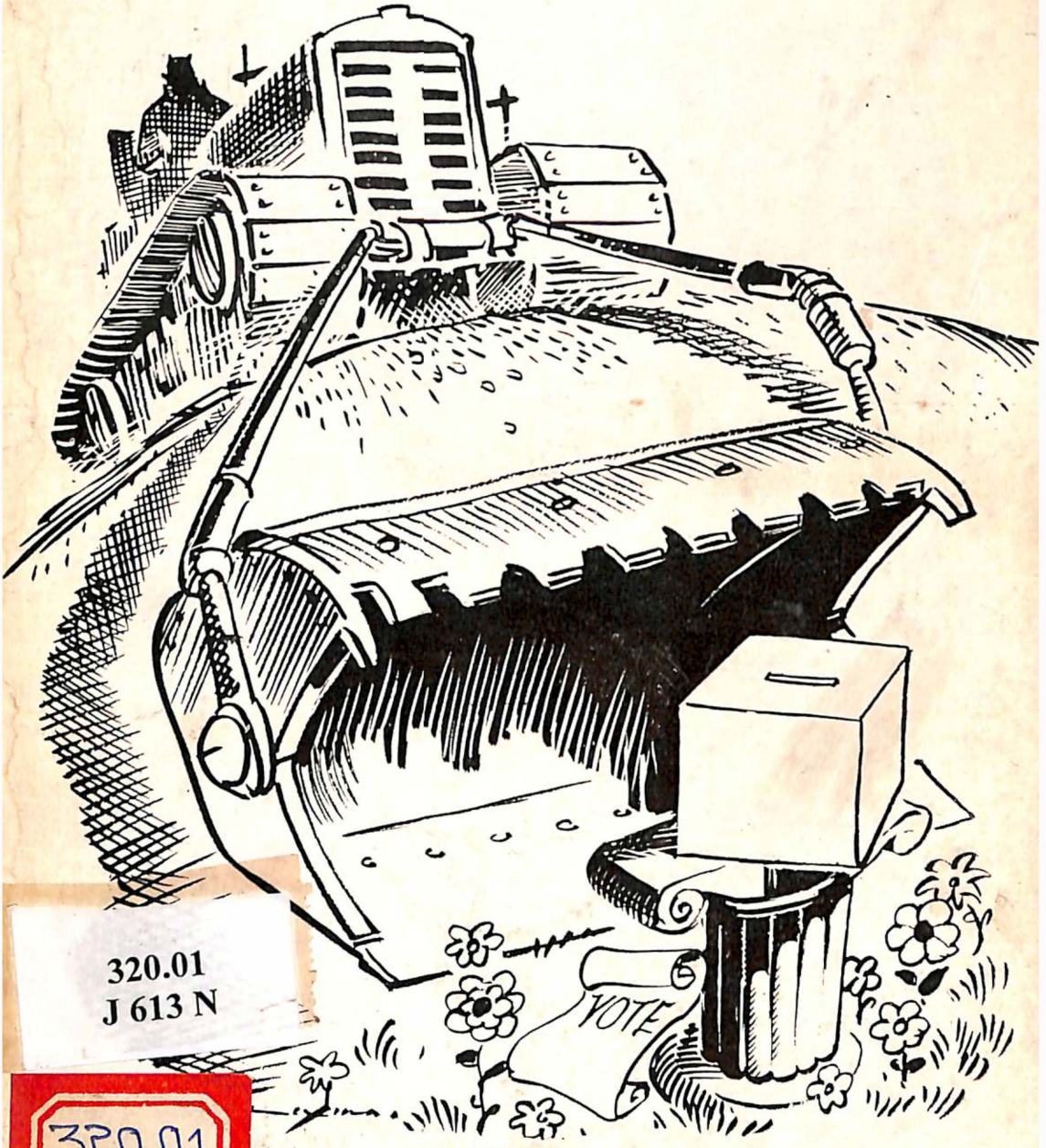
Not By Politics Alone!



Edited by

V.V. John & C. Kulshrestha

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The non-political roots of a free society

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Contents

Introduction

THE spectre of unfreedom that haunted the Indian people for nineteen months during the emergency promulgated by an ambitious Prime Minister to consolidate her political position has created a fresh need to consider the basic safeguards that help to protect the liberty of citizens and to ensure their quest for happiness as enlightened and responsible constituents of a free society. The urgency of cherishing these safeguards is particularly real for democracies, because totalitarian societies can always whip up the necessary political rhetoric to persuade themselves that their priorities are progress, change, stability, and efficiency rather than justice, freedom, equality and fraternity. The Indian experience of the emergency suggests that such a confusion of priorities can all too often tempt a complacent citizenry to accept a potentially authoritarian form of government in place of one that is inherently committed to the spirit of democratic participation in all avenues of national life.

Perhaps there is something in the very nature of a democratic society that makes it susceptible to pressures and influences that tend to erode and even dissolve its own scaffolding. There is a splendour and stateliness of form, forged by a centrally located omnipotent intelligence, which democracies have to forego in their need to respect the right of every individual in the collectivity. This itself is no small cause for extended problems. Hans J. Morgenthau points out that the democratic regard for the sensitivities of all citizens can create a situation in which "What a man ought or ought not to do becomes determined not by objective laws immutable as the stars, but by the results of the latest opinion poll." The freedom with which society permits its citizens to function can often produce extremist and activist critics of existent social and political

systems who may, ironically enough, take it upon themselves to question and subvert the normative assumptions of free life in a civilized community. Columbia philosopher Charles Frankel has shown in *The Case for Modern Man* how the work of thinkers such as Mannheim, Toynbee, Maritain, and Niebuhr has sought to negate the tenets of liberalism and democracy by questioning the validity of prevalent ideas about secularism, the question of human perfectibility, and the possibility of objective judgements in social science studies. In our own country, the rhetoric of violence inspired by the Naxalites has led many to wonder uneasily if such movements could really find a nourishing soil in societies with less political freedom. One is inclined to agree with Fisher Ames that to steer the raft of democracy through the troubled waters of conflicting ideologies and opinions is to master the art of crisis:

> Monarchy is like a splendid ship, with all sails set; it moves majestically on, then it hits a rock and sinks for ever. Democracy is like a raft. It never sinks but, damn it, your feet are always in the water.

The sense of crisis and indeterminacy evoked by Fisher Ames's image of the raft is not necessarily an undesirable prerequisite of a free society. Freedom, in one connotation, survives through a free exchange of multitudinous ideas as each individual asserts his right to define his self and reconsider his terms of contract with the environment. A proper climate of ideas makes it possible for a democracy to evaluate the precise nature of the forces at work within its ambit and to evolve adequate strategies to contain them. A free society, in this respect, may be regarded as a function of the democratic intelligence operating at all levels of social growth. This intelligence assumes that all men are created equal and strive together as fellow-beings to harness the natural forces to their best common advantage. The notion of equality reinforces the willingness of the representatives of the people to continue the dialogue of mutual development in Parliament, and to derive from it workable resolutions on matters of vital interest to the public at large.

The three essential components of a free society are a free

press, a system of liberal education, and free trade. Working in conditions of optimum efficiency, these elements significantly neutralize the divisive and subversive character of dissent by creating an atmosphere of intellectual tolerance and accommodation in which diverse standpoints and conflicting stances may be brought to focus in a shared search for possibilities and perspectives. A responsible and free press can provide the forum from which such a dialogue may be effectively conducted. Defining the nature and role of a free press, the Commission on Freedom of the Press (U.S.A.), appointed in 1947 under the chairmanship of Robert M. Hutchins, pointed out:

> Freedom of the press means freedom from and freedom for. The press must be free from the menace of external compulsions from whatever source. To demand that it be free from pressures which might warp its utterance would be to demand that society should be empty of contending forces and beliefs. But persisting and distorting pressures—financial, popular, clerical, institutional—must be known and counterbalanced. The press must, if it is to be wholly free, know and overcome any biases incident to its own economic position, its concentration, and its pyramidal organization.
>
> The press must be free for the development of its own conception of service and achievement. It must be free for making its contribution to the maintenance and development of a free society.

To generate a widespread regard for freedom, it is necessary to evolve a pattern of education that goes beyond formal and rigid structures in its insistence on the relevance of learning to the empirical needs of the student and helps to develop a complex and comprehensive vision of reality that relies on the power of discrimination while analysing the problematic character of the issues involved in any task of study. In a society that values freedom, education should seek to provide, in Bertrand Russell's words, "a sense of the value of things other than domination, to help to create wise citizens of a free community, and through a combination of citizenship with liberty in individual creativeness, to enable men to give to

human life that splendour which some few have shown that it can achieve."

The Economy constitutes the most crucial aspect of planning; it is almost always a sensitive indicator of the degree of freedom that obtains in society. The concentration of excessive economic power in the State can seriously hamper the fluorescence of trade; on the other hand, a complete absence of control can give rise to various forms of fiscal imbalances and irregularities. The need, therefore, is to limit the activity of the State to its natural and proper corrective function so that all economic measures and legislation are reoriented to meet the demands of a free economy. In developing countries with an agricultural potential, investment resources have to be so reallocated as to contribute heavily to farming, irrigation, power, extension services, and rural industries. Economic policies, in their turn, should try to cope with the challenge of increasing production, employment opportunities, and income resources.

The three essential ingredients of a free society that have been briefly considered here should fall outside the sphere of partisan politics; nevertheless, they substantially influence political behaviour and act as powerful non-political catalysts of social change. In countries where these catalysts are weak, the rate of change is slow and unsatisfactory and the spirit of free activity and inquiry is hampered by undesirable vested interests. The Indian predicament during the emergency holds a pointer to the danger that can afflict a society with decaying non-political roots: if our body politic had not been riddled by the evils dormant in the caste system and the secondary position of women and if the commitments of our educated masses, minorities, journalists, and businessmen had not been so insecure and uncertain, it could not have been easy for a majority party to muffle all voices of opposition and dissent at the behest of a ruthless leader. The plain fact is that when threats to freedom materialized from within, India was not intellectually, emotionally, and morally equipped at first to defend herself. Any preparations that we may now wish to make to deal with such insidious challenges in the future must begin primarily with the task of strengthening the non-political roots of our society. Such an effort will create an attitude of accountability,

grass-roots vigilance, and active citizenship and bring about the needed transformation of social, economic, and political processes.

This volume contains the papers presented at a stimulating seminar arranged by the Leslie Sawhny Programme at Agra on 'Strengthening the Non-Political Roots of a Free Society' on August 27-29, 1977. The issues which received the attention of the learned participants included topics such as: (A) The Nature of a Free Society; (B) The Role of Press and Media in a Free Society; (C) The Relevance of Education in a Free Society; (D) Economic Priorities of a Free Society; (E) Modernizing our Social Structure and Institutions (Caste, Class, and the Position of Women); and (F) Man—Character—Total Revolution. The 'Report on Discussions' that follows the texts of the papers represents the conclusions at which the participants arrived after careful deliberation. Taken together, the papers and the conclusions help to identify the premises of what may in all appropriateness be called a working syllabus of the equipment required to create a free society.

V.V. JOHN
CHIRANTAN KULSHRESTHA

Non-Political Roots of a Free Society

V.V. JOHN

THE theme of this paper needs to be rescued from two erroneous notions. One is that everything that concerns a free society is political. The other notion, that may seem to veer to the opposite extreme, views politics as unclean, and considers 'dirty tricks' as its invariable staple. The first notion suggests that there is no escape from politics, because everything is political. The other exhorts us to escape from politics if we would preserve the purity of our souls.

That all things in society are political is as unhelpful a generalization as Hilaire Belloc's famous assertion that all controversy is at bottom theological. There is a sense in which all discussion is ultimately related to one's view of human destiny; and such a view could be described as theological. Similarly, there is a sense in which all matters relating to man in society are the substance of politics. For the purposes of the present discussion, I shall define politics less compendiously, and take it to be concerned with the disposition of power in human society. There could be different patterns for such disposition of power, and there could be legitimate debate on them. The debate would however be impossible except on the basis of certain assumptions in regard to generally acknowledged values. There could be debate on these assumptions too, but without those assumptions a free society would be inconceivable.

Before I proceed to a consideration of these assumptions, which are the theme of this paper, a further word needs to be

said of the notion that there is something essentially unholy about politics. In denouncing an opponent's utterances or actions, even politicians, for instance, deem it adequate disparagement to suggest that such utterances and opinions are 'politically motivated'. When, in February 1977, someone alleged that the erstwhile Government in Delhi had deliberately allowed Jayaprakash Narayan's health to deteriorate in jail, the indignant rejoinder was that the allegation was politically motivated. The imprisonment without trial, of a 73-year old leader in poor health, was certainly a political issue, and the suspicion of callousness had a legitimately political angle to it. It was no answer to a political charge to say that it was political.

