami Dada*."

Moreover, he maintains, it could be the unhappy endings that contributed to the failure of his films. "In *Heera Panna Zeenat* dies and in *Anand Aur Anand* Dev dies," he explains. "People wanted them to live."

This is one way of looking at it. At least, it is Dev Anand's analysis of his flops. His associates, however,

view things differently. Gulshan Rai feels that it is Dev's insistence on handling every aspect of film-making himself that diminishes his ability to do justice to the product.

Lyricist Amit Khanna, on the other hand, feels that Dev Anand is not lacking in technical competence. The problem, according to him, is that, as a consequence of having been a star for too long, Dev Anand has

become isolated from the real world. "In that isolation he believes that there is a kind of popular cinema," he explains, "but that perception is simply not true."

As a result, Khanna feels, Dev Anand does not make the kind of films he would ideally like to make, but ends up producing films that he mistakenly believes the audience wants.

There is some basis to this claim. For, despite being widely liked, Dev Anand has few connections with the real world and few close friends. Gulshan Rai, who has distributed several Navketan productions, maintains that Dev's absorption with film-making leaves him with little time for friends. "After work, when people would be drinking together, Dev would be writing scripts," he says. When asked to name people close to him, Dev can only point to his unit members who have been with him for years. Amit Khanna, who still maintains an office in the Navketan buildings, says, "I feel very warmly towards him," but as Rai puts it, "Dev Anand keeps to himself. He doesn't tell the world his troubles or sorrows."

In his personal life, too, Dev Anand has few companions. His marriage to his former co-star, Kalpana Kartik, has not been a success. Relations with his brothers, Chetan and Vijay, are rumoured to be strained. Actresses Zeenat Aman and Tina Munim — with whom he once shared close relationships — left him years ago.

Further, being a loner and a relatively intelligent man, Dev Anand has little in common with people in the film industry where he has spent 40 years of his life.

So, today, at 62, Dev Anand is quite alone.

His familiarity with the audiences and the commercial cinema is also questionable, though he claims to keep in touch with the work of his contemporaries. The last Hindi film he saw was the Amitabh Bachchan starrer, *Inquilaab*. More than a year has elapsed since its release. On the

subject of directors, Dev cannot name a single one he admires. And the only 'well-made Hindi films' he can recall in the last decade are *Deewar* and *Sholay*.

The theory that he is out of touch with the film industry and the tastes of audiences seems increasingly plausible.

LOOK at my contemporaries — Rajendra Kumar and Raj Kapoor — they retired and vanished," says Dev Anand triumphantly. He has reason to be pleased for, unlike them, he has stayed on in films on his own terms — as a leading man. The face on the screen has more lines than before, but the broad shoulders under the maroon jacket seem capable of carrying off the role.

Dev watches his image for a while, rehearsing his lines. He has only ten minutes of dubbing time at the busy Ketnav Studio where he is redubbing a scene because he found his delivery too 'sing-song'.

Raising his arm dramatically he tries out new tones of voice, varying the emphasis. His assistants pass judgement and the satisfactory version is recorded. The fuss seems needless: the final version is not strikingly different from the original. But, after all, Dev Anand is not only a star but the core around which his films revolve. He cannot afford to be careless.

The realisation that stardom could grow if nurtured, came to him early in his career. With that end in mind he, like Raj Kapoor, even took to directing his own films. For over a decade Raj and Dev reigned supreme along with Dilip Kumar and Rajendra Kumar. After 1970, however, things changed dramatically.

Dev Anand at the time was riding the crest of success. The unprecedented success of *Johnny Mera Naam* — released in 1970 — had given him a fresh lease on life. But he was worried. His contemporaries were doing badly. Raj Kapoor's *Mera Naam Joker* had flopped miserably. Dilip Kumar had gone into semi-retirement and his comeback effort in *Sagina*,

three years later, proved a disaster. Rajesh Khanna was taking filmdom by storm. For the first time in 25 years, Dev felt seriously threatened.

The older stars opted out. Raj Kapoor involved himself in launching his sons' careers. Dilip Kumar gave up playing the hero. Rajendra Kumar was already busy investing his earnings. The stars of the next generation — Shammi Kapoor and Sunil Dutt — were also on their way out.

At this point, Dev Anand took a decision that was to change the direction of his career. He would, he decided, write and direct his own films. In this way he would be in total control and could continue playing lead roles.

But Dev knew that producers would soon stop coming to him with lead roles. As he now admits: "If I had not branched off then I would have been finished." At best he would be playing character roles like Dilip Kumar. And that would have been anathema to Dev Anand who still maintains, "I am exclusive." In the light of his subsequent flops, however, Dev's decision to perpetuate his stardom does not seem to have been a very wise one.

THE LIGHTS burn bright in Dev Anand's Sun 'n Sand suite. It is late and the star has turned reflective. "I suppose I am an island," he says thoughtfully. "To branch off as someone unique you have to be an island."

The note of forlorn acceptance vanishes as he continues more enthusiastically, "It is a beautiful world of my own and I revel in it."

It is easy to believe him as he races from film to film constantly mulling over new ideas in his mind. His flops upset him, but only momentarily, and then he is on to the next project. "I'm still in the race and that's what matters," he asserts.

The refusal to look back is typical of Dev Anand. "He never discusses the past and is always looking into the future," says Gulshan Rai. Even now, his restlessness is apparent from the fingers on the sofa. *Hum Nau-*



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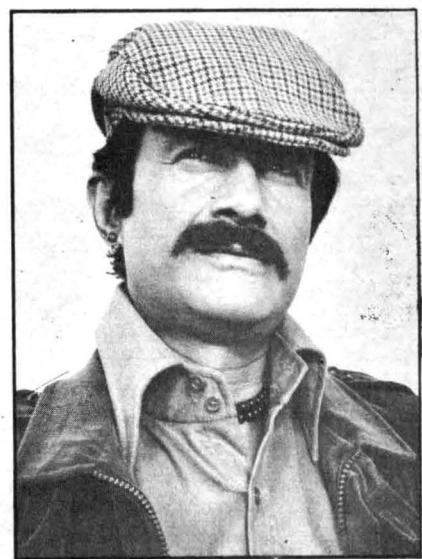
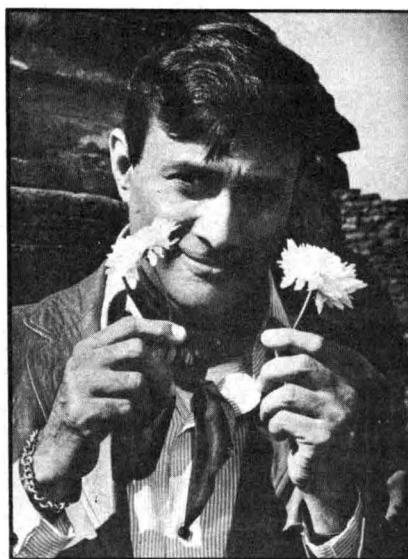
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The unchanging face of Dev Anand: he won't hang up his boots.

jawan is yet to be released, but his mind is already tossing up ideas for another film. "I haven't given my best yet," he insists.

At the same time, he is anxious about the fate of his latest film. With so many flops behind him, Dev Anand badly needs a hit. "It will be a feeling of great success," he admits, "if this film is a hit."

And then, the possibilities are enormous. He would love to make a 'tremendous romantic film about an old man and a young girl'. Gulshan Rai, who produced *Johnny Mera Naam*, even sees great potential in a James Bond-like role for him.

"The ultimate aim of any artist is to go on creating, to go on existing," says Dev Anand emphatically. And there is no doubt that he will go on making films. As Amit Khanna observes, "He won't hang up his boots."

DEV ANAND is sitting in the front seat of his blue Fiat, fiddling absent-mindedly with a pair of old-fashioned dark glasses. Mixing is over for the day but *Hum Naujawan* is still on his mind. "I am introducing three newcomers in this film," he declares. "If they become the stars of 1985, I'll feel great."

The inconspicuous Fiat winds its way through busy streets. A group of children stops its game of cricket

to stare. The batsman flashes a Dev-style salute. Dev waves back nonchalantly. He is used to it.

Obviously, he does not lack fans in the streets. His problem is converting them into audiences for his films.

Logically, it should not be such a problem, for his fan following is tremendous. "The following Amitabh Bachchan has is nothing compared to the stupendous stardom Dev Anand enjoyed," says Amit Khanna, relating an incident where a man nearly killed himself racing down the slopes of Mussoorie in pouring rain to catch a glimpse of the star. "He has great charisma," agrees Gulshan Rai. In fact, after his second film, *Ziddi*, it was obvious that Dev Anand had arrived — in a big way. Dev remembers how, at the *Ziddi* premiere in Ahmedabad, people swarmed round his car, risking lives just to touch his hand.

