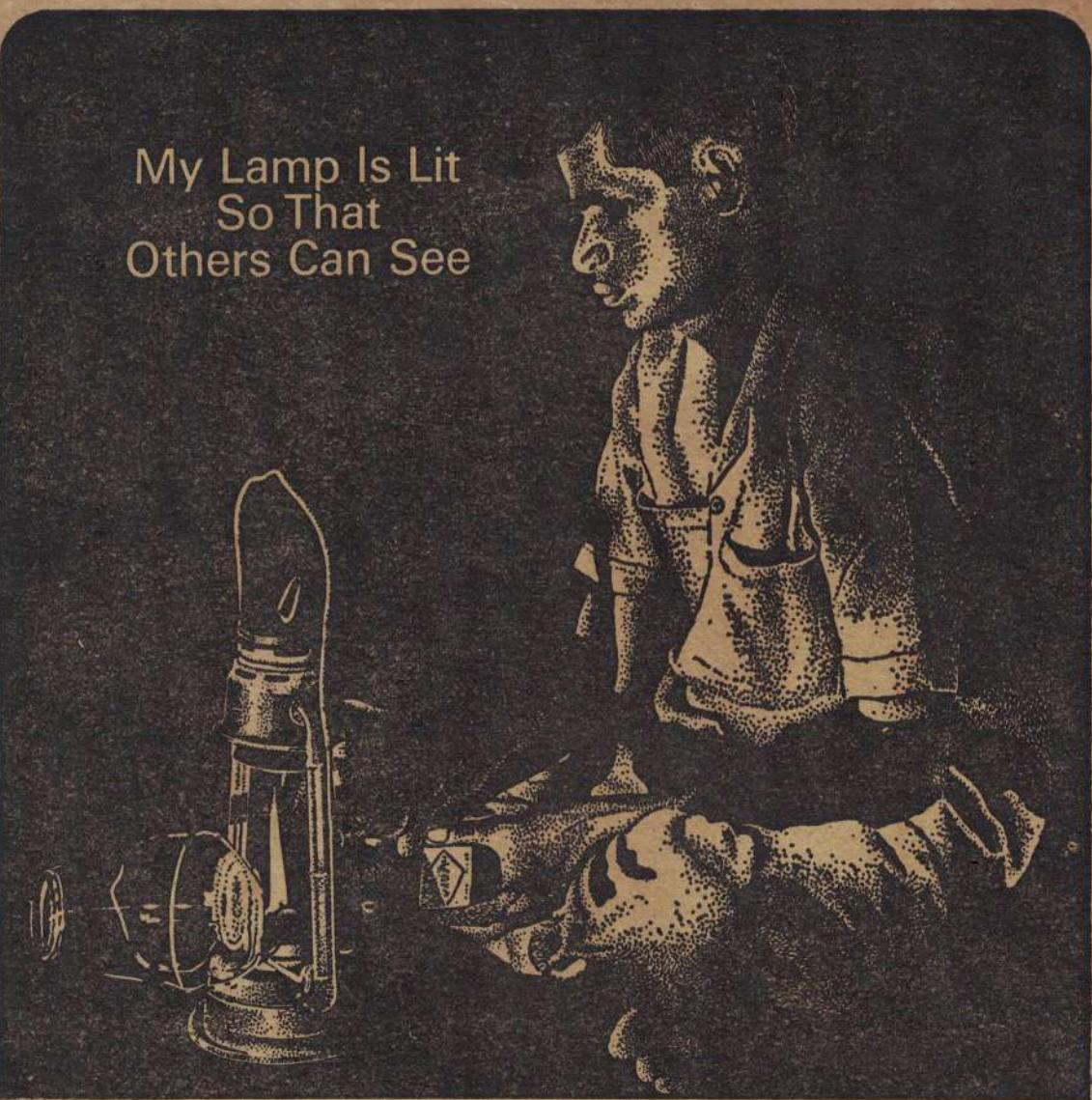


OPINION

APRIL 1971

Single Copy 50 Ps.

My Lamp Is Lit
So That
Others Can See



At eventide on a lonely road, returning after a hard day's work, a blind man met a stranger who laughingly asked: "Does a blind man need light?" "Yes," replied the blind man, "my lamp is lit so that others can see."

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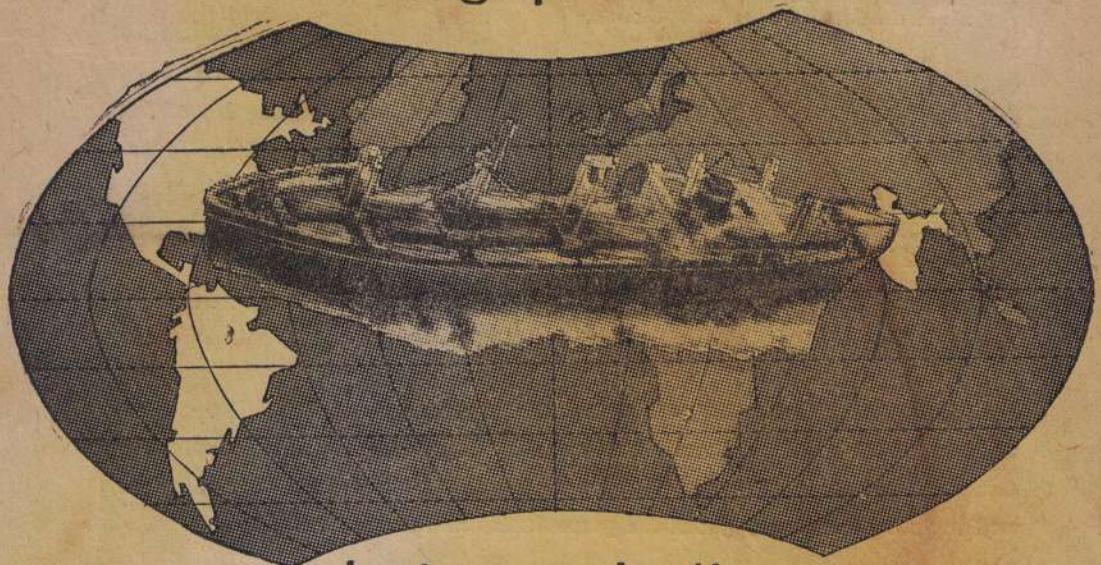
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AGENTS IN ALL PRINCIPAL PORTS OF THE WORLD

SISTA'S SSN 272

WHY ARE WE SO POOR ?

BECAUSE we have done the things we ought not to have done and have not done the things we ought to have done. Consequently there is no health in us.

Consider population figures :

1950-51	35 crore 70 lakhs
1960-61	43 crore 30 lakhs
1968-69	52 crore 40 lakhs
1970-71	54.7 crore

Now nobody can say that we did not know from 1950-51 or even from 1948-49 that one of the keys to prosperity for us was holding the population. Time and again was this brought to authority's notice. The Government seemed on occasion even to accept it as self-evident. Yet no attention was paid to bringing it about. The first fifteen years from 1950-51 were in this regard years the locusts had eaten. While Japan stabilised its population in the decade ending 1960-61, we wasted it in futile talk and even more futile experiments to ascertain what was and was not feasible, what attitudes were held by what people, etc., etc. Though we had ample knowledge gathered by some who had worked in the field very effectively themselves, and made available by them in talks and written statements, we would not act upon it. More recently we have spent a great deal of money in connection with this subject. But on what? On creating a new bureaucracy which, we hope, will do something. Meanwhile except for publications, talks, meetings, demographic institutes, seminars and colloquiums, nothing happens. The flood of population rolls on with ever greater vigour.

