THE PEN IN REVOLT

SOUVENIR

underground literature published during the emergency
A Letter from a Father to his Son

written by Gour Kishore Ghosh, from prison

The author of the following letter is a journalist of repute on the staff of Calcutta's "Ananda Bazar Patrika". He was arrested on October 6, 1975 for allowing this letter to be published in Kolkata, a Bengali monthly edited by Jyotirmoy Datta. Later Bhumiputra of Baroda was asked to deposit a security of Rs. 25,000 for publishing the Gujarati version of this letter. Copies of it were made and circulated by the underground network.

My dear son:

For some time now I have been thinking of having a few words with you about myself. For about two months now something has been troubling me. I find no remedy for it. The only relief that I can expect is to unburden my mind to you.

At your age—you are only thirteen—much of what I shall speak now may seem incomprehensible. Yet the reason I write to you alone of my trouble is that you should also know of it.

Now about my trouble. Do you remember how upset you were seeing my clean shaven head when I went to see you last a few weeks ago? You asked me then, "Father, why have you shaved your head?"

I told you in reply that the Government had proclaimed an emergency and had thereby taken away my freedom to write. Now I cannot write and publish what I really think and feel. I can only write things which would please the Government— I remember, I told you that I considered this act of the Government an unjust encroachment on the writer's freedom, and that I had shaven my head only to register my protest against the wrong done by the Government, that I would not let hair grow on my head until I got back my freedom of expression as a writer.

I don't know exactly whether you could understand everything that I said, but I still remember that your face darkened. And later, when your mother was by your side, you asked her, "Will they never allow father to write?"

In reply, I can tell you this much that unless freedom of expressson is restored in this country, your father will never get any scope for writing.

So you understand that I resent very much the fact that my freedom as a writer has been taken away; I cannot reconcile myself to this situation. Not merely that, I want to register publicly my protest against this wrong. But whenever I think of protesting, your face, the faces of your sisters, of your mother and of your grand-mother all appear before my minds' eye. Some of you are young. Some helpless and some old. All of you are dependent on me. All these years I have tried to provide you with a secure home. Should I do anything to satisfy my "whims" or "fancy" which may result in the loss of this secure shelter for you all?

If I recognise as the supreme end of my life the task of providing you with a secure shelter, then the question of my taking the risk of registering my protest does not arise, for that is surely going to endanger your security. But then I have to meekly submit to the injustice done by the Government, and make a compromise with untruth. That means I have to sell my honour as a writer and adopt the profession of a hired quill driver. In other words, I have to stifle in me the urge of asserting myself as a man.

On the one hand I have to think of you, your security; on the other hand, I have to think of myself, of my self-respect as a man. Which of the two shall I preserve at the cost of the other? It is this dilemma that torments me every day, every moment. This is the root of my trouble of which I spoke at the outset.

It is an irony of fate that I am confronted with this tormenting question not under a communist regime, but in a democratic set up with Mrs Gandhi at the helm of its affairs. But since circumstances have thrust upon me the difficult task of making a choice, choose I must. To by-pass the issue makes no sense to me. So, I have to
before we try to understand society. Man, by nature, behind his progress. As man is ever dissatisfied, so is desires change. is created by man. Hence, we must first understand man his society in perpetual unrest. This is so because society let you know my decision. I strongly protest against the depr'vation of my freedom.

I feel that by taking away my freedom of writing, my freedom of self-expression, they have done violence to my very being. Hence I declare that the censorship that has been imposed on us is an affront to all principles of justice and morality; it is anti-democratic and violative of freedom.

All my life I have fought for human justice and morality, for democracy and freedom. My writings will bear testimony to it as you will find for yourself, provided you get an opportunity to read them when you grow older.

It is for this very reason that I raised my lonely voice in those dark and chaotic days of Naxalite violence. Time and again I sought to persuade those misguided young men that violence and hatred could not bring freedom. They only result in the replacement of one kind of tyranny by another. Democracy alone keeps individual freedom alive. For democracy is the only system which makes room for and respects dissent.

After a long period of experiment in history with various types of social systems, the wise amongst us have by and large come to accept the democratic way, for it is the only way that ensures peaceful change of rulers, without resorting to violence and terror. The most human and effective way of peaceful transformation lies in reasoned persuasion. Not the way of bullets and dagger. It is for this reason that I prefer the democratic way, though I am fully aware of its many imperfections.

I have talked of change, of change of society and change of rulers. It is in the nature of man to seek change. It is also a kind of vulnerability in man which ennobles him. Man is both a householder and a wanderer. He sets up a home and assumes the responsibility of a sheltered life under the sovereign compulsion of necessity. At the same time, a mysterious and compelling urge calls him away from home and makes him a wanderer. This is the nature of man. To build anew and to destroy what is built. These two opposing tendencies dwell in him side by side.