It was, of course, a different era — when films revolved around stars. And when stars were sensitive, romantic heroes and not gang-busting supermen. And perhaps Dev's longevity lies in the fact that he is the only star to have successfully hurdled from one unreality to another.

The likes of Jeetendra and Rajesh Khanna have always drawn crowds the sizes of which vary in proportion to their box-office status. Dev Anand

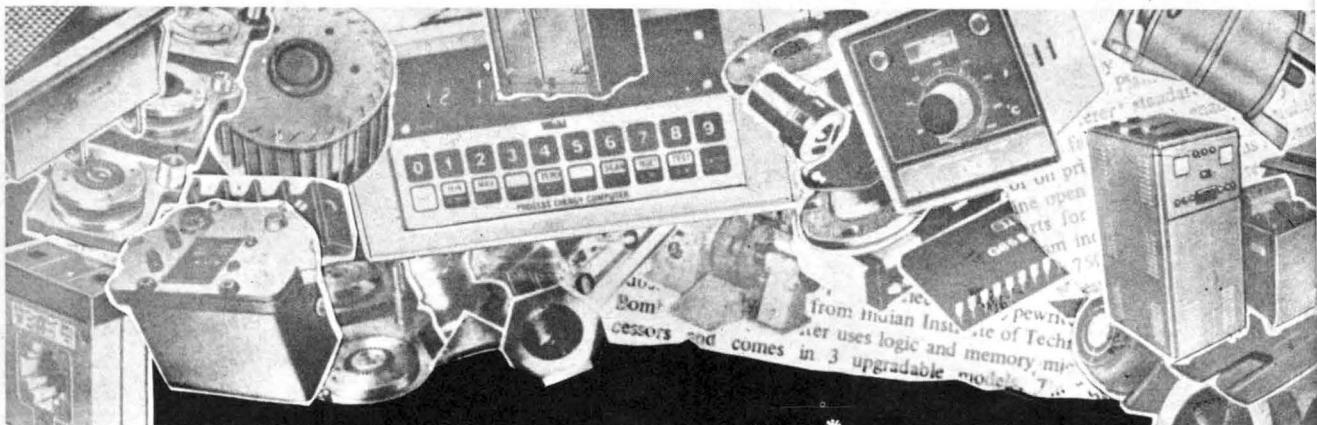
is really the last of the Great Stars — his popularity is entirely independent of the box-office.

And yet, 40 years of stardom have not gone to his head. He very rarely loses his temper, and is always polite. Moreover, he takes his stardom very seriously. "It has given me a responsibility," he confesses.

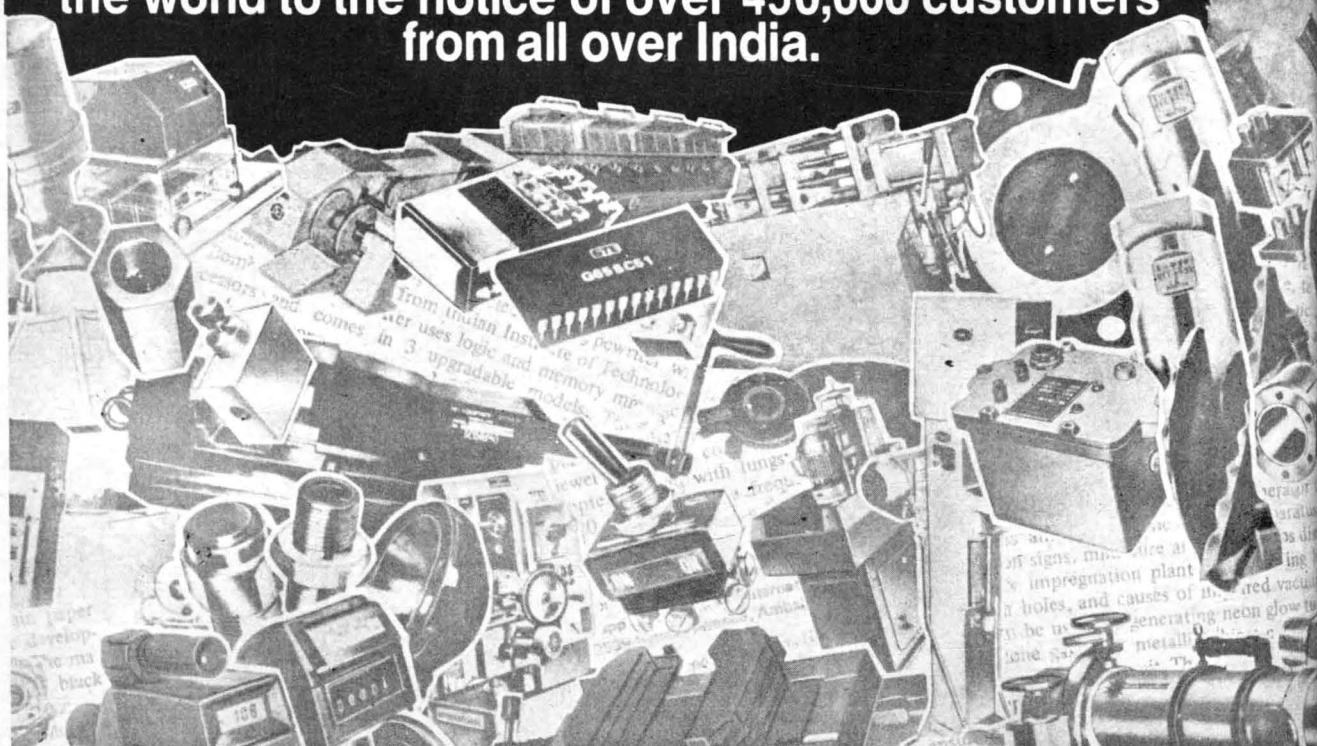
And he has kept his end of the deal by maintaining his figure and preserving his looks to the extent possible. His insistence on looking presentable at all times is obsessive. So much so that last year, when he fell in his bathroom, he refused to do what would have been the most natural thing to do under the circumstances — shout for help. Instead, he shampooed his hair, bathed, dressed under excruciating pain, and only then did he seek help.

"I feel constantly that I have to project myself," he admits. More so, because he thinks people expect it of him. Then again, he makes films the way he feels people expect him to. "I am not making films for a classroom," he observes. "The audience is very important to me." But for too long now the audience has been cold to his efforts to please it.

Perhaps this time it will not disappoint him. Just once maybe, it will reward his efforts by giving him that elusive hit. ♦