To disparage politics is one of the easy gambits of the aphorist. Look up a dictionary of quotations, and you would come up with endless examples. "If experience teaches us anything at all, it teaches us this: that a good politician, under democracy, is quite as unthinkable as an honest burglar" (H.L. Mencken). "Politics is the diversion of trivial men who, when they succeed at it, become important in the eyes of more trivial men" (George Jean Nathan). "Our great democracies still tend to think that a stupid man is more likely to be honest than a clever man, and our politicians take advantage of this prejudice by pretending to be even more stupid than nature made them" (Bertrand Russell). "He knows nothing and thinks he knows everything. That points clearly to a political career" (Bernard Shaw). "I am not a politician, and my other habits are good" (Artemus Ward). Politicians love quoting such aphorisms with varying motives, sometimes to disclaim involvement in certain categories of politics, and more frequently to discourage good men from entering politics, so that the less scrupulous ones could have the field to themselves.

There is no need to tarry long over any consideration of this trickery. Politics is a noble pursuit. Its chief task is to be involved in man's continuing struggle against poverty, ignorance and disease—a task that involves unceasing vigilance against man's own tendency towards indolence, self-seeking and exploitation. The disparagement of politics in any general or absolute terms, therefore, suits only the idler, the self-seeker

and the exploiter. It is a dishonest gambit employed for lowering people's faith in their capacity to shape their own destiny.

Paradoxically, a great deal of the impotence of politics can be traced to its extravagant claims to potency. At its most arrogant, one may observe this in such a phrase as 'the sovereignty of Parliament.' We have lately had some experience of this arrogance. The failure of politicians in this instance was a failure to recognize what politics could not, and ought not, to do. Except for a lone voice in the highest court of the land, even the judiciary abetted this arrogance of power.

Perhaps I could best indicate the untenable pretensions of politics by referring to the caption of a cartoon published in a Rio de Janeiro newspaper a year ago. The cartoon showed Adam rushing to tell Eve, in great excitement: "Eve, I've got some terrific news—they're setting up this thing called *The State* which will give us freedom and the right to life." We have just lived through a time when, without any suggestion of such drollery, it was argued that the Indian citizen derived his right to life and personal liberty from article 21 of the Constitution of India. It was maintained that, with a Presidential order suspending the right set forth in article 21, we could not call in question any state action abridging our liberty or even depriving us of life. When the Government spokesman's assertion in this regard in the Supreme Court was recently recalled in Parliament, those for whom the spokesman had spoken, made a grievance of anyone reading too literal a meaning into a hypothetical statement. The air of injured innocence with which this belated and ambiguous disclaimer was made was noteworthy. So were the words of reassurance spoken by one of the judges who had upheld the action of the Government in putting people in prison without telling them the reason why. He concluded his wordy judgment in these eloquent terms: "Counsel after counsel expressed the fear that, during the emergency, the executive may whip and strip and starve the detenu, and if this be our judgment, even shoot him down. Such misdeeds have not tarnished the record of free India and I have a diamond-bright, diamond-hard hope that such things will never come to pass." The judicial rhetoric has lost some of its diamond-bright glow since the disclosures in specific instances like those of the student Rajan in Kerala, the actress

Snehalata Reddy in Karnataka and scores of others now under investigation in different parts of the country. When the full story is unfolded, we shall have learnt—but at what terrible cost !—what the state could do, if the statute book and its authorized interpreters were the only guarantees of freedom in a free society. If India's democracy needed any lessons that the true guarantees of freedom lie beyond the usages of politics, it has had them.

We do not however have to search beyond our Constitution to identify the non-political roots of the free society of our dreams. They are enumerated in the opening words of the Constitution, in which 'We, the People of India,' pledged ourselves to the establishment of a democratic republic based on the ideals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Everything that follows this noble pledge—that is, the articles of the Constitution and the schedules—is a spelling out of the details of how we would seek to redeem this pledge. If at any stage, any of the articles or any item in the schedules is seen to offend against the values set forth and proclaimed in the Preamble, it is a transgression against the proclaimed intent of the people of India. Constitutional experts may argue whether the Preamble is a part of the Constitution and could be reckoned as part of the law. The argument is not of much consequence, because the values set forth in the Preamble are inviolable, and in the event of a conflict between them and the articles of schedules of the Constitution, it is the latter that should give way. Courts of law may not be able to ensure this, but the democratic political process is not without other resources.

How grudging is the assent of political authority to the inalienable rights of individuals mentioned above may be gauged from the fact that the Universal Declaration of Human Rights unanimously adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948 (with the six members of the Soviet bloc, Saudi Arabia and the Union of South Africa abstaining), remains no more than a declaration, and not a treaty between states or a legal instrument comprising enforceable provisions. When the two International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were drawn up under the auspices of the United Nations, seeking to take the matter of human rights outside the 'domestic jurisdiction'

of member states, it was stipulated that a minimum of 35 ratifications or accessions from member states were necessary to bring the Covenants into force. This minimum is yet to be reached, and since a majority of the member states of the United Nations have authoritarian regimes, any wider acknowledgement of the inviolability of human rights is not an immediate possibility. As Professor W.J. Stankiewicz ruefully puts it, the present position is that "human rights exist and are recognized, but their defence is hardly possible." (in article on 'Sovereignty' in Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed.)

Let me add a cheering thought at this stage. It was reckoned a year ago that the spread of authoritarianism had been such that, of all the world's population, only fifteen per cent were living in conditions of political freedom. Five months ago, we in this country helped to double that percentage. But before we congratulate ourselves too vigorously on this account, we should take note of the fact that the electoral pledge to remove from our political systems all vestiges of arbitrary power is yet to be fully redeemed.

A democratic government is expected to fulfil two possibly irreconcilable requirements: namely, to derive its just power from the consent of the governed, and to adhere to certain timeless moral values whose validity and relevance do not depend on the results of a referendum. There could conceivably be a conflict between these two requirements. On a given issue, justice may point one way, and that may not be the way people would agree to go. Democracies have been known to make unjust decisions, and demogogues have often swayed the will of the people in nefarious directions. The fickleness of mobs and the tyranny of majorities are familiar arguments in the armoury of those who would want to install benevolent dictators or philosopher kings in power. The trouble with philosopher kings is that the philosophy evaporates by and by and leaves the dross of absolutism behind, as, for instance, the Portuguese people discovered some time after they installed a university professor, Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, in power. The same erosion is known to have occurred to the benevolence of benevolent dictators. When a change of rulers becomes due, there should be other ways of securing it than by assassination, an altogether messy and uncertain procedure, or through a stroke

of paralysis or apoplexy, as happened with Salazar. A political system cannot count on nature to intervene with timely and incapacitating ailments to afflict the ruler.

The uncertainties of popular rule, which drive some to desperately opt for the grim certainties of absolute rule, derive principally from a failure to recognize that the consent of the governed is not the same thing as majority rule. Nor is it to be confused with the mushy and contrived thing that is known among us as a consensus. Its primary base is the common adherence to certain values. On this basis, an individual has rights that a majority may not take away from him, because he derives them from the fact of his being born a man, and not from the will of the majority. This is the basis of the individual's right to dissent. Enlightened democracies thrive on such dissent, for out of such lone dissent often start movements of thought and of action that end by transforming society.

On the plane of electoral fortunes, a democracy provides every minority opinion, even that of a single dissenter, the opportunity to convert itself into the majority opinion. But a problem arises out of the circumstances that in most democracies there are permanent minorities based on race, religion or language. These tend to stay permanently as divisive factors in society, and they often develop what may be described as a minority psychosis. But before I say anything about this phenomenon, I should like to say a word about our policy of secularism, which was adopted as a response to the pluralist structure of our society. Correctly understood, secularism would imply the tolerant acceptance of the many-splendoured fabric of culture. But I have friends to whom secularism is another name for irreligion, and they would somewhat insidiously want the state to discourage the practice of religion by being impervious to the religious susceptibilities of citizens. I sometimes get the feeling that, just as irreligion is being offered as the eventual solution for tensions between religious groups, we are on the verge of offering illiteracy as the final solution to our language squabbles. The alarming recession in the quality of language studies, that has occurred under official auspices in recent years, compels such an inference.

In regard to the minority psychosis I mentioned a moment ago, I do not have to point out that the special safeguards that

have been made for the minorities could tend to become a vested interest and impede unity. My personal cure for the minority psychosis has not become widely known, and I should therefore like to describe it. In respect of the religion I profess, I belong to a minority in this country. But this does not put me into a minority twentyfour hours of the day, and at all levels of my consciousness. There are aspects of my life and activities in which I belong to a majority, and others in which I belong to a minority and am content to be so. I mentioned the matter of religion. There are other respects too in which I currently belong to a minority, such as opposition to both capitalism and state socialism and faith in a third and obvious alternative, namely, distribution. I belong currently to a minority of people who still believe in the three-language formula and have a plan to implement it. But I also belong to a majority in certain other respects. To start with some thing that cannot be altered, the colour of my skin is the same as that of a majority in this country. I also belong to the majority that do not have to pay wealth tax. I keep continually discovering other points that I have in common with a majority of my countrymen. And I find this reckoning very helpful in dealing with whatever traces of the minority psychosis I discover within myself. And I am also ready with my style of divisiveness when the battle between the Big-Endians and the Small-Endians grows acute.

The right to dissent, and the rights of minorities, have their ethical source in the inalienable rights of individuals that no state may take away. They are moral rights before they become codified into political rights. Would this apply to the right of civil disobedience? Greece provides us with two magnificent episodes, one from imaginative literature and the other from real life, of two distinctive and heroic responses to iniquitous civil law, which may help us to answer this question. Socrates was condemned to die for propagating his opinion, and he accepted the penalty instead of making his escape from Athens, for which his friends could provide him the means. He took the view that having lived under a system of laws, he should do as the law bids, unless he could induce the people to change their views of what the law should be. Antigone, in Sophocles' play, takes a different view of what constitutes her duty. The state, in the person of the king, forbade the burial of her rebel

brother, whereas her religion enjoined such burial. Antigone confronts Creon on this point:

Creon : Tell me, not at full length but briefly, did you know my edict against doing this?

Antigone : I did. How could I help it? It was plain.

Creon : Yet you presumed to transgress laws.

Antigone : Yes, for it was not Zeus who gave the edict; not yet did Justice, dwelling with the gods below, make for men laws like these. I did not think such force was in your edicts that the unwritten and unchanging laws of God you, a mere man, could traverse. These are not matters of today or yesterday, but are from everlasting. No man can tell at what time they appeared. (Sophocles, *Antigone*)

"An unjust law is not a law," is Antigone's claim, and it was so formulated later by Aristotle. This raises some difficulties. Since the touchstones of a just law are moral principles, the ultimate arbiter would be the conscience of the individual citizen. This however leads to the possibility of every man becoming a law unto himself. Gandhi, using non-violence as a method of resisting injustice, provides an answer to this predicament, which, I reckon, Socrates would have had no difficulty in accepting. I should like to quote, on this subject, a passage from Harris Wofford's article on 'Nonviolence and the Law: The Law Needs Help,' (*The Journal of Religious Thought*, Autumn-Winter, 1957-58):

Civil disobedience, (Gandhi) demonstrated, is not subversive of the law . . . On the contrary it involves the highest possible respect for the law. If we secretly violated the law, or tried to evade it, or violently tried to overthrow it, that would be undermining the idea of law, Gandhi argued. But by openly and peacefully disobeying an unjust law and asking for the penalty, we are saying that we so respect the law that when we think it is so unjust that in conscience we cannot obey, then we belong in jail until that law is changed.

A consideration of the right of dissent obliged me to indulge in this perhaps disproportionate discussion of civil disobedience.

Once the postulates of a pluralist society are acknowledged, and the moral values on which the polity is based are firmly proclaimed, dissent is likely to become what in modern idiom would be called a growth point, and occasions for civil disobedience are likely to be few. But the acceptance of a common set of values need not, and ought not to, mean a common style of life. Diversity would be inevitable and healthy, and any effort to gloss over them or eliminate them through measures to enforce uniformity would be ill-advised. We should distinguish between what we should have in common, and in what we could be different. We may need a uniform civil code (though I am not sure of this), but we certainly do not all of us need uniforms. I recall how in 1947, in the first flush of the country's independence, a highly placed enthusiast canvassed the idea of a national dress. I had occasion to comment in a newspaper that, whereas one could understand the need for a national language so that the different regions could communicate with one another, the need for a national dress, was not so clear, unless we wanted to borrow one another's clothes ! By looking for uniformity in areas where variety and difference are inevitable and to be welcomed, we tend to obscure the values that hold the nation together.

Of these values, the most paradoxical perhaps is the ideal of equality. In invoking this ideal, our Constitution echoes the words of the American Declaration of Independence of 1776, which said, "We hold these truths be self-evident: that all men are created equal . . ." Four-score and seven years later, to use his almost Biblical idiom, Lincoln, in a moving reiteration of his country's ideals, used the same phrase, in describing his nation as "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal". Outside the sphere of political rhetoric, however, this is a concept that generates bewilderment and discomfort.

