

OPINION

Vol. XIV

25th SEPTEMBER 1973

No. 22

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Posted at Masjid Paper Sorting Office, Bombay on
Regd. No. MH 580
Licence No. 141. Licensed to post without pre-payment

10 OCT 1973

Edited and published by A. D. Gorwala at "Purnima", Ridge Road, Bombay-6 and Printed by
him at the Mouj Printing Bureau, Khatau Wadi, Bombay-4. Proprietor: A. D. Gorwala.

SOLZHENITSYN

(Nobel Prize 1970, Author of *First Circle*, *Cancer Ward*, August 1914,
all banned in the Soviet Union)

Moscow, August 28

The author was interviewed by the Associated Press and Le Monde of Paris. He accepted written questions and wrote out answers to those he chose to respond to in a Russian text of more than 7,000 words.

I RECEIVED letters with threats, rather than demands, threats to make short work of me and my family. This summer such letters have come to me through the mail. Not to mention psychological mistakes, the many technical mistakes by the authors have convinced me these letters have been sent by KGB agents.

"For example, the incredible speed of delivery of these bandits' letters—less than 24 hours. Only letters from the most important government organs go that fast.

"Another example of technical mistakes they make is that the KGB officials were in such a hurry that the envelopes were sealed only after the post office had stamped them."

The author noted that normal delivery of mail takes three to five days. He added: "During the winter of 1971-72, I was warned through several channels—within the KGB's apparatus there are also people who are tormented by their fate—that they were preparing to kill me in a 'car accident'.

"But here we have a peculiarity. . . .

"If, for example, a letter that reaches me by post blows up, it will be impossible to explain why it didn't explode before in the hands of the censors.

"And since for a long time I have not suffered from serious diseases and since I don't drive a car and since because of my convictions under no circumstances of life will I commit suicide, then if I am declared killed or suddenly mysteriously dead, you can infallibly conclude, with 100 per cent certainty, that I have been killed with the approval of the KGB or by it.

"But . . . my death will not make happy those people who count on it to stop my literary activities. Immediately after my death or immediately after I have disappeared or have been deprived of my liberty, my literary last will and testament will irrevocably come into force . . . and then the main part of my works will start being published, works I have refrained from publishing all these years.

"If the officers of the KGB track down and confiscate copies of the harmless *Cancer Ward* in all provincial cities—and dismiss holders of these copies from their work or drive them from higher educational institutions—what will they do when my principal and posthumous books stream out all over Russia ?"

He declined to discuss further the unpublished "main part" of his works, especially in a flat which he believed was bugged. He turned instead to plans for publishing the remainder of the series that began with *August 1914*.

He said that probably "I won't let out *October 1916* before the third volume *March 1917* is ready". The two are too closely knit and only together could explain his view of the course of events, the writer said.

August 1914 related in fictional form the catastrophic defeat of the Russians by the Germans in the early days of the First World War. The other two books are planned to carry the narrative through the Bolshevik Revolution.

Solzhenitsyn reported running into severe restraint and harassment in his research.

"Vaganov, head of the regional archives in Tambov, refused to let me have a look even at Newspapers 55 years old. In the central military historical archives, a rigorous search was recently carried out in order to find out who in 1963 turned over to me material about the First World War and how this happened."

A young literary specialist, Mr. Gabriel Superfin, who had helped him in searching historical archives, had been arrested on the basis of confessions of Mr. Pyotr Yakir and Mr. Viktor Krasin—at present on trial in Moscow for subversion—and accused under Article 72 of the criminal code dealing with "especially dangerous crime against the state". It provides for a sentence up to 15 years.

Solzhenitsyn spoke also of reprisals against Mr. Aleksander Gorlov, a friend who in 1971 surprised KGB men burgling the author's country house, and persecutions of Mr. Mstislav Rostropovich, the cellist, who had publicly befriended the novelist.

In connexion with the refusal of a permit to live in Moscow with his second wife and their two children, Solzhenitsyn said he is staying in a rented dacha for the summer but has no other permanent place of residence.

"I don't live anywhere any more. When winter comes I will have no other place to live than the apartment of my family, a natural place for any human being. And I'm going to live here irrespective of whether they give me the permit or not. Let the shameless come and evict me. That will be a deserved advertisement for our advanced social structure."

On surveillance of him and his family, Solzhenitsyn said: "Already for several years not one single telephone call or indoor conversation— involving me or members of my family—not even on matters of everyday life, is undertaken without being bugged. We have already got used to the situation that day and night we permanently talk in the presence of the KGB.

"When their tape runs out they break the telephone conversation unceremoniously in order to reload while we dial again."

On the trial of Mr. Yakir and Mr. Krasin, who have pleaded guilty to the charges against them, Solzhenitsyn said:

"With the right of an old prison inmate I tell them here and now:

that they have conducted themselves faintheartedly, basely and even ludicrously, by repeating with a 40-year delay and in inappropriate conditions the infamous experience of the lost generation, of those who capitulated in the thirties . . .”

Asked about the intensified attacks on Dr. Andrei Sakharov in the state-controlled media, Solzhenitsyn noted: “He is declared ‘a supplier of slander’, ‘ignorant’, a ‘naive purveyor of projects’ . . . a ‘malevolent critic who hates his own country and who is unconstructive’.

“It’s not an accusation, it is a blunder. For those who have followed Sakharov’s articles for some years . . . cannot help seeing his deep knowledge about the processes of Soviet life, his pain for his own country, his torments because of mistakes not made by him, his good-hearted conciliatory standpoint, acceptable to highly opposite groupings. . . .

“Sakharov, alas, is too well known and, therefore, he has to be crushed publicly. But unknown critics are crushed in great numbers in silence, in the countryside, in the hinterlands, and how many can they be, these people never mentioned to anybody, languishing and perishing in regional psychiatric clinics ?”

The official Soviet answer to dissidents, Solzhenitsyn said, is never arguments, “because arguments don’t exist, but always curses and slander . . . either administrative punishment in a court, a curse or silence.