The point is that there is no political kudos to be gained by doing something seriously about birth control. You get no votes because of it and you can't even turn it into a soul-stirring slogan. It is basic, it is essential for any sound economy to flourish in this society, but what is there in it for Indira Gandhi and her ilk or indeed for any other political party? Hence a shrugging of the shoulders, a little lip-service on rare occasions, and no real serious effort. The same is true, though perhaps not to the same extent, of most of our professional economists. They will wax eloquent about almost every other aspect of our economic situation. About this a stray reference, if any at all.

This is not the place to say what should have been or what should be done even now. Both have been stated over and over again in these columns. About the second, it should be noted in passing that the real problem is in relation to two age groups only, 15 to 24 forming 18.6 per cent of the population and 25 to 34, forming 14.7 per cent of the population. There is not the least doubt that the problem is capable of solu-

tion, that with determined devotion and energetic and imaginative handling, the population can be held.

The papers recently carried an item about the laying of the foundation-stone of a new Legislative Chamber building in Bombay by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha. The cost, it was stated, was to be about two and a half crores. Now, why this expenditure? Hasn't the Maharashtra Legislature been able to function with the fullest vigour in its present Council Hall? It has. Then why the new building? Some inconvenience is felt. By whom? By some Members, some office-bearers, some Ministers. Is the inconvenience so terrible that it just cannot be borne any longer? Is there danger to life or health in carrying on as before? No, of course not. This expenditure then is not inescapable and a very poor country, it is common ground, ought not, save for clearly productive purposes, to enter into any expenditure that is not inescapable. The poorer the country, the greater its need for capital for productive purposes; also, in it a great lack of capital. A poor country then can only grow poorer if it devotes any part of the capital it has to expenditure which is not inescapable, to expenditure for show or to impress or for improving conditions, already reasonably good, for those in positions of authority. In other words facadism, gigantomania, and privlegisation are all diseases that keep a poor country poor or make it poorer. It would not be exaggeration to say that since Independence at least two thousand five hundred crores have been devoted to such purposes by the Centre and the States in the way of construction alone. This from the national point of view is so much waste, and if you waste large sums of the little capital you have, you don't improve your economic condition.

Nassar dies, the Government proclaims a holiday; The President dies, the Government proclaims a holiday; a Chief Minister dies, the State Government proclaims a holiday; Pakistan deals most disgracefully with its people in East Bengal, two State Governments declare a bandh; and so forth and so on. To express sorrow, to express indignation, to express joy, we Indians it seems just must not work. A holiday or bandh, countrywide, involves a loss of well above a hundred crores; the cost for a city like Bombay has been estimated to be about four crores. All this is in addition to the holidays fixed by the Central and State Governments, nineteen to twenty-one a year. For a country in our position, there should not be more than four holidays a year, in addition to the one day a week already allotted, and the usual ten days casual leave a year. Independence Day, Republic Day and two days midway between them should suffice. A secular state has no business to have religious holidays and no religion in any case enjoins that people should not work on such days. Prayers, rejoicing to celebrate, mourning to ensure remembrance, are all possible before and after work. In a country with enormous unemployment and underemployment, if even those who have work to do, holiday again and again, the national product must be affected detrimentally.

If a nation puts masses of capital into businesses of various kinds, and then cannot run them effectively and keeps on making losses, it is increas-

ing its poverty, not adding to its wealth. If without removing the defects that cause the losses,—and these can be many and various, from over-capitalisation to unsatisfactory and surplus labour, from interference by Ministers with management to corruption by them and their subordinates in contracts, from unused capacity to inadequate laying-in of materials and machinery parts—it goes on putting in capital into fresh projects, either new or taken over from others, who were running them and through them adding to the national product, the likelihood is that it is over-reaching itself, and will increase its own poverty. After twenty years of experience of management of business by Government, even staunch advocates of State-management, men who as Government servants under the former regime ran State-enterprises with great success, are compelled to concede the truth, for countries like ours, of the old saying, "When the ruler embarks on business, ruin faces the country". Very recently there was news of Maharashtra Government losing many lakhs on, of all things, a poultry-dressing plant. Now why a government should want to dress or rather undress poultry, or for that matter, run hotels, or bake bread, etc., when it is making such a sad mess of its own proper function of governing, cannot but be beyond the comprehension of sensible men. The answer, some are inclined to think, is not economic benefit to the country, but benefit to authority, direct and indirect, through increased power and patronage.

A country is bound to be poor in which the Government seems not to have understood yet that full value must be received for every rupee of public money spent. A former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission sorrowfully confessed that at best Government was getting sixty per cent value for money expended. This is so, not only as regards projects and contracts, but also as regards its own servants. Go into almost any Government office today and for one man who is working, one is out of the room, or chatting or drinking tea or preventing even the worker from working by interfering in one way or another. The old maxim "What is not inspected, is not done" guides nobody today, for hardly any officer dares to go into an office himself and start inspecting. The inspection of many a Minister's personal office would, no doubt, indicate a disgraceful state of indecision, delay and worse.

Such uneconomic behaviour is further compounded by wrong policies. For instance, to pay forty per cent of the price as subsidy for the export of a commodity in order to get foreign exchange—could anything be more uneconomic? You need foreign exchange, for sound and legitimate reasons. Take a direct loan, and allocate it properly. Don't mix it up with export. Let that be on its own merits. If the price is competitive, the quality good, the follow-up service reliable, the promotion, in terms of knowledge about the goods, wide-spread, not only will you export, but you will build up permanent export markets, that will bring you in quite reasonable sums of foreign exchange. By subsidy, you may get a once-in-a-while order, but think of the loss you are inflicting on the country. In effect at the cost of India, you are benefiting the foreign buyer. A poor

nation which does this continually, what is it doing but making itself poorer?

We have forgotten that the central problem of economics in a free society is price. Our Government, almost from the moment it came into power in 1947, seems to have not understood the role of price in development. Consequently, it has let prices rip. Its various efforts, made under the pressure of great outcry, to do something about prices, have been so ludicrous that it is unnecessary to recount them. Regularly the Government has permitted the rupee to lose value, with the natural result of labour unrest, higher wages, fall in exports, difficulty for the middle and lower classes, devaluation and set-back in development. Its standard has been the sum spent, but the sum spent being worth much less in real terms, the result is bound not to correspond with the result expected even assuming full value was received for money spent, and not the usual sixty per cent. Not thus does a poor country shed its poverty.

Nor again does it shed it by deficit financing, spending what you have not got, and managing by adding a large dollop of paper to the money-supply, you originate, thereby again reducing the value of the rupee and giving another spurt to prices. Whether this device has a useful role to play in special conditions in advanced countries may be a matter for argument. That it has none in the circumstances of a poor country like ours, is evident.

Corruption, too, has laid a heavy toll on any effort towards betterment. Corruption has delayed decisions, led to favourable opportunities being missed, inflicted serious loss on some in the interest of others, created often a state of great uncertainty, caused wrong opinions to be given, all have suffered tremendous hindrance in the path of development. We have suffered corruption to prosper until today it is the gravest of all our national ills.

The large loss we suffer on account of the heavy smuggling of gold and foreign goods, has been dealt with in these columns recently (6.4.1971). Some people argue that anyhow the gold and goods are in the country, so there is no real loss. The point is not that. The point is, what use are that gold and goods to us? Could we not have done without them, and put what we gave for them to much better productive use within the country? There can be no doubt that smuggling does result in enormous loss of real resources, and makes the country poorer. It also robs the state of its legitimate revenue. Long ago it was said "Every smuggler is in fact a pick-pocket."

There is also little understanding of the fact that not to waste is actually to earn. This applies to both Government and people. A foreigner describes his surprise at seeing a shower of small coins descend from the windows of all the compartments of a train into the river as it went over a particular bridge. A completely uneconomic profession, consisting of over a million people, is maintained by the wasteful practice of giving to beggars. The amount of grain that is allowed to be wasted by not being properly dried and stored is estimated at anything between ten to fifteen

per cent of the yield. To that add at least five per cent for what is allowed to be wasted while still in the field, eaten up by rodents, birds, monkeys. By not destroying uneconomic cattle and selling their hides, the country loses doubly. It does not get the large foreign exchange such sales would bring and also has useless cattle encumbering its soil, making conditions of fodder, etc., more difficult for useful cattle. In education, we seem almost to be determined to render useless the really good material that we have. Instead of opening up to students the entire treasure-house of the world's knowledge, we insist in many territorial areas on preventing them from developing the only skill that would enable them to get access to it, a knowledge of English. We want them to rely on translations in their media of the best books in various subjects, and at the end of twenty years, the number of such translations is extremely limited. In one University, M.A. degrees are awarded on the study of one book, the only one on the subject in that medium. All this is wanton waste. Can a country which willingly indulges in it expect not to be poor today and perhaps even poorer tomorrow ?

For a country in our situation, the path to betterment is through good sense, honesty in dealing, hard work, thrift, living well within its means, sound investment, careful management in every sphere of activity, close watch on results, proper education of the young, enlightened development of natural resources and inherent skills, devotion to duty. A man may, of course, attain riches by luck. He may win the first prize in one or more lotteries. So, too, may a nation. It may strike enormous basins of oil in its continental shelf or huge diamond-mines in its deserts. But even then, for both the man and the nation, there remain the problems of getting the best possible results out of the wealth that has suddenly accrued to them. For a nation on whom this welcome rain from Heaven does not descend, there is no short-cut to betterment, however great its faith in magic, the stars, sacrifices, etc. It must work and its work must be rightly-oriented. And here it is that the quality of Government is of fundamental importance. Not for nothing did the U.N. Expert Team on Development lay down that the first requisite for development in any nation was the possession by it of an honest and efficient Government. Can we apply that to ourselves ? Is it an honest and efficient government that has been responsible for the lapses mentioned above and many others not mentioned ? Is it an honest and efficient government that tells you now it can get rid of poverty by soaking the rich generally. Why, if it confiscated everything that everybody owning over Rs. 500 had and distributed the results per capita, some insignificant count of paisas would come to every citizen, and all production would grind to a standstill. And if it did not distribute it but kept it and attempted to use it, its capacity for management is such that even then either production would come to a standstill or the product from it would be greatly reduced. The nation would become poorer and the condition of the people worse.

Go then, good Indian, get yourself an honest and efficient government, a government with some understanding of economic cause and effect, a

OPINION, April 27, 1971

government that will collect all taxes and permit no evasion, if you want your country to be not poor. Change also some of your attitudes, give up uneconomic practices, sanctified though they may be by time or hallowed by superstition. However great and praiseworthy your desire for equality, realise that the man who honestly earns five lacs and honestly declares for tax purposes what he has earned, deserves praise and not condemnation, for of his earnings he pays the state four lacs twenty-five thousand seven hundred rupees and keeps himself only seventy-five thousand three hundred. He is a worthy citizen, who by the sweat of his brow and the labour of his brain contributes amply to the Commonweal. Emulate him, if you can, and make a corresponding contribution. You will be a far more useful citizen than if you merely shout slogans for equality, higher pay, work to rule, bandh, etc. There can in fact be no absolute equality in economic matters, any more than there can be in physical or mental equipment. The best that can be attempted is equality of opportunity, already to some extent in evidence. Even for that, funds are necessary, so if you earn honestly a great deal and give honestly out of that to the state what is its full due, you are making considerable contribution towards it, always provided the state uses honestly and sensibly the funds it collects. And in order that we may be sure of that, we must have an honest and efficient government, just as we must if the country is to cease to be poor. Nor will it make any difference to this basic need, if the Government subverts our democratic system and substitutes for it the Communist system, with all power in its own hands. The economy may grow in some directions, as it has been growing in some now, but on the whole the people, deprived of all freedom, will be far more miserable than they are today.

He who governs by his moral excellence may be compared to the Pole-star, which abides in its place, while all the stars bow towards it.

* * * *

To err and not reform may indeed be called error.

THUMBS

*You will not take a peekaboo
In the distorting mirror. Now
This I certainly shall not allow.*

*Unshaved, unwashed!—hole in shoe or sock?
These jolly facts no uncommon luck.
Not point them out to me, my man.*

*Hence, I will make you forget
Gout in bone, tightness in chest
The stomach's decay. The rest.*

*Kindly obey. Part from the thought
Of the ambiguous manner of the trip
And the rickety body's jerky plod,*

*The soul jolted every few wheel-turns
Of the cart, along the long
Stretches of the dirt-track.*

*No, not point out, nor, Fate
That will presently have you dangling by your tail.
There is more time still left.*

*Time enough to make
The athletic lift
Of the world's great height and weight.*

*A good bit of it still may
Spinning stand on the little finger
Of your either hand.*

*So thumbs up. Clear deck.
You manage, yet shall, the Goliath
With tides of laughter, till the end.*

BREAK-UP

*you know, you will not
walk out of the cage*

*not strange, therefore
that down you slump in the dumps
that the blood-stream breaks-up in black-heads
that there are crazed storms abroad
in the brain-box ;*

*not long now before
the short-circuit
and the blow-out
of the divine-spark*

*only dead dust particles
will dare dance hereon
between the glassed eyes
and the forehead.*

*clearly, your worlds are tumbling
about your shuddering ears—
the thews of your thoughts gone slack
sans push or pull
not knowing their escape-routes
to firmer ground*

*what secret concert of kindred souls, mon ami, what . . . !—
now that the spirit's powder is impossibly wet,
heart-taxed by the iron-laws
of a life-time of defeats*

*no jab or kick in the face
will jerk those sick eagles
of the elan vital
to spin in the air*

K. Malik

INDIA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN

A. G. NOORANI

INDIA neglected her defence in the Himalayas and came to grief. But the lessons of the debacle in the NEFA have not been learnt as India's policy in the Indian Ocean shows. At best it is a confused policy if a policy there be at all. The main impression one gets is simply one of unconcern bred by a blind reliance on the Soviet Union.

The Government speaks in two voices. Thus on one and the same day (April 7, 1971), the Defence Minister, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, told the Lok Sabha in a written answer that there had been "an increase in the movement of Soviet ships in the Indian Ocean". But, the Deputy Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Surinder Pal Singh said that the Government had "no positive evidence" of a large-scale Soviet naval build up in the Indian Ocean. Where does an "increase in the movement" end and a build-up begin? What better proof of a build-up in an Ocean can there be than a sudden and substantial increase in the presence or movement of ships?

On November 20, last year, Lord Balniel, Minister of State for Defence said in the House of Commons that Soviet naval strength in the Indian Ocean had increased from nil five years ago to a score of ships today—seven warships, four submarines and nine auxiliaries.

But our Defence Minister in his written, and presumably well-considered, reply confessed that the Government was not aware of the details of the number or type of ships. If this is true it betrays appalling ignorance; if it is not true it shows a profound distrust of the people's representatives and, indeed, of the people themselves.

Mr. Jagjivan Ram, however, added that Government considered the presence in the Ocean of warships of countries not bordering the Ocean "unnecessary and likely to create tension". This has been made known to all the Powers, including Russia and America.

But the impartiality is more apparent than real. For, while the Government of India has repeatedly and angrily inveighed against the British and the Americans for their deal in respect of the "British Indian Ocean Territory", it has studiously underplayed the Soviet role in the region. (The B.I.O.T. is a group of lands in the centre of the Ocean between Mauritius and Ceylon in which a new British colony was established five years ago to provide defence facilities for the U.K. and the U.S.). The Government of India has sought to minimise not only its own relations with the Soviet Government but also that Government's relations with the other countries of the region.

The Times published (September 15, 1970) a very informative article by Mr. A. M. Rendel in which he wrote, "India has already granted Russia some bunkering and other naval facilities in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. A Soviet supply depot and training mission is also at Visakha-

patnam for naval aid to the Indian navy in the eastern half of the Indian Ocean." He mentioned two other deals; one with South Yemen for a Radio Station and ammunition dump on the island of Socotra, and the other with Mauritius for the use of its ports by Russian "fishing" vessels.

Similar reports were published by others, too. Mr. Peter Stewart said on the B.B.C. that "although the Indian Government says it affords them no naval facilities, the Russians are helping to extend the port of Visakhapatnam on the eastern seaboard. Ports are also being built or extended with similar assistance at Aden and Hodeida in the Yemen Republic and Berbera in Somalia. Russian ships call at Mogadishu and at Dar-e-Salaam in Tanzania. Mauritius has recently concluded a fisheries agreement to allow Russian trawlers to be serviced, plus landing rights for Soviet planes to rotate the trawler crews.

"Socotra, off the Horn of Africa, commands the approaches to the left-leaning republics of the Yemen, the Sudan and Somalia, and straddles the approaches to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. Some weeks ago a 4,000-ton Soviet tank-landing ship, the NATO code-name of which is "Alligator", appeared off Socotra, attended by two destroyers. This rocky island, once a British signal station, was annexed by Aden when Britain pulled out and has since lain forgotten by all but its scavenging goats. Now, it appears, the Soviet Navy has refurbished the radio masts, excavated tunnels in the rock for stores or ammunition and stationed marines to guard them."

(*The Listener*, November 12, 1970.)

Marion Donhoff wrote in *Die Zeit* (February 12) "Moscow's sole success is Visakhapatnam on India's eastern seaboard, where the Russians are building harbour facilities in return for certain rights on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Indian Ocean".

Speaking in the Lok Sabha on November 19, 1970, the Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Swaran Singh reiterated the Government's views "opposing" the creation of the U.K.-U.S. "communication and staging" facilities in the B.I.O.T. but he completely exonerated the U.S.S.R. He denied that any facilities had been given to Soviet naval ships at Visakhapatnam. But that is not the charge; the charge is of Soviet aid there in return for facilities in the Andamans.

For good measure, Mr. Swaran Singh took it upon himself to speak for South Yemen and Mauritius as well; denying on behalf of the one the lending of Socotra and on behalf of the other that the agreement is "for any purpose other than fishing facilities". But, as one writer has pointed out, "fishing facilities in mid-Indian Ocean are not an economic proposition". Russia is certainly fishing; the object of its labours is not however fish but political influence in the region. India has failed to evolve any sound and coherent policy towards this region perhaps because its Government is not quite clear in its own mind what its relationship towards the Super Powers ought to be. They may compete or they may make-up. "We will do nothing to harm legitimate Soviet and Chinese interests in the area" President Nixon has said. In either case, India and the other countries of the region have little cause for complacency.

ABROAD AND AT HOME

VIVEK

Wellington, Nilgiris, 13-4-1971

EVERYTHING is to change, everything remains as before", aptly sums up the Soviet Party Congress. More consumer goods, higher salaries, more facilities for the people, has there ever been a Party Congress that has not said all these ? And has not the reality in every case fallen far behind the promises ? Khrushchev was sure they would surpass the American standard of living in five years. It hasn't happened even after a longer period. What has happened is the strengthening of the military machine. Again that is promised, and undoubtedly again that will happen. Which just shows how foolish are the people who believe the Communists of the Soviet Union have given up their design for world-supremacy, and are now just like any other great power. The overtures to China are another aspect of the same design. "We reject your slanderous insinuations, but in the common interest of our world cause we overlook them and extend to you the hand of friendship in all sincerity. Please grasp it, please do. It is very much to the joint interest of our cause and of both of us to be friends." That is what the appeal to China comes to. Let us hope the cheeks of the many experts who talked of irrevocable enmity between the two great Communist powers are now blushing.

The principal lesson of the Congress for democrats everywhere is that all talk of the Russian authorities softening in their attitude towards freedom of thought and expression, moving towards genuine liberty, is just so much nonsense. Firmly the Congress declared that all literature, all art, all life, must be in conformity with the Party dictates. He who goes against this rule, however preeminent he may be in his art, whatever his reputation in the world, is a traitor to the party and the country and must suffer. Solzhenitsyn will not be allowed to publish, Rostropovic will not be able to give major concerts. Even Sakharov, the great scientist to whom Russia owes so much, is said to be in serious trouble because of his speaking up for liberalisation. For dissidents not so well known, there is always the labour camp, or the ward in the mental hospital. At least one devotee of literature and the arts finds his way there every week with the kind assistance of the K.G.B., according to a knowledgeable Source. This then is the condition of the intellectual who presumes to think for himself in the premier Communist state of the world, the state which proudly claims to have turned into fact the theories of Marx and Engel. Had Marx lived under Stalin, it has been well said, he would not have lived long. Had Marx lived under Brezhnev, Kosygin and Podgorny, it may be added now be would have lived as an inmate

in a mental hospital. Said the kindly Kosygin with the utmost contempt to a dissident intellectual "You, you fellow, I can't understand you ! Why do you stay here at all ? Why don't you go to America ?" "Will you let me go, will you ?" asked the man eagerly, and then sadness overcoming him "Ah, no, you won't, I know very well. This is a mouse trap, this land, there is only the way in."

Indian intellectuals who have adopted the Soviet Union as their spiritual fatherland and long to see its methods and principles in practice here, advisers of the Prime Minister and her confidants, educationists whose stock-in-trade is the language of the dictatorship of the proletariat, may consider what their own fates could well be in the Communist Peoples' Democracy they are trying so hard to bring about here, if even a spark of the normal freedom to which they are accustomed now asserts itself in an unwary moment. Which will they choose if they have any voice in the choice at all, Ranchi or Thana ?

* * * *

Mrs. Bandarnaike's plight, one may with justice say, she has brought on herself. If after a spectacular electoral victory, you set out to disorganise the whole structure of a country, turn into a shambles its economic life, keep on making statements with little regard to facts, each more extreme than the other, you must not complain when young revolutionaries, whom you yourself have encouraged and unleashed, turn to bite the hand that fed them. The Che Guevarists or Tupomaros or Naxalites are all children of the slackness and weak fibre of authority, encouraged in their early conspiracies by sympathisers in power who declared that their violence was only an upsurge against injustice and privilege. And so they in Ceylon grew in numbers and in strength and with the help and guidance of Communist China, murdered and burnt and sabotaged until they threatened their dear mother herself. Pathetic was the broadcast the other night of a Communist Minister, who said he just couldn't understand the anti-government behaviour of these young people of the Left, when the Government itself had shown by its acts and legislation that it was so Left that nothing could be more Left. He forgot that once you cry Havoc and let loose the dogs of disorder, they are just as apt to tear you to bits as your adversary.

The highly-placed good mother of the Indian Naxalites will, it is to be hoped, profit at least now by the experience of her sister in Ceylon. Merrily the Naxalites continue to kill. Six, eight, ten victims per diem is their quota. A High Court Judge, a Deputy Superintendent of Police, a businessman, a poor passer-by, a simple constable, none escape their net. And their great patroness, exclaiming violence will not be tolerated and reiterating it is a political problem, lets violence go on unchecked, while the crypto-Communist Head of the Bengal State, egregious Dhavan, her pet protege, delivers himself light-heartedly of the portentous statement that his charge reminds him of the Russian capital on the eve of the 1917 Revolution !

* * * *

Reports from Karachi say the Pakistanis are counting on ten Chinese divisions taking the field against us, if we intervene on behalf of Bangla Desh. That between Communist China and Pakistan the tie is very close, there can be no doubt, and the Chinese have already adopted a threatening attitude towards us. The best thing, of course, would be if some slight glimmer of sanity appeared even at this late stage in the Pakistan High Command and it settled terms with its prisoner Mujib-ur-Rahman. If not, and resistance continues in the East, we just might not be able to tolerate any more utterly unarmed and helpless men, women and children being massacred, and might have to go to their aid. We would not be fighting against Pakistan in fact, we would be fighting for Pakistan, for surely there are more Pakistanis, despite the slaughter, in East Pakistan than in West. In good conscience then we could well help the majority against the tyranny of the leadership of a minority.

Our leaders, political and military, have been telling us that we are so well prepared that we could deal successfully with both China and Pakistan, if they combined in aggression. Perhaps the time is coming when they will be able to prove true their assurances. It is fortunate that China is still a couple of years away from having its inter-continental ballistic missile operational. If it had, and was in a position to destroy New York or Washington, there would have been nothing to prevent it from threatening us with its intermediate range ballistic missiles or even using them against us. And that would have been the end of any idea of intervention on behalf of the oppressed. Once again it could be clear what a complete sitting-duck this country has made of itself by its refusal to develop nuclear weapons !

The Karachi and Islamabad civilian view is that the fate of Mujib is sealed. A military court will try him, hold him to be a traitor, and order his execution. A firing squad will do the rest. No effort should be spared by every Government that considers itself civilised to prevent such a fate overtaking the truly remarkable democratic leader. God's favour be upon him, and may he soon be free !

* * * * *

The foreign press and foreign radio commentators are greatly exercised over the likely coming into being of a third Communist giant. East Bengal, independent, is very likely in their view to turn Communist. Its pull on West Bengal, already with a large number of Communists and near Communists, will, they think, be irresistible, and so, hey presto, the Communist giant, which whatever they may say now, neither Communist China nor Communist Russia will be able to refrain from recognising and aiding. How terrible for India, they feel, no wonder the Indian Government is behaving so cautiously. Well, if it did happen, it would certainly be a disaster of the first order. But shall we refrain from our plain duty which, in this writer's view, is to help the oppressed Bengalis to the largest extent possible, because it might happen ? No, do what is right and trust in God. The best laid plans of mice and men gang aft agley. So why not the calculated conjectures of journals and experts, however

eminent? Once Bangla Desh is freed, if Mujib is still the leader, it may well be that it will not turn Communist. Again, even though political memories are short, once enthusiasm is fulfilled by the establishment of Bangla Desh, our West Bengalis may well not forget that the riots in Bengal that caused Partition were not the work of Punjabis from the West but of the local people. They may well feel that while maintaining the friendliest relations with the fellow Bengalis of Bangla Desh, it would be just as well to stay outside it, under the aegis of the Indian flag, which assures to them an honourable place in the comity of states that is India.

* * * * *

The Arabs and the Israelis, what a picture they make! The Arabs feckless, disunited, dissipating their great strength by factional strife unable to work together even in the face of a common foe; the Israelis compact, tough, greedy, self-confessed, self-aggrandisers, experts at specious reasoning in the forwarding of their attempt to keep the Arab territories they seized at the end of the 1957 war. Who should succeed? Neither side. If justice ruled international affairs both would be slapped down hard, the Israelis being made to return the conquered areas, the Arabs being made to enter into proper peace treaties with them, Jerusalem being internationalised, and a United Nations force being stationed along every frontier for at least the next ten years with instructions to keep the parties apart. But justice does not prevail in international affairs, so? Probably on present showing, the Israelis.

The British, the French, the Russians are convinced that in their own interests, the Israelis ought to give up the territories in dispute. American officialdom is too. But the Israelis seem to have sufficient influence in American politics to prevent the American Government coming down against them, and so they hope to wear down the rest. The situation would of course change considerably if the Russians made it clear they regarded the return of the territory as so important that they would be prepared to adopt extreme means to bring it about. The American government would then have to make up its mind whether Israel's retention of these pieces of land was so important to it that it would be prepared to fight a real nuclear war for them. Very probably on balance its answer would be that it was not and that consequently Israel must come into line. However that stage has not been reached, and it may well never be. So Israel sits pretty, the Arabs gnash their teeth and make futile diplomatic gestures, and the Great Four say tut, tut, be good, chaps, be good.

* * * * *

A strange people the Americans! It can scarcely have escaped the attention of even the moderately intelligent among them that in Vietnam, the Russian and Chinese Communist regimes are conducting a war against them by proxy. And yet they want to cut and run. They have no objection to being utterly defeated by the Communist powers, aggression from whom they have for years been preparing to prevent and beat back, provided they are defeated in a far-away place, from which they can quickly avert their eyes. A thousand specious reasons they urge for getting out.