The paradox I mentioned is described in a striking passage in John W. Gardner's *Excellence*: "If you say to the average American that all men should be equal, he will say, 'Of course!' And if you then say that we should 'let the best man win', he will applaud this as a noble thought. The idea that the two views might often conflict doesn't occur to him. His sentiments are those of the Irishman who cried, 'I'm as good as you are,

and a great deal better too !" Gardner's typical American, who is thus able to accommodate in his mind conflicting allegiances to equality and excellence, is in fact wiser than the pundits who, with due deliberation, opt for one ideal or the other. Democracy refuses to exercise this option, and thrives on the continuing tension between the claims of equality and the need for the pursuit of quality.

Latterly, we have had pronouncements from sociologists, psychologists and geneticists to the effect that their researches do not provide any scientific warrant for the claim that all men are created equal. It does not call for any laborious investigation to discover the intellectual and physical inequalities among human beings. Were Jefferson who drafted the Declaration of Independence and the founding fathers of the Indian Republic unaware of these ubiquitous phenomena when they put equality among the self-evident truths by which free societies should live? The bewilderment of the geneticist and the psychologist is due to a failure to recognize that the equality of men is not a biological or psychological concept. It is a moral concept, and a recognition of what G.K. Chesterton once referred to as "the great things we have in common, as compared with the small things that divide us." Chesterton wrote these words in an essay published in the *Illustrated London News* soon after the first World War. What he said further on the theme is worth quoting:

> And anyone who understands the real doctrine of equality (there are not very many in the modern world who do) will understand that some sense of it vaguely but invariably comes to the surface under the hideous conditions of war. Any army, which in one sense would seem the very home of subordination, has nevertheless an ultimate tendency to encourage equality; because, whatever may be the rule or the orders, the facts are those of an intense independence. If any man really fails to understand the mystical dogma of the equality of man, he can immediately test it by thinking of two men, of totally different types and fortunes, falling on the same field at some terrible crisis in the war which saved our country. One might be, and often was, a gentleman of the finer tradition, fortunate in his friends, in his tastes, in

> his culture as well as his character. Another might be some stunted serf of our servile industrial slums, a man whom all modern life conspired to crush and deform. In the hour when the flag of England was saved, there was no man who dared to say, or would have dreamed of saying, that one death was more glorious than the other (G.K. Chesterton, *The Apostle and the Wild Ducks*, pp. 114-5).

It should be clear that in adopting a moral doctrine that ventures to place Albert Einstein and the merest moron on a plane of equality, we are moving on a plane where political action can only provide palliatives and approximations. But there is something that the law can do and is striving to do. The last of the four values enumerated in the Preamble to the Constitution lies however beyond the reach of legal provision and enforcement. I refer to the ideal of fraternity. The state can and should prevent transgressions against justice. It can and should desist from, and prevent encroachments into the citizen's freedom. It should perpetually be concerned with measures to ensure equality before the law, and equality of opportunity. But there is little that the state can do to ensure a sense of brotherhood among the citizens. Laws can discourage my coveting my neighbour's property. Laws can do nothing to ensure that I love my neighbour.

In making brotherly love a part of the law that governs the Republic, did the founders of the Republic indulge in the extravagance of going beyond what the law can enforce? The makers of our Constitution had profited by their extensive acquaintance with the constitutions of other lands. In the ideas and even the phrasing of many of its provisions, our debt to the laws of other lands has been acknowledged. But the invocation of fraternity as a national goal is not copied from the statutes of any other land. Its most notable historical precedent is that in the early days of the French Revolution, it formed part of the tribune slogan of the revolutionaries as they stormed the Bastille and paraded the streets of Paris. The slogan was: Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. Of these, whatever happened to the first two, fraternity did not survive the guillotine.

Considering that we have a whole battery of laws and administrative decisions designed to approximate the usages of

our polity to the values of justice, freedom and equality, the temptation to embody the ideal of fraternity also into a statute or two should be assailing our lawmakers every now and then. For, confronted by any social problem, the instant solution we seek is to make a new law about it. Our statute books are full of these expressions of our good intent. We do not however let them incommode us in our conduct, so much so that it has been said that our statute book will surely go to heaven, though we may have to seek accommodation elsewhere.

To put into the law what the law cannot enforce may not be the path of wisdom. Some of our social legislation belongs to this unintelligent category. This cannot however be said of the inclusion of the ideal of brotherhood among the values set forth in the Preamble to the Constitution. The Preamble is not a piece of law to be enforced; it is the expression of a people's high resolve, and lists the values that should serve as touchstones of the quality of all political decision. Of these values, the one that is mentioned last, namely, fraternity, makes the other redundant, as it were. For, where brotherhood prevails, justice, freedom and equality do not have to be enforced by law. The demands of justice, freedom and equality generate some difficult problems in this imperfect world of ours. In the last analysis, brotherhood remains their only and ultimate solvent. But this consummation remains a far-off, divine event, and hence the need for perpetual striving, which is the meaning of legitimate politics.

The Role of the Press and Mass Media in a Free Society

C.R. IRANI

WHAT happened to the Press and to radio and television during the Emergency is now generally known but I am not so sure that the perspective in which these events occurred is properly understood. If the perspective and background were more generally known and remembered, people would not today be asking the question why the Press suddenly collapsed in June 1975. The short answer is that the collapse was not sudden. It was planned and worked upon since the middle of 1969 when the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, sounded off a systematic campaign against the Press on the occasion of the nationalisation of the 14 major banks. Since then, a clever (or, perhaps, too clever by half) carrot-and-stick policy has been adopted towards the Indian Press designed to ensure that any strong expression of views is very difficult if not rendered quite impossible.

The Prime Minister's cry was taken up by our then Minister for Information and Broadcasting, I.K. Gujral, a clever and resourceful politician. He first tried to divide the prestigious editors from their publishers and when this failed, clubbed them together as being 'elitist', as being removed from the people, as not understanding the process of 'social change' in the country, and as being only interested in making money. The inconvenient fact that many of the prestigious newspapers were not making money was easily dismissed by changing the attack and questioning their motives instead. Systematic and inspired attacks were organised in Parliament to pulverize the will of the Press

to resist. By April 1971, it was apparently felt that the necessary climate had been created to bring out a comprehensive 'reform' bill to force the Press into a predetermined straitjacket. Briefly, the provisions of this bill were designed to ensure that owners would be denied the fruits of ownership, managers would not be allowed to manage, and editors would find it impossible to edit their newspapers. One example should suffice—it was provided that the editor in each newspaper would be elected every year by working journalists, thus reducing the editor to the status of a politician seeking popularity and votes !

Newsprint supplies were artificially reduced and a monopoly set up in the hands of the State Trading Corporation and Information Ministry. The operations of the Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity in the Information Ministry were greatly expanded and the DAVP was used to approve, or disapprove of, the advertisement rates of newspapers. The guidelines framed in the Ministry and approved by the Cabinet for release of government advertisements were ignored and the Minister was able to defend himself from occasional attacks in Parliament by claims that he was supporting the small and medium newspapers, that he was encouraging newspapers in rural areas, and that 'jute bags' and 'money bags' (which was his way of describing the leading newspapers in the country) deserved no sympathy.

Needless to say, this blatant policy of divide and rule would not have succeeded without the active connivance of newspapers themselves. Even more attractive carrots were dangled before individual journalists. They were provided with government housing and, on the eve of the Emergency, as many as 110 houses in the Capital were reserved for allocation to journalists at very concessional rents. Motor-cars in those days were in short supply, and a special quota was reserved for journalists who were allowed in some cases to buy a new car every year and sell it at the end of that year in the open market at a vast profit—untaxed! Journalists were allowed access to the co-operative stores attached to the Parliamentary Secretariat which were primarily intended to isolate our elected representatives from the consequences of their own folly. Commodities in short supply from time to time, including high quality rice, cooking oil and pure ghee and baby foods, were thus made available at

very special prices not offered to an ordinary citizen. It is easy to understand why certain things never got published in our newspapers in spite of the devotion to basic principles of several publishers and senior editors in the Press.

I think, therefore, that the point is established that when the real test came in June 1975 the Press, which was already softened up and had lost some of its idealism, collapsed without a whimper, with very few exceptions. Our new Information Minister, L.K. Advani, is right when he said that there were many journalists who were unwilling even to rattle their chains, not to speak of trying to break them. And when he taunted the Press in general by saying that 'when you were only asked to bend, you chose to crawl' I think the criticism is well-merited. So much of the Press.

The other parts of what is clumsily called the mass media—radio and television—will not detain us very long. Radio and TV have always been government-owned and controlled in this country but at least until the Emergency the real intentions of government were cloaked under what was a fig leaf of credibility and impartiality. All pretence was given up after June 1975. The last word was said by the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi herself, who ridiculed all questions raised about credibility in her speech to the conference of AIR Station Directors on September 9, 1975. She said, "Quite honestly, I don't understand what it (credibility) means. Who has credibility? The newspapers, who had day-in and day-out printed falsehood?" The Chanda Committee prepared a very useful report about the autonomy and independence of this media. The government's motives were always suspect but the matter was put beyond doubt by Indira Gandhi who in the same speech, went on to say, ". . . just because a few Members of Parliament shouted, sometimes I found that the Minister was trying to say that no no this is not a Government organ. Now I have interrupted him and I have said in public forums it is a Government organ and it is going to remain a Government organ. We are proud that it is a Government organ. So there should be no doubt about this at all. It remains a Government organ. It is there to project Government policies and Government views." Nothing could have been clearer. No wonder on September 12, 1975, three days after the Prime Minister's speech, orders went out over

the authority of the Secretary in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry that "there was no question of AIR or Television adopting an attitude of neutrality or be concerned about their credibility."

What happened in India during the Emergency greatly shocked and saddened the rest of the world. Some of us involved with the Press have been warning about the threats ever since 1969 but nobody listened. A cynic may say that this should occasion no great surprise. India was only reducing itself to the level of the majority of Asian, African and Latin American regimes in their attitude towards the Press and the mass media. There are many variations on this theme. The Press is called upon to be socially responsible; in other words, society will act as a watch-dog to see that the Press behaved responsibly. Society is a vast amorphous mass and the responsibility can only be carried out by its elected representatives, i.e., the Parliament and government. Thus, the argument runs, government has a role to play in supervising the Press and other media.

Development journalism is another sacred cow. It is suggested that this is a whole new kind of journalism. The importance of economic development throughout the Third World cannot be denied but it is mischievous to suggest that reporting economic stories is somehow outside the capability of a professional journalist unless he is totally reoriented. Nobody has suggested that there should be legal journalism or medical journalism or educational journalism. The sophisticated arguments advanced on this score generally come from the mouths of those who wish to support the case for direct government influence and control over the Press.

It is sad to see that a respected world organisation like UNESCO is today in danger of allowing itself to be used as a cover to encourage these tendencies in our part of the world to control the media. This is not the fault of UNESCO. It has played no direct role in this matter, but certain committed officials in the UNESCO Secretariat are allowed to go round countries in the developing world selling a new approach to information. Briefly, this approach is on the following lines:

(i) trying to canvass support for a new 'information order' to keep in step with the new 'economic order';
(ii) economic development is under government auspices; therefore, the new information order must likewise be under government supervision;
(iii) freedom must be limited to this extent because all freedoms thrive under restraints and no freedom is absolute. If journalists accept the limitations imposed by the law of slander and libel, they should accept restraints in a field which is so vital for raising living standards of the vast majority of the population in those countries;
(iv) liberals and democrats are sought to be placed on the defensive by challenging them to declare whether they oppose economic development and social progress;
(v) newspapermen are accused of batting for the large multi-national news agencies supposed to be indulging in 'cultural imperialism' in the countries of the Third World.

There is a need in our time for a re-affirmation of the Press and a harking back to fundamentals. Essentially, the Press functions in exercise of the individual citizen's right to freedom of speech and expression. This right is not part of what are often dubbed as 'Anglo American' standards. It is to be found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, where Article 19 states:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.

We are supposed to live in an age of reason and pragmatism. Very often this is a euphemism for abandoning standards and compromising with evil. All governments everywhere seek to influence the Press for the simple reason that no politician in office can be expected to be enthusiastic when he is criticised in the media. This is a natural human reaction. It follows that there will be the desire to seek to influence the Press. What is

unforgivable is when consequences are visited upon those who stand by their high professional code and refuse to succumb to pressures. If I were asked to sum up the role of the Press, I would say that it is no part of the duty of the Press to pay heed to the sensitivities of governments. It is bound only by its own high code of journalism—to report objectively, to analyse logically and to criticise fearlessly, but always with an ear to the voice of dissent. After all, dissent is what freedom of the Press is all about. As the great scientist, G.H. Hardy, once said, "It is never worth a first class man's while to express a majority opinion; by definition there are plenty of others to do that."