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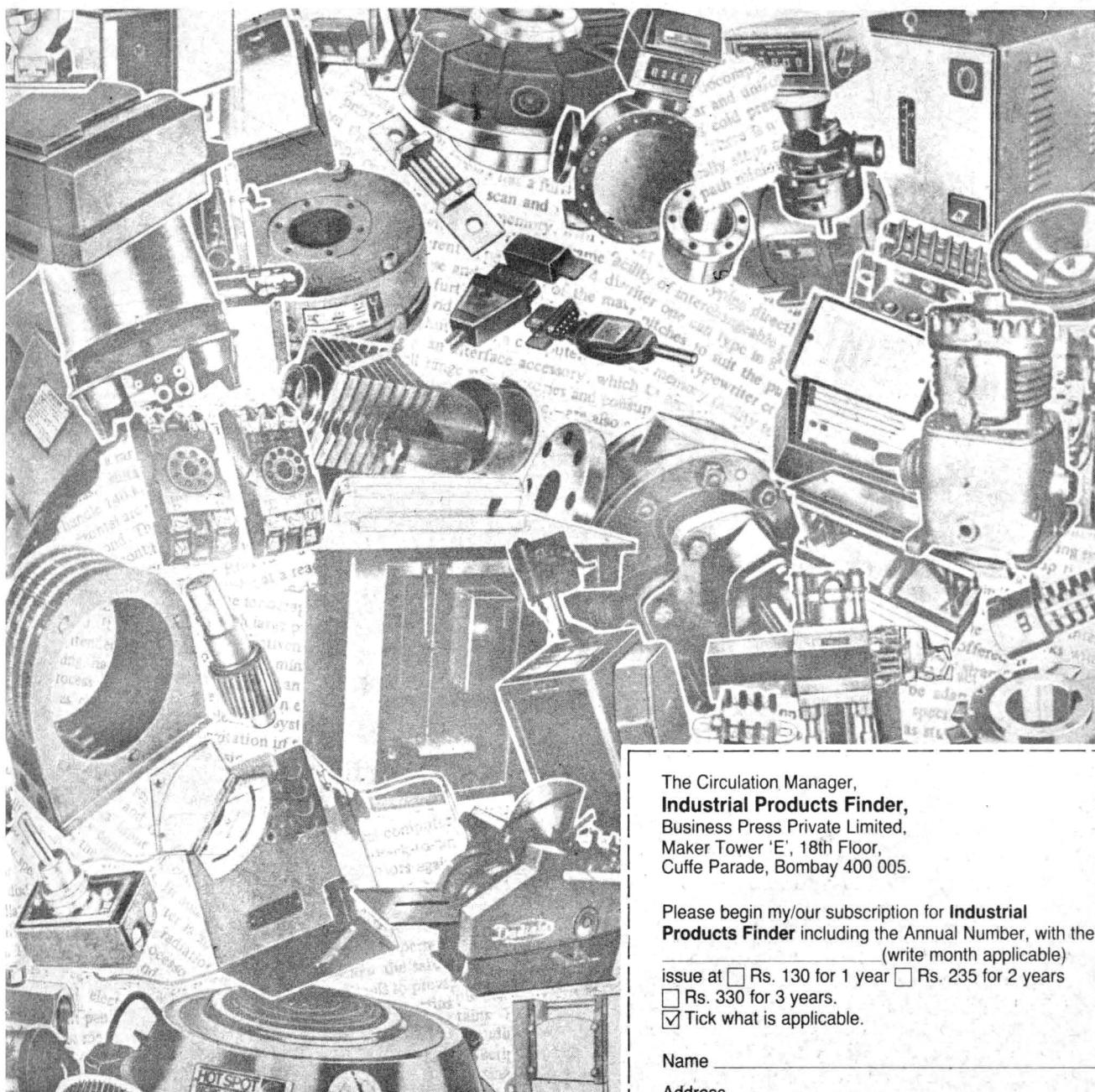
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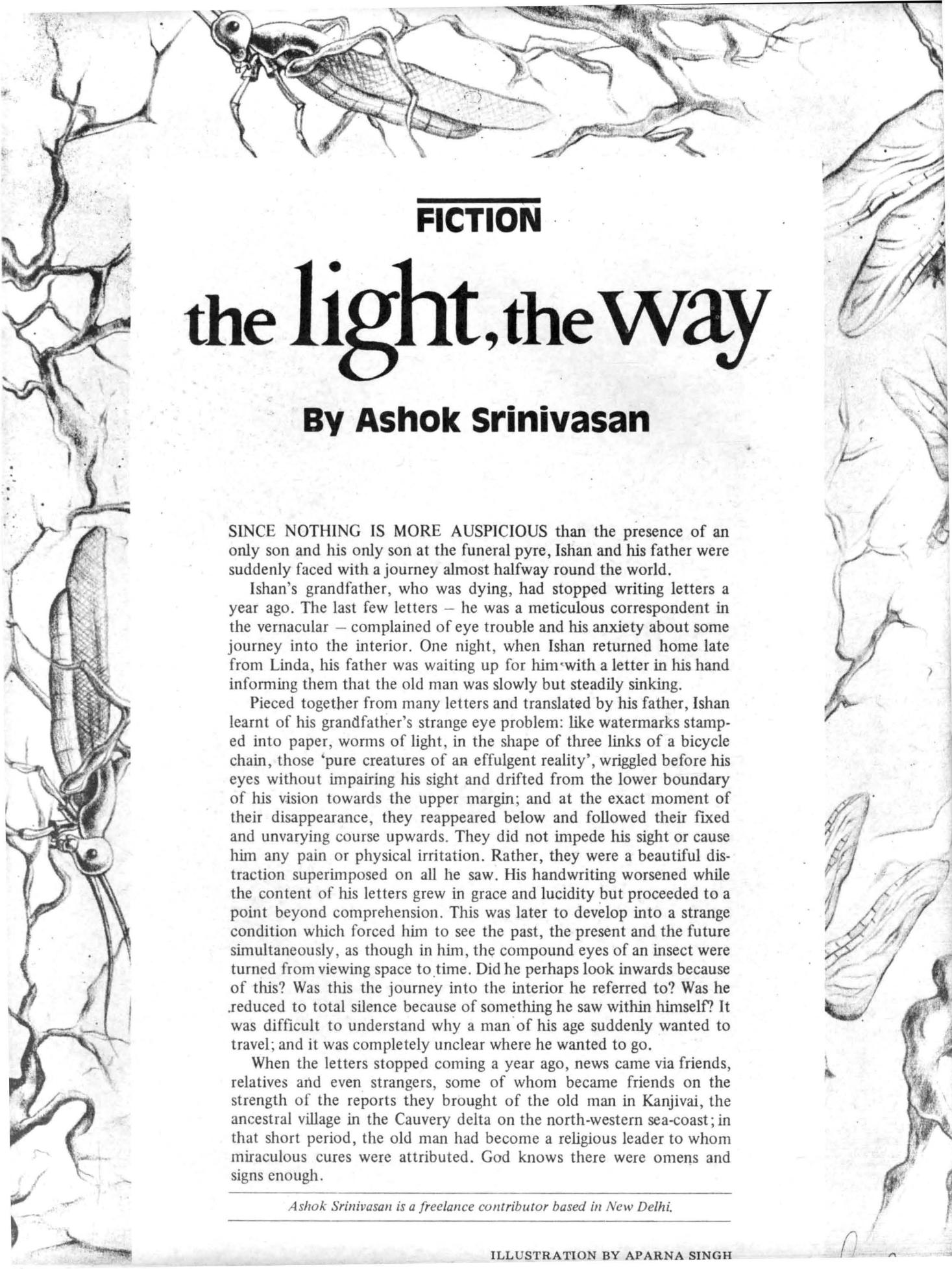
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FICTION

the light, the Way

By **Ashok Srinivasan**

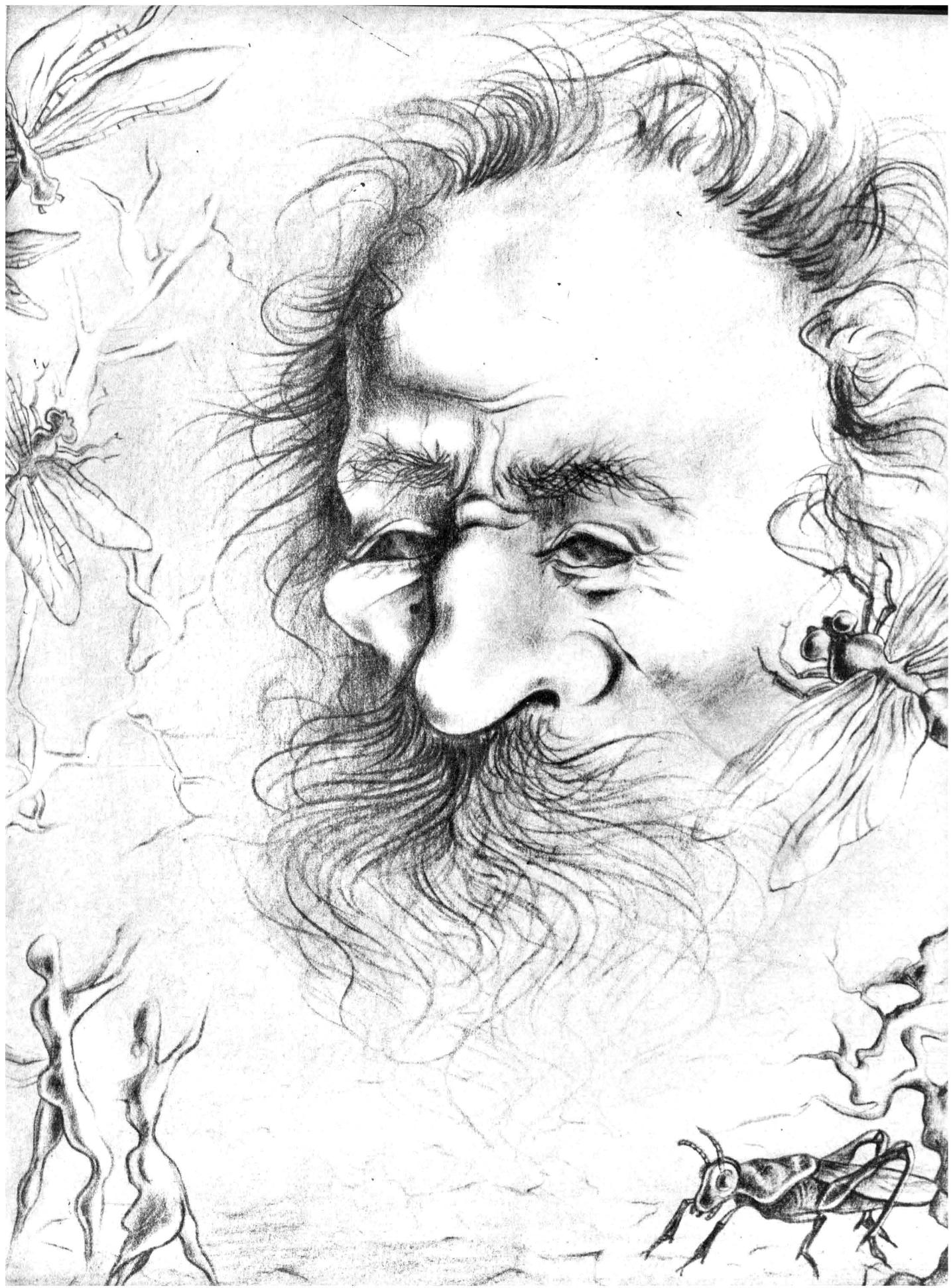
SINCE NOTHING IS MORE AUSPICIOUS than the presence of an only son and his only son at the funeral pyre, Ishan and his father were suddenly faced with a journey almost halfway round the world.