Hence, what man builds today he must pull down tomorrow and the same man, who was found busy destroying yesterday will come forward today for creating anew. Man can never remain content with what he has created. This perennial discontent is the impulse behind his progress. As man is ever dissatisfied, so is his society in perpetual unrest. This is so because society is created by man. Hence, we must first understand man before we try to understand society. Man, by nature, desires change.

Hence, in the ever changing society created by change-loving man, no system can be permanent and absolute. We would do better to realise the truth. Of the various methods of changing social and political systems, the Constitutional method appears to me as more humane and therefore acceptable. I cannot bring myself to believing that through bloodshed we can even achieve any good in the long run. This is what I tried to convince the Naxalite youths who once proclaimed my death sentence. I directed my efforts towards persuading them to see the futility of their programme of senseless murder. Violence and ferocity pertain to that nature of man which was once shaped in the jungle. Civilization has made us more tolerant and believers in coexistence. This is what I call the democratic approach.

Ferocity belongs to our primitive nature. Democratic tolerance is the gift of civilization. Dictatorship is nothing but primitive ferociousness in a modern guise. That is why dictatorships have to resort to force continually in order to survive. And dictators can hardly be removed from power without bloodshed.

In a democracy it is much easier to replace the rulers because opposition (to the rulers) is recognised and respected in this system. The leader of the Government today would gracefully occupy the place of the leader of the Opposition tomorrow, thereby upholding the dignity of civilised conduct.

From my repeated emphasis on the merits of democracy you can see how dear democracy is to me. No other system recognises the dignity of the individual so much as democracy.

It is, therefore, with profound sadness that I have now to tell you that the democratic system in which I breathed for the last twenty-six years and in which you have grown up has now been defiled. The threat to our democratic system now comes from our present rulers who are lacking in foresight. Democracy has been reduced to a farce by proclaiming an emergency in the country. Our fundamental rights have been taken away on the pretext of doing good to the people.

My right to express my views freely has been taken away. No one can talk freely now except the fawning flatterers of our Prime Minister.

You may even come to know very soon that your father has been arrested by the police for the crime of expressing his views so candidly, if these words which I write now happen to appear in print. Yes, it is a crime these days to say all these things.

It will grieve you when you come to know of my arrest. But don’t be afraid. It is small I xider.ts like these that teach a man to be firm and make him think. And such thinking helps a man grow up. Surely you will have many an>icus thoughts. But pray, don’t give
billing than such dignitaries as the Defence Minister or the chief ministers of the states he visits.

One might compare this with the way in which the hated British dealt with the Indian Press at the height of the Indian Naval ratings' mutiny. During that rebellion, in February 1946, when, by the government's own admission, there was absolute calm in the country at the declaration of the Emergency, and when British power was actually threatened, the Free Press Journal actually came out with a demand for the removal of the British admiral then in charge of the Indian Navy, and give the fullest publicity to the manifestos and acts of the striking navy men.

If we go further back into Indian history, we will discover that even after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of April 1919 the Indian Press of the time, according to an Indian chronicle of those events, "condemned the conduct of General Dwyer and Lt. Governor O'Dwyer in the Punjab, in the strongest terms".

Indian history also shows that, barely three years after another major traumatic event, the Indian uprising of 1857, the sedition clause in the Indian Penal Code drafted by Macaulay was dropped because "it was felt that it might be interpreted as a measure against the liberty of the Press".

More than a hundred years later as India celebrates the 29th anniversary of its independence, such sensitivities and sentiments do not seem to be in evidence among those who took over the reins of power. It is sad to reflect that freedom of the Press lasted less than a generation after the British quit India. Ironically, the average life expectancy in India used to be 29 years before the year 1947. A free Press in a free India barely breathed that many years.

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**An Eight-point Programme for Indians Abroad**

Excerpts from the first letter from the resistance movement's General Secretary Nanaji Deshmukh, addressed to Indians abroad, are reproduced below. Nanaji was subsequently arrested in December 1975. The letter was sent outside India by the Lok Sangharsh Samiti.

"...a number of options are open if you desire to associate yourself with the movement:

1. Form a committee for civil liberties in India and become its convenor in the country of your residence.

2. Persuade a good person, Indian or foreign, to form such a committee if you cannot yourself do it for some reason.

3. Organise fund-raising via this committee for helping the Lok Sangharsh Samiti to provide literature, pamphlets, newspapers to concerned persons and to generally assist the struggle.