The Relevance of Education in a Free Society

RAM JOSHI

EDUCATION is the most fundamental problem of modern society. It is at once its principal means of preservation as well as of change. Traditionally, society has looked upon education as a process by which to conserve, enrich and transmit to succeeding generations the accumulated knowledge, skills, beliefs and values on which its cohesion and permanence depend. But in more recent times, and especially in the developing world, education has increasingly come to be looked upon as one of the most potent instruments of modernization. As James Coleman has said, "Once regarded as an essentially conservative, culture-preserving, culture-transmitting institution, the educational system now tends to be viewed as the master determinant of all aspects of change".

Society has probably changed more in the past three decades than it did in the previous three centuries, and this is equally true of both the developed and the developing world. It is this continuing and often profound societal change and the salient role of education in it that have brought to the fore the question concerning the nature of relationship between education and society.

Two major post-war developments account for this new awareness regarding the relationship of education to society, economy and politics. One is the emergence from colonial rule of the countries of Asia and Africa whose leaders at once turned to education as an effective instrument of national development. The other is an increasingly acute awareness in

the industrially advanced countries that in the continued stress on education lies the assurance of their technological and economic leadership. The earlier attitude of treating education as though it were a self-contained and autonomous system functioning in isolation of prevailing socio-economic realities was therefore largely abandoned in favour of a more positive concept of education as a social sub-system interrelated with and interacting with other sub-systems like the economic and the political.

There are at least three ways in which education has direct relevance to society. First is the way it produces suitably trained people in required numbers to man the myriad institutions through which society lives and grows. This may be called its leadership recruitment function. Second is the contribution it makes to economic growth, both in terms of skills and attitudes. Everywhere and particularly in the developing countries the belief in some kind of a causal relationship between education and long-term economic development has become almost an article of faith. The rulers of the new nations are relying increasingly on considerations of economic development to justify increasing state support for education. Underlying this emphasis on economic development is another article of faith, namely that rapid economic development is the minimum indispensable requisite of democratic political development. This may be called the developmental function of education. The third and equally important role of education relates to its socialization (including political socialization) function. Socialization refers to that process by which individuals acquire values, attitudes and feelings towards the social system and towards their distinctive role in it. Every social system is based upon its own unique value system and seeks to perpetuate itself by creating an appropriate ideological support-structure through shared beliefs and values in the society. Education is a principal agency in this process, which begins at birth and continues through both formal and non-formal systems well into adulthood. For example, a free society seeks to inculcate among its members values of freedom, tolerance, dignity and autonomy of the human personality, justice and fair-play, respect for truth and a belief in human reason and its capacity to solve social problems. A free society also seeks to encourage

a healthy scepticism towards authority and power and especially towards all forms of dogma and seeks the help of education to achieve this.

The kind of education which free societies tried to provide to their young was called liberal education since it aimed at liberating the mind from dogmatism, prejudices and parochialism, in fact from all forms of obscurantism and making it receptive to truth and to new and unconventional ideas. There is greater merit in this concept of liberal education than is currently recognised. However, liberal education was also looked upon as education for 'the gentleman', a sort of elitist education open only to the privileged classes, for their cultural refinement so that they could better appreciate and enjoy the finer things of life, while simultaneously sharpening their leadership capabilities. In this sense, liberal education was aristocratic and further accentuated the elite-mass division. Unfortunately, the reaction against liberal education went to the other extreme and virtually equated education with impartation of vocational skills and neglected the more basic function of cultivating the human mind with the result that the essential difference between training and education got blurred. Today it is possible for a person to go through school or college or university and emerge well trained but essentially untouched by education. Now, there is more to education than mere acquisition of knowledge or skills. That something more is the creative function of transmuting knowledge into wisdom. As Walter Lippman said: "The capacity to judge rightly in a choice of both means and ends is the hallmark of a liberal, as distinguished from a utilitarian or vocational, education." This capacity to make a right choice of both ends and means is a moral capacity and the quality of education and indeed of the society itself is to be judged from the number of individuals it produces who have this capacity and the courage to stand up and speak against the adoption of wrong ends or means. Only such individuals would be able to act as the backbone of an upright society which refuses to be servile or pliant.

It is critically necessary to have a large number of such individuals who have not only mastered particular skills but who also possess cultivated minds that respond to higher values

or larger problems of freedom, equality or social justice. Only 'educated', as distinguished from 'trained', men and women would feel increasingly concerned with larger issues that bear no immediate practical impact on their lives. Only they would be able to see both the virtues and the drawbacks of their social system and would be able to offer or respond to informed and responsible social criticism The incisiveness and vigour with which such criticism emanates from the intellectual community may be one mark of the quality of education and the vitality of the intellectual community in a society. Judged from this point of view, one has regretfully to note the isolation, even alienation, of the Indian intellectuals from the society around them and their continuing failure to make any large and lasting impact on it. Unlike the Western intellectual tradition which developed in response to challenges of social reality, the modern Indian intellectual tradition is an exotic growth without roots in an authentic Indian social experience. The wall of silence that separates the intellectual community from the society at large can be broken down and communication links established only by getting the Indian intellectuals and other educated Indians deeply involved not only in understanding but also in solving national problems. Only by bringing education face to face with real life situations will we succeed in making it socially relevant, and therefore credible.

Indian society is not yet a free society in a fundamental sense, if by freedom we mean something more than political independence. Its hierarchical caste structure, its inequitous economic system and its authoritarian intellectual tradition are formidable barriers to its development as a free society. Education, therefore, will have to make a major effort to create a more egalitarian social order as a means to freedom. Unlike Western societies where freedom usually meant freedom from the State, in India and in other developing countries freedom means first and foremost freedom from want, hunger, ignorance and disease in the eradication of which the State could play a pivotal role. In such a situation, education for freedom would have a far more positive content than the inculcation of an attitude of suspicion and hostility towards State and Government. It would have two components in its curricular content

which would enable the students to relate their educational experience to their immediate social environment by participating creatively in the transformation of that environment to desirable ends. The first component would consist of the conserving aspect of education and would be dealing with knowledge about nature and working of the existing system of government and society and the values and beliefs that sustain it. The second would be the participatory component which would have both a theoretical and applied aspect. The theoretical aspect would necessarily have to be interdisciplinary in orientation and the applied aspect would include among other things programmes like work-experience and social work. It needs to be emphasized that our education is not and cannot be conceived as education for citizenship only. It is education for a better and freer society. The fundamental objective of education in developing countries is to enable the community to comprehend, and even anticipate, changes in its environment not only to survive in it but to participate creatively in order to control and regulate change.

To sum up, one can say that education is centrally relevant to a free society inasmuch as it provides a critical input to the process of comprehending as well as changing social reality. By creating the required awareness among more and more people and by involving them in the movement for change, education helps to liberate society from its traditional, inegalitarian and hierarchical structure and make it modern, egalitarian and free. Such being the catalytic role of education, it is wrong to look at it as a self-contained neutral and autonomous system. Rather it must be consciously orientated towards the realization of the national goals.

Economic Patterns of a Free Society

B.R. SHENOY

WITH the abrogation of the Emergency the democratic process is back again on its wheels. This implies that organised and articulate public thinking on national issues will play its due role in the management and execution of national affairs.

I. The President of India on the State of the Indian Economy

2. N. Sanjiva Reddy in his 30th Independence Day-eve message to the nation observed:

(i) "We have yet to end poverty, ignorance and disease, and inequality of opportunity."

(ii) "All national planning must put the interests of those living in the villages first." There is no other way to "prevent the volcano of discontent and frustration from blowing its top".

(iii) There exist "glaring inequalities in the standard of living of our people", which "we must endeavour to narrow down, if not remove".

(iv) "The upward spiralling of prices shows little sign of abatement." Apparently, throwing the blame for this on the trading community, the very next sentence refers to the "machinations of a very watchful and unscrupulous section of our society which preys on human misfortune".

(v) Black money and anti-social pressure groups are directly behind "political corruption, demoralisation in the public services, and a deterioration of standards in public life".[1]

3. Though this may be rather strong language for the head of a state, the sentiments expressed reflect the feelings of many people on the prevailing state of affairs. Being a major policy pronouncement of the President of India, the statements have, doubtless, the full support of the Janata Government.

II. Communism, Socialism, and a Free Society

4. Contemporaneously, there exist three broad economic systems or patterns in the world—free societies, communist societies, and socialist societies. The last are varying mixtures of the doctrines of the former two systems.

5. Though socialism had, for long, been the established article of faith of India's first Prime Minister, the late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and this had, inevitably, influenced Indian economic policies since Independence (1947), socialism as the goal of all governmental effort dates with the acceptance of the "socialist pattern of society" by Parliament in December 1954, following its adoption earlier, in the same month, by the Indian National Congress, at its Avadi session. The socialist pattern, in due course, got metamorphosed, imperceptibly, into socialism; and, at times, looked like being further metamorphosed into communism. This last danger has disappeared with the election victory of the Janata Party.

6. Though an economic policy package of the Janata Party is currently under discussion within the Party and within the government, the Independence Day-eve message of the President indicates that, presently at any rate, the Janata Government have no intention of departing from socialism, the Congress policy system. The message merely seeks a shift of emphasis in planning—the overall description of the socialist policies—in favour of agriculture and the rural sector. There is nothing in

1. The quotations are from the text published in *The Times of India* August 15, 1977.

it to suggest a recognition of any need for a change in the overall policy pattern. The disappointing state of affairs to which the President has referred has been the end outcome of the working of these policies during the past three decades. The question that calls for an answer is: Can the danger of the "volcano of discontent and frustration blowing its top" be averted by a mere shift in emphasis in favour of agriculture within the framework of the prevailing policy system?

III. Economic Constituents of a Free Society

7. A free society is so called because its citizens are free individuals, free in the sense of "independence of the arbitrary will of another".[2] Individuals in a free society function, in the economic sphere, under the guide-lines of the doctrine of pragmatism, pursuing the line of success and discarding the path of failures, success and failure being assessed by their own subjective criteria. Viewed functionally, a free society may also be termed, therefore, as a pragmatic society. As the terminal aim of the individual's activity is the maximum satisfaction of his consumption needs, and he is unfettered in this as in other matters, a free society is described, too, as a society of consumer sovereignty.

8. The principal economic constituents of a free society may be briefly stated:

(i) First and foremost the economic affairs of a free society are controlled, directed and governed by truly sovereign consumers. Therefore, by definition as it were, all economic activity other than those delegated by consumers to the government—which they do in their capacity as sovereign voters—have, for their end objective, maximum consumer satisfaction.

(ii) Consumer control and direction of the economy is effected through a price-regulated market mechanism. Consumers register, in the shopping centres or other markets, their votes regarding their requirements

2. F.A. Hayek, *The Constitution of Liberty*, 1963, p. 12.

continually, and their preferences get reflected in commodity price changes and in turn-overs.

(iii) Traders interpret these price and turn-over signals, and direct producers to adjust their production programmes to match the consumer needs, thus recorded.

(iv) Available investment resources, i.e. domestic savings and inflows of foreign savings, get shifted, through such activity of traders and producers, and *via* the capital market—which is an integral part of the overall price-regulated market mechanism—or otherwise, into production channels which meet consumer-preferences.

(v) In a modern society—whether it is free, communist or socialist—production involves time, and the production process has, for technological reasons, to commence in anticipation and in advance of demand. The forward market, which is another integral part of the overall price-regulated market mechanism, helps such anticipatory production. The forward market may reduce to a minimum, or eliminate, resource wastages from production errors, by projecting the changing market situations.

IV. Functional Pre-suppositions of a Free Society

(*i*) *Trade, the First Link in the Operational Chain*

9. Operationally, the first link in this chain of consumer-directed economic system is, it will be noted, trade, which interprets and transmits to producers consumer decisions. That trade is the sprear-head of all economic development emerges graphically when we imagine a community cut off from the rest of the country, of which it had been traditionally an integral part. Production for the national market will then soon be replaced by production to meet the limited needs of a small community; and its people are consequently destined to slip down into poverty and, possibly, into a more or less primitive way of life, depending on the size of the isolated community's market. A pre-condition for the full and efficient functioning of a free society is, therefore, the absence of barriers to internal and external trade. Logic and experience

have shown that this freedom will permit continued prosperity for the economy--the result of the use to capacity of its specialised talents through integration of the national economy with the world markets, the demands of which—unlike the demands of the limited national markets—may not be easily satiated.