Ishan's grandfather, who was dying, had stopped writing letters a year ago. The last few letters — he was a meticulous correspondent in the vernacular — complained of eye trouble and his anxiety about some journey into the interior. One night, when Ishan returned home late from Linda, his father was waiting up for him with a letter in his hand informing them that the old man was slowly but steadily sinking.

Pieced together from many letters and translated by his father, Ishan learnt of his grandfather's strange eye problem: like watermarks stamped into paper, worms of light, in the shape of three links of a bicycle chain, those 'pure creatures of an effulgent reality', wriggled before his eyes without impairing his sight and drifted from the lower boundary of his vision towards the upper margin; and at the exact moment of their disappearance, they reappeared below and followed their fixed and unvarying course upwards. They did not impede his sight or cause him any pain or physical irritation. Rather, they were a beautiful distraction superimposed on all he saw. His handwriting worsened while the content of his letters grew in grace and lucidity but proceeded to a point beyond comprehension. This was later to develop into a strange condition which forced him to see the past, the present and the future simultaneously, as though in him, the compound eyes of an insect were turned from viewing space to time. Did he perhaps look inwards because of this? Was this the journey into the interior he referred to? Was he reduced to total silence because of something he saw within himself? It was difficult to understand why a man of his age suddenly wanted to travel; and it was completely unclear where he wanted to go.

When the letters stopped coming a year ago, news came via friends, relatives and even strangers, some of whom became friends on the strength of the reports they brought of the old man in Kanjivai, the ancestral village in the Cauvery delta on the north-western sea-coast; in that short period, the old man had become a religious leader to whom miraculous cures were attributed. God knows there were omens and signs enough.

Ashok Srinivasan is a freelance contributor based in New Delhi.



FICTION

Unknown rains fell upon the rocky, arid regions south-east of Kanjivai and some weeks later, the desert blossomed with whole meadows of young grasshoppers which, through constant body contact, changed colour, turned cannibalistic and took to the air, laying waste the countryside. Iridescent as a mica storm in the pityless sunlight, cloud upon cloud of orange-and-black locusts, their green innocence gone, denuded the villages in their blind path of hunger.

While news of this dreadful visitation was on everyone's lips, word spread around Kanjivai that a leper who was begging from door to door was suddenly made clean and whole when he appeared before the door of Ishan's grandfather's house. At this juncture, all the bamboo-stands in Kanjivai — in the world, actually — began to flower.

This was something that had never happened in living memory. After its full flowering and before the bamboo clumps died, rats swarmed through the thickets devouring the bamboo fruit. Town and village alike were ravaged by the plague. Numberless callers arrived at the old man's house. It was reported that even victims of the plague survived by passing before his door.

While a few surviving bamboo rhizomes in his backyard put out weak pencils of culm that would take more than a decade to attain their full former maturity, a gnarled dead tree before the verandah of his house began to glow at night with a secret light. By day it was home to termite and fungus. The emission of this heatless light drew swarms of fireflies which settled on the twisted branches of the leafless tree; and as the light emitted by the fireflies became synchronous, an awesome hush fell upon the sea of expectant faces, broken by the simultaneous pealing of all the temple bells in the area.

And while the sound vibrated and died upon the humid air, all the lights in Kanjivai were doused for a minute, plunging the townlet into complete darkness, leaving the lone tree glowing with fairy lights. And though there were not people enough

to count the dead, whole hosts of the faithful prayed to the blind seer as to a living saint. The old man gave no discourses and performed no rituals. He lay speechless on a string cot on the verandah of the ancient house where he had been born, and people flocked to see him. It was enough to see him lying there, with his head turned away perhaps, barely drawing breath, to effect the most fantastic cures in the pressing multitudes. Letters to him, unanswered, unopened even, worked wonders through the Indian postal system.

He was regarded as the greatest practitioner of the healer's art. A vast organisation of the faithful, to which the old man was totally indifferent, sprang up around him to handle the mail, the concourse of supplicants and all the necessary arrangements to marshal the traffic of millions of cripples, believers and incurables. There were additional trains to Thalayut, the station nearest to Kanjivai, called Pilgrimage Specials. The drowsy village had become a booming townlet, expensive, chaotic and holy. They said the old man was saintly. They said he was mad. The people adored him. The people reviled him. He was a seer. He was a fake. A healer. A charlatan. God. Fraud.

Ishan, at 19, was a disappointment to his father, who, like his father and forefathers before him, worked with vegetable dyes on coarse cotton, painting detailed and repetitive pictures of multi-armed goddesses in strict accordance with traditional values, to be used as wall-hangings in prayer rooms. Ishan did not continue the family tradition, but worked for a photographer's studio attached to a press-cum-bindery, in Soho. Ishan was involved in the production of special, limited editions of candid camera work in hard-core pornography exclusively for circulation to members of private clubs: photographic portfolios on pre-teen, animal, lesbian, oral, orgy, whipping, S&M, B&D, rape, child, perversions, fetishes, spanking, and homosexual. His people knew nothing about it.

Ishan's father considered each of

his own unsigned, anonymous productions, a work of art, simply because in colour values and the relationship of lines to planes, each picture faithfully recreated an earlier picture through the exact reproduction in line and colour, not of the model, but of what he had learned of the religious texts from his father. For generations, the family had stuck to paintings of the four forms of the goddess Parvati as they obtained in Madurai, Kanchipuram, Nagapattinam and Varanasi; Meenakshi, Kamakshi, Neelayadhakshi and Vishalakshi.

And though nobody considered them works of art, Ishan's father sold a great number of his cloth paintings at modest prices to members of the immigrant community there. Quite sincerely, he conceived of art as craftsmanship, and always referred to his craft as art. For him, a work of art by an artist must be unique in its total correspondence with that of his predecessor without being, in any way, a copy of it.

All true pictures of the goddess were the same and no two pictures were ever the same. He spoke often with contempt of Ashok, a sculptor of temple deities in the home country who went commercial, gave up the ways of his forefathers and took to fashioning nudes and fountains in garden settings. Later, Ashok was reduced to hacking granite into millstones for grinding meal and moonlighting as a stone mason to scratch a meagre living for himself. In his own shy, unspoken way, he was proud of his son's poor English gleaned from a nearby county comprehensive school and did his best to hide his hurt about Ishan's ignorance of Tamil and temple painting. He often spoke to Ishan about their family, the village they came from and his own remembered childhood. He read him excerpts from the scriptures and told him stories of myths culled from the epics, that he himself had been told when young. And in return, Ishan never mentioned a word about his own job, what it involved and where it all led him, for he was happy in his own work and more

FICTION

than a little ashamed of his father. India may have been his father's country but it was not his. Not discounting the limescale orthodoxy of his Hindu upbringing, it was here, amid the pubs, the pawn shops and the football pools, that he had grown up to man's estate, on forbidden fish and chips and with the recession and the cruise missiles looming before him.

His father would switch off the telly, sit on the carpet before the fire, with the weighty family album before him and point out various figures to Ishan, telling him their names and histories. And as often as not Ishan's mind strayed into the red darkness of his studio where Linda had first shown him an unexpected kindness. The strange names and half-familiar faces photographed in foreign places never remained welded for long in Ishan's mind, and so it became a pleasant and chatty winter evening exercise with the family that would apparently bear endless repetition. The album was not only a prized family possession to which each generation had added its pictures, but a holy article used in ancestor worship.

Ishan was numbed by the detailed and wordy delineation of the family tree, replete with formally posed photographs of other people with hints of a likeness to himself. The four corners of the album were touched with auspicious vermillion. With unseeing eyes Ishan gazed at the album, at the pictures of his grandaunts and great-granduncles, in formal poses and stiff postures with stern faces.

Preparations for their return home were going apace when news arrived of the old man's death. Things were completed in an altered mood and tempo, full of reminiscences and new orthodoxies. While they were waiting to leave for the airport, unannounced friends who had witnessed the blind man's passing away in India, dropped by to speak to Ishan's father, directly from Heathrow.

After serving them tea, Ishan's mother withdrew into the kitchen with tears in her eyes but returned

dry-eyed in the doorway, the better to take in the latest gossip. The few words spoken, issued out of a comfortably shared silence which was to prepare Ishan for the things that would need saying or be left unsaid on his first journey to the land of his forefathers.

"Will it be four days then?"

"About. It is the heat I am afraid of. For him."

"How many years since you went there?"

"Twenty-five years. I remember like it was yesterday; I was reluctant to leave India for England then as I am reluctant now to make the journey in reverse."

"Things have changed, you know? The old routes are not open any more and new connections and detours are now operative."

"There are special trains to Thalayut Junction now and one does not have to wait for the weekly boat-train. What, I say! The buses and autos have now replaced the bullock-carts and rickshaws to Kanjivai. Jokes apart, you cannot recognise Kanjivai now. Things are not what they were."

"Don't go by what you remember. Ask at every point what direction and mode of transport you should take. Though I must say, I don't think any of this will apply to you as your arrival there is expected. You will be escorted on the last lap of your journey. Your father was an extraordinary man."

"The last words he was heard to murmur before his death were: 'So long ago, these memories, they seem to belong to an earlier birth of mine.'"

"He died as he lived, without having acquired any possessions but, seeing that body peacefully waiting for death, nobody could have thought it had ever known want."

"He was as luminous as only a man who has not wronged his brethren might be at the moment of dying."

"The night he died the Cauvery caught fire. The river burned and burned for miles, from the estuary halfway up to Srikakulam."

"The newspapers carried stories

the next day that the industrial wastes and pollutants from the factories and oil refineries upriver had caused the fire, but the people will have none of that. They repeated the story umpteen times; I ask you brother, even if that were so, why did the river catch fire that night? Can anyone answer me that? The people are not fools. I told that ass of a journalist, it won't wash, my boy! It simply won't wash! How can anybody ask the people not to believe what they see with their own eyes?"

When one of the visitors said, "They are waiting for both of you," they were all suddenly recalled from considering the old man's piety to the fact of his death. In the silence that followed, some sipped the cold dregs of the tea spiced with lemon grass and ginger.

"Ashok is finished now. You may have heard. The crows had been at him all day long when his body was found in an abandoned quarry. They had been searching him three days; they had been finding him everywhere. I was told the southern side of the temple's *gopuram* remains incomplete to this day. Poor chap, he'd been asking for it for donkey's years and when it came he was not ready for it. He's finished; I told him long ago he'd never get a bite fishing in the puddle of his own piss, but would he listen? Poor fellow, he's finished — simply finished!"

There were smiles at this irrelevancy. The mood lightened perceptibly and one of them launched into a lengthy anecdote about Srinivasan, a distant uncle of Ishan's. "Even Srinivasan has come to the end of his rope — Srinivasan who was as meek as a mouthless insect. It is so funny you won't believe it! When they brought Srinivasan home from the office he was pororating on how exactly a man may get to the interstate bus terminus. His clearly enunciated words were already a mix of geography and the *shastras*: "...After the esplanade on the left you must move straight on beyond all attachment and desire till you arrive at the coal depot outside the old Customs

FICTION

office..."

For two days and three nights Srinivasan's increasingly hoarse voice could be continuously heard giving nonstop directions that no human being could possibly follow. Unimpeded by the rumoured whisperings of those around him, Srinivasan's steady, dry voice kept detailing the topography of the city as though he would exhaust the grammar of his existence along the narrow bylanes and *gullies* running between the compound walls of shuttered bungalows with their courtyards open to the sky in the walled city with its open drains and permanently locked garden gates with permanently open doors let into them, leading to a common courtyard surrounded by many houses within the same compound, all marked by the daily wash hung out to dry.

Quite simply, what had happened was this: a man, a foreigner, had come up to Srinivasan in the office asking for directions to get to the interstate bus terminus. Srinivasan gave him the most detailed, uncalled for and literally interminable directions on the many likely routes he should not be seduced by if he hoped to reach his destination by the quickest possible path.

"Do you know where Kurla is?" asked Srinivasan.

"No," said the man, standing in front of him with the tips of his fingers playing along the edge of the table.

"All right. Sit down, please. You know where Ghatkopar station is?"

"Yes."

"Good. You catch your tram in front of the railway station, number 23. It will take you straight to Nagpada Chowk. You get down there and walk straight on. Are you following me?"

"Thank you," said the stranger. "Yes."

"You want to take the first turning on your right at Nagpada Chowk itself and ignore the first two streets on your left. Go straight on till you see a clock tower on your right. Stop me if I am going too fast. Till what on your right?"

"Clock tower," said the man, suppressing a smile and already looking tired.

"Right," said Srinivasan and hit the table with the palm of his hand. "After you pass the clock tower on your right, take the first turning to the left and keep straight on till you come to a domed red brick building. Till what building? That's it — a domed red brick building. It's unmistakable. But that is not the building you want. What you should do is leave the building after the domed red brick building and take the second one in the same line further on. If you enter by the exit gate marked 'No Entry', you will find yourself facing the annexe. This is a short cut, I am telling you. You go through the annexe, jump over the compound wall and walk across the *gandha nallah* before cutting across the *maidan*..."

And when the stranger suggested he would take a taxi or scooter, Srinivasan implored him not to waste his money on scooters and taxis that would certainly take the most circuitous routes to increase their fares. "Want not, waste not," said Srinivasan to the harassed foreigner and suggested that he take down in writing the directions given by him. When the foreigner, full of resolution, took a few steps towards the door, Srinivasan sprang up and physically tried to detain him. His colleagues intervened and so matters were sorted out.

And so Srinivasan's speech wound down, in the insane asylum, to disconnected phrases and words. The pauses between sentences, then between phrases and finally between words grew longer and longer till he fell silent of his own accord. The visitor ended the story with the words, "It was so funny, I can't tell you." The visitors departed amid small laughter and good cheer. Ishan understood each separate word well enough but the significance of the wholly pointless digression quite eluded him. He had to be content with the thought that he'd soon see for himself the country they endlessly referred to.

The journey itself was nothing,

less than nothing. Mosquitoes, heat-stroke and diarrhoea lent their passage to India the quality of a dream. There was no cremation, for the body, uniced and un-embalmed, showed no signs of decay, giving off instead a mild fragrance of jasmine into the humid air of the tropics: the incorruptible body now belonged less to the family than to the faithful and it was now well on the way to joining the pantheon of Indian gods.

It was already winter when father and son returned home from home, with their separate, unshared assumptions intact, though shaken. They returned cicatrised with half-remembered bits and pieces that did not fit each other and were incongruous with the facts of their journey. The first snow of the winter that had thawed into muddy puddles earlier in the day had by evening hardened into drifts of dirty ice again. As Ishan lay in bed, solarised images of his nightmare journey ate like quicklime into the flesh of his sleep: diazo memories in patches kept him awake all night, such as his first sight of the glassy airport undulating in the heat haze; a crowd of people on the edge of a vast *maidan* gathered around a young woman possessed by spirits after accepting buttermilk in a coconut shell from a stranger; his grandfather's house: the front verandah, the cavernous hall (with dead leaves rattling in the corners) opening directly onto the large backyard enclosed by a high earthwork wall; and there, beyond the water-well and yellowing bamboo clumps, the roofless lavatory in the far corner, cicada-loud and full of the black berries of the curryleaf tree outside. Like that far-off house, his father too would soon become a derelict; a human shell fitted out with beliefs that nowhere and in no way meshed with the common cams and gears of the technology of the day. It was still dark outside and the sodium streetlamps cast an orange glow through the freezing fog. Tears sprang to Ishan's eyes not because Linda was gone or his grandfather dead but because he now knew that the time had come for him to leave home. ♦

ARDHANGINI: THE OTHER HALF

IN ORDER TO FIT into an office traditionally reserved for men, Indira Gandhi ruled as the embodiment of both male and female. She developed traits which belied her own gender. She became tough, shrewd and uncompromising. But her efforts at providing the country with masculine leadership did not prevent her from fulfilling a woman's role. Indira Gandhi was also charming, warm-hearted and graceful. She could play the role of national hostess to such perfection that, by unspoken accord, she was declared *de facto* First Lady of India. As fate would have it, Indira Gandhi's indivisible leadership remained intact even after her own death. The Prime Ministership was bequeathed to none other than her son. But the dynastic succession that preserved her power, also precipitated a division of its male and female aspects. While Rajiv Gandhi was entrusted with the male half — the Prime Ministership — his wife, Sonia, was automatically bestowed with the female half — the First Ladyship.

As the official inheritor of his mother's title, Rajiv has also acquired the clout and authority that surrounded her office. But Sonia Gandhi, as First Lady, does not bear the official importance which her predecessor did. The First Lady's post is not mentioned in the Constitution. There are no statutory duties she is expected to perform. Indira Gandhi executed her duties as First Lady according to her notions of what a woman prime minister should do.

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Sonia Gandhi will bear the First Lady's mantle according to her understanding of her own status and that of her husband, the Prime Minister.

So far, Sonia's inclination for being the dutiful wife has confined her to the home. Her public profile is, therefore, mysteriously low. She materialises briefly at official functions, where she emanates an aristocratic reserve. Whenever she is seen outside the home, Sonia appears as if in 'purdah' with her face hidden behind large dark glasses. It is not a sense of being foreign, but choice, which determines the Italian-born First Lady's insularity. She belongs to a race whose men and women are known for a sanguine gregariousness. But, ever since this *Gandhi bahu* from Turin was thrown into the limelight, she has found herself uncomfortable in it. She is reluctant to grant interviews, makes few public statements, and prefers to keep to herself.

In her own mind, Sonia Gandhi probably finds it incumbent upon herself to concentrate on her home. Her children, Rahul and Priyanka, are still young. And given the trauma they underwent last October, they probably require her individual attention. Secondly, now that Rajiv is spending most of his time on matters of state, the demands on Sonia as a parent have virtually doubled. This familial devotion should be easily digested by a nation that deifies its wives and mothers on the silver screen. In America — the land that sprung the women's lib movement on the world — such devotion would surely be criticised. When Nancy Reagan declared that her principal duty was to be wife and home man-



ager for the President, critics did carp. She was showered with brickbats.

But India is another world altogether. Given the Indian orthodox views on marriage and wifely devotion, the few judgements passed about Sonia have, naturally, been sympathetic. The media eulogised her heroism during the assassination. And when the heroism crumbled into sorrow, it applauded her as if she were the lead tragedienne in a magnificent Greek drama. If the media were being swayed by the 'sympathy wave' engulfing the nation in those days, what will influence their analysis of her right now? What yardsticks can the pundits use now to cheer or condemn the First Lady's wifely virtues?

Since no modern Indian canons of female conduct exist, we can borrow and adapt standards from the ancient ideals for women. Epic literature states that a wife is the half of her husband. According to Manu, the oldest Hindu law-giver, woman acquired this status when Brahman, the Creator, divided his body into two, becoming male by one half and



female by the other half. Interpreters of Manu believe that so divided, husband and wife must complement each other to be considered complete.

In her private life, Sonia has performed her role as Rajiv's other half or *Ardhangini* with utmost seriousness. Recently, in her first ever interview, in *Dharamyug*, the reticent First Lady said that her sole aim was to unite with her husband. Perhaps this is one reason why, despite her reluctance in allowing Rajiv to join politics, when he did, she backed him with genuine grace. Her dedication was further symbolised by her poignant participation at Mrs Gandhi's funeral, when she stood doggedly by her husband through every religious rite.

In retrospect, with this brief appearance, Sonia Gandhi has publicly expressed support not just to her husband, but to the incumbent Prime Minister of India. By projecting herself as a model wife, Sonia has inadvertently trapped herself into promising the nation an ideal First Lady. Now 700 million people will expect her to complement the Prime Minister in both his domestic and public life.

First Ladies around the world are expected to represent the ideals of their time. So what does Sonia Gandhi have to do?

And just what does Sonia Gandhi have to do in order to fulfil that expectation?

First Ladies around the world are expected to represent the ideals of their time. They are expected to emerge with a distinctive style and an exemplary set of goals. And, most of all, they are expected to champion a handful of causes that are of personal interest to them. The trend-setting Jackie Kennedy brought national attention not only to the pill-box hat, but to culture and art. Her successor, Ladybird Johnson, pioneered an ecological movement and started a 'War on Poverty' programme. What our own First Lady does, beyond making prim and proper official appearances, is yet to be seen. Her accomplishments outside the home are few. She is known to have a flair for languages which could lend the Prime Minister a diplomatic edge over foreign dignitaries. Sonia has also learned restoration of paintings at the National Gallery of Art — a skill which could be put to good use in patronising the maintenance of Indian masterpieces.

But where Sonia is most qualified to be Rajiv's helpmate, is in his crusade towards the uplift of women. And ironically, what makes her eligible for this job is not any developed skill, but her inherited gender. Anti-dowry movements will be more effective when they are spearheaded by a woman who is known for entering a marriage with no more than love and devotion. Education for women can be encouraged with greater conviction by one who has studied at Cambridge. And family planning will be accepted more readily from a mother of two.

In a historical perspective, with Mrs Gandhi's death, Sonia is responsible for ensuring that the ideals of

the Nehru dynasty are held secure for posterity. The other Gandhi daughter-in-law, Menaka, has attempted to wipe the Indira years from the pages of history. In December, she requested a TV ban on films depicting all posthumous leaders — including Indira Gandhi. On the other hand, given Sonia's closeness to her late mother-in-law, her legacy should be safe in the hands of the new First Lady. We know that she has already been taking interest in the activities of the Jawaharlal Memorial Fund. But not all First Ladies may want to follow Sonia's footsteps in becoming champions of the Nehru cause. Thus, as First Lady, Sonia is responsible for creating a role which extends beyond her family interests to the nation at large. Her performance will set the trend for her successors and will determine the importance given to First Ladies of the future.

The irony is that whether Sonia Gandhi decides to acquit herself in these tasks or not, her power to influence Rajiv will be unaffected. She alone will be his closest friend and confidante. On some days, her pillow-talk could affect his policies more than any Cabinet minister's brief, and her worried looks could change the endings of his speeches more decisively than any professional prompting would. But no First Lady will ever disclose the moments when her tiny interventions may have shaped the nation's course of events. And given Sonia's private nature, we will never know how or when she influences or guides her husband. However, in the next five years, if Sonia Gandhi decides to fully complement her husband as his public analogue, she will be remembered not as a national enigma, but as a legendary First Lady. ♦



WILLIAM GOLDMAN

The Ecology Of Hollywood (or, Lucas, Spielberg and Gunga Din)

HOLLYWOOD has never been short of boy wonders. Joseph L Mankiewicz received his first Oscar nomination when he was 21 years old. Stanley Donen was 24 when he co-directed *On The Town*. Most notable, I suppose, is Orson Welles, who received four nominations for *Citizen Kane*, a feat never accomplished up to that time. Welles was 25.

But nothing in memory comes close to the dominance of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg.

Both are extraordinarily talented, have been working successfully for a decade or more, and are still in their '30s. And when I say 'dominance', consider this: Lucas and Spielberg have been crucial to the five most successful pictures in history.

Star Wars and *The Empire Strikes Back* belong to Lucas. Spielberg directed *Jaws* and *ET*. The fifth, *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, was a collaboration, Lucas being the incisor, Spielberg calling the shots.

Not only have these films made the two among the richer young men in America, the four released prior to this year have all won various prizes and awards and been nominated for a lot more. But none of the four has won the Oscar for Best Picture.

ET will change all that.

What the five films have in common, besides their world-wide appeal, is that they are all comic book movies.

If you think I am putting down comic book movies, you could not

be more wrong. Not only have I written my share of them, my favourite movie of all time is a comic book movie: *Gunga Din*. (I have seen it 16 times, still start to cry before the credits are over, and will return to it shortly.)

But first, the matter of definition.

Having used the term 'comic book movie' several times now, I think it's only fair that I tell you precisely what it means —

— except I can't do that.

Primarily because we get into matters of personal taste: What I

With George Lucas and Steven Spielberg, comic book movies seem to have come into their own. But no definition of the term exists.

find a comic book movie you may totally disagree with, and you may be right. For example, I think *The Deer Hunter*, that searing indictment of American involvement in South-east Asia, was a comic book movie, and I think *Bambi* — yes, I know it's an animated cartoon — is not.

But if I can't give a precise definition of what the hell I'm trying to say, at least I am able to give a few parallels, which should help set the parameters of what I'm after.

Food: empty calories. (Not, under-

lined *not*, junk food, which has a pejorative connotation. Please remember that in none of this am I making a critical judgement against the comic book movie.) But as an example of empty calories, put down potato chips.

Television: The only prime-time entertainment series that is not a comic book programme is *M*A*S*H*. Not because of its outstanding quality, but because every scene in *M*A*S*H*, no matter how wildly farcical, is grounded in the madness of death. That is what gives it its tone, that is the heart of the piece. You can make *M*A*S*H* into *My Mother The Car* easily enough. Just keep those same wonderful actors and stick them in a giant army training camp here in the States. And the wounded are simply guys hurt in fights or drunken-driving accidents — of which, by the way, there are more than plenty near any major army post.

And what you have got then is a bunch of goofy surgeons grousing because they're stuck in the service and not out in the civilian world, making a fortune. It might be just as funny, and just as successful, and absolutely would be exactly like every other series on the air.

Music: bubble gum songs. Billy Joel, Elton John, etc. The kind of singer-songwriter who basically appeals to pop music's target audience, the teeny-boppers who buy albums. (The Beatles began as bubble gum musicians — "I want to hold your hah-hah-hand" and the like. Then they changed. Lennon, in his solo albums, did not write bubble gum music; McCartney, the most successful songwriter in history, still does.)

Now let's try and take some of this and apply it to comic book movies. None of these are meant to be strict rules, but more often than not I think they're true:

(1) Generally, only bad guys die. And if a good guy does kick, he does it heroically.

(2) There tends to be a lack of resonance: Like the popcorn you're munching, it's not meant to last.

(3) The movie turns in on itself: Its reference points tend to be other movies. If, for example, there had been no Saturday afternoon serials,

Deer Hunter, in spite of its skill and serious subject matter, was only a well-disguised comic book movie. Whereas Bambi, a cartoon, had a terrifying sense of life — not life as we like it to be.

there would have been no frame for *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*.

(4) And probably most important: The comic book movie doesn't have a great deal to do with life as it exists, as we know it to be. Rather, it deals with life as we would prefer it to be. Safer that way.

Let me briefly explain now my feelings about *Bambi* and *Deer Hunter*.

Does anyone remember, say, the last part of *Deer Hunter*? Saigon is going up in flames and Robert De Niro, an ordinary guy with no contacts in high places, is out of service and back in Pennsylvania. He hears about his old buddy, Christopher Walken, who's still back there.

Shazam — De Niro's in Saigon. Now the entire world is trying to get out, but somehow De Niro gets in.

He finds Walken. Do you know what Walken has been doing all this time? He's been playing that game of Russian roulette with real bullets. (The Russian roulette ploy was made up by the movie's creators, by the way; it didn't happen in reality.) For months and months, Walken has been taking on all comers in this loony tunes Russian roulette, and guess what? —

Whappo — he's undefeated, untied, and unscored on.

It would take a computer a while to give the odds against that happening, but never mind, because now we're into the confrontation scene.

De Niro versus Walken at Russian roulette.

If you looked at the billing of the picture on your way in, did you ever doubt who was going to win?

Zap — De Niro is unscathed but Walken dies, with a touch of the heroic smile on his lips.

All this was exciting, and I enjoy-

ed it every bit as I used to be enthralled by Batman having it out with the Penguin —

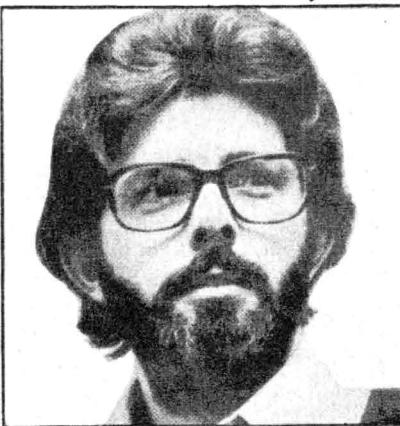
— and precisely on that level.

What *Deer Hunter* told me was what I already knew and believed in: No matter how horrid the notion of war, Robert De Niro would end up staring soulfully at the beautiful, long-suffering Meryl Streep.

So I say, in spite of its skill and the seriousness of its subject matter, we have here a well-disguised comic book movie. Nothing shook my world.

Okay, *Bambi*.

If the shower scene in *Psycho* was



George Lucas.

the shocker of the '60s, and for me, it sure was, then its equivalent in the entire decade of the '40s was when *Bambi*'s mother dies.

And what about that line of dialogue: "Man has entered the forest"? And the fire and the incredibly strong anti-violence implications. (The National Rifle Association would probably picket the movie today.)

I know it was a cartoon, I know Thumper had one of the great scene-stealing roles, I know there was a lot of cuteness.

But I left that movie changed.

It had, and has, a terrifying sense

of life to it, and not life as we like it to be. You may think I'm crazy and you may be right, but *Bambi* still reverberates inside me.

Now let me circle back to *Gunga Din* and make strictly a judgement call: It is my absolute opinion that in every conceivable way — direction, script, star performances, special effects, emotional power — it is infinitely superior to any of the five Lucas-Spielberg prize winners.

Gunga Din was released in 1939, and when it came time for the Oscar balloting, it received a grand total of zero nominations.

Granted, 1939 was an exceptional year for Hollywood. (I am going to start playing games now, but please bear with me. I hope and believe there's a point to it all.) You probably don't remember the Oscar winner for 1939, but let me list five movies and then you guess: *Golden Boy*; *The Hunchback Of Notre Dame*; *Intermezzo*; *Juarez*; *The Private Lives Of Elizabeth And Essex*.

To help you along, a few refreshers: *Golden Boy* introduced us to William Holden; *Intermezzo* to Ingrid Bergman. Charles Laughton played the Hunchback, Paul Muni starred in *Juarez*, and Bette Davis was Elizabeth, one of her more famous performances.

The envelope please.

Answer? None of the five. In fact, none of the five even got a Best Picture nomination.

But here are the five that did: *Goodbye, Mr Chips*; *Mr Smith Goes To Washington*; *Ninotchka*; *Of Mice And Men*; *Stagecoach*.

Again, please, the envelope.

Same answer: none of the above. (They nominated more than five pictures back in those days.) And one of the five I didn't list was *Wuthering Heights*.

Which also didn't win because 1939 was also the year of *The Wizard Of Oz*.

Which also didn't win because *Gone With The Wind* did.

Pretty impressive year.

So impressive that in spite of my passion for *Gunga Din*, I can't complain. It's a glorious adventure film; I may prefer it to any other, but I don't think it belongs up there with the prize winners.

The basic ecology of Hollywood is radically changing. Today comic book pictures are only breeding more comic book pictures — something that has never happened to this extent before. And I think it's scary.

And I don't think any of the Lucas-Spielberg films do either.

The subject here, remember, is the ecology of Hollywood. Ecology, as I am using it, means balance.

Hollywood has always made great comic book movies. *The Great Train Robbery* was not intended as a sonnet, and let's not forget that early wonder that was these two little girls having a pillow fight.

But traditionally, the money made from pillow fight pictures was ploughed back in, and sometimes what emerged was *Citizen Kane*.

Several years ago, a studio head told me this: "If I've got to come up with a slate of 16 pictures a year, I know going in that four of them are turkeys. I just hope they're not too expensive and I don't lose too much on them. Eight or nine are going to be programmers — decent enough entertainment if I'm lucky; money-makers. *The last three I have hopes for.*" (Italics mine.)

He meant, he went on to explain, quality; the kind of movie he might be proud of.

But let's go back 20 years: *Lawrence Of Arabia* won Best Picture. I thought it was a great epic and deserved everything it got. But the following pictures didn't even get nominated: *Birdman Of Alcatraz*; *Days Of Wine And Roses*; *The Miracle Worker*; *Long Day's Journey Into Night*; *Sweet Bird Of Youth*; *David And Lisa*; *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*; *Freud*; *Lolita*.

I'm not suggesting any of them should have been nominated; I'm just saying that's a pretty good list of non-comic book pictures. In a year that was not considered anything special.

That was 20 years ago, now let's try again. Another unremarkable year, but these were some of the non-comic book pictures that came

out in 1972: *The Godfather*; *Cabaret*; *Deliverance*; *Slaughterhouse-Five*; *A Separate Peace*; *Play It As It Lays*; *Lady Sings The Blues*; *The Heartbreak Kid*; *Fat City*; *The Candidate*; *Jeremiah Johnson*.

The summer movies of 1982 are now half done, and by the time you read this, most of them will have blissfully faded from your memory. But this is what's come out so far: *Conan The Barbarian* and *Rocky III* and *Poltergeist* and *Hanky Panky* and *Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid* and *Annie* and *Star Trek II* and *ET* and *Firefox* and *Grease II* and *Author! Author!* and *Blade Runner* and *The Thing* and *Megaforce* and *Tron* and — and they're all comic book movies.

Okay, let's put as positive a light as possible on things: Summer, after all, has always been the time for kids' pictures because that's when the kids are out of school. And Woody Allen has directed a film and George Hill has directed a film and there's a strong advance word about *An Officer And A Gentleman*.

You can be as Pollyanna-ish as you want; me, I think it's scary.

Why? Because in the entire first five months of this calendar year, there were almost no films you can think of that also weren't comic book movies. A few: *Victor/Victoria* and *Diner* and *Missing* and *Shoot The Moon*.

Maybe you can come up with some others; I can't. And none of the above four did the kind of business that tends to win at Academy time. Which is why *ET* will take the Oscar: There's nothing else.

And why do I find this all scary? — because the basic ecology of Hollywood is, I'm very much afraid, radically changing.

Remember that italicised quote from the studio head: "The last three

I have hopes for"? Well, those 'last three' aren't being made any more. The money made from *ET* is only going to give us, if we're lucky, something like *Mandrake The Magician*.

Jaws began the present cycle: It did business far beyond what anyone dreamed possible. Then *Star Wars* shattered all the records set by *Jaws*. And now every executive in Hollywood is trying to figure out how the hell to topple *Star Wars*.

Which, of course, is only right and proper: It's their job. But in their quest, they have altered the tradition of ploughing back profits in pursuit of an entire range of different sorts of films. Right now — today — comic book pictures are only breeding more comic book pictures, something that has *never* happened to this extent before.