“And now against Sakharov they pick up again the worn-out and beslobbered trump card of the thirties—help to foreign intelligence services. What savagery ! Would a man who has armed them with the most terrible weapon, a weapon on which their power has rested for decades and still rests, give help to foreign intelligence services ? That borders on utter shamelessness and utter ingratitude.” (Dr. Sakharov was principal developer of the Soviet hydrogen bomb.)

Solzhenitsyn was asked about the recent expulsion of Mr. Vladimir Maksimov from the Writers’ Union, the official body from which Solzhenitsyn was also barred.

“About the Writers’ Union I would not like to talk seriously,” he replied. “What kind of Writers’ Union is it if it is led by generals of the KGB like Viktor Ilin ?

“But Vladimir Maksimov is an honest, courageous writer who in a disinterested and sacrificing manner is dedicated to truth and has already been very successful in the search for truth. Therefore his expulsion from the lying Writers’ Union is completely normal.”

On the Soviet practice of confiscating passports of prominent dissidents allowed to travel abroad—such as the recent case of Mr. Zheres Medvedev in London—he said: “Citizenship in our country is not an inalienable natural right for every human being born on its soil, but it is a kind of coupon which is kept by an exclusive clique of people who in no way and by nothing have proved that they have a greater right to the Russian soil.

“And this clique can, if it doesn’t approve of some citizen’s convictions, declare him deprived of his homeland. I leave it to you to find a word yourselves for such a social structure.”

Solzhenitsyn mentioned Mr. Andrei Amalrik, just sentenced to a second

three-year term, and General Pyotr Grigorenko who is in a psychiatric hospital for his dissident activities.

Amalrik, he said, had dared "to give an independent analysis of today's social structure and predict the future, that is, what in fact may happen to our country. Then instead of analysing his works and taking from them what is true and practically useful, they simply put him in jail.

"And when out of the ranks of our glittering and decorated generals turned up this lone Grigorenko who was bold enough to express his non-conformist view about the course of the last war and about today's Soviet society, a view which in fact was entirely Marxist-Leninist, then this view is declared a psychiatric insanity."

Solzhenitsyn listed a number of cases of political prisoners reported in the underground *Chronicle of Current Events* which has not appeared for months.

He noted: "In this striking country with its most advanced socialist structure, for a half century there hasn't been a single amnesty for political prisoners.

"When our prison terms were 25 years and 10 years, when eight years in our country, no joking, was considered a child's term, then we had this famous Stalinist amnesty (July 7, 1945) which released political prisoners with less than three-year sentences—that is, nobody.

"Those who had a bit more (up to five years) were released by the Voroshilov amnesty of March 1953, which just flooded the country with criminals. In September, 1955, by releasing to Adenauer, Germans serving terms in the Soviet Union, Khrushchev also had to give amnesty to those who had collaborated with the Germans.

"But for the dissidents there has never been a single amnesty for half a century. Who would be able to give another example from our planet or a social structure or state system so convinced of its stability? Let the admirers compare this with Greece if they like.

"When at the end of the forties we were choked with 25-year terms, we only read in the papers about the unprecedent reprisals in Greece. Today in many of the statements from the Western press and Western personalities, even from those who are most sensitive to oppression and persecutions in the east, in order to create an artificial balance in the face of left-wing circles, there must always be the reservation: the same thing happens in Greece, Spain, Turkey. . . .

"I dare to declare that there is no such 'the same thing happens'. I dare make the observation that in all these countries violence does not reach the level of today's gas chambers, the prison psychiatric clinics.

"I dare observe that Greece is not surrounded by a concrete wall and with electronic murderers at the border, and young Greeks don't pass in hundreds over the lethal line with faint hope of ever reaching freedom. And nowhere east of Greece is it possible for an exiled minister (Karamanlis) to have his anti-government programme printed in the papers."

In comparing various levels of violence, Solzhenitsyn said: "The first unit on one scale may stand for 10, but the first unit on another scale may stand for 10 to the sixth point—that is one million. . . .

"I tried in vain a year ago in my Nobel prize lecture to draw attention in a reserved way to these two incomparable scales of evaluation of the volume and moral meaning of events. And that it is impossible to accept as internal matters events in countries that decide the world's fate.

"Also in vain I there pointed to the fact that jamming of Western radio broadcasts in the East creates a situation comparable to that on the eve of a common catastrophe, nullification of international agreements and guarantees, because they thus don't exist in the conscience of half of mankind—their superficial trace can easily be swept away in the course of a few days or a few hours.

"What jamming of radio broadcasts means is impossible to explain to those who haven't experienced it themselves, who haven't lived under it for years. It means daily spittle into your ears and eyes, it is an offence and degradation of man to a robot's level.... It means that grown persons are reduced to infants: swallow what your mother has already chewed for you.

"Even the most benevolent broadcasts during the most friendly visits are jammed as systematically: there must not be the slightest deviation in the evaluation of events, in the nuances, in the accents—everybody has to be informed about and remember an event 100 per cent the same way. And many world events must not be made known to our people at all.

"Moscow and Leningrad have paradoxically become the most uninformed big cities in the world. The inhabitants ask people who come in from the countryside about news. There, because of cost (our population has to pay very dearly for these jamming services) the jamming is weaker.

"But according to observations of people from various places, during the last month the jamming has been extended, has conquered new areas, has been intensified.

"However, international information, the ideas, facts and human protests that slip through after all have an influence. It is important to understand that the East is not at all indifferent to protests from public opinion in the West. On the contrary—it has deadly fear of them—and only of them—but this in the case only with the united, mighty voice of hundreds of prominent personalities, with the opinions of a whole continent.

"Then the authority of the advanced structure may falter. But when timid, isolated protests are heard, without every belief in their success and with the compulsory reservations 'the same thing happens in Greece, Turkey, Spain', then this evokes only the laughter of the aggressors.

"When the racial composition of a basketball team becomes a bigger world event than the daily injections given to prisoners in psychiatric clinics, injections that destroy your brain, then what else can you feel but contempt towards an egoistic, short-sighted and defenceless civilization?"

Solzhenitsyn said: "Our prisons retreat and hide from the light of world publicity. It was planned to give Amalrik a long, long sentence as early as 1970, but they were forced to give him an everyday charge and three years."