(*ii*) *Institution of Private Property*

10. Secondly, the full and efficient functioning of a free society demands recognition of the institution of private property, not only in respect of a family house, the durable consumer goods in it and a car, but also in respect of capital assets, the means of production. In a free society, because of the discipline of a most ruthless consumer, the management, under the duress of survival has to keep a continual watch over cost, quality and turnover. This calls for perpetual flexibility of decisions. Consumer discipline operates, in the case of the larger corporations, through its impact on the stock-market quotations for the scrips of the corporations. It is just not practical to achieve the requisite decision flexibilities under social ownership—i.e. the ownership of no one in particular—of the means of production. Experience has shown that the magic of ownership is among the most powerful forces making the progress.[3]

11. The power of the magic of ownership of the means of production is nowhere more convincingly demonstrated and highlighted than in Soviet agriculture. In 1964, the output of 3% of the land under collective farms, the private plots allotted to their workers, accounted for no less than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the gross farm output of USSR and $\frac{1}{2}$ of the Soviet livestock production.[4]

3. For socialists and communists, private ownership of the means of production is like the red rag to the bull. On the other hand, Ludwig non Mises observes in his book, *The Free and Prosperous Commonwealth*, New Delhi, 1968, (p. 63): "The foundation of any and every civilization, including our own, is private ownership of the means of production. Whoever wishes to criticize modern civilization, therefore begins with private property. It is blamed for everything that does not please the critic, especially those evils that have their origin in the fact that private property has been hampered and restrained in various respects so that its full social potentialities cannot be realized".

4. W.N. Loucks, *Comparative Economic Systems*, See Chap. 25, on "Soviet Agriculture".

Russia's dependence on the capitalist world for its food and other agricultural needs—this dependence is, incidentally, rather amazing as about ⅓ of the Soviet labour force is engaged in, and an equal proportion of the total population lives on, agriculture—would have assumed disastrous dimensions, if Communist ideologues were to prevail and abolish completely private ownership of the means of production in Soviet agriculture. Will our own ideologues ever learn from this experience?

(*iii*) *Economic Freedoms of the Individual*

12. The third pre-condition for the full success of the consumer-directed economic system is the economic freedom of the individual, particularly in respect of:

(a) the distribution of his income between consumption and saving;
(b) the choice of consumption and the power to direct entrepreneurs, through a price-regulated market mechanism, to import, or to fabricate at home, the commodities of his choice;
(c) the distribution of his savings among the several alternatives;
(d) the choice of his occupation.

These four freedoms constitute fundamental economic freedoms of free citizens. When these freedoms are infringed, the charms of mundane life correspondingly diminish.

V. Built-in factors making for Growth and Social Justice in a Free Society

13. Quite obviously, a consumer controlled system cannot come into being, nor function, without freedoms (a) and (b). Freedoms (c) and (d) are essential to ensure that the material and the human resources of production get drawn into channels where their output is the highest. These latter freedoms will, through continual resource shifts, minimise or eliminate less

effective resource deployments and thus make for the maximisation of the national product from a given quantum of resources.

(ii) Tendency to Maximise Production, Employment, and Income

14. Under consumer sovereignty, four desiderata are integral to the functioning of the system. First, to seek consumer patronage, entrepreneurs would strike to reduce costs and improve quality. With consumer approval and appreciation of such effort, high-cost and low-quality products would continually tend to be replaced through resource shifts and technological progress, by low-cost and high-quality products; and, as already pointed out, this will continually tend to lift up production, and hence employment, income and the level of living.

(ii) Expansion of Employment

15. Secondly, rapid expansion of employment is built into the economic system where everybody's concern is to meet the demands—which, it may be noted, are most exacting, in addition to being ruthless—of the consumer. The expansion of employment at current, or rising, wage rates is a function, not of investment, as Indian experience has shown; nor of stepping down the technology of production, which is currently in use. It is solely a function of the expansion of overall production. Since consumer sovereignty makes for rapidity of growth of the national product, it may, therefore, liquidate unemployment with corresponding rapidity.

16. To illustrate the working of this built-in urge to expand employment: in Japan, low wages, the heavy pressure of population on land, 291 persons per square kilometer—the average land-holding in the country, as a result of this population pressure, is but 1.01 hectares—the scarcity and high cost of capital induced farmers to adopt labour-intensive methods of cultivation in agriculture. Japanese agricultural output is well above the world average,[5] and Japanese agriculture employs

5. The Japanese output of paddy, per hectare, in 1974 was 5.84 tonnes, as against the world average of 2.36 tonnes.

2,031 workers per 1,000 hectares of cultivated land. In USA, on the other hand, capital is less scarce, the average holding is 157.6 hectares, population density is but 22 per square kilometer; and the country adopted capital-intensive methods of cultivation, the labour employed per 1,000 hectares of cultivated land being a mere 17. These differing systems of cultivation were adopted, not under the direction of a planning commission, but by independent farmers in free economies, the course and destinies of which are, on the whole, determined by sovereign consumers. By contrast, the Russian Gosplan copied the American method of capital-intensive cultivation, notwithstanding low wages, with none too complementary results.

(*iii*) *Social Justice*

17. Thirdly, under full consumer sovereignty, there is no need, nor room, for monopolies in production, distribution, imports or exports; and incomes of all individuals—wages, interest, rent and profits—would correspond to their respective contributions to the national product. Such a situation permits no windfalls. Hence, none can appropriate someone else's earnings, i.e. there can be no social injustice. Social injustice, on the other hand, is inevitable under socialist economic systems, which abound in monopolies, privileges and subsidies; and hence bring to privileged individuals and groups unearned and also unmerited incomes, at the expense of the rest of the community.

(*iv*) *Reduction of Income Contrasts*

18. Fourthly, income contrasts tend to decline as economic development progresses, under consumer sovereignty. This is so not merely because of the absence of social injustice—see factor (iii) above—but also as a consequence of, on the one hand, a natural decline in interest, rent and profits, the earnings of the economic elite, and a natural increase, on the other, of wages and salaries. As a free economy progresses, the proportion of wages and salaries to the national product tends to increase and the proportion of interest, rent and profits tends to decline.

19. In Japan, wages and salaries rose continually from 41.3% of GDP, in 1960, to 50.8%, in 1974. In West Germany, this percentage rose from 46.9 to 54.7. By contrast, in Socialist India, this percentage fluctuated within a narrow range and was, in 1974-75, 28.2, lower than in 1960-61, 29.9.[6]

20. The growing prosperity of the masses of the people in free societies is evidenced by the overwhelming proportion of economic activity being directed to the turning out of articles of mass consumption and by the vast multiplicity of departmental stores, Safeways, shopping centres and the endless series of retail shops which purvey these products. Many of these products would be, if then available, matters of envy among the noblemen and the elite of the eighteenth century. The shoppers that crowd these places are not plutocrats but farm and factory workers and salaried people. Except in Communist countries, cars are no longer a luxury transport, accessible only to the favoured top crust of the community.

21. In a communist society, none of the economic constituents of a free economy, outlined in Sections III and IV, paras 7 to 18 above, hold true. The state determines the needs of consumers, arranges the distribution of goods and services and allocates resources among alternative uses, individuals do not enjoy fundamental economic rights, and forward markets do not exist. We need not here be drawn into the "merits" and "achievements" of communist societies, as the political party in power and also the main opposition, the Congress, have rejected communism.

VI. Record of Socialism in India

22. It is much more relevant to review socialism as we have been practicing it during the past three decades. Under our socialist policies, consumer control and direction of the economy is hindered, among other ways, by exchange control; by import and export restrictions; by the control of capital issues; by the industrial policy resolution, 1956; by the allocation of investment resources, including capital inflows from abroad, by a planning commission; by nationalisation of numerous undertakings; by state trading; by state financial agencies; by Reserve

6. See attached table.

Bank control of credit; by a multiplicity of economic legislation both by the Centre and the States; by the creation of a series of monopolies of varying degrees; by numerous subsidies and privileges; and, until last April, by internal barriers to the movements of rabi foodgrains.

23. As a result of the working of these measures, we may identify four sectors in the economy, a public sector, which receives priority attention, an industrial sector, which is policy-favoured, an agricultural sector, which is harassed and neglected, though it receives much lip sympathy, and a corrupt sector. The industrial sector is inherently unviable, viability being assessed by reference to cost-quality standards of the output, its competitive ability in world markets, and this sector's contribution to employment and income. Exceptions, if any, apart, there is not a single major industrial product which is not subsidised—more generally, this subsidy may be exceedingly heavy—by the consumer in the home market, and the export of which is not subsidised by the state in the markets abroad. And yet, this sector has gallopped ahead, through deliberate policy inducements and by preferential allocations of resources. Its contribution to employment has been most disappointing, in relation to the resources employed. Industrial production (manufacturing) accounted for but 16.3% of the national product in 1975-76, having risen from 12.9% two decades ago, in 1955-56.

24. The public sector is the most pampered sector. Taking an overall view, objectively and realistically—leaving alone doctrinaire dogma—public sector undertakings in India have by no means been a striking success. That is but inevitable when management and stakes are divorced. Even without including the gaps between landed costs and market prices of the import goods acquired against foreign aid, the public sector absorbs, from the data in the National Accounts Statistics, about 55% of the total available investment resources, though the contribution of this sector to NNP, was, in 1975-76, but 17% save and except when a powerful and selfless individual may be at the helm of affairs, is assisted by a team of like mettle, and this body of rare people is free from interference by interested parties, operating with the aid of politicians, public sector undertakings may be more or less milch-cows of

those who may gain control over them. The illicit, though not always illegal, gains which they may gather are—being cases of resource wastages—a drag on the performance of these undertakings and a heavy debit, because of the magnitudes involved, on the national product. The nature of the operation of these factors in the nationalised coal industry is well brought out by B.P. Pai in his book, *Save Coal India*, Vol. I, published last month. Pai is Deputy Chief Mining Engineer in a subsidiary of Coal India. His revelations of mismanagement merit the serious attention of the public and the Government.

25. The agricultural sector is as inherently viable as the industrial sector is unviable, this viability being assessed by the same yardsticks cited above. No agricultural product receives any subsidy from the consumer in the home market, nor any subsidy from the state on exports. Agricultural exports, which are able to stand on their own in world markets, account for about 40% of total exports. The rupee prices of many agricultural items, e.g. rice, coffee, and Bengal desi cotton, are way lower than international prices, and their exports are banned, restricted or are subjected to penalty export duties. In desperation, some agricultural produce, like rice, is smuggled out! For all its viability, agriculture, however, is the least cared for of the three sectors. With the public sector and the industrial sector appropriating the lion's share of the resources, agriculture is starved of capital, though it accounts for about one-half of the national product and 72% of the population lives on it.

26. The corrupt sector, to which the President referred, is fed by the public sector; by exchange control; by import restrictions; by licencing policies, and by the complex network of economic legislation and administrative measures, which, as noted earlier, have created numerous monopolies and other privileges, that yield windfalls and hence give rise to corrupt payments. Until April 1977, rabi food zones, across which foodgrain movements were not permissible except under permits, were among the major sources of corruption and the generation of black money. Y.B. Chavan, when he was Finance Minister, stated that black-market transactions were probably as large, in the aggregate, as those in white money. Black

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incomes being generally cases of investment funds converted into private incomes, through corrupt payments, they turn back the hand of development.

27. The National Accounts Statistics, issued by CSO, help to present the ultimate end product of these measures. As may be seen from the attached table, the per capita income of the agricultural population, which constitutes 72% of the total, declined from a near-peak of Rs. 219.20 in 1960-61 to Rs. 195.50 in 1976-77, or Rs. 2.30 below its level in 1950-51, on the eve of the adoption of socialist policy measures. During the census decade, 1961-71, agricultural workers, the lowest rung of the economic ladder, rose by 75%, the number of cultivators fell by 16%, and the population below the poverty line moved up from 39% to 45% of the total population. The income of the rest of the population, mostly the urban people, on the other hand, more than doubled from Rs. 400 in 1950-51 to Rs. 813 in 1976-77. In these statistics is writ large the neglect of agriculture and of the interests of the masses, the pampering of industry and of the urban elite, and the fostering of corruption and of monopolies, in all of which the wily crowd of politicians and the corrupt among the businessmen, industrialists and administrators have been working hand in glove, even throwing to the winds, when required, human decencies and ethical standards.

VII. Redemption and Progress Through Pragmatism

28. There is no remedy to these consequences other than to extinguish the corrupt sector, and divert resources, in a big way, from the public sector and the industrial sector, into the agricultural sector. Our analysis demonstrates that the most effective and the most appropriate method of achieving this is to make a right-about turn and move rapidly in the direction of the Gandhian concept of the role of the state in economic affairs. This involves the release of the consumer from the socialist chains and taking the other consequential policy U-turns,[7] more particularly:

[7]See my article on "Planning: Need for a Policy Alternative" in *The Capital* (Annual), dated February 24, 1977 and the paper on "Economic

(i) Channelising more funds into the agricultural sector, both under public and private investments;
(ii) removing the barriers to internal and external trade;
(iii) revising the industrial policy resolution, 1956;
(iv) abolishing industrial licensing and the system of subsidies;
(v) scaling down drastically overall public sector outlays, even withdrawing part of public sector investments;
(vi) limiting state activity to its natural and proper duties;
(vii) removing exchange control, and adopting a fully floating rupee;
(viii) reducing taxation, and balancing the budget at a vastly lower level of expenditure and investment than now;
(ix) reviewing all economic legislation and administrative measures with a view to abandoning or restructuring them to match the needs of a free economy.