The real one which they hide deep down in their mind is that they dare not stand up to the Communists. Many years ago this writer pointed out that having got into the war, America's clear duty was to win, that it could win easily if it stopped Russian supplies pouring in through North Vietnamese ports, that the only thing that prevented it from doing so was fear of consequences if in the process Russian ships were sunk, that this fear was absurd since the Russians were not likely to risk the destruction of their own cities for the sake of the Vietnamese. But for years and years they havered, and now they are not only quitting, but trying to make out that what is in fact cowardice, is great statesmanship. Do they really think the Communist powers, having defeated them in Vietnam, are going to leave them in peace hereafter? He who fights and runs away may live to fight another day. But fight he will have to, and better by far to win today's fight and so perhaps not have to fight again. However of all emotions, none is more debilitating to the human being than fear, and here you have a great people, with enormous resources and skills and half the productive power of the world, trembling like an aspen leaf in the grip of fear.

* * * * *

Why is the average Indian so damnably exuberant? Why does he seem to think that in order to be happy he has to be noisy? This writer was yesterday having a quiet, peaceful lunch, looking out on lovely greenery, when a horde of Ph.D.s., M.A.s, B.E.s, etc., etc., the officer staff of a large company, very well-dressed, some even wearing elaborate hand-painted ties, poured in, all talking at the top of their voices, grinning at one another, definitely determined to show everyone they were enjoying themselves. Peace vanished from the dining-room, in which four or five other tables had also been occupied by couples and threes and fours, foreigners all eating and talking quietly, their voices for the most part being carried only as a murmur to the other occupants of the room. A strange phenomenon, thought this writer, perhaps it is the sun in our blood that insists on bursting out so vociferously, perhaps we are at heart so sad a people that we have to make a very special effort to appear to be enjoying ourselves, and the effort having been made, just can't be kept within limits but has to run to extremes. Ah well, he said to himself, no doubt some school of social science professor will one day hold an elaborate survey and write a book about it, meanwhile let me depart quickly to that distant terrace for my coffee.

Joy unconfined in this way very probably is a worthy emotion, but it is generally harassing to the innocent spectator. Those indulging in it might occasionally recognise that. Perhaps, in time consideration for others, however unknown, may also become one of our more prominent characteristics. Meanwhile, God's mercy be upon us.

LEGACY

What would I have stolen ? For
 A stretch of bed to put seeds into.
 From useless fields, no-man's-land,
 Property valued at so little
 No fencing keeps the cattle out ;
 No man from the forest department yet
 There to check erosion, no guard
 That need be bribed. If stray buffaloes
 May scrape their teeth, goats
 Invent pasture, my haul of dusty, grimy earth
 Is innocuous surely.
 It leaves a chasm.
 Daily it gapes as my seeds suck and sprout ;
 Overrun, yes, by fissures claiming it all
 Into uniformity, yet abrupt, evoking
 The wrong of torn out flesh.
 The theft is basic.

It gives me power.
 I am uplifted though I can see
 No legacy of land awaits me.

Gieve Patel

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SOME LETTERS BY GHALIB

HERE in Delhi they have a term 'a new nawaab'. This term can be applied to any one, Hindu or Muslim. When a man dies—a wealthy man, that is—and his property comes to his son, bad characters get together and begin addressing him as 'Lord of bounty' and 'Your exalted lordship'. They tell him, 'Such and such a courtesan is desperately in love with you' and 'Such and such a lord was praising you to his assembled friends. You must certainly send for this courtesan and give a party for this lord. That is what worldly wealth is for. You cannot take anything with you. Did your father take anything with him? and will you?' Anyway to date your humble servant has seen three such new nawwabs. One was Khatri Todar Mal. He had a hundred thousand rupees to his name, and in six or seven years he lost it all, left Delhi, and disappeared without a trace. The second was a Punjabi boy named Sa'adat. He lost all he had—some forty to fifty thousand rupees. The third was named Khan Muhammad. He too had twenty to twenty-five thousand rupees and used to ride around in a buggy. Now he clip-clops around in down-at-heel shoes.

* * * *

Thomas Metcalfe Sahib, the Delhi Agent and Commissioner, has died. He was the only one left of those who knew us. The celebration of his funeral defies description. There was a crowd of a hundred thousand people stretching from the Kashmiri Gate to his residence.

* * * *

These days Maulana Ghalib (God's mercy be upon him) is in clover. A volume of the *Tale of Amir Hamza* has come—about 600 pages of it—and a volume of the same size of *Bostan-i-Khayal*. And there are seventeen bottles of good wine in the pantry. So I read all day and drink all night.

The man who wins such bliss can only wonder
What more had Jamshed? What more Alexander?

* * * *

Yes sir? What do you want of me? I corrected the manuscript and returned it. What more did you want me to write? You prefer the ways of Muhammad Shah's reign (1719-1748): 'Here all is well and I desire to know of your welfare also. I had received no letter from you for many days. I was pleased to hear from you. The manuscript, duly corrected, is returned herewith. Please give it to my dear son Mir Sarfaraz Husain, and give him my blessing also. And further give my blessing to Hakim Mir Ashraf Ali and to Mir Afzal Ali. It behoves you as a dutiful son always to continue writing to me in this way.'

What do you say? Isn't it a fact that this is the way they used to

write letters in those days? Good heavens, what an attitude—that unless it's written like that, a letter's not a letter but a well without water, a cloud without rain, a tree without fruit, a house without light, a lamp without radiance! I know that you are alive: you know that I am alive. I wrote what was necessary, leaving it to other times to write the superfluities. And if I can't please you without writing like this, well, my friend, I've written you a line or two in that style now—and when a man makes up for a prayer he has missed, his atonement is accepted. So forgive me, and don't be cross.

* * * *

My friend, Delhi and Lucknow are agreed that 'Jafa' is feminine. No one would ever make it masculine, except perhaps in Bengal, where they make even 'cow-elephant' masculine.

* * * *

There is a verse of Nazir (God's mercy be upon him) which you may write on a piece of paper and tie round my neck, and then expel me from the company of poets

The brightness of my vision is all rusted over now.
Alas that He who made my mirror did not cherish it!

Note: Ghalib wrote about himself "the love of poetry which I had brought with me from eternity assailed me and won my soul, saying, 'to polish the mirror and show in it the face of meaning—this too is a mighty work.'

* * * *

Pretension is one thing, and accomplishment is another. Jalalae Tabatabai (God's mercy be upon him) wrote a letter to Sedaya Hindi. I forget his exact words, but the gist is that one day Maulana Urfi (God's mercy be upon him) and Abul Fazl were disputing together. Abul Fazl said to Urfi 'I have prosecuted my studies to the farthest limit and brought my knowledge of Persian to perfection.' Urfi replied 'How can you match my experience? Ever since I was old enough to understand, every word that I have heard from the old women and old men of my house was in Persian.' Shaikh Abul Fazl replied 'I acquired my Persian from Anwari and Khaqani (two famous classical poets) and you learnt it from old women.' Urfi replied 'And Anwari and Khaqani also learnt it from old women'.