Will the ecology shift back to what it's been? "Absolutely," the studio executives will tell you. When? "When the public demands it."

Of course, there's a certain element of truth to that — but basically it's a cop-out. Change will only come when the executives stop ignoring the churning in their guts. These are bright people, never forget that. They don't personally enjoy the movies they're okaying. Do you think they're happy going home and saying to their families, "Hey, guess what, a great thing happened today, we decided to make *Megaforce*..."

The ecology can only shift when these people decide that there's got to be more to life than a remake of *The Creature From The Black Lagoon*. When they suck it up and decide to find material like *Ordinary People* and *Cuckoo's Nest*.

But this summer's three big pictures so far are *ET*, *Rocky III*, and *Star Trek II*. So, for the present, I think we may as well prepare ourselves for seven more *Star Wars* sequels and half a dozen sequels involving Indiana Jones. By the end of the decade, we may well be seeing *ET Meets Luke Skywalker*.

As Bette Davis advised us, I think we all ought to fasten our seat-belts. Because it looks from here like we're entering a long and bumpy night. . . .

Bejan Daruwalla's Predictions



ARIES: March 21 to April 20:

The full Moon, on July 2, helps you to expand, take on new commitments and obligations. But just remember that the home, too, needs its fair share of attention. Therefore, walking the tightrope between these two worlds is absolutely essential. Partnerships will be bitter-sweet, as Mars opposes your sign. Mid-month is for journeys.



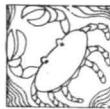
TAURUS: April 21 to May 21:

Sun-Saturn trine is ideal for reaching out to people via the media of transport, communication and publicity. Now is the time to push ahead, be the battering ram, and give it all you have. Ninth to the 19th will be crucial for personal affairs. Don't nit-pick, and indulge your generosity. Around the 25th, the focus shifts to the home.



GEMINI: May 22 to June 21:

Pluto regains direct motion on the 12th, and helps you in terms of finance, family and self-confidence. Between July 10 and 21, expect a round of socialising and entertainment, fun and games, and in the bargain, good money. That should please you. The last week helps you to communicate vividly and vibrantly, as the Sun changes signs.



CANCER: June 22 to July 22:

Sun-Mars conjunction in Cancer, gives you the pep and push to conquer all and be triumphant. Romance, the luck of the devil, top-drawer creativity, trips and ties is how it will be with you. You will think positively, use your undoubted imagination and intuition, act promptly, and therefore, be a winner. Money will flow in.



LEO: July 23 to August 23:

Travel and expenses make a happy duo for you this month. Poets, writers, editors, astrologers, showmen, actors, artistes, entrepreneurs, show the grand stuff they are made of. Surprisingly, you will also turn the searchlight within, realise your potential, understand your limitations better, and thus, have a clearer picture of yourself.



VIRGO: August 24 to September 23:

You will hammer your rivals into the ground and that's that. The month favours friendships, ties, marriage, a mix of pleasure and profit. Got the message, me dears? Mercury-Uranus trine helps you to set a cracking pace, move fast mentally and emotionally, be of good cheer, socialise happily, win the game of life and love.



LIBRA: September 24 to October 23:

You will work like a slave and enjoy like a king, and that, you agree is fair enough. The new Moon, July 17, makes you overtly ambitious, and this is a good time to open a new branch, launch a venture, go into operative high level efficiency. The Midas touch will be yours. This month property matters are spotlighted.



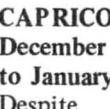
SCORPIO: October 24 to November 22:

Off and away is the astro message for you, children of Mars, because Mars roars away in your ninth and tenth angle. Inspired moves and guesses, ties and collaborations and journeys, a big publicity splash, a contract signed and sealed and delivered, make you happy. You will be at your sizzling best.



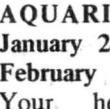
SAGITTARIUS: November 23 to December 21:

Like a forked road, July has these two directions: a) accent on funds, loans, insurance, joint-finance; b) definite slant on ceremonies, rituals, spiritualism, intimate relationships, perhaps tantra and mantra, a legacy, a will, an endowment, a gift, taxes and rentals, buying and selling. Expect health hazards and travel at short notice.



CAPRICORN: December 22 to January 20:

Despite tensions and upsets caused by Mars opposing your Sun-sign till the 24th, this is a month of achievement and progress. Partnerships and trips and collaborations are the other side of the astro coin. Your exceptionally strong likes and dislikes will be fully manifest now. July 2 to 17 emphasises your personal affairs.



AQUARIUS: January 21 to February 18:

Your health could well be the culprit in reducing your efficiency. Also, you will be working hard and long and that, too, could tell upon you. More responsibilities will be thrust upon you. News and messages will have an extra significance for you, because Mercury swishes and shuttles in your seventh angle of travel.



PISCES: February 19 to March 20:

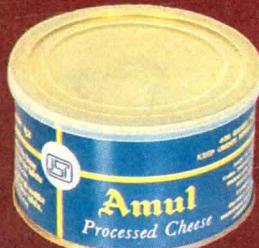
Happy romance, gaiety and glamour, travel at short notice, a dash of luck and laughter, makes July a fine month for Pisceans. The atmosphere will be congenial. Good cheer and fellowship will prevail. Attachments, old ties being renewed, hobbies and children give you a lot of satisfaction. After July 24, take adequate health precautions. ♦

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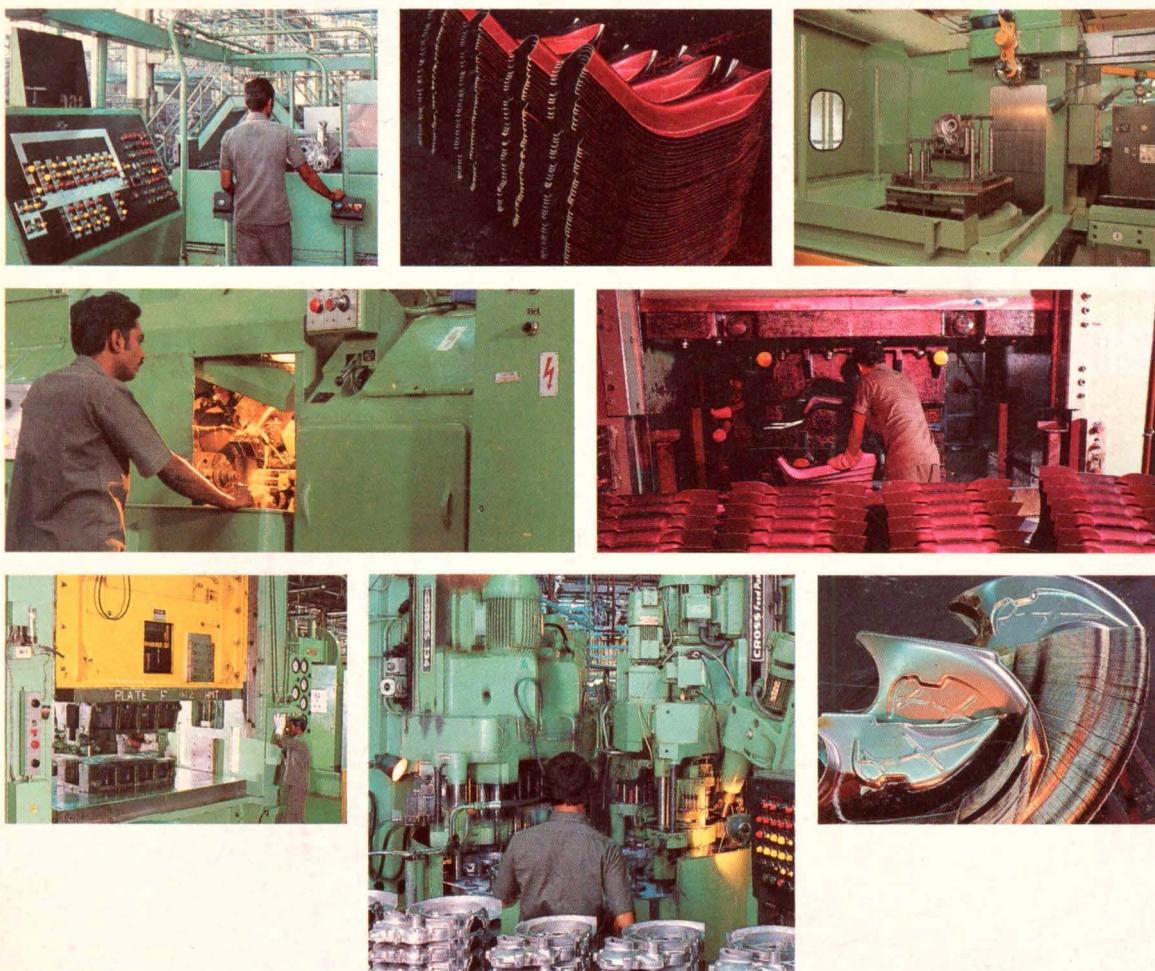
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