29. The legacy of the Janata government is both complex and difficult. The Government may not be able to fulfil its election promises, if it merely continues the Congress policy framework. These policies need to be abandoned in all major respects. If the approach is pragmatic—not doctrinaire—there is every hope that the Government would be led, through the most sound and dependable technique of trial and error, along the right road to progress. The people have had enough of dogma and scapegoats. They are now looking for tangible achievements.

30. Experience has shown, again and again that no country which has been directed, in its economic affairs, by the collective counsel of sovereign consumers, has come to grief. The dividends harvested have invariably been of the "miracle" order, both in respect of growth and social justice. In the contemporary world, West Germany (under Professor Erhard), Spain, Japan and the several mini-Japans in Asia are outstanding examples. On the other hand, no country which has fallen victim to any significant policy-mix of socialism—which has generally been under the guidance of self-seeking businessmen,

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Growth With Social Justice: The Need for a Policy Alternative" in *Development Strategies: Search for Alternatives*, Leslie Sawhny Programme, Bombay, 1977.

industrialists and administrators, and aided by deluded ideologues—has escaped chaos and overall semi-stagnation or decay. India, Burma, Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh are classic examples.

31. The sovereignty of the consumer, on which hinges rapid economic growth with social justice, and the soverignty of the voter, the foundation of all democratic institutions, are but different aspects of a free citizen. We may have an ideally free society when the two sovereignties go together. Given sovereign voting rights, if the rights of citizens as sovereign consumers are infringed and the economy decays as a consequence, the citizens may react in protest, first in the bye-elections; and, if the government failed to take heed, more massively in a general election, as happened in March 1977. In this destiny-election, the *Garibi Hatao* slogan having turned out to be but a political confidence trick, the traditional voting loyalties of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes—accounting for over 30% of the total electorate—were shifted away from the Congress, virtually *en masse*. The danger of a political disaster which may attend the inability of the Janata Government to fulfil public expectations, should not be under-rated as 45% of the population is below the poverty line and 70% illiterate. These lowly folk have little value for fundamental rights, civil liberties and constitutional niceties. In frustration and beguiled by promises, they may well vote into power a dictatorial regime, which it may not be easy to dismiss. Not only the Janata Government but also those who wish well by it are, so to speak, on trial. Let us hope that we will succeed in holding high both the sovereignty of the consumer and the sovereignty of the voter; and firmly establish in India a truely free society, for the rest of Asia and the world to admire and copy.

YEAR	Per Capita Income (in Rs.) (At 1960-61 Prices)			Per Capita Consumption of pulses[1] (Kg/year)	Wages and Salaries as per cent of GDP at Market Prices	
	Overall Average	Agricultural Population	Non Agricultural Population		India	Japan[1 2]
1950-51	252.9	197.8	399.4	22.1[4]		
1960-61	305.6	219.2	531.4	24.0	29.9	41.3
1961-62	309.2	216.0	554.4	25.2	29.8	
1962-63	308.2	205.6	578.6	22.6	31.1	
1963-64	318.3	206.8	612.3	21.8	29.8	43.5
1964-65	335.1	220.5	639.5	18.6	28.7	
1965-66	311.0	185.6	643.8	22.5	30.6	44.7
1966-67	307.4	179.6	646.4	17.6	30.1	44.2
1967-68	325.4	202.4	654.4	14.5	30.0	43.3
1968-69	327.0	198.7	669.8	20.5	30.9	42.7
1969-70	340.6	206.6	699.1	17.3	30.6	42.8
1970-71	353.0	219.0	711.5	18.9	30.3	43.3
1971-72	349.0	209.8	721.3	18.7	30.6	46.3
1972-73	337.1	190.4	729.3	17.3	30.3	47.1
1973-74	349.1	202.7	737.7	15.1	28.5	48.6
1974-75	343.2	191.1	745.1	14.9	28.2	50.8
1975-76	365.9	211.1	774.3	14.6		
1976-77[3]	365.1	195.5	813.2	18.9		

[1]Figures relate to calendar years; that against 1960-61 corresponds to 1960 and so on for later years.

[2]The trend observed in the case of Japan is also observed in many other countries.

[3]Estimates based on indications in the *Economic Survey 1976-77*, Table 1.1, p. 1.

[4]Relates to 1951 (and not 1950).

Sources: *National Accounts Statistics*, issued by CSO, *Bulletin on Food Statistics*, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, and *Yearbook of National Accounts Statistics*.

Modernizing our Social Structure and Institutions: Caste, Class, and the Position of Women

PROMILLA KAPUR

It is essential to understand the character and important features of our society, the position of women, and the processes of modernization for devising any strategy or strategies for modernizing our social structure and institutions.

Indian society is highly stratified. According to the Varna scheme, Hindu society is traditionally divided into four main categories: Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. But this scheme over-simplifies the stratification: it not only keeps the untouchables outside this division, but also does not take cognizance of the real and effective units of its broad categories. In the caste system, the Indian social structure is divided into a number of castes or Jatis and sub-castes (estimated to be about 3000). Each one of these units is a hereditary, endogamous, and usually localised social group having a name, a traditional association with a vocation, and a particular hierarchical position among the local castes, with a particular body of customs sanctioned by the traditional rules and constituting the area of effective social life for the individual as maximum commensality occurs within the caste.

The criteria of hierarchical rank in castes are based on the practice of certain customs, rituals, traditional rules, and lifestyles and on the acceptance or non-acceptance of cooked food and drinking water from each other. The ones from whom one accepts food and drinking water are either of the same social

status or superior while from those these are not accepted are inferior.

Though there is no real contradiction in the English word "Caste" being used to denote both Varna and Jati, there is at certain points a difference between the two. To take an example, in the Varna system the hierarchy of the various categories is clear and immutable, with ritual considerations forming the basis of the differentiation and having no variation between one region and another. But in the caste system there are found to be not only significant regional differences with regard to the position of a few occupational castes, some castes being found only in some parts of the country, but the position of a caste in the hierarchy may vary even from village to village. An instance may be cited of the people of one category of Varna, say Brahmins, who do not form a single endogamous group and may have a few endogamous groups even among all those Brahmins who speak the same language. As compared to Varna, the caste system is a much more complex phenomenon. Caste is characteristically a Hindu phenomenon, yet divisions corresponding to castes are also found among other religious groups such as among the Christians—Old and New Christians —and among the Muslims—Ashrafs and Non-Ashrafs.

Apart from its division into different castes, our society is also divided into different classes which are mainly based on economic differences and, like castes, are hierarchically graded social categories. But while classes are based broadly upon ownership and non-ownership of the means of production and are defined in terms of property and not essentially in terms of social honour, castes are status groups placed according to and defined in terms of social status and honour which are dependent largely, if not exclusively, on the ritual considerations, values, traditional rules, and style of life (highly esteemed styles of life being generally associated with many ritual restrictions). Property and occupation enter as important but not necessarily decisive elements in the style of life.

The classes are, in principle and to some extent in practice, open groups. The mobility among them is not very low and in class system it is the individual who moves up or down, whereas castes, in theory at least, are closed groups, though in practice there is some movement. This mobility is a gradual and a much

slower process and in the caste system entire communities or groups move and change their positions. The upward social mobility which several castes and communities have tried in the last ten decades are through the process of 'Sanskritization'—a process by which a 'low' Hindu caste, attempts to improve its status by adopting the customs, ritual, ideology, and way of life of a higher caste. While the caste system has numerous and multiple status groups, the class system has only a few broad divisions of economic groups.

But in traditional Indian society the important economic differences and caste distinctions have been very closely intertwined. Caste has been the fundamental institution of traditional India and one of the most striking and complex features of our social structure and stratification has been its division into a number of castes and sub castes.

On analysing the class and particularly caste structure and stratification of our society, one finds that our social structure is highly stratified and that the stratification is fundamentally ascriptive, hierarchical, inegalitarian, inequalitarian, rigid and somewhat without much social mobility or at best with a peculiar type of upward social movement.

The term 'position' in the present paper refers to two aspects of a person's social position—role and status respectively. Role refers to obligations and duties, and 'status' refers to rights, privileges, power, prestige and the grading of a person in order of what is socially valued and what gives him the ability to influence or control his social environment. Thus the position of women would refer to their expected duties and obligations as also their privileges, powers and rights both within and outside home. It also signifies how they are treated by the society.

Since our social stratification is peculiarly rigid and each stratum has a different 'style of life' prescribed by traditional rules and customs, including the social expectation regarding the behaviour of both the sexes, the role of women in social life in each stratum becomes conspicuously different from the other and this affects their position in different strata.

There are two aspects of the position of women in India: one is their position according to the Constitution and Law, the other is what they actually enjoy in day-to-day life. Accord-

ing to Articles 14, 15 and 16 of our Constitution, a woman has been imparted equal rights and privileges with those of men with regard to the vote and opportunities of education, jobs, occupations and professions. It is laid down that no discrimination will be made on grounds of sex, caste, religion or creed. Similarly, our law, through the various statutes and Acts enacted particularly after independence, gives women by and large the same status as men, enabling them to claim almost all the rights and privileges of a man. Thus in Constitution and law—in theory—the position of women has improved a lot and in principle they have the position of equality with men.

But what is the position of women in reality—the one that they enjoy in day-to-day life? Before presenting this aspect of women's position I would like to emphasise the complexity and great variation of the Indian socio-economic and cultural scene. The variation is not only with regard to the different religions and regions but even in the same region among its urban, rural, and tribal population. Even in the same urban or rural area there is much social diversity among the people belonging to different kinship and family groups, castes and classes with regard to their 'design of life', including the role and status of the various members of different social groups, kinship and family relationships and other inter-personal and inter-group relationships, and the degrees of their adherence to the traditional, and acceptance of the modern, ways of life.

Since the position of women is closely interlinked with their immediate socio-cultural milieu, the highly stratified and complex character of our social structure and institutions brings about not only variations but even striking contrasts and contradictions in the position of women among different segments of society. As such, it is very difficult to make any unqualified generalisations and to present a uniform picture with regard to the position of women in India. No doubt, the socio-economic and politico-legal changes that India has witnessed in the last six decades or so and particularly those after Independence have brought about improvement to a lesser or greater degree in the position of women of different sections as compared to what existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. One finds that their literacy rate has increased, their average age of marriage has risen, their mortality rate has decreased and life

span increased. More and more of them have various kinds of education and enter various occupations and professions and hold official positions at various levels. The number of widows and divorcees remarrying has increased even among those sections of society which did not allow this at all. The various studies, including my own and the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women (1974), do indicate a trend towards a change in the conceptions regarding the position of women in India.

Yet, as the Report of the Committee on the Status of Women and other studies rightly point out, whatever changes and improvements have taken place have had the greatest impact on women of urban dwelling middle and upper class families, and that the basic socio-economic conditions under which women live and work in the countryside have altered very little. Among the high castes, the lives of women continue to be oppressed by sharp sex segregation, the rigid segregation of roles between men and women with almost no participation of each in the roles of the other, isolation of women in the narrow world of domestic life and the use of women primarily as sex symbols. Great sex-role inequalities, rigid ritual restrictions, seclusion and absence of freedom of movement, and harsh sexual and marital norms persist as before. Among the women of low castes, the harsh realities and hardships of their lives have remained almost unchanged. They still have to fetch drinking water and cooking fuel from long distances. At work the system of inequalities and exploitation, within which the women of lower castes and classes are forced to work, are almost the same. In spite of over two decades of planned economic development, the possibilities of employment for women in rural areas remain relatively unchanged. Rather, they have deteriorated, as the agricultural extension services including on-the-spot-training are directed to men, though women are heavily involved in agricultural production and marketing. The result is that they are given unskilled or semi-skilled lowly paid and less prestigious jobs. Thus, by and large the position of women has not improved palpably.

Even while the situation of women of middle classes has improved considerably, the basic attitude of male superiority and greater desirability and female's inferiority and less desirabi-

lity still largely prevails. Women do not enjoy a position of equality with men. Even the increase in the number of women in the professional sphere has not led to sexual equality in the distribution of occupational positions having power, status and privileges. While the position of individuals in society has changed, the overall conception of the man-woman relationship has altered much less. The provisions of equal legal and Constitutional rights and privileges for women have meant little to the large majority of women, and will continue to mean little so long as the structure of man-woman relationships continues to be hierarchical and asymmetrical.

The various observations, researches, studies, and the report of the Committee point out that apart from widespread ignorance, superstitions and illiteracy, what comes in the way of women enjoying better social, educational, economic and health status are those prevalent age-long and outdated traditions, worn-out customs, rituals, social norms, socialisation processes, social attitudes and authoritarian pro-male values that look down upon women as inferior and as less desirable and propagate double standards of morality—one set of principles governing the male and another governing the female.