* * * *

"Friend, my greetings to you. Your letter came, and I read both your gazals and rejoiced. Flattery is not your humble servant's way, and if flattery be allowed to enter into matters where the art of poetry is concerned, then a man's shagird cannot perfect himself. Remember, you've never yet sent me a gazal in which I have not made corrections, especially of Urdu usage. These two gazals are, in word and content, without blemish. No correction was called for anywhere. A hundred thousand praises on you!"

* * * *

"I have examined your Gazals. Your humble servant makes it a rule that where he sees faults or defects in a man's verse, he puts them right, and where he finds it free of fault he does not make changes."

* * * *

If an old servant who has obeyed your commands all his life fails to carry out an order in his old age, that is no crime. If the collection of my Urdu prose (letters) cannot be printed without a preface from me, then I opt not for impression but for suppression. Sadi, God's mercy be upon him, says

It is the way of men with freedom in their gift
To free their slaves when once old age has come to them.
You come in that category. You are a 'man with freedom in your gift.'
So why don't you act upon this verse.

* * * *

I received your letter and though it did not please me, it did not displease me either. Anyway, you may continue to think of me—unworthy and despised of men though I am—as your well-wisher. What can I do? I cannot change my ways. I cannot write the way the Indian writers of Persian do, and start talking all sorts of nonsense like a hired panegyrist. Look at my odes and you will see how long the preamble is and how relatively short the panegyric proper. My prose is the same. Look at my foreword to Nawab Mustafa Khan's tazkira to see how much praise you find in it. Look at my introduction to Mirza Haya's diwan. Take the foreword I wrote at Mr. John Jacob's request, to the Diwan of Hafiz—you will see that apart from one couplet of verse in which I have mentioned his name and praised him, all the rest is taken up with quite different themes. I swear by God that if I had been writing a foreword to the diwan of some prince or nobleman, I would not have praised him so highly as I have praised you. If you knew me and my ways you would have counted what I wrote as ample praise. Anyway, in short, I have taken out the sentence I wrote about you and written another in its place, just to please you. It is clear to me that you don't think these things out for yourself, but allow yourself to be misguided by other gentlemen, most of whom, I expect, will regard my verse and prose as worthless. And why? Because their ears are not accustomed to its sound. Well, you can't expect people who rank Qatil as a good writer to appreciate the real worth of prose and poetry.

* * * *

The man who has the wherewithal to break the fast when evening comes

Must surely keep the fast; it is his bounden duty to.
He who has nothing he can eat when it is time to break the fast
Can only eat the fasts themselves; what else is he to do?

* * * *

The sun is fierce. I'm keeping the fast, whiling it away, that is. Every now and then I take a drink of water or smoke the hookah, or eat a bite of bread. People here have warped minds and strange ways: here

am I whiling away the fast and they inform me that I'm not keeping it. They can't understand that not to keep it is one thing, and to while it away is another.

Twin soul of mine, may Agra's air and water, distilled from hapless Ghalib's sighs and tears, rejoice your heart. Though we are far apart, yet the power of thought of my far-ranging mind has brought our oneness to the point where distance dares not to draw near. Granted that you have gone on a far journey and that the thought is near to you that you are far from me; and yet while you stay in the city of my birth, then truly we are near to one another. And I rejoice because my love that sees afar has sent my eyes and heart with you upon this journey, that I too, held in this place of exile (Delhi), may pay due tribute of joy at the sight of the city of my birth. Let no man look upon Agra as of slight account, but as he passes through her roads call on God's preserving and protecting power to hold her in its keeping. For she was once the playground of my love-distracted heart. . . . To every grain of dust of that land in flower my body sends its message of love, and on every leaf in those fair gardens my soul calls benedictions to rain down.

I think of your good fortune, and my eye is on the road to see when you will write, and weeps to see no letter ever comes to tell me how the stone horse (a famous monument in Agra) responded to my greeting and how the river's ripples made reply.

* * * *

[The Editor strongly commends to all interested in the greatest Indian poet of the nineteenth century the excellent UNESCO *Ghalib* by Ralph Russell and Khurshidul Islam (Allen and Unwin, London, 70s). The letters above, taken from it, give some idea of the 'zinda dili' of this very likeable human being who "set his face in the path of poetry" because "to polish the mirror and show in it the face of meaning—this too is a mighty work." He was not only a great poet, he was a truly remarkable man—God's Mercy be upon him.]

In nature there is no blemish but the mind,
None can be called deformed but the unkind.

* * * *

I will not grieve that men do not know me,
I will grieve that I do not know men.

ROUGH PASSAGE

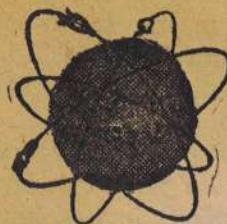
*Mortal as I am, I face
the end with unspeakable
relief, knowing
how I should feel
if I were stopped and cut off.*

*Were I to clutch at the air,
straw in my extremity,
how should I not scream,
'I haven't finished' ?
Yet, that too would pass unheeded.*

*Love, I haven't the key
to unlock His gates.
Night curves. I grasp your hand
in a rainbow of touch. Of the dead
I speak nothing but good.*

R. Parthasarathy

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THE STORY OF A BOOK

PERIN H. CABINETMAKER

A BUNDLE-OF-BONES boy was watching other children play outside his humble home. Suddenly his honey-coloured body was seized with a fit of violent coughing. He clutched at his sides as though his lungs would burst. The widowed mother watched the child in pain. The doctor from the free clinic wanted her to give him good food and expensive medicine. She could barely manage to give her children one meal a day. The boy's father, a school teacher, had earned a good deal of respect but hardly any money.

Fortunately for the boy, about this time, his elder sister's husband who had retreated to the Himalayas, returned to Mysore to take charge of the Palace Yoga Shala. The brother-in-law suggested to the fourteen-year old to demonstrate and teach a few asanas at the Yoga Shala in return for accommodation, school education and two meals a day. The boy was over-joyed. He would at last have some food. His 'guru' proved a hard task-master. However the child persisted. He obeyed his 'guru' implicitly. He carried out his duties which went on increasing, diligently. And when opportunity came his way, he bade a most respectful farewell to his guru-cum-brother-in-law to start teaching on his own at the age of seventeen. The boy was Sundararaja Iyengar, son of the deceased school teacher of Bellur, Shri Krishnamacharya and grand-son of the illustrious Sanskrit scholar, Shri Srinivasa Iyengar who went from Mysore to Gujarat to spread the Sri Vaishnava sect.

Iyengar was not content with his 'guru's' repertoire of a few asanas. He read ancient books, experimented with new techniques and developed new asanas. He cured himself of his T.B. with the help of asanas alone. His body was at last free of pain. And it is this rare gift he imparts to his students.

To mention but a few. After years of hardship and privation, young Iyengar, now a 'householder' with wife and a growing family settled down in Poona. A grateful student invited him to Bombay to treat a famous violinist, Yehudi Menuhin, who lay listless in his bedroom at Raj Bhavan. "Please do not trouble to get up. You look very tired" observed Iyengar gently. "Yes, you are right. I have hardly felt relaxed these last few years. I feel exhausted," confided Menuhin. Iyengar put him in 'Sevāsana' and Menuhin slept soundly for nearly two hours. He begged Iyengar to accept him as his student. Within six months he was able to play his beloved Stradivarius once again and give concerts 'which baffled the listeners of his coming back to his own glorious play.' That was in 1952. He still continues to spend at least one month every year with Iyengar.

J. Krishnamurti, a well-known exponent on matters spiritual, he too

felt the need for Iyengar's healing hand. So did Aldous Huxley. So did the late Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother of the Belgians, so did and does the famous pianist Clifford Curzon. And so did and do a host of his students, some very well known, some hardly. But to one and all he gives the most serious and careful attention. Their money or position or status affects him not in the least. They are all alike—in need of his help and this he gives most generously, till their bodies are at peace and their minds free of stresses and strains.

This is the reason why some of his students insisted that Iyengar write a book on Yoga. And that is the reason why *Light On Yoga** came to see the light of day. The book had to be written and Iyengar had to write the book, said his grateful and devoted students. So this gentle and kind-hearted man, devoid of any formal education, but richly endowed with a brilliant intellect, sat down to write the book for the benefit of his students. He began in 1958, and completed the manuscript in 1964 with the assistance of some students (whose help he has acknowledged in the preface). However it was not till 1966 that the manuscript found a publisher. His Indian publisher was frightened by the size and the illustrations. The book would have to be very expensive and then who would buy it, in India at least. In India people borrow books, not buy them, they argued. When his students in London heard of the plight of the manuscript they came to his rescue especially Mrs. Beatrice Harthen who spoke to Mr. Gerald Yorke, the literary adviser to M/s. George, Allen and Unwin. He read through the entire tome and suggested that the manuscript be re-written with an emphasis on the practical aspects of the subject, especially a clear demonstration of the application of theory to practice and an expansion of Iyengar's original contribution to Yoga. Unless this was done, said Mr. Yorke, the book would not go beyond the first edition. (His advice proved right.) So Iyengar once again sat down and re-wrote the entire manuscript. Once again Gerald Yorke read through the entire work. (He refused to take his usual fee.) This time he was pleased and so were M/s. George, Allen & Unwin. However they too were frightened by the cost of publishing a work which contained over 600 photographs. How many would buy a book worth at least 6 gns., they queried. But the gods were on Iyengar's side. M/s. Shoeckins Books Incorporation of U.S.A. who were searching for good books on Yoga saw the manuscript and paid in advance for 2,000 copies of the book at 75s. a copy. M/s. George, Allen & Unwin took heart and proceeded with the publication of the manuscript at 75s. The book is now in its second impression of the second edition, both in U.S.A. and U.K. Last March a paper-back was also printed at 50s. *Light On Yoga* has been translated into Spanish, Italian and German. In India the English edition may be obtained for Rs. 67.00. The paper-back, about Rs. 50.00, has not reached the Indian market yet. But translation of the book in Kanarese, the author's mother-tongue, is

* *Light On Yoga*, by B. K. S. Iyengar, George, Allen & Unwin Ltd., London ; Price : 75s. net in U.K. only ; Rs. 67.00 in India.

available for Rs. 30.00. M/s. Orient Longman will soon publish the Hindi and Marathi editions while a student of Iyengar's is bringing out the Gujerati edition.

Yoga is not an easy subject to write about. Most books on Yoga tend to be tedious repetition of what the ancients said. Iyengar's work is no mere repetition. In the introduction he mentions works like Patanjali's *Yoga Shastra* and Swatmarama's *Hatha Yoga Pradipika* but the book is the result of over 35 years of unceasing effort at perfection. Every page breathes the 'relentless practice' of a true yogi. This reviewer has not come across any literature on the subject that can compare with Part II *Yogasanas, Bandha and Kriya*. It is the most authoritative work on yogasanás. The chapters discuss in detail 200 asanas and give their description, technique and efficacy. Each asana is illustrated with one or more photographs, the poses demonstrated to perfection by the author himself. Besides asanas, the book deals with pranayama, asana courses for the novice and the advanced student, and curative asanas for various diseases. There is also glossary of Sanskrit terms and a table to correlate the asanas with the photo-plates which illustrate the asanas. One hopes the author will write in the near future an equally authoritative and exhaustive work on pranayama, because the chapter is but an introduction to pranayama. It is not as exhaustive a study as his discussion on asanas.

The author has had no scientific training, yet the method of discussion of the subject, the arrangement of chapters and their detail treatment are developed with thorough logical consistency. The language is clear and precise. It can be followed by a beginner as well as an advanced student. There is ample material for both. The most up-to-date standard work on the subject, it is in fact a classic,—a monumental classic.

Light On Yoga is essential for those in search of 'peace of body and poise of mind'.

Do not teach only to teach. Teach to improve the student. To be a teacher requires vigorous discipline of one's own self.—IYENGAR.

* * * *

The student who aims at wisdom, and yet is ashamed of shabby clothes and poor food, is not yet worthy to be discoursed with.—CONFUCIUS.

FOR CULTURE READ GUNS

S. P. R.

THE Soviet interpretation of the term "cultural relations" can differ considerably from that of the non-Communist countries. Such at least has been the experience in Colombia where the press last month revealed that the Soviet-Colombian Cultural Institute had been showing a series of films on terrorist tactics to local guerilla leaders.

At one of these sessions, a Soviet film entitled "Tank-T34" which explained how to paralyse agricultural machinery and halt production at every level of activity, was shown to an audience consisting of well-known Colombian terrorists, among them Herman Lievano Rodriguez, leader of an urban guerilla network which is closely identified with the castroite Ejercito de Liberacion National (ELN) and two other guerilla leaders.

The Russians even sent out a commentator to help illustrate the points made in the film. The actual showing was followed by talks on subversive tactics and the distribution of manuals such as "150 Questions to a Guerilla" and Che Guevara's "Guerilla Warfare".

The Bogota daily "El Siglo" of 25 January instanced the Soviet use of the diplomatic bag to get the offending films into the country as a further abuse of diplomatic privilege.

A Soviet-Colombian cultural agreement signed last August provides for an exchange of scientific, technical and educational know-how, and the Colombian authorities are now wondering what other misuse of these seemingly inoffensive ties the Soviet Union may be planning.

If you govern the people by laws, and keep them in order by penalties, they will avoid the penalties, yet lose their sense of shame. But if you govern them by your moral excellence and keep them in order by your dutiful conduct, they will retain their sense of shame, and also live up to this standard.—CONFUCIUS.

OPINION, April 27, 1971

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OPINION

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Nos. 51-52

CONTENTS

<i>Why Are We So Poor ?</i>	3	
<i>Thumbs, Break-up</i>	9	K. Malik
<i>India and the Indian Ocean</i>	11	A. G. Noorani
<i>Abroad and at Home</i>	13	Vivek
<i>Legacy</i>	18	Gieve Patel
<i>Some Letters by Ghalib</i>	19	
<i>Rough Passage</i>	23	R. Parthasarathy
<i>The Story of a Book</i>	24	Perin H. Cabinetmaker
<i>For Culture Read Guns</i>	27	S. P. R.

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