"And now because of renewed world publicity they have been forced

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to limit themselves to only three years additional. Otherwise it would have been more.

"But the Western world has drawn an incomplete lesson from this, has not shown enough feeling to realize that our persecuted are not only grateful for the protection, but also provide a lofty example of spiritual endurance and willingness to sacrifice at the very point of death and under the syringe of the murderer-psychiatrists.

"The unbending General Grigorenko requires incomparably more courage than is demanded on the battlefield, when, after four years in the hell of a prison psychiatric hospital, he daily spurns the temptation to buy freedom from torment at the price of his convictions, accepting injustice in the place of justice.

"Vladimir Bukovsky, who all his young life has been ground by the mincing knives of psychiatric prisons, ordinary prisons and camps, did not break down and did not choose a possible existence in freedom but laid down his life as a deliberate sacrifice for others."

Solzhenitsyn said Mr. Bukovsky, a dissident sentenced in 1972 to seven years' imprisonment and five years in exile, was offered his freedom if he left the country and gave up his political activities. Solzhenitsyn said Mr. Amalrik was told he could go free if he "could confirm Yakir's and Krason's confessions". Both refused.

"There is one psychological peculiarity in the human being that always strikes you: to shun even the slightest signs of trouble on the outer edge of your existence at time of wellbeing when you are free of care, to try not to know about the sufferings of others (and your own or one's own future sufferings), to yield in many situations, even important spiritual and central ones—as long as it prolongs one's wellbeing.

"And suddenly, reaching the last frontiers, when man is already stricken with poverty and nakedness and deprived of everything that seemingly adorns his life—then he finds in himself enough firmness to support himself on the final step and give up his life, but not his principles.

"Because of the first quality mankind has never been able to hold on to one single attained plateau. Thanks to the second quality, mankind has pulled itself out of all bottomless chasms.

"Of course this wouldn't be a mad thing: to foresee one's future downfall and the price of the coming reckoning when you find yourself on the plateau, and to show some endurance and courage somewhat before the critical hour—to sacrifice less, but a bit earlier.

"One cannot accept that the disastrous course of history is impossible to undo, that a soul with confidence in itself cannot influence the most powerful force in the world.

"From the experience of the last generations it seems to me that it is fully proved that only the inflexibility of the human soul which firmly puts itself on the front line against attacking violence and with readiness to sacrifice and death declares, 'Not one step further'—only this inflexibility of the soul is the real defence of personal peace, universal peace, and of all mankind."

—Courtesy, *The Times*, London

BIRTHRIGHT

*i entered the world too soon
the brightness dazzled me*

*i could not stand firm on my legs
the ground always shook beneath me*

i fell

i crawled

i fell

i half-got up

i remained in that position half my life

what is a home

*my mind has to cover too long a
distance to meet another*

i feel my ghost

uneasy in my body

i am NOT guilty

*my mother should be hung
she didn't keep me in her womb for the full*

nine months

—Sukrita Paul

OPINION, September 25, 1973

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FROM PERSONAL SUFFERING TO WORLD SUFFERING

G. L. MEHTA

Dear Editor,

It is heartening to learn from the highest official sources—Cabinet Ministers in Delhi—that rising prices are a world-wide phenomenon and inflation a global problem. In other words, is it not soothing to find that we in this country are not alone in suffering even if 500 million of us suffer since the rest of the world (without always knowing it) is in the same predicament? Our malady is a world malady.

Is this not consoling? Do you know dear Editor, the story of Buddha and Kisagotami? You say you cannot recollect it so let me recapitulate. Buddha during his wanderings met a young woman, Kisagotami, who had lost her only child to death and came to him for a spiritual remedy to revive him. Buddha asked her to get a tola of black mustard seed from some one in whose house no one had died. Kisagotami wandered from door to door but could not find a household where none had died: everyone had lost some dear one. Unable to find what Buddha had asked, she returned disappointed and told the Lord. Whereupon Buddha explained to her that she had found a bitter balm "searching for what none finds" and said :

"Thou knowest the whole world weeps with thy woe
The grief which all hearts share grows less for one."

Our modern Buddhas are not less ingenious, even if not exactly saintly. We are told again and again by government spokesmen that all mankind (*minus* the affluent, I suppose) suffer from the ills we do. People suffer from abnormally high prices in New York and Tokyo, Paris and London. People in Niger and Chad die of starvation. People in South Vietnam suffer from malnutrition. Corruption is equally a world-wide phenomenon. Big magnates have made fabulous contributions to Nixon's election funds though they have to account for it. So, let us not be too self-critical.

Our rulers, in Buddha's words, are also "searching for what none finds"—cure for garibi, food shortages, inflation, etc., through take-overs without pain, production without gain, water without rain. Some weeks ago there was no crisis—it was the figment of imagination of a monopolist, sensational press and a "politically motivated" Opposition. The Western, particularly American, press magnified the small hardships felt by a few in the country. We had no necessity to import foodgrains. But the crisis can be seen in its proper perspective—a world-perspective. We have to learn that we cannot have development without rising prices, economic

growth without widespread suffering. When in doubt, said Mark Twain, speak the truth. When in doubt, say our rulers, enunciate some noble principles, preach austerity, practise "conspicuous consumption and waste" and expand currency.

Nevertheless, I cannot help feeling that it is no small solace for the poor in this country that if they are starving, the rest of the world is (in some parts) doing the same and there is an international bond of hunger. Let them remember that their unemployment is due to population explosion and shortages of necessities of life due to circumstances beyond control—such as emergence of Bangladesh, Indo-Pakistan war and drought. What we are suffering are long-term difficulties during a short-term period. That is why the elite in our country—ruling as well as affluent—can say with Oscar Wilde: "Give me the luxuries and the necessities will take care of themselves." Lenin's dictum that no revolution can be successful unless it is a world revolution may not be wholly acceptable. But the fact that every grave economic malady is a world malady is not only sound in principle but a respectable doctrine which can be freely given expression to in Rashtrapati and Rajbhavan parties and be embodied in the President's and Prime Minister's addresses to Parliament and Chambers of Commerce.

We all know that nothing is now-a-days attempted except on a worldwide scale. There are world records in flying, swimming, motoring, motor-boating, reaching the moon or climbing the Everest, eating bananas, chewing gum or standing on one's head. From the time of our independence, we have been bidden not to engage ourselves in petty squabbles (except for ministerships) but to develop an international outlook. When a person can't get his ration, he should think not of what he will eat but of American aggression in Cambodia. If a farmer finds his well dry, he must not shed tears but think of the prospects of Ganges-Cauvery grid. If he has to wear torn clothes, he should think of the discriminating tariffs and quotas on Indian textiles by the European Economic Community. If he cannot find a shelter, he must think of the unjust occupation of Arab territories by Israel. Thus, in perspective, any personal problem will appear almost insignificant in the background of world events. And concentrating on world matters will make a world of difference to our outlook. We should not, therefore, be unduly depressed by our petty ills and individual misfortunes but keep our eyes firmly on the horizon (during the day) and at the stars (during night). This outlook promises a world of hope and our leaders are truly becoming world-figures.

Your fellow-sufferer in world troubles

G. L. M.

AN INDIAN MANGO VENDOR

*She squats
on the dust-broomed pavement
behind a pyramid of mangoes
washed with her youth's milk
tinctured with the musk-rose in her hair.*

*Through the slits
of her patched blouse
one bare shoulder
two white moons
pull all horses
off the track.*

*This old man's leery eyes—
idle birds pecking at
the mango-nipples.*

*Buy something, man,
or move on
to the crypt
where Death's ferrous fingers
will pull the remaining stray hair
from your green skull.*

—Shiv K. Kumar

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HANOI AND CAMBODIA

Before the 15th August

BOTH Prince Sihanouk, the deposed Khmer Head of State, and the North Vietnamese leaders have recently taken pains to quash suggestions that Hanoi speaks for Cambodia in Indochinese negotiations. Nevertheless, since the reduction of fighting in South Vietnam and Laos, more North Vietnamese troops are reported to have been deployed in Cambodia, and while they may wish to stay in the background, the North Vietnamese leaders will probably continue to use the country—and Prince Sihanouk—until their aims in South Vietnam have been achieved.

Respect for the legality of Prince Sihanouk's Peking-based "Royal Government of National Union" (RGNU) and for Khmer sovereignty was stressed by the North Vietnamese party and government heads, Le Duan and Pham Van Dong, at a meeting with RGNU leaders in Peking on June 5. But both sides noted that the "militant solidarity" of the peoples of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos was becoming more consolidated and reaffirmed their loyalty to the joint declaration of the Indochinese Peoples' Summit Conference held in south China in April, 1970. In an anniversary message on April 24 the North Vietnamese leaders had assured Prince Sihanouk and his "Prime Minister", Penn Nouth, that their joint struggle would be "crowned with glorious victory". On the following day the Prince expressed gratitude to the (North) Vietnamese people, government and armed forces for their "invaluable contribution to our historic mission".

For the North Vietnamese the Indochina summit marked an extension of their influence in Indochina since it brought Prince Sihanouk and his newly-formed "National United Front of Kampuchea" (NUFK) into an open alliance with themselves and their Laotian and South Vietnamese clients. The idea of holding a conference, always described as having been the Prince's initiative, is now shown (in his recently-published book, *My War with the CIA*), to have arisen during a talk with the North Vietnamese Prime Minister in Peking in March, 1970, on the best ways of coordinating their struggles. Although the published accounts of the conference revealed little of what this meant in practical terms, the Prince's book said that joint operations with Vietnamese Communist forces in the frontier areas were in keeping with conference decisions. North Vietnam had also provided 2,000 military instructors and used a part of Khmer territory to protect their communications with South Vietnam. The Prince claimed that there had been no other North Vietnamese intervention apart from the supply of arms, although there was no reason why Khmer and Vietnamese Communist forces should not "cooperate militarily on a grand scale in certain situations". Elsewhere he said that his troops and the Vietcong fought side by side.

The Prince's aims still include a peaceful and neutral Cambodia, but his book reveals that a precarious peace and apparent neutrality were maintained until 1970 largely because his government had turned a blind eye to the presence of Vietnamese Communist forces in the border area. Cambodian rice, paid for by the Chinese, was delivered to the Vietcong. Weapons and supplies stored in the frontier region were distributed to Khmer rebel forces when United States and South Vietnamese troops moved against Vietnamese Communist bases in Cambodia in 1970, after Khmer demonstrations against the Vietnamese Communist presence had helped to bring about the Prince's downfall. Whatever hopes Prince Sihanouk may entertain about the future of Cambodia, they are likely to be conditioned by Hanoi's need of a prolonged war in the Republic while pursuing its objectives in South Vietnam.

Recent reports suggest that the North Vietnamese want to stay in the background of Khmer affairs as far as possible, perhaps reasoning that their Khmer allies will do better if they are not identified in the public mind with the foreign invader. Khmer refugees arriving in South Vietnam said that Vietnamese Communist troops planned to stay in Cambodia disguised as Khmers Rouges (*Saigon Post*, May 6).

The Prince nevertheless insisted that North Vietnam had no part in the war in Cambodia and that the Khmer insurgents were an effective force. His trip to Cambodia on April 6 was intended to refute allegations that there were wide rifts between the Sihanoukists and the Khmers Rouges and that the latter would not allow him to enter Cambodia. The Prince had admitted in his book that before 1970 he was "sometimes too harsh with my Khmers Rouges".

He said in Peking that "all the members of the interior Resistance never ceased to surround me with the most touching affection". In practice this seems to mean that the Khmers Rouges, like the North Vietnamese, have accepted that he is still necessary to them, if only (as the Prince's book put it) as a "working symbol" of the unity of the resistance and a "bridge . . . between Khmer Rouges whom I have come to know so much better, and Sihanoukists".

LORD CHESTERFIELD'S LETTERS

NERGIS DALAL

FROM time to time, as I re-read the letters of Lord Chesterfield to his son, I feel again the inadequacy, one might almost say, the barbarity of manners today. What would he have thought of our young people with their loud strident voice, their abandoned laughter and their wild, uncontrolled gestures? With what horror would he have attended present-day parties, where men and women congregate in different corners of the room, divided by invisible but inflexible barriers, and shrill laughter and loud guffaws, may be heard on all sides.

"Have a real reserve with everybody and seeming reserve with almost nobody, for it is very disagreeable to seem reserved, but dangerous not to be so," wrote Chesterfield. It is easy enough to imagine him saying this as he looks out at us from his portrait, immaculately dressed, his eyebrows a little raised, surveying the world with weary and rather cynical amusement.

There were so many things he disapproved of. Laughter was 'low and unbecoming' since it made a disagreeable noise and 'occasionally a shocking distortion of the face'. No one, it seems had ever heard his lordship laugh aloud. One wonders whether in private, dallying with some fair charmer in bed, he permitted himself only a faint smile from time to time. How very disconcerting for the woman attempting to amuse him at that time!

Chesterfield had evolved his own distinctive approach to women. He firmly believed that they greatly relieved the tedium of ordinary life, and would certainly have disapproved strongly of the segregation of the sexes at parties and dinners. Women, he claimed, should be treated with "Familiarity, gaiety and respect," a combination intriguing enough to make every woman want to meet him at once. Imagine the heady, subtle flattery, of being treated with both familiarity and respect!

"Never" wrote Lord Chesterfield, "have I seen the worst-bred man guilty of lolling, whistling, scratching his head, and suchlike indecencies in company." Had he been living in India today he would have seen it all around him. I recall a dinner at which the guest on my right kicked off his shoes with the first course, and had to grope frantically for them when the time came to drink a toast to the President. Eventually he had to stand up in his socks, looking both foolish and embarrassed. Slipping one's shoes off, wiggling bare toes, and playing with one's feet in company, is quite the accepted code of behaviour today.

My lord's frosty comments on how a gentleman should talk are also worth noting. A gentleman never uses clichés and speaks always "with a clear and graceful diction." Nor should a gentleman employ "outmoded affectations in his speech"—a pointer for all those who insist on using mod language with such tiresome persistence.

It is possible to open the letters haphazardly and find wisdom on every page. "Romping, struggling and throwing things at another's head, are the becoming plesantries of the mob, but degrading to a gentleman", and again, "think more of the manner, than the length of your life."

One wonders how much of all this excellent advice benefited the young Phillip Stanhope, since the letters began arriving when he was a child and continued until he was a man. Perhaps Chesterfield's most valuable piece of advice is that gentlemen should always keep their tempers, even in the presence of those whom one "yearns to have at sword-point". I like the elegance of this phrasing. There are so many I yearn to have at sword-point !

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COMMUNAL RELATIONS : NOW

V. B. KULKARNI

IT is both untrue and unhistorical to claim that the Muslim League is a patriotic body. It was founded in December 1906 at Dacca with the purpose of preventing the Muslim community from joining the mainstream of national life. Choudhry Khaliquzzaman (who died recently in Pakistan, was a Muslim League stalwart from Uttar Pradesh) said that the party was "dominated by the titled gentry, Nawabs, landlords and *jee huzoors*, who were generally well-meaning gentlemen but wanted to serve the Muslim cause only so far as it did not affect their position either socially or in Government quarters."

This fact of the League not being particularly patriotic is further confirmed by the observation of the late Dr. Khan Saheb (Premier of the North-West Frontier Province). He told Lord Mountbatten, that he would have nothing to do with the Muslim League in his province because it represented "only self-interest and a privileged class of Khans." Further proof to clinch the issue may be supplied by recalling that Mr Jinnah used the party as a decisive instrument for securing India's partition. On March 31, 1946, he told the Foreign Editor of the *News Chronicle* that there was no such country as India and that he was not an Indian at all! The man, who years before had declared categorically that he was "no lover of sectarian cries", and had asserted that he was a "nationalist first, nationalist second and nationalist last" saw no wrong in repudiating his own deeply-felt conviction when it suited his purpose. The attractions of communalism and the resultant power proved irresistible.

The Muslim League is thus a patently sectarian organisation whose continued existence and activities cannot further the integration of the sixty million Muslims of India into the country's wider unity. Its self-exile from Pakistan after the partition would have been complete and permanent if only the Congress had realised the long-term ill effects of placating Muslim diehardism in order to win the votes of that community. Mr. Nehru was a democrat and a secularist but, (as even many progressive Muslims complained), he showed a strange complaisance to Indian Muslim communalism.

By making common cause with the Muslim League in Kerala in 1959 and 1960 against the Communists there, he, perhaps unwittingly, raised a Frankenstein which now threatens to weaken further the tenuous communal harmony in the country. His daughter has chosen to follow in his footsteps. During the mid-term elections in Kerala in September 1970, she acclaimed the Muslim League there as a non-communal organisation. The League's President improved upon this certificate by asserting that his party was "democratic, national, constitutional and legal" not only in Kerala but throughout the country. Since then, his successor has gone many steps forward. In June 1973, the League President asserted, in a

manner reminiscent of Mr. Jinnah's claims in the pre-partition years, that his party was "the sole political organisation of the minority community in India."

No fair-minded person can exonerate the ruling party for this dangerous development. Commenting on its collusion with the communal organisation in the southern State, the Editor of *Opinion* wrote this on October 6, 1970 : "The Muslim League is a name ominous to the ears of all good Indians, whatever their religion ; a name reminiscent of one of the darkest chapters in Indian history." Recalling its disruptive role in the past, he further observed : "It is not surprising that a shudder of horror runs through the frame of this aged Indian at the current suggestion that the Muslim League should be revived in the various States of the present India." In a country where political power has been captured by self-seekers, such patriotic lamentations fall on deaf ears.

Emboldened by the Congress attitude of surrender towards it, the Muslim League has now decided to falsify history. It maintains that the Moplah uprising of August 1921 was a patriotic movement. No useful purpose can be served by recalling at length unsavoury episodes from contemporary history. The rebellion was an offshoot of the agitation over the so-called "Khilafat wrong" which was rejected by Mr. Jinnah. The Malabar violence was directed against the "enemies of Islam". Those who want to know more about this sanguinary episode may read what Dr. Annie Besant has said in her book *The Future of Indian Politics* (pp. 252-53).

No less untenable is the Kerala Muslim League's objection to the textbook which gives a fair and well-authenticated account of the part played by its parent organisation during the British period in thwarting the movement for national independence. The facts are so obvious and abundant that it is sheer folly to repudiate or ignore them. The question which all right-thinking persons should ask themselves is whether history, the sole basis of which is truth, should be rewritten to pander to the prejudices of politicians and communalists.

The Kerala textbook episode raises the important question whether the States should not have some kind of a co-ordinating body in the production of such literature. More than a decade ago, the University Grants Commission recommended the establishment of a national advisory board, consisting of eminent scholars and University teachers belonging to all parts of the country, to advise on the production of textbooks for the States and to review them from time to time. The national integration conference, which met in September 1961 under Mr. Nehru's chairmanship, endorsed the widely-held view that textbooks should be written at the national rather than at the State or regional level. The Committee on Emotional Integration also urged that the "best brains" should be harnessed to the production of such literature. It conceded that the National Book Trust was doing good work but pointed out that the achievement of that body was "no more than a drop in the ocean".

The Kothari Commission, which reported in 1966, deplored the inadequacy and the poor quality of the textbooks that were being turned out. It recommended that talented persons in the country should be brought

together and invited to produce such and allied literature both for schools and universities. It thought that the creation of an autonomous organisation, functioning on commercial lines, would best serve this purpose. Since no such wise steps have been taken, the States continue to pull apart like Plato's team of horses. In consequence, the aim of using the textbooks as the instruments not only of learning but also of national unity by propagating common ideals through them has remained as distant as before.

(Concluded)

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THE TOUCH OF TIME

KAILASH C. KOHLI

AS I visit my *alma mater* after thirty long years, the panorama that emerges is compellingly reminiscent of the lost posts of adolescence. The long span of time that has crept in the crevices of my flesh exudes a strange nostalgia for something that has slipped out of me stealthily at a convenient time.

So much has changed since then. The birds that descended on the sidewalks around the campus cafe for crumbs are long dead. Even the cafe, the rendezvous for young amorous souls and furtive sentimentalists is not there. The place has been taken by a new faculty building. The sprawling banyan tree wears a more senile look. Or is it the reflection of my own disposition?

As I scan the surroundings and try to read my past, I realise more eloquently that time goes and the sense of its passing is planted more in personal history. Several faces press themselves in my mind. One of them is Roma, emerging in all her frivolous exuberance but the other moment I find her dying in a hospital ward due to a natal complication. There are others who are more or less conveniently placed in life either in good executive or vocational positions or have ended up as clerks, and are scattered in this vast country meeting life's myriad challenges and boons.

In our desire to belong to this world, we are hunting for agreeable places to plant ourselves. A time comes when all our relationships, all contrivances start appearing hollow. They vanish. Even friends and acquaintances.

It is difficult to make an inventory of the things that have vanished. Not a single soul in the campus is visible to add substance to the lost kaleidoscope. The slit-eyed librarian whose look from behind his monocle was more mischievous than his timid disposition actually intended, is not there. There are no deans of that time, no staff, no chowkidars. Only the Mutiny Memorial on the Ridge is holding the perennial dagger of its structure aloft in its historical obstinacy.

Have I lived faster all these years? The *alma mater* in whose environs I am vainly trying to fit myself again, makes me more conscious of the fleeting time. Where does it go? This mighty element of our being! Why do the events of life become irreversible and yet a feeling of living the same moments again gets stronger and stronger?

To stave off these persisting thoughts I rise to withdraw from the environs. As I walk hurriedly, I suddenly run into an old man standing in a corner of the enclosure. In the frame of mind I am in, I do not take long to recognise the destitute figure. He is none but Bairagi Baba, the beggar, who in those days had become so much a part of the life around the cafe.

In the world of change at least one soul is there who holds the panorama of a bygone age in his leaning frame. But how ironic. Has not Time been too much a burden for him, too harsh for his wretched life?

CEREBRAL THROMBOSIS

*The rattle ground like oxcart wheels the gravel
Of his throat. In the fluted heart of shells
Doze the ballads of the sea. He was past
Eighty, yet it was an adolescent
Dream that prowled the dirt-roads of his brain. His
Relatives watched the shut safe of his face
They were so sleep-obsessed, weary, three nights
In a row, and not even a pillow
For their heads, only the oxcart stumbling on and on....*

—Kamala Das

THE POLITICS OF HISTORY

A. G. NOORANI

"**H**ISTORY is the most dangerous concoction the chemistry of mind has produced. Its properties are well-known. It sets people dreaming, intoxicates them, keeps old wounds open, torments their leisure, inspires them with megalomania or persecution complex and makes nations bitter, proud, insufferable and vain." The blatant and unscrupulous exploitation of history in politics would seem to prove the truth of Paul Valery's remarks in his *Reflections on the World Today*. Regretfully, not a few academicians aid and abet the politician in this game. The intensity of their political convictions overcomes their academic discipline and benumbs their sense of values. There are, of course, less worthy reasons for the assistance, as well.

Far from raising the level of the political debate, they lower their own standards to those of the political forums. The more sensitive and emotion-charged the issue the greater the abuse.

The discipline in which these traits are seen most is, as one might expect, international relations where the grip of the slogan "my country, right or wrong" few are able to resist. To this day, when the international aspect of the problem has receded far into the background, studies on Kashmir pour forth with not even a pretence to objectivity. Sino-Indian studies fare little better. History must be tailored to fit diplomacy.

This is as unfortunate as it is unnecessary. It is quite possible for one to hold that, on balance, the Indian case on the alignment of the border with China is the stronger one without denying that China has a case, too. And one can hold this view and yet plead for a rapprochement with China, just as some felt that no matter what the strength of the Indian case, China must be checked.

The pity of it is that the revisionist school, which has now emerged, follows the orthodox in making a clean sweep of all that stands in the way of the desired conclusion. Its bible is Mr. Neville Maxwell's book and its techniques are no better than his.