On analysing the origin of such practices and customs, one finds that they are closely related to or have originated out of the characteristics of the caste system. For example, the practice of dowry is the outcome of the institution of hupergamy found to be the characteristic of the higher caste Hindus. According to this institution practice, women could be married to men of superior and not of the lower caste or sub caste. In order to get a matrimonial match from the superior castes the parents of the girl had to provide a bait of high 'dowry'. Since in the rigid caste system the upward movement could be only through the process of 'Sanskritization', the lower castes started taking on the 'style of life' of the higher castes and started adopting this practice. Today it operates almost at all levels of castes and classes of our society. The basis of dowry is social and economic inequalities or rather caste and class inequalities. Prostitution, which is both a cause and effect of the lower status of women, is fundamentally also the exploitation of the poor by the rich and of women by men owing to the social and economic inequalities existing in our society.

Thus it is the modernizing of the social structure and institutions—caste and class—that is needed for modernizing the position of women. An equally important strategy could be to modernize the position of women in order to modernize the social structure and institutions. It would be still better to bring about modernization simultaneously in the social structure and the position of women as they are the cause and effect of one another.

Before discussing the model or models for modernizing the social structure and institutions (caste, class and position of women), a little clarification of the concept of modernization is required. Despite its being a prominent theme of debate in the last two decades or so, 'modernization' continues to have different meanings and connotations not only for people of different nations but even for people of the same nation having different perspectives. Modernization is often taken as just another term for economic development and technological change and is wrongly understood as a synonym of 'Westernization'. No doubt economic development is a necessary criterion for modernization. But it is not a sufficient one. What is needed along with economic welfare is the development of such a socio-psychological situation and environment in the social structure which may allow the creation and establishment of tension-free or harmonious inter-personal and inter-group relationships. And this requires the development of human values of rationality and humanitarianism—an active concern for the welfare of all human beings irrespective of caste, economic position, religion, age and sex—including egalitarianism and secularization.

There could be several modernizing models. No country and more so a country of India's cultural complexity, variation, and social stratification, can adopt a modernizing model without taking note of the realities of its socio-economic and social structural scene. Different models would have to be adopted for modernizing different sections of society. For modernizing the caste, class and position of women in India, we have to work out the details for improving the position of men and women of different strata. For example, for modernizing and thus improving the socio-economic situation of the rural women of less-privileged class and caste, an emphasis has to be laid on informal education in production and marketing hygiene, child care skills and

nutrition. A few of the most important measures could be to provide them with physical and material basic amenities of easily accessible water supplies, easily manipulative and available cooking fuel, and health services. The situation of the women belonging to higher castes would improve with greater freedom of movement, less rigid segregration of sexes, less harsh marital and sexual norms, egalitarian inter-sex relationships, wider opportunities for education and utilization of education. For actual details regarding the practical steps to be taken for improving the position of women, the recommendations made by the Committee in their National Plan of Action (1975) should be incorporated in the national development plans and implemented effectively.

Yet there are some fundamental and essential requirements for modernizing the position of women. We must work for a socio-economic situation in which the structure of role and inter-personal relationships between men and women is based on equality so that both are respected and loved as human beings with equal human worth. There should be an acceptance of the principle of equality within and outside the family along with a recognition of the need to develop a working partnership as also a partnership in marriage and family relationships and responsibilities. The family roles as also other roles of men and women should be 'symmetrical'. The role of wife, house-wife, and mother is to be given as much importance, pride, prestige and value as the role of the bread-winner. It should not, however, be eulogized or idealised so much that women get obsessed with the deep desire of playing that role as their only aim in life and may be completely frustrated if deprived of that role. They should not be looked down upon by society if unable to play that role, no alternative role for them being acceptable to society. Both men and women should be able to exercise choice in all matters relating to education, livelihood, marriage, and control over fertility. There has to be a social acceptance of multiple roles of women as home makers, mothers, and socially and economically productive individuals. They should be able to take active part in a variety of divergent roles in the wider arena. Both men and women with faith in each other should help one another for their own good and progress as also for the progress of the society at large.

However, since the position of women is interlinked with the entire societal set-up, it is essential to modernize the social structure and institutions in order to improve their lot. This would be possible if apart from establishing such an economic system or development, which could look after economic amenities, public health, education, and communications and other public welfare, the relationship between the various social groups as also between the sexes are made to move from the hierarchical to a more egalitarian level. The status of individuals should not be 'ascriptive' but based on achievement. Thus such a social structure has to be established which would be like Gandhi's concept of 'Swaraj' in which, apart from establishing self-rule, self-sufficiency and provision of nutritious food, shelter, health services and work for everyone, the emphasis is on establishing non-exploitative, egalitarian, and equalitarian social order and human relationships by removing caste, class, and sex inequalities.

The modernizing of the social structure will have to be at various levels—social, psychological and economic—and the approach as well as the measures will have to be multipronged and multi-phased. Simultaneous action on a number of fronts is required. It is essential that through a process of equalitarian socialization—bringing up the sons and the daughters with equal care and love and providing them with equal opportunities and facilities for development—and through later socialization, formal and informal education, and effective mass media, such attitudes, values and feelings and personality characteristics are consciously inculcated in men and women, which would make them 'modern'. Because modernization of structural forms requires certain significant changes in the human personality, the characteristics which have to be inculcated are openness to innovation, rationality and scientific attitude, and a capacity for understanding, adjustment, sympathy, empathy, and love. The individual has to be trained to cultivate an active faith in the egalitarian human relationships: he himself should be equalitarian in his own dealings with others.

However, for evolving effective strategies for modernizing our social structure and institutions, and particularly for modernizing the position of women, it is imperative that we

have many more empirical researches and systematic studies on a nationwide basis carried out to cover their various aspects. After all, it is the scientific knowledge and analyses of the actual situation that help greatly in bringing about the needed change.

Man—Character—Total Revolution

ACHYUT PATWARDHAN

THE recent eclipse of all civil liberties and the bloodless imposition of an authoritarian regime has made us realise that there is nothing automatic or fail-safe about the preservation of a free society, solely on the strength of a political system based on representative government. Democracy is not merely a system of governance; it is primarily a way of life. There are some norms of conduct which the community must accept as sacrosanct. It does not mean that there are no deviations from the norms at any given place or time. All the same, they are seen and treated as lapses and a breach of the code of social ethics. There is no room for sophistry by which you justify bald evils like apartheid, slave trade or untouchability, etc.

It must, however, be conceded that this ethic has never become effective or influenced international relations. Between two so-called democracies, or between a democratic and another feudal state, relations are not materially different than between two authoritarian states. Democratic or free society has nowhere freed itself from its regional-tribal, or racial-national roots. Earnest men of goodwill have, however, always felt that the democratic way must also devise new norms for international relations, if human life is not to revert to a new barbarism.

Basic to this problem of creating "a society of free and equal men and women" is a specific *Concept of Man*. However, not all who swear by a democratic faith share the perspectives concerning the 'phenomenon of man'. I am inclined to consider that a FREE SOCIETY is rooted in this perception of man's

uniqueness. What is the nature and content of this view of human existence?

Briefly it states than MAN IS THE MEASURE OF ALL THINGS. Society exists for the wellbeing and total development of man. Man must not be looked upon as a mere instrument of society, to be pushed about and forced to conform to the dictates of society, and used for fulfilling its ends of material prosperity and political stability. However, it is not my intention to posit any in-built contradiction of interest between man and the community in which he lives and works. But it should be recognised that collectively certain urges get priority and are allowed greater scope for fullest development, at the expense of certain other felt-needs, which are less compulsive in the lives of overwhelming numbers or of more influential and powerful people.

Society is only man writ large, tied with his fellow-men in an intricate web of relationships; so all the errors of judgement man is prone to are faithfully projected in his social fabric. Man is dimensionally different from other primates, yet he has an animal nature inherited through the evolutionary cycle. Man knows IMPERMANENCE as an experiential fact. In spite of this he has a compulsive craving for continuity, and for pleasure. He also knows that PLEASURE AND PAIN are inseparable cognates. Yet he strives for pleasure hoping to escape pain by his extraordinary resourcefulness and inventive flair, to such a degree that these tendencies have become a part and parcel of the powers and proclivities of his brain.

Western science has developed the scope and expanse of man's knowledge, and achieved a near-complete command over his material environment during the past two hundred years. This knowledge is tabulated, organised and stored in his brain. The brain which invented the computers and electro-telescopes has now touched the horizons of infinity in the field of astronomy-cosmology, physics and biology, etc. Thus INFINITY is now the perspective of modern science. One more fact defines man's relationship to infinity, in that he now knows from experience that whatever he knows in astronomy, for instance, demonstrates the limitations of his instrument of perception. He has moved a long way from the time when almost every natural scientist was a materialist. Matter and energy are seen

to be inseparably related. The substance of the universe, as at least some eminent scientists see it, is a mysterious energy expressed as intelligence. Some scientists would even agree that the nature of the physical world is CONSCIOUSNESS.

While natural science moves in this direction, there is one major blind-spot in man's advancement. An astronomer recognises that the view of the cosmos vouched to him through his telescope is the limitation of his lenses. The cosmos is vaster—an infinity ! Psychology has however not kept pace with this development. Man is far more knowledgeable regarding what he perceives of the phenomenal world. He is still groping in the twilight of uncertainty and illusion about the nature of the 'perceiver'. Therefore, western psychology (both behaviourist and most of the other schools) still treats the EGO as an entity. Whereas in the East there is an established traditional wisdom which does not posit God or any Super natural power—which simply states that Man compulsively chases pleasure and is unwilling to accept the fact that pleasure and pain are cognates. He knows that he must die—he knows the reality of IMPERMANANCE. Yet he is preoccupied with continuity. This entity seeking pleasure plus continuity is quintessentially the PERCEIVER in the brain. It is posited by Indian psychology that this perceiver who has come into being as a part of the 'Body-Brain Complex', is a NON-ENTITY! This perceiver has no basis in the soul or the Atman. And this truth can become an experiential fact. The world-view based upon this psychological perception is naturally at variance with what has been called the 'scientific outlook'—an outlook that has compulsively placed itself at the service of self-defeating pursuits like the producing of atomic weapons and other forms of frightfulness and pollution. It is high time that man, who has specialised himself as a problem-solving animal, should take a closer look at himself as the problem-maker.

If MAN IS THE MEASURE OF ALL THINGS, science will have to set other more humane targets before itself than the mere lop-sided conquest of the laws of the phenomenal world. It must also accept the validity of the search for the experiential process of pure perception. It must address itself to the challenges to human survival—VIOLENCE, POLLUTION AND ALIENATION. Whereas violence and pollution have at

least been recognised as threats to human survival, ALIENATION is still a word which rings no bell for scientists of any discipline. Ideologies of communism and democracy have this minor difference, that while in the western democracies knowledge of the psyche is used for selling unwanted goods in the service of a consumer society, in Russia it is abused to rob man of his heritage of free will by administering mind-tampering drugs. Both are in-roads upon Free Will. One uses pleasure as its decoy, and the other uses the pain-mechanism diabolically.

Alienation received haphazard attention in the early writings of Marx. But he was lured away by the bait of immediacy and an amoral achievement-orientation, which was always lurking in his psyche, to the dogma of Class-War. The Dictatorship of the Proletariat was a short-cut he sought to cope with the private ownership of social resources, which in his view, was the villain of the nineteenth century industrial revolution. We must not judge Marx too harshly because he lived and wrote a hundred years ago. Euro-communists have at last mustered some courage to strike a note of partial revisionism regarding the validity of the theory of dictatorship of the proletariat. As a matter of fact, it is obvious to every thinking citizen from the shores of the Pacific in China to the Gates of Bradenburg in East Germany that, if he had the freedom from fear to do so, he would testify that the rule of the Communist Party Caucus can never lead to a Classless Society. It has crystallised as a New Ruling Class, which cannot afford to renounce its political power by which it retains its control over the military machine.

We have moved a long way to reach a short distance. Alienation is man's ignorance of the I-process and what human existence is about. It is the polar opposite of KINSHIP. Every father and mother, every son and brother, every lover and husband, has known the magic by which he awakens, non-verbally, to the sanctity of another person, as an experiential fact. This kinship is the content of a vital relationship. It may also be impermanent, but none the less, many can testify to its reality. I shall offer only two symbols of alienation: the jhuggies and shanty-towns, that grow on the fringe of multi-storeyed apartment houses under construction, as an urban phenomenon, and the existence of untouchability in our villages for centuries. These bear silent witness to man's total aliena-

tion, his lack of kinship. Man's survival is threatened by alienation no less than by violence and pollution.

The non-political roots of a free society are man's discovery of his true nature which brings him to the source-spring of compassion, the highest point of human intelligence. Religions have touched upon the fringe of this profound truth. However, they have skirted away to provide palliatives to man in his distress and self-pity. Religion has joined the ranks of psychiatrists, offering solace instead of enlightenment; and in the process, they have lost the insights of their Founders. Unless man can discover these non-political roots, a free society will be constantly threatened by a Nixon, or an Indira Gandhi, by Stalin openly or by Brezhnev less crudely; by Mao or Hua—the names are insignificant.

Structured as we are sociologically, we only value a social ethic. Where the State or some giant organisation like NASA or IBM sets the pace of collective enterprise and social welfare, you have to evolve an ethic, a discipline for team-work, for the pursuit of shared goals. Thus, when we come to the problem of organising a community for mutual welfare, certain codes of behaviour become meaningful, whether you believe in God or not, the laws of corporate living have a fascinating facial likeness. They are based, in the words of Bernard Shaw, upon a form of prudent rascality at least as far as the more aggressive members are concerned. Social ethics however breaks down in conditions of crisis, particularly when there are rapid changes in the social system due to technological advances and when there is a generation gap on account of lack of psychological coherence between different sections of society. Something more than a social ethic is called for.

What provides a firm foundation to social ethics is a shared faith in human goodness. This can only be cultivated by a perception of the Meaning of Man, which we have outlined at some length. How it can penetrate to all social levels, irrespective of barriers like illiteracy and other forms of backwardness, is demonstrated by the saint-poet Kabir who has made this view of human existence the main theme of his songs and teaching. This was the main task performed by the Saint poets of the Middle Ages when India had passed under a shadow of political disorder and instability. Social education is a potent

weapon for communion with fellow-man, if the heart is full of compassion. It does not depend upon technological aids. Per contra without charity your propaganda machine is hollow as sounding brass.

Character is a fragrance of benevolence which seeks no reward, it is a quality of impersonal kinship. When you realise, in a world such as the one in which we live today, that technology has made human survival and prosperity indivisible, a new kind of concern for man comes into being in sensitive minds and hearts. Then you are pledged to SARVA BHOOTA HITA, you will not act in a manner injurious to your fellow man. The State cannot buy your skills in the name of patriotism or any other blah blah, nor can it bully you to use your faculties and resources to the detriment of human well being. A journalist as much as a scientist, a teacher as much as a technologist, will refuse to serve the State or a private corporation whenever it puts a superior value upon national prestige etc., at the cost of the crusade against poverty and destitution. Your ability and resources are thus pledged to the ending of avoidable misery in the midst of which you are called upon to live.

This is the meaning of Total Revolution as I understand it. While I extend my fullest sympathy for my esteemed friend Jayaprakash Narayan, I am afraid he does not seem to have grasped the arduousness of the process by which Total Revolution can be translated into a meaningful pursuit. Unless one is prepared to transform *oneself* psychologically and behaviourally, one is not an adequate instrument for the radical regeneration of Man. Total Revolution is an invitation to each of us to transform our value-system in consonance with a new perception of human worth.

This is not to disapprove of the direction indicated by that phrase: Total Revolution. It, however, gains no momentum by becoming a slogan. It might, all the same, become a sign-post for educationists; and a call to all earnest men and women that you cannot change society in a larger measure unless you are prepared to change yourselves.

Report on Discussions

DESPITE the wide variety in the background and orientation of participants who included men in public life and management, legal experts, educationists, social scientists, economists, social and Sarvodaya workers, journalists, creative writers, in fact men and women belonging to all denominations, classes, creeds and castes, there was general agreement that the democratic political process was only a means to achieve a free, pluralistic, non-exploitative society and that, therefore, the non-political roots of such a society needed to be strengthened. Just as it is difficult to conceive of a free society without democracy, it is equally difficult to sustain it without enriching and stabilising its non-political dimensions.

2. Those who initiated the discussions and participated in the Seminar included Achyut Patwardhan, V.V. John, M.R. Masani, P.G. Mavalankar, Soli Sorabjee, C.R. Irani, the Most Rev. D. Athaide, Piloo Mody, Balraj Madhok, Ram Joshi, Khushwant Singh, Shamim Ahmed Shamim, Manohar Malgonkar, B.R. Shenoy, K.D. Desai, Narayan Desai, Promilla Kapur, Chirantan Kulshrestha, Kanshi Ram, S.V. Raju, Arvind Deshpande, Jehangir Patel, and Sheela Singh.

3. The Seminar endeavoured to identify the non-political dimensions of a free society. It was pointed out that the task of strengthening and enriching these possibilities was jeopardised when vested political interests, particularly during the Emergency, had sought to replace the basic values of Justice, Freedom, Equality and Fraternity in the Constitution with the secondary concepts of progress, change, stability, efficiency, and development, as though these values and concepts are

mutually inconsistent. Another issue which came up for discussion concerned the finer distinction between democracy and a free society. It was asked whether or not the two concepts could exist in mutual isolation, and it was considered possible to regard one as the means and the other as an end.

4. There was general agreement that the urge to fulfil the basic requirements of the people had led to a greater concentration of power in the State and the consequent politicization of Indian society. The excesses committed during the Emergency and the public awareness of the hazards inherent in allowing too much power to the State had generated a feeling that the non-political roots of Indian society should be nurtured in such a way that indiscriminate displays of State power are avoided. Education and appropriate technology, it was felt, could also substantially help the cause of freedom.

5. The Seminar took note of the relevance of education to the dynamics of a free society. It was agreed that education for the development of personality had to be distinguished from a mere training for occupational skills. Education, it was felt, should inculcate a critical temper and a capacity for discrimination and induce a wide awareness of social problems and issues. This involves academic freedom and the absence of political interference. A recent example of such interference was the directive from the Prime Minister's office that a certain text book be withdrawn because of alleged bias.

6. The present educational system in India came in for considerable criticism, and it was suggested that educational planning should specifically concern itself with the environment and the empirical needs of the student. It was considered worthwhile to give primacy to a large number of small-scale innovative projects over complicated and highly theoretical all-India schemes.

7. The principal economic constituents of a free society were discussed. The economic policy followed during the past thirty years came in for critical analysis and it was generally felt that it had led to an erosion of the free and independent spirit of the people because of the concentration of economic and political power in the State. There was, therefore, a great need for a radical change in policies, particularly in regard to the system and manner of the allocation of investment resources. As 72% of the population drew its living from agriculture, greater

attention has to be paid to public investment in agriculture, particularly in irrigation, power, extension services, and viable rural industries. Overall economic policies need to be reoriented for assured maximisation of production, employment, and income. Gandhiji's talisman that all policies should be tested by the impact they would have on the well-being and the dignity of the poorest in the land should now be adopted so as to make the poor man a viable consumer.

8. The Seminar considered the role of the press and the mass media in a free society and noted the various methods resorted to by the Government to control the media. The participants recorded their apprehension that though the Emergency was behind us, subtle threats to freedom of expression still lurk.

9. It was noted that while the new Government fulfilled its promise to scrap the Prevention of Objectionable Matter Act and restore the 'Firoze Gandhi Act', there were other areas where reforms needed to be carried out. These concerned the control of Government advertising, newsprint supply, and the present monopoly of the news service, television, and radio.

10. The Seminar observed that the Government, through its control of newsprint and public sector advertising, pursued a carrot-and-stick policy towards the press. In addition, since 1969 the Congress Government had intensified its efforts to create a schism between editorial staff and proprietors by pampering or victimising journalists and proprietors in pursuit of the objective of controlling the press. It was felt that independence of the press would be ensured if the DAVP served only as an advertising agency functioning on normal commercial lines and newsprint was imported direct by the newspapers. It was noted that in the past the Government had discouraged the local production of newsprint through the licensing of newsprint machinery.

11. As regards the news agency monopoly, the Seminar felt that the recommendations of the Kuldip Nayar Committee would not end either the monopoly or the Government's stranglehold over news. The report favoured one English language service and one for the other Indian languages, while permitting only one agency for international news. The news agencies would be subsidised by the Government. The participants felt that the proposed system will only replace the present monopoly

by three new monopolies and inhibit competition that is essential. The question of the viability of setting up private news services was considered and it was understood that while it was possible within India, it would not be permitted for the overseas services on grounds of conserving foreign exchange,

12. In the matter of radio and television, it was regretfully noted that the Government had appointed a new Committee instead of following the recommendations of the Chanda Committee. This, it was felt, would entail needless delay. Nothing less than an immediate setting up of statutory autonomous Corporations would meet the needs of the situation.

13. The Seminar felt that freedom of all media lay in competition, diversity, and multiplicity and that vigilance continued to be the need of the hour.

14. The Seminar discussed the need for modernizing our social structure and institutions, taking into account the role of Caste, Class, and Women. It was agreed that obstacles to social mobility presented by the caste system inevitably hamper the functioning of a free society. The various kinds of socio-psychological problems and tensions created by the caste system could be greatly mitigated by moving from a hierarchical and discriminatory pattern of inter-group and inter-personal relationships towards a socially egalitarian pattern. Effective social action towards the eradication of the evils of caste is greatly needed.

15. A crucial test of a free society is a feeling of security and freedom among the minorities. Recent reports of the assaults on Harijans are, therefore, a matter of grave concern.

16. While it was agreed that generalizations of any kind in the diverse and complex socio-cultural Indian scene should be avoided, it was strongly felt that every effort should be made to improve the position of women of different strata by keeping in mind the actual but different needs of the women of each stratum of society. Apart from providing them with education, employment opportunities, social and old age security, it was imperative to bring about a radical change in the value systems of an essentially male-dominated society. Some stress was also laid on the need for the educated and enlightened women and men to help in this process.

17. The Seminar considered the relevance of Man, Character, and the concept of Total Revolution. It was realized that the

recent eclipse of civil liberties culminating in authoritarianism in India had made it necessary that the whole mechanism of safe-guards available to democracy be reconsidered. Basic to this problem of preserving a free society is the view that "Man is the measure of all things" and that society is made for Man and that it is Man who makes society. In fact, democracy presupposes obedience to the Moral Law (Dharma). This concept of Man will ultimately determine what constitutes freedom and democracy. In this context the need for building up character was also stressed.

18. There was need to subject the concept of Total Revolution to more rigorous critical scrutiny and to spell out its wider implications which would include the changes sought to be made in our values, attitudes, and the politico-economic structure. One cannot change society in a larger measure without preparing to change oneself. It was conceded that neither science and technology nor systems and ideology can be expected to solve our problems or lead to a non-exploitative society which would give real content to the ideal of fraternity. In the immediate context, however, Total Revolution meant social transformation and specific improvement in political and economic processes. It would mean a reversal of our lifestyle. It would also mean that periodic elections are not by themselves any safeguard of a free society and that there is need to supplement them by continuous accountability through grass-roots vigilance and active citizenship. It is thus that a decentralised and participative society can be built.

19. Our feudal background and backwardness has led to a preponderance of statism and party politics. In the light of current awareness it has now become possible to correct this imbalance and thus strengthen the non-political roots of our society.

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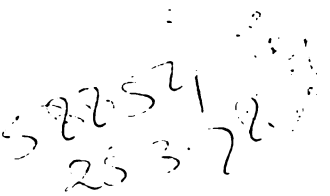

Not By Politics Alone !

Is it possible to conceive of a free society without democracy? Can democracy survive without our identifying and strengthening the non-political dimensions or roots of a free society? Was the recent eclipse of civil liberties culminating in authoritarianism due to our misguided attempt to replace the basic values of Justice, Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, with the secondary concepts of Progress, Change, Stability, Efficiency and Development? What are the non-political dimensions? What is the role of education, the role of the press and mass media? What are the principal economic constituents of a free society? And finally, what is the role of Man, Character, and what is J.P.'s Total Revolution? Should we not subject these concepts to rigorous critical scrutiny and try and spell out these wider implications? These issues have never exercised the public mind as they do in today's India.

A three day seminar which met in Agra from August 27 to 29, 1977, discussed these and other issues relating to our dilemma. The seminar was organized by the Leslie Sawhny Programme of Training for Democracy, a non-partisan Programme which aims at training public workers, social workers, youth leaders, trade union functionaries, journalists, professionals and executives, in citizenship, leadership, effective organization and principles of liberal democracy, in collaboration with the Friedrich Nauman Stiftung, a West German educational foundation devoted to the spreading of the values of liberalism and humanism.

The wide variety of participants who included men in public life, management, legal experts, educationists, social scientists, economists, social and sarvodaya workers, journalists, editors, in fact men and women belonging to all denominations, classes, creeds and castes considered these vital issues. In other words, this is a serious attempt to take a hard look at t[illegible] without reference to personalities.

This book contains papers presented at the sem[illegible] prove a valuable guide to those who believe in [illegible] would like to work for achieving a free, pluralis[illegible] exploitative society.

V.V. John an eminent educationist and former Vice-Chancellor of Jodhpur University, has edited this book in collaboration with **C. Kulshrestha.** Other contributors are **C.R. Irani, Ram Joshi, B.R. Shenoy, Promilla Kapur** and **Achyut Patwardhan.**

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