4. Organise via this committee seminars, meetings, television and radio interviews to highlight the events under dictatorship in India.

5. Press for the release of all political prisoners and restoration of Press freedom. This may be done by taking delegations to centres of influence, sending of important people's telegrams to the Government of India.

6. Urge Indians abroad to write home to relatives and friends in India to lend co-operation to the Lok Sangharsh Samiti.

7. Persuade associations, societies and conferences to pass resolutions to condemn the arrests of national leaders and obtain publicity for them on radio and television.

8. Any other activity you think fit. Please maintain a record of all activities, and despatch a copy by post.
Dear Comrades... . .
from George Fernandes somewhere underground

Dear friends,

In a few days it will be two months since Mrs Nehru Gandhi used power and installed herself as the Dictator. With all the arrogance and foolishness that is the prerogative of dictators everywhere, she declared in the Lok Sabha on July 22, "You have been calling me a dictator when I was not. Now, yes, I am."

It must be said to the credit of the woman that she is clear in her mind about her newly acquired status, while still there are a few innocents at large who are looking for signs of an early return to democracy in the country. Let us finally be clear on this one point. Indian democracy was butchered on June 26, 1975 by a woman called Indira Nehru Gandhi, and none alive can now raise it from the dead. Our struggle is to overthrow the dictatorship. Only when we have accomplished that can we lay the foundations of the Second Republic.

As I have reported in my many communications, the battle against the dictatorship has been joined all over the country. I am, of course, aware that co-ordination between various underground groups has not been achieved to our satisfaction. And this because most people are still functioning as party workers. I warn everyone that this attitude will have disastrous consequences for our movement. If people have their ideological axes to grind by all means keep grinding them, but within the four walls of your houses please.

Where the struggle against the dictatorship is concerned, whosoever thinks of his party or his group is a traitor to our cause. He is even worse. He is an agent of the dictator. So, friends, let us forget the parties, and begin to function with a single-mindedness in our struggle against fascism.

Secondly, everyone must have by now realised that you cannot have committee meetings and mutual consultations in the prevailing situation. This has created considerable problems. Wherever I have gone, I have been told by political activists that they are awaiting instructions from their respective parties. The presidents and general secretaries of all the parties are in prison, so also most members of the national executives, state executives, even district committees of these parties. Those who have evaded arrest are not easily available.

In these circumstances, who is supposed to give the instruction? Hence, the need to have a new hierarchy to assume leadership of the movement. Either there should be quick mutual consultations, at every possible level, or we should have people assuming leadership at various levels. After a time, it may be possible to work out a better arrangement. Just now, the wisest thing to do is for someone to assume leadership at the national level. Similarly at the state, district and local levels.

Whosoever is acceptable at each of these levels must be called the director of the movement. He should function on behalf of the Sangarsh Samiti at the appropriate level. In the event of his arrest, a person earlier nominated by him as the director should take charge of the movement. The directions of the director should be implicitly obeyed. This is no time for hair-splitting on every suggestion or proposal for action.

Thirdly, the action itself. As is usual in such situations, I find a lot of unnecessary debate on the nature of the movement that is called for in the struggle against the fascist dictatorship. In some cases, it has been a useful cover for inaction, while in some others it has meant rationalisation of cowardice. No-one had proposed that the votaries of violence should not fight against the dictatorship, nor has it been hinted that those steeped in the techniques of non-violence should not resort to violence. Everyone can choose the method best suited to his genius and, of course, age.

There are the 1942 veterans whose bones have turned stiff and muscles gone loose. They need not waste time in conjuring up visions of barnstorming the country. Then there are the youthful enthusiasts who want to set the Ganga and the Cauvery on fire. None need advise them that cold waters catch no fire. The hot blood coursing through their veins may still set the Ganga and Cauvery on fire. The important thing is to act now.

It is my deep conviction that satyagraha is still the
The trade unions must come out of their stupor and return to their legitimate activities, agitating on the demands of the grievances of their members. Just because Mrs. Nehru Gar.dhi had become a dictator, the workers' problems have not been magically resolved. In addition to their normal issues, they should now gird their loins to fight for democratic rights and for the release of their arrested leaders.

Mrs. Nehru Gandhi has been monotonously repeating that there are groups planning sabotage and violence as a part of the struggle to rid the country of her fascist menace. She may be lying as usual when she indulges in such talk. But there is no reason for the non-violent satyagrahis to be upset if there are groups of people who have other plans. Anyone who strikes one more nail in the coffin of the dictator is welcome. How he strikes the nail need not become a point of debate. After all, violence does beget violence. M/s Nehru Gandhi's rule is based on violence and falsehood. True, it will be finally defeated by truth and non-violence. But as long as it lasts, it will continue to provoke people in a violent upheaval, even if there should be many among us who would consider violence as not so legitimate a way of struggle. We need not be prudish at the sight of Mrs. Nehru Gandhi's illegitimate offspring.