A revisionist school has also emerged in the U.S. and its concern is the relationship with the Soviet Union since the end of the war. The cold war brought forth a mass of tendentious literature on the Soviet Union. The New Left is at pains to set the record straight as it sees it. Only in the process, it has adopted the same techniques. One should add that there exists in the U.S., also, a fine tribe of academicians who pursue their studies without adopting the techniques of either extreme in their analyses of the history of U.S. foreign policy. Men like Herbert Feis, for instance.

Prof. Robert James Maddox has laid the student of international affairs in debt by his painstaking analysis of the contribution of the New Left

to the debate. THE NEW LEFT AND THE ORIGINS OF THE COLD WAR (Princeton University Press; *agents*: Oxford University Press; \$7.95) is a detailed review of seven studies by representative writers of the revisionist school. The works of William Appleman Williams, D. F. Fleming, Gar Alperovitz and David Horowitz figure among them. In a sense they are successors to Frederick L. Schuman in the U.S. and to Konni Zilliacus, Andrew Rothstein and D. N. Pritt in Britain.

The focus of Prof. Maddox's study is on the *methods* the seven writers have adopted rather than on the *views* they have expressed.

Prof. Maddox well sums up the principal difference of opinion between the two schools. "The orthodox explanation of the how the Cold War began has been stated most succinctly by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.: it was 'the brave and essential response of free men to communist aggression' at the close of World War II. Regardless of what we know now or might learn in the future about Russian intentions then, according to this view, American leaders at the time reacted defensively against what they could only consider to be systematic violations of wartime agreements. Orthodox scholars have differed in what they see as the causes of Soviet behaviour, assigning various weights to factors such as traditional Russian foreign policy goals, the dynamics of the Soviet system, and Josef Stalin's personal characteristics. They have also differed over the appropriateness of the American response. All of them, however, agree in attributing the origins of the struggle to Soviet initiatives.

"Although the revisionists disagree among themselves on a wide range of specific issues—the role of the atomic bomb in American diplomacy, for instance—they tend to divide into two recognizable groups. The 'soft' revisionists place far more emphasis upon individuals than they do on the nature of institutions or systems. They see a sharp break between the foreign policies of Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman, and place responsibility for the Cold War on Truman, and the men around him. Truman, according to this view, broke apart a functioning coalition soon after he took office. To the 'soft' revisionists, therefore, the Cold War came about because of the failure of American statesmanship. The 'hard' revisionists raise more fundamental issues. To these scholars the Cold War was the inevitable result of the American system as it developed over the years." F.D.R.'s departure is irrelevant to those who hold this view.

Most of the revisionist historians proclaim that they write for a purpose, namely, to influence the policies of today. "They conceive of their work as a tool for change."

The revisionists share certain traits in common, a double-standard being among them. "Russia's actions are justified or explained by reference to national security or *Realpolitik*, Western actions are measured against some high ideal and found wanting. This approach extends even to the texture of their prose. One revisionist, writing about the suppression of leftist factions in Greece, could scarcely contain his outrage. There was, he wrote, 'no greater example than Greece of naked repression and nationalist jingoism in all Europe'. The murder of 10,000 Polish

officers in the Katyn forest, however, touched no such wellsprings of emotion."

The author, however, is fair to point out that "orthodox historians have been guilty of precisely those charges now being levied against New Left scholars. Some have perceived within the Soviet system a dynamic of expansionism every bit as deterministic as the (hard) revisionists' version of American capitalism. They too have employed variations of the double-standard—the Americans and British 'restore order' in an occupied area, the Russians 'suppress dissident elements'—and often have written as though the Russians could have had no legitimate concerns about national security. Many *have* ignored economic relationships, as the revisionists claim, and have just as unhesitatingly attributed to Stalin objectives (malevolent, of course) for which no reliable evidence exists."

What the author has done is to subject the seven selected works to a very simple test. He has compared the evidence they present with the record as it is. The result is most revealing. "Granting a generous allowance for mere carelessness, such an analysis reveals that these books *without exception* are based upon pervasive misusages of the source materials. Although the frequency varies from volume to volume, even the best fails to attain the most flexible definition of scholarship. Stated briefly, the most striking characteristic of revisionist historiography has been the extent to which New Left authors have revised the evidence itself. And if the component parts of historical interpretation are demonstrably false, what can be said about the interpretations? They may yet be valid, but in the works examined they are often irrelevant on the data used to support them."

The core of William Appleman Williams' thesis is that the U.S. was determined to project an Open Door Policy in Eastern Europe after the War. Prof. Maddox quotes two paras from the book on this topic and proceeds to dissect them. What emerges is that portions of three separate position papers had been mixed up and they, yet, failed to support Williams' thesis.

Far more telling is his demonstration of Williams' technique of constructing imaginary speeches. In order to explain "the Soviet view of the Conference" Stalin is said to have spoken thus at the "first general session" of the Potsdam Conference: "This Council will deal with reparations and will give an indication of the day when the Peace Conference should meet."

Actually, the reference to "this Council" was not to the Conference but to Truman's proposal that a Council of Foreign Ministers be formed. A "cable" is erroneously described as a "memorandum". Remarks at two separate meetings are telescoped by Williams into one misleading whole. A meeting is alleged by him to have taken place on July 23, 1945, with Truman, Marshall and Stimson as participants, Prof. Maddox finds from the record that there was no such meeting that day; only, at Truman's request Stimson asked Marshall a particular question.

The gravamen of D. F. Fleming's charge is that Truman deviated from Roosevelt's policy of befriending Russia. In support he cites Roosevelt

interview with Edgar Snow on March 3, just three weeks after Yalta overlooking Roosevelt's protest to Stalin on April 1, less than two weeks before his death, against Stalin's interpretation of the Yalta agreement in so far as it applied to Poland. What is more, in a cable to Churchill on the same subject Roosevelt expressed his fears about "future world co-operation".

Fleming has Truman "telling the Russians to go to hell". The remark was made by Truman to his aides, not to the Russians and in the context that he intended to go ahead with the San Francisco Conference to draft the U.N. Charter even if they refused to participate.

In a section devoted to the Polish question entitled "Was Stalin Insincere at Yalta?", Fleming asserted that as late as June 1945 Stalin had no intention of forcing communism on Poland. His evidence? Stalin said so to a noncommunist Polish leader in November 1944 and told Harry Hopkins substantially the same thing six months later. And Stalin's remarks should be believed because "Hopkins was the man in all the West whom Stalin had most reason to trust, and least reason to hoodwink." Comment on this logic is superfluous.

Atomic Diplomacy by Gar Alperovitz receives an equally devastating treatment from Prof. Maddox. Two instances will suffice. One lies "in the author's conclusions about Truman's overall conduct towards the Soviet Union. 'The President's attitude,' he wrote, 'is best summed up in the statement he made eight days after Roosevelt's death. He 'intended to be firm with the Russians and make no concessions'. The latter part of the quoted sentence, which Alperovitz left out, reads: 'from American principles or traditions in order to win their favour'. Truman did not say that he would make 'no concessions' and, in the same paragraph, he alluded to the need for establishing relations on 'a give-and-take basis'."

"Perhaps the most amusing illustration of this kind occurred in Alperovitz's efforts to show Truman's disappointment at learning that technical difficulties would postpone the nuclear test until after the Potsdam meeting had begun. Referring to the President's state of mind at that time, Alperovitz wrote that 'Truman made no attempt to hide his feelings: 'I am getting ready to go see Stalin and Churchill, and it is a chore. . . . Wish I didn't have to go, but I do, and it can't be stopped now.' Again the hiatus produced a most serious distortion, this time replacing 'I have to take my tuxedo, tails . . . preacher coat, high hat, low hat and hard hat as well as sundry other things,' and another sentence in the same vein. What Alperovitz presented as the words of President Truman, global strategist, turns out to be Ol' Cap'n Harry, complaining to 'Momma and Mary' about the formalities he would have to endure."

David Horowitz's Critique of American Foreign Policy in the Cold War was so well received as to be published in Britain as a Pelican. Prof. Maddox shows some entire passages of the book to be no more than slightly altered versions of passages from Howard K. Smith's book *The State of Europe*, written in 1949. "Except for expunging those of Smith's words which were critical of the Soviet Union, Horowitz reproduced these and other passages almost verbatim from *The State of Europe*. Occasionally he acknowledged that portions of his work were 'based on' or

'taken from' Smith's volume, which phrases constitute the only examples of understatement to be found in the book. These offenses are relatively trivial, however, when compared with the uses to which he put his materials." (Emphasis mine)

This, indeed, beats the rest. But what emerges from Prof. Maddox's close analysis is the *similarity* in techniques adopted by the writers. The question is inescapable: Is it not too much of a coincidence to be one? A writer who employs ellipses assumes a heavy responsibility for the accuracy of the quotation.

Prof. Maddox gives several instances which show that besides economy in space what the ellipses achieved was economy in accuracy as well. Consider in this context an instance of Mr. Neville Maxwell's misquotation. The issue was whether the Clarifications of the Colombo Proposals went beyond the Proposals themselves.

In a footnote Mr. Maxwell wrote, "Mrs. Bandarnaike admitted that the New Delhi 'clarifications' were drafted by the Indian Government in her March letter to Chou En-lai. The document, she wrote, was 'prepared by the Government of India . . . (and) is expressed in the language of the Indian Government'."

Actually, her letter said: "This document was prepared by the Government of India *as a summary of the discussions in New Delhi*. This document is expressed in the language of the Indian Government but *its content is no different in substance to the thoughts conveyed in my document...The Principles Underlying the Proposals of the Six*." This is the document she had earlier given to Chinese leaders.

By the omission of the italicised portions, Mr. Maxwell gives the reader an impression quite contrary to what Mrs. Bandarnaike had written. The omission, which could only be deliberate, is a serious lapse.

Prof. Maddox raises two important questions. One concerns the quality of book reviews and the other, that of book publishing. Why did not the reviewers discover such glaring lapses? The same question is asked *a propos* the scholars whose opinions publishers seek before agreeing to publish the book.

THE PROFESSOR CONPOLES

Your brother died, you said
eleven years old and run over by a car ?
I am so terribly sorry to hear it !
Pardon me, not tragic, as you said just now.
Unfortunate is the word, terribly unfortunate
nothing could be more . . . more unpleasant
But "tragedy is clean, it is restful, it is flawless"
as Anouilh said. This was an accident . . .
depravity of circumstance
There was no air of design about it, you follow ?

I cannot stand an accident
the blood clotting on the tarmac
the brain spilling over
like an uncooked stew !
The moment I see a crowd thrombosed
around a victim, I take a detour
to forestall a physical reaction.
Tragedy is different, one aesthetic layer
on the other to absorb the thrust
with neither desire nor revulsion aroused.

But you need time, perspective
for the action to evolve, and space
—that is essential for tragic momentum
I see your point, yes, the empty street
a car hurtling at sixty miles an hour
but that was not the momentum I was referring to

The Catastrophe must have a
specific reference to us . . .
I can imagine your feelings . . . yes, yes
he was your brother, his death
had a very personal reference to you
but there was no sin, no guilt
no hubris no hammartia.

Tragedy is a culture by itself
it takes a lifetime to be immersed
in its panoply and symbol.
Sometimes, of course, I brood :
tragedy is no longer what it was !
Its sweep and passion
took in half the universe once ;
evil came rasping like a magnesium flare
in a night canopied with mirrors ;
and heavy with destiny, loaded
with the past, the sky collapsed.

But after the havoc, across the
umber-coloured scraps of mist
horizons appeared awash with light
and pencilled with pearl-grey monotones.

But now there is no order to revert to
No sanctions beyond immediate hungers ;
and suffering would be a waste, like
digging a canal from the desert to the
river, to find it as dry
as the udders of an old cow.

Tragedy today is private, insular :
a depraved enzyme
in the belly of chance.

It digests you
skull, hair, dentures and all !
Yes, in an absurd scheme of things
accidents are the order.

I am sorry, extremely sorry, young man
for the tragedy that overtook your brother,
and left you with this grief
you won't know what to do with.

—K. N. Daruwalla

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