

SWARAJ

For democratic self government in India.

"Democracy is not a state in which people act like sheep. Under democracy individual liberty of opinion and action is jealously guarded." - Mahatma Gandhi

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UP BACK FIGHTING!

From Leslie Murphy

BOMBAY. — India's key opposition figure Jayaprakash Narayan, who at 73 is still fighting off the effects of months of illness and detention, has not given up his dream of defeating the present government at a general election.

The thin, frail "J.P." as he has always been popularly known, now lives with a personal and largest but ineffective opposition groupings to unite as a single party.

He spends seven hours every second day on dialysis on an artificial kidney machine at the nearby Jaslok hospital to keep himself alive.

Crackdown

But he still finds time and energy to keep abreast of politics, as practised in post-emergency India, and to urge the four largest but ineffective opposition groupings to unite as a single party.

"I meet a few people. I dictate some statements. More than that I cannot do. I am physically not in good enough condition," he said.

Narayan was one of the



JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN

first people arrested in the sudden government crackdown in the early hours of June 28 last year when the country's first state of internal emergency was declared.

He spent more than four months in detention and was released on November 12 because of his rapidly failing health.

He recovered sufficiently to leave hospital at the end of last year and since then has lived quietly in Bombay.

The ordeal has not changed his political stance. Only hours before his arrest he had told a big rally in New Delhi that Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi was trying to establish a dictatorship in India. (Reuters)

THE TIMES JUNE 3 1976

Prisoners Tortured

From Our Own Correspondent
New York, June 2

A report accusing India of torture and brutality towards prisoners has been submitted to Dr Waldheim, Secretary-General of the United Nations, with a request that an investigation be undertaken. The report lists torture as one of the elements in a policy of "anti-libertarian legislation and executive action" in recent months.

The report is by the Lok Sangharsh Samiti, or People's Struggle Committee, which is made up of a group of four opposition parties. It accuses the Indian Government of an official policy of torture,

brutality, starvation and other mistreatment of prisoners, and gives eyewitness accounts and the names of victims.

The types of torture alleged include beatings with steel rods and rifle butts, inverting live electric wires in crevices of the body, burning the skin with candles, tying rods to prisoners' necks so that their spinal cords are strained, and hanging them upside down in an "aeroplane" method.

The report has been submitted to Dr Waldheim by the International League for Human Rights, a group based in New York. The complaint is fully documented, and contains charges that India is violating the United Nations charter and other international agreements

on civil and political rights by its state of emergency.

A request for an investigation has also been made by Indian for Democracy, an organisation of Indians living in the United States.

Mr Jerome Shustack, the president of the International League, commented: "We do not know whether the United Nations Human Rights Commission will take up this complaint. It has shown an aversion to any on human rights violations by large countries with influence in the United Nations. However, the pattern of violations is so egregious here that the Human Rights Commission would be derelict in its obligation if it did not pursue an investigation of this matter."

Oxford Action Group

The Oxford Action Group Against Dictatorship in India was formed in May 1976 by a local nucleus of British and Indian trade unionists, students and academics. The Group aims at mobilising workers and students and their unions and political organisations against British support for the landlord-capitalist dictatorship in India. The Group has five main demands:

1. Release of all political prisoners, whether arrested before or after June 1975.
2. Repeal of the Emergency and all other repressive legislation, including the Defence of India Rules and the Maintenance of Internal Security Act;
3. Establishment of full civil liberties, including freedom of the press and of association and the right to strike;
4. Lifting of presidential rule in all states of the Indian Union and the granting of full autonomy and equal rights to all linguistic, ethnic and religious minorities; and
5. Ending of all forms of imperialistic intervention in India by the termination of foreign economic and military aid to the present dictatorship and the return to the Indian people without

repayment of all assets in India owned by foreign capitalists.

The Group organised a public meeting in Oxford on 21 May attended by over 100 people. The meeting was addressed by Dr. Ashok Mitra (former Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India and now an outspoken critic of its economic policies), Dr. Bipul Dasgupta (Convener, Committee for Civil Liberties in India), Gautam Appa (President, Indian Workers Association, London, and representative of the Alliance Against Fascist Dictatorship in India convened by Mary Tyler) and Upali Cooray (representative of the Asian Socialist Forum and the Campaign for Release of Indian Political Prisoners). The meeting adopted by an overwhelming majority the political resolution moved by the convenors of the Oxford Group.

The Group has been campaigning actively in student bodies and the trade union movement. The student bodies of six Oxford colleges have already passed resolutions endorsing the Groups' demands and calling on the Oxford University Students' Union and the National Union of Students to adopt a similar policy.

THE TIMES JUNE 5 1976

LETTER TO THE TIMES

From Mr Jayaprakash Narayan

Sir, It surprises and pains me to find some Western democratic writers giving certificates to Mrs Indira Gandhi. Democracy has been nearly destroyed in India and all powers have been concentrated in the hands of the Prime Minister, the entire Opposition has been put in prison, the press has been completely muzzled and the world is fed with one-sided propaganda.

Mrs Gandhi claims that whatever she has done is according to the constitution. This is true only because she has declared an emergency which gives, according to the Constitution, very large powers to the executive. For instance, as long as the emergency lasts, Mrs Gandhi may go on postponing elections to the Lower House of the Indian Parliament as long as she wishes. She has already done this for a year. However unfair, and undemocratic that might be, it would still be Constitutional.

As for the emergency itself being justified or not, I suggest that unprejudiced democratic leaders from the West should come to India and find out if the conditions in this country prior to June 26 (the day emergency was declared) were such as to justify declaration of emergency, arrests of thousands of persons, imposition of press censorship of a kind that even the

British imperialists had not thought of. Mrs Gandhi no doubt paints a frightful picture of pre-twenty-sixth June India and makes out as if there was such violence growing in this country, that there was danger even to her life and that of her family (as she told an Italian lady press reporter).

As I was at the head of the people's movement, I affirm with all the sincerity and honesty I possess that there was a minimum of violence, considering the depth and spread of the movement and its intensity, and further that wherever I or my trusted colleagues were able to reach, what isolated violence had broken out was immediately brought under control. In many cases, the violence was provoked by the Congress Party and government themselves. Mrs Gandhi's and her government's propaganda is merely to justify her personal dictatorship.

The least the Western democrats can do is to desist from issuing cheers to Mrs Gandhi. By doing so, they will only succeed in destroying whatever democracy is left in this country and perhaps in Asia also.

As I am dictating this from my sick-bed in a Bombay hospital, I cannot say any more.

Yours, etc,

JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN,

Jaslok Hospital,

Bombay.

Press Censorship and Indira's Biographer

by a special correspondent

A recent episode involving Zareer Masani, author of a biography of Indira Gandhi, illustrates the Machiavellian falsifications to which the Gandhi dictatorship's press agents resort in order to bolster the unpopular image of their leader. The original British edition of Masani's biography, published in June 1975, was banned in India because it predicted the establishment of a dictatorship by Mrs Gandhi. This has not prevented Samachar, the Government news agency, from attempting to claim Masani as a supporter of the Gandhi dictatorship in a

new report carried on 29 April 1976 by The Times of India and The Statesman.

The news item in question was a skillfully doctored selection of excerpts from a review by Paul Grizner, New York Times of the updated American edition of Masani's biography, published last month. On the basis of a stray remark in this review, Masani was astonished to find himself "reputed" with the view "that Mrs Gandhi had no choice but to enforce discipline, ban strikes, control supplies and ruthlessly punish the corrupt". Masani, however, had argued in his book that Indira Gandhi's decision to impose emergency rule was dictated by any legitimate aims or considerations, but by the conventional ambition.



'I Wish They Had Population Control Before Indira Was Born.'

India: A Search for Vitality and Vision

By Jonathan Power

Herald Tribune, 2/23/74

BOMBAY—India, old and wretched, slowly flowing like the Ganges, the inhabitant monotonous. So runs our image. India, deep with promise, a river rich with life is, after years of failure and lost opportunity, difficult to imagine. Yet both Indira exist, intertwined like some tropical creeper, symbiotic and to the outside mysteriously hiding where the one precisely ends and the other begins. For in the midst of political oppression, cultural stagnation and economic decline, it is clear that in India vitality, energy and vision still abound.

The tragedy is that Indira Gandhi and to a lesser extent her father Jawaharlal Nehru before her have tied India hand and foot. Nehru locked India in an economic policy that after "4 to emulate the Soviet example of by industrialization but which has succeeded in creating inefficient nationalized bureaucracies, vast urban slums, growing income inequalities and a total inability to feed its mushrooming population.

Mrs. Gandhi, in modifying this economic disaster only a little, has now added her own political rigidities—jailing her opponents and suspending the active democracy which was once India's proud inheritance. But where is this vitality? A meeting with four of India's most brilliant progeny expresses something of its yet unrealized potential.

Story of Famine

Satyajit Ray, the film director, has earned a reputation that puts him on the same pedestal as his fellow Bengali, the poet Tagore. Ray, winner of nearly every major film award, is an inconspicuous light rising out of the often dismal subject matter of his films. "Distant Thunder," one of his recent films, which in the United States has become a Broadway success story, tells the story of famine through the life of a remote little village in Bengal. The story, though harsh and horrifying, is rivetingly beautiful in composition. As the Indian critic B.M. Deb comments: "His fascination seems to lie in observing the myriad darting movements in a

drop of life which, as Rabindranath Tagore once said, is like looking for infinity in a drop." Deb also writes that: "Although he seems to have leftist inclinations, he is neither a preacher of any religion nor a peddler of any ideology."

And Ray confronted by the journalist probing his political stance at a time when India is in the throes of its most serious post-independence political crisis becomes quietly evasive: "My main commentary is on the human condition, not social and economic policies," he says. "My job is simply to present the problems as clearly and honestly as possible. I have nothing to do with politics."

An unsatisfactory reply perhaps for someone whose films portray "the grandeur of the poor, and the inherent seeds of uncertainty and self-destruction in the autocratic rich; the struggle between the new and the old, and the hypocrisy of the self-righteous." How can he, the visitor wonders, stand so aloof while Mrs. Gandhi subverts the values he loves? Yet beneath this, perhaps defensive, exterior his films warn us that there is a smoldering intensity of passion within.

Eloquent Critic

Minoo Masani is an intellectual of a different type. Sharp-tongued, opinionated, even abrasive, he is arguably the most eloquent critic of Mrs. Gandhi's India. An energetic man of 70, he has a formidable pedigree. A veteran prison inmate from Mahatma Gandhi's civil disobedience campaign, he has been joint secretary of the All India Socialist party, mayor of Bombay, and a member of Parliament. He could have been Nehru's foreign secretary but his refusal to go along with Nehru's his emphasis on heavy industrialization and a pro-Soviet foreign policy estranged him. His sword is his pen.

His first book, "Our India," is the all-time best seller in India with sales approaching a million copies. Now there is a flurry of articles, pamphlets and books. His philosophy today is a mélange

of Ben. Henry Jackson, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and Willy Brandt on international affairs and Mahatma Gandhi on village development—which puts him against the "dictator."

Mrs. Gandhi, he says, has "smashed the Constitution. The discipline of fear which is now what we have is deceptive. It deprives those in authority of knowledge of the extent of dissatisfaction among the people and of dissent from official policies. It is a prescription for popular alienation which may take the form of a word or a look, a sign—any silence. It cannot be suppressed. . . . In such a setting, what is the role of the liberal democrat? It is, in my view, to eschew romanticism on the one hand and craven fear on the other. He should endeavor, to whatever little extent may be possible within the limits of legality, to assert the rights of the citizen and to seek to expand the bounds of freedom, for in such a climate even normal calm and courage have a therapeutic value. At the same time the liberal will accept the need for a measure of self-discipline. He will endeavor to address those in authority in the spirit of the Russian proverb: 'The yes-man is your enemy, but your friend will argue with you.'"

This low-profile advice comes after a period of hectic political activity in which he joined J.P. Narayan, Mrs. Gandhi's most threatening opponent, in the battle of Patna. "What the capital of Bihar witnessed on that day, Nov. 4, 1974, was a massive show of armed might never witnessed before even during the most repressive phases of the British Raj."

It was a battle that provoked Mrs. Gandhi's sweeping suspension of civil liberties in India. J.P., as he is called, was arrested, jailed, and then released as his health deteriorated seriously. He is now living in Bombay spending three

days out of seven in a hospital on a kidney machine. Yet to a visitor the old Gandhian vigor of this great man is still evident.

"After the first arrests [he estimates that there are still 100,000 in jail] the feeling was one of fear. Now that fear is going. I'm not saying there's a people's movement going on, but it is not wrong to see that the people are with me rather than her. This will become clearer as the fear decreases. . . . If normal conditions were restored I could carry the vast majority of people."

J.P., 33 as he is, does not believe he will live to see the end of Mrs. Gandhi's dictatorship. The opposition, however, "will ripen in time," he argues. "Maybe it will take four to five years." And then? He sees either the possibility of food riots, followed by a police and army crackdown, followed by an army revolt as one scenario. Or more hopefully he thinks that if the other great Mahatma Gandhian leader Vinoba Bhave were to take public issue with Mrs. Gandhi, it would be difficult for her, given his enormous spiritual hold over the Indian masses, to take him head on.

'She May Change'

Bhave, Mahatma Gandhi's official successor, is more spiritual, less political than J.P. and refused at the time of the Patna campaign to back J.P. Now, however, J.P. says, "he is becoming disillusioned. And he could well decide to use his influence to persuade her of her folly."

J.P. living with the hope of the second scenario still tries to keep the channels of communication open. He continues to write to Mrs. Gandhi whom he has long regarded as his daughter—the old family friendship is not quite dead. And he still maintains that "the way in her own interests change back to normalcy."

Paradoun Mehta, a powerful intellectual like Narayan, Bhave, and Masani, is a man within rather than without. For he represents India's employers at the International Labor Organization and is the chief economic adviser to Tata Industries. Tata is India's largest firm with a turnover of more than \$1 billion a year, making trucks, chemicals, textiles, and nuclear power stations.

Although a part of the industrial establishment in this sense, Mehta is a militant opponent of the fetish with industrialization that pervades not just the capitalist world in which he moves but the Soviet type development ideas of Mrs. Gandhi and her father before her. "I don't think we have to go through this dirty process of capital accumulation in the industrial sector," he says. "We have to put agriculture first. There are countries where this has been done and the redistribution of land, income and wealth laid the foundations for mass prosperity—Japan, South Korea and Taiwan. So we need water from tube-wells and minor irrigation works on the one hand and the flow of basic consumer goods at reasonable prices to the countryside on the other."

And he calls for a drastic cut in state expenditures on subsidizing inefficient steel plants, on atomic energy and on defense expenditure. If this is not done, he prophesies mass unemployment and inflation of an ever worsening dimension. But if it is done, India will have no food shortage, a thriving rural-based economy. Indeed in 25 years time it may even face a labor shortage.

In 1924, E.M. Forster wrote of India as "swelling here, shrinking there, like some low but indestructible form of life." Not a pleasant image, but a fair one for then and now. Yet if Mrs. Gandhi would listen to these own children, it could be, in not too long a time, very different.