A few dos and donts before I conclude.

1. Do everything to destroy what is left of the credibility of Mrs Nehru Gandhi.
2. Constantly ask the people not to listen to All Indira Radio for the news. BBC, VOA, even the Pakistani and Peking Radios may be heard for the news but not AIR.
3. Every bulletin or circular one receives should be duplicated, copied, translated and circulated. Anyone who does not keep circulating the bulletins, is, to say the least, an ally of the dictator.
4. Make extra efforts to educate the Muslims, other minorities, harijans and adivasis on the real character of Mrs Nehru Gandhi's dictatorship, and to enrol satyagrahis from among them. Produce bulletins in Urdu for circulation among the Muslims.
5. Raise resources to meet the cost of producing underground literature.
6. Prepare nation-wide mailing lists for sending literature and other information.

And remember "three raised to the power of eighteen". If three persons tell a story each in turn to only three others, in eighteen operations the whole country will have heard the story. Learn the power of the spoken word.

Yours,

GEORGE FERNANDES

Annada Sankar Ray

Annada Sankar Ray was a member of the I.G.S., but that is the least of his distinctions. As a writer there have been few in Bengal in the last forty years who have been as versatile. Fiction, poetry, essays, travel—Annada Sankar Ray has glittered in all of them by qualities of style, perception and sincerity.

During the Emergency we found to our dismay that the simple rules laid down by our Great Master (Mahatma Gandhi) were not applicable in all situations. A friend of mine who rose to eminence in the Indian Civil Service and the Indian Foreign Service came to see me one day and said, 'The British did not impose pre-censorship even during World War II. Won't you protest?' I answered, 'Certainly I would like to. But who will publish a protest?' Then he said, 'In that case India will develop a Samizdat literature like Soviet Russia.' His prediction came true. India could not be silenced. She raised her voice in the only way open to her intellectuals. An underground literature of no mean proportions sprang up.

I had no idea that pre-censorship included non-political writing of every description. Even philosophical magazines had to be submitted to the Censor. A humorous story I had written before the Emergency appeared in a mutilated form. The Censor struck out the salient point of the story. I was furious. But what hurt me most was that my obituary on Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, whom I knew personally, was not allowed to be published in a Bengali magazine.

People expected that the intellectuals of India and Bangladesh would condemn the inhuman outrage. I was not in the Government. What I wrote did not involve the Government. If it was Government policy to keep mum, it was entitled to do so. But should I be prevented from doing my duty as a human being in the face of a human tragedy of the magnitude of the murder of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman and forty members of his family? Was it not possible that the written word might go very far towards preventing further tragedy in Bangladesh?

Since I could not accept a situation of this kind, I wrote to the Chief Minister of West Bengal. Let me quote from the letter I addressed to him:

"I have thrice represented India in Bangladesh and twice led an Indian cultural delegation to the country. Every time I have published my impressions in well-known Bengali periodicals. The intellectuals of Bangladesh will not dare to write what I, from this end, can.

One of us should protest against this terrible crime against humanity with inside knowledge of the causes, if not of the circumstances of the carnage, that has wiped out a whole family.

"Out of the agony of my heart I have given up eating fish and meat for seven days and then wrote an article entitled "Cry, the beloved country". I eschewed politics and avoided any reference to the current regime. But I analysed the course of events step by step. I sent it to Desk as on previous occasions. But it was returned to me on the grounds that the Censor might make cuts unpalatable to me and I might object to its publication in a mutilated version. What then shall I do? Wait with folded hands till the end of the Emergency, by which time the protest will have lost its urgency? How on earth can I communicate my thoughts and feelings to the people of Bangladesh who know me well and expect me to speak out while they are muted by brute force? Or shall I confess that I too have been muted by the authorities of my own country by censorship, originally meant to be used against an irresponsible Opposition and now extended to independent thinkers and writers who cannot even express themselves freely when a human being has been slain, buried and consigned to oblivion right across the border?

"As a member of the P.E.N. and as one of its three Indian Vice-Presidents and as Chairman of its West Bengal branch, I have a public duty to perform whenever life and liberty are threatened anywhere. The All-India Centre of this world association of writers had Nehru and Radhakrishnan as well as Tagore on its rolls. They signed the charter which is binding on all members. Under this charter no member can be a silent spectator if freedom of speech is taken away. The P.E.N. has therefore sent a representation to the President of India against pre-censorship of all writing for publication. It may be that India has some irresponsible politicians and journalists who deserve such curbs, but she also has a galaxy of eminent writers who have no axe to grind. Their articles have also been blacked out and mutilated for no fault of their own.

"When the British were in power they did not inter-
fere with my writings, even political essays or poems which were pro-Gandhi or pro-Swaraj. Pre-censorship is something unknown in our history. Have it if you like but see that it is not abused. This letter is meant to draw your personal attention to an instance of such abuse with the humble protest of a writer."

This letter was dated the 29th August 1975, two weeks after the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman. The Chief Minister referred the matter to then Prime Minister of India, Smt. Indira Gandhi, and she replied directly. Her letter is dated September 24, 1975.

Let me quote from it: "The Chief Minister of West Bengal has sent me a copy of your article on recent events in Bangladesh and I have had it translated. It is deeply moving and has a hard core of valuable analysis. You are aware of the high regard in which we held Sheikh Mujib and of our revulsion at the gruesome assassination of the entire family. However, we must think of the repercussions of anything that is said or done here. Lest we be misrepresented we should modulate our public reaction to events in a neighbouring country with the utmost care. What a person of your position in the literary world says will have far-reaching impact, and I am sure that you would not like to cause us any embarrassment.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/- Indira Gandhi."

I waited for two months and again wrote to the Chief Minister, asking him if the article could be published. He did not reply. After another three months I wrote to him a third time. He was silent. I was advised by a friend to publish the article in book form because books were not subject to pre-censorship rules. The worst that could happen was that it would be banned. By that time what I wanted to say would have reached at least some of those I wanted it to reach on both sides of the border. A publisher came forward who was willing to take the risk. The book was published. There were no repercussions, no banning. But the book was out of date by that time. Meanwhile, Tajuddin and others had been brutally butchered inside a Dacca jail. Who knows whether my article might not have given them some protection if it had been published in time? Not a dog barked either in Bangladesh or India. A free country indeed.

Ouch wholesale muzzling of writers threatened to become a regular feature of our Constitution when the 42nd Amendment was passed. Books could be banned. Presses could be sealed. Publishers could be penalised. Writers could be detained without a legal remedy, without anybody knowing they were so detained. It was nothing less than a well-planned conspiracy to break the spirit of the nation. Nothing like it was ever seen in British India. At least we had an Opposition. But the amended Constitution would not allow anybody to speak or write openly or freely. Everybody was expected to toe the official line or keep silent. Something had to be done before it was too late.

People were found willing to cooperate. The editors of Alekhya, Darpan and the Economic Bulletin of the West Bengal Congress published my writings. I scrupulously avoided clandestine publication. A speech I gave in the presence of the Home Secretary was inaccurately reported in an underground newspaper without my knowledge. I corrected it on being shown a copy by the police. That was the only contribution I made to Samizdat.

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INDIA'S MOST VERSATILE MEDIA MAGAZINE

VIDURA

PRESS INSTITUTE OF INDIA
Sapru House Annex. Barakhamba Road,
New Delhi 110001
Arun Chandra Guha has been a Minister of State for Finance in the Union Government, but his real distinction which has won him undying respect and affection from his countrymen is of a long revolutionary career which earned him jail sentences totalling several decades.

"\"EVER be the rigour of the Emergency, there was more scope for publishing underground literature than in 1915-16 or in 1932," said Arun Chandra Guha. He was comparing the earlier periods with the recent Emergency as far as the production of underground literature was concerned.

"Many of the journalists and press-owners were connected with the publication of underground literature during the Emergency. They had some facility of printing presses. In our case, except in the very early years, it was at great risk any press would take on to publish literature that was banned. In any case presses were not in abundance in 1915 or for that matter in 1930 or 1942. The number of presses with owners having progressive ideas were very few. Then to start a press at that time you had to go through so many formalities. Now it is a matter of registering another company.

Guha, who joined the revolutionary movement in Bengal in 1910, owned a publishing house, "Saraswati Library", an establishment he used for publishing political literature of extreme views. "My role was to get as many books as possible published."

Of the banned books that he published, four are well-known—Bidrohi Prachya (Revolting East), What the students of other countries have done. Punjab Kahani ...(about the Punjab atrocities of 1919), and Desk Parichay. The last was a non-political document, an introduction to the country giving an idea of India's composition, languages, religions and political system.

"Pamphlet publication from Saraswati Press was also started by me," he proclaimed proudly. The press also published a weekly, Swadhinta (Freedom); four of its editors were consecutively convicted for writing seditious material. Its last issue, before it was banned, was brought out on April 10, 1930, soon after the Chittagong uprising. It contained an article entitled "Brave Chittagong". Four or five editions of it had to be reprinted, so great was its demand. "The hawkers were coming to collect it till 10 p.m.," recalled Guha. Within two or three days the paper had been proscribed and the Saraswati Press was asked to deposit a security of Rs 5000—a phenomenon not unknown during the Emergency. Thereafter "Brave Chittagong" was reproduced and secretly circulated.

The literature proscribed by the British Government was secretly published by the Bengal revolutionaries. Booklets like Mukti Kon Pathe (Which way freedom?), and Vartman Rananiti (Modern tactics of war) giving instructions on how to manufacture bombs, figured in the list. In 1907-8 Kiran Chandra Mukherjee was convicted for being caught distributing Mukti Kon Pathe. When Sandhya, a daily paper widely read even among shopkeepers, was banned, Kiran Mukherjee was one of those who decided to publish it secretly. Again, when Jugantar, a weekly openly preaching revolution, had four of its editors consecutively convicted for sedition, it started publication clandestinely. Till 1961 it was brought out in both English and Bengali, but its appearance was erratic.

In December 1917, on the eve of the visit to India of the Secretary of State for India in the British Cabinet, the Jugantar group, headed by Kuntal Chakravarti, distributed leaflets, excerpts from which give an idea of the kind of material that was being circulated clandestinely at that time: "What then must we do? Our duty is plain. We have no concern in Mr Montague's coming or going. He is coming in peace, he may depart in peace, for aught we know or care.

"But first and last, spread terror. Make this unholy government impossible. Hide like invisible shadows of doom and rain death upon the alien bureaucracy. Remember your brothers who are perishing in jails and rotting in swamps. Remember those who have died or gone mad. Remember, watch and work.

"We ask you once more, brothers, in the name of God and country and all, young and old, rich and poor, Hindus and Mohommedans, and Buddhists and Christians, join the war of Indian independence and pour forth your blood and treasure. Hark, the Mother calls and shows the way—Nanya Pantha Vidyata Aynya (The only way and no other)."

It was signed, "By order of the Executive, Indian
During the Thirties when the Congress committees were banned. Guha's friend, Satish Chakravarty was bringing out cyclostyled pamphlets issuing instructions to different units on how to violate laws. Sometimes these were handwritten: on other occasions they were cyclostyled. Chakravarty also organised a secret postal service for their distribution.

Arun Chandra Guha, though he spent 25 years of his life in jails, also had uncanny escapes. "One night in June 1916 I went to the home of another friend and a political colleague. He gave me a bundle of Jugantar leaflets. He had a feeling that he might be searched before long. I removed the papers to my hideout. In the early hours of the next morning the house of my friend was raided and he was arrested. But they could not get those papers. They looked z\ over Calcutta".

It was in prison in 1920 that Guha decided to join the non-cooperation movement of Gandhiji because "I felt that a revolution could not be effective by a handful of men organising it secretly. They could act as spearheads but the movement had to be mass based".

On September 4 that year at the special Congress session at Calcutta, Arun Chandra Guha supported the non-cooperation resolution of Mahatma Gandhi.

Guha was again incarcerated before the Quit India movement was launched.

As a result he was not able to take an "active part outside" during the course of the movement.

The Kannada Scene

C.H. Prahlada Rao

LOOKING back, it was a non-event, like something inside going dead without one's knowledge. The morning of June 26, 1975 was like any other. But the silence that descended was deathly; one broke it, looking back over one's shoulder. Conversation dropped into whispers. A vague helplessness seized you.

It was the total silence that was unbearable; the raucous chorus of yesterday seemed unreal. That was bearable, not this, not this. And how long would it go on? Who could tell?

One ceased to look forward to the newspaper: it took a bare minute to dismiss it. The front page seemed an affront; one could at best put it aside. And the news bulletins on the radio were hardly music to the ear!

In Karnataka, with a vast and varied population of more than 20 million, more than a dozen newspapers, large and small, serve the reader, in town and village. On a rough estimate, between them the Kannada newspapers reach 5 lakh homes.

The readership, however, is wider. The newspaper is not infrequently shared by a neighbour, especially in the small town and village.

After June 26, 1975, this readership found that the spice had gone out of the fare. Something was missing; it was credibility. It did not take long for the reader to realise this.

Overnight news had undergone a sea-change. Morning after morning, week after week, the newspaper looked the same, stereotyped and stale.

Rumour was quick to fill the vacuum. But soon it had a rival: the underground news bulletin. It came like an answer to prayer, like a promise of change, however remote.

One day it came to me in the mail, and it kept on coming. I wondered how it did, because the envelope easily betrayed the contents. They were crammed in a postal envelope, the work of an amateur. Once there was also a proud display of the sender's pseudonym: Satyavadi. Either authority turned a blind eye to it, or lacked curiosity.

The underground news bulletin in Kannada, Kahaie (which means The Trumpet) was issued under the imprimatur of the local Lok Sangharsh Samiti headed by Mr. K.S. Hegde, now Speaker of the Lok Sabha. "Read and circulate", it urged. It was the size of a handbill,
printed in small type, replete with emotive epithets and exclamatory marks.

Occasionally it did give news. One learnt of Kuldip Nayar’s arrest, the lathi charge and arrests at Raj Ghat on Gandhi Jayanti, the expulsion of foreign correspondents. The stories may have been belated, yet they made news. And one ignored the verbiage and a proneness to name-calling.

To begin with it was *Kahale*. Later it appeared as *Jyoti Jagriti*, *Panchajanya*, *Kesari*, *Ranadundubhi*, and so on. *Mangaluru Var.ha*, *Kadagu Vani*, *Mysooru Vortha*, and *Chikmagaluru Vartha* had a regional flavour. These made fortnightly appearances.

There were also others like *Challenge*, *Rashmi*, *Sadlimma*, intended for analysis, which appeared once a month. From the Bangalore prison were issued manuscripts of pamphlets like "When disobedience to law is a duty", "Anatomy of Facism", "Not property but democracy is her bugbear" by L.K. Advani, now Minister of Information.

Ramakrishna Hegde and S. Venkatram, who were also in the Bangalore prison, authored pamphlets, which found clandestine circulation outside. One wrote "The Decade of Decadence" the other "The Decade of Corruption". Both were in reply to the official propaganda material, "The Decade of Progress".

How did the underground news bulletin keep going?

What were the sources of its information? Who did they reach and how? What was the organisation behind it? Who were the men and women involved and what was their motivation?

The full story can only be assembled by the discriminating researcher. There was a vast network for exchange of information operating at the local, regional and national levels.

Information about emergency excesses and popular resistance emanating from the village would travel through the district to the regional level. From there, in English and Hindi, it would go up to the national level. And information from the national level travelled in reverse order.

Though the information centres were vulnerable, the sympathy which a resistance struggle evoked among the common people was their armour.

In Karnataka there were seven key centres and twenty-five minor centres from which news bulletins were issued. Resource-wise, there were twenty-four cyclostyled machines and forty-seven printing presses. The large numbers took care of possible interruptions when one or the other link in the chain snapped.

The news bulletin reached 2085 centres, both towns and villages. About 50,000 to 60,000 copies of each bulletin were printed or cyclostyled. On special occasions, the coverage was wider, reaching out to another thousand centres.

The bulletin was delivered or addressed to its intended reader: the teacher in schools and universities; opinion-makers like writers, journalists, editors; trade union and student leaders; social and religious workers; members of the legislatures.

It is estimated that 577 bulletins, running into 32 lakhs, were circulated in Karnataka. There were also regional phenomena like Subharaya Chokkadi’s *Ajnaia Prava*, circulation of 200 in Sulya (South Canara), and K.V. Subhanna’s *Turtu Kare*, with a circulation of 1000, in Heggodu, Sagar.

Those who ran the bulletins worked by day and by night. They eluded the vigil of authority, thanks to timely warnings by friends. Under constant threat of exposure, they were ready to dump their wares, particularly the addresses of contacts, or face the worst when trapped.

It was largely the R.S.S. cadre which manned these services. Quality-wise, one may not go into raptures. That it happened is the main point. It kept flickering hope alive.
In October 1977 some of those who had been involved in producing underground literature during the Emergency got together in Calcutta to organise an exhibition of such literature produced in many parts of the country.

The New Delhi Exhibition, organised by the Press Institute of India, has as its core the material gathered in Calcutta. A number of significant and interesting additions have, however, been made. Altogether around two thousand items would be on display in AIFACS hall, New Delhi between 16-19 April, 1978.

Those who deserve thanks for their co-operation and help include Niranjan Haldar and his colleagues from Calcutta; B.G. and Amiya Rao; P.C. Randeria; Kuldip Nayar; B.G. Verghese; Dr. Arun Limaye; Nikhil Chakravarty, Amrita Rangaswamy.
RABINDRANATH Tagore was born in this city of Calcutta and he also died here. One cannot think of Bengali literature, culture or the Bengali people apart from Rabindranath. There are not a few in this city of Calcutta who have been making a name in society and also earning a living by holding on to Rabindranath's legacy or exploiting his name. And yet during the Emergency when there was a ban on printing uncensored a line from Rabindranath along with Gandhi and Jawaharlal, and when many of Rabindranath's songs were banned, there was not even a stir, not to speak of manifestation of protest in Rabindranath's city of Calcutta.

In the morning of June 26, 1975, the Government clamped down Emergency for the second time all over the country and from 10.30 a.m. attempted to control all news to be communicated at home or abroad. Before that Mirchandani of U.N.I, had telephoned the representatives of the foreign press and had arranged for the dispatch of news abroad. On that day, the Government sent out a 16-point guideline to the newspapers and the Press Information Bureau and sent its men to different newspaper offices to censor according to the guideline all news, advertisements and cartoons and thereby suppressed all news of protests against the Emergency.

The Financial Express of Delhi came out on June 28 for the first time after the declaration of Emergency. It could not print its editorial, and so on the front page published under the caption, "Song of the Day", the English translation of Rabindranath's poem "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high." After establishing her tyrannical regime, Indira Gandhi realised how dangerous could be her Gurudev Rabindranath for a tyranny : the opponents of her tyranny would not be able to express themselves but convey their mood and sentiments with the help of Rabindranath's words and songs. So, on the direction of the then Principal Information Officer to the Government of India Dr Baji, Rabindranath was marked out as a dangerous person in the eyes of the Government and the steamroller of censorship was pushed through the recording of Rabindranath's songs for the Calcutta station of the All India Radio. The military rulers of the then East Pakistan (that is Bangladesh of today) had outright banned Rabindranath's songs over the Dacca Radio Station. The excuse made out was that Rabindranath was Indian and, moreover, he was not a supporter of the demand for Pakistan. Although the same thing could be applied to Kazi Nazrul Islam, only his "Islamic" songs were broadcast over the Dacca Radio Station. Such a thing was not possible in the case of Rabindranath. The artistes of Tagore songs and the community of writers of Bangladesh had campaigned for the restitution of Rabindranath in the former East Pakistan so that they could convey their own thoughts to their countrymen through Rabindranath's words and songs. Many litterateurs and journalists of West Bengal had spent a lot of paper and ink to denounce the anti-Tagore drive of Pakistani President Ayub Khan. Because of the communal mentality dormant within themselves, they had characterised at that time Ayub Khan's anti-Tagore measures as being tail ted with communal poison : they had never realised that the drive against Tagore came as part of the offensive to put down the democratic forces.

From Delhi came the warning to be alert on the question of broadcasting Tagore's songs and poems keeping in mind the Emergency. But what songs would the then Station Director and his cronies take up for recording? Any song that would suggest that one would win overcoming all obstacles or that no barriers would stand or any song that might remind one of Indira Gandhi's regime—such songs must not be broadcast over the Akashvani. The artistes were not permitted to do the recording of any song containing words like "darkness", "grief" or "pain". The number of Tagore songs banned in the Calcutta Station of the All India Radio in the nineteen months of the Emergency was large, but I have been able to get only 26 of them. Among the banned could be found such well-known ones as "The day of mine which has been swept away by tears", "Now sorrow is my limitless receptacle", 'if the darkness of sorrow is lighted up". "In what words to express pain", "If nobody responds to your call" etc. Not everybody
had accepted this ban on the recording of Tagore's songs. Tagore's song on the rains which Bani Thakur had not been permitted to sing, was sung after her insistence by Kanika Bandyopadhyay. Kumkum Chattopadhyay insisted that the authorities convey in writing their objection to the song she had not been permitted to sing. But she could get nothing in writing. It would not be unfair to imagine that the Delhi directive on Rabindra Sangeet which came from Dr. Baji or the then Information Minister Vidya Charan Shukla, was perhaps oral. Many ordinary unknown artistes had protested against the order scrutinising the wordings for recording Tagore songs. Some of the officers and employees of Akashvani could not easily tolerate this national insult to Rabindranath Tagore. Adhir Chattopadhyay of Akashvani sought transfer and went to Bhopal, and Moni Ghosh took two months' leave. And Amiya Chattopadhyay played the records of some of the Tagore songs whose recording by artistes was not permitted.

Along with Rabindranath's, some of Nazrul Islam's songs and poems were also banned. The songs, "The Rebel" and "The Mountain is difficult to cross and the desert is limitless", found place in the list of the banned. The authorities of A.I.R. did not stop at that. The Calcutta Station programme of playing records of Rabindra Sangeet at 12-30 p.m. was cut down during the Emergency from six days to three days in the week. And at the Delhi station the half-an-hour programme of Bengali songs was abolished for fear of Rabindranath's banned songs being broadcast in that programme. After the Lok Sabha election (1977), Subhas Chandra Sarkar, the journalist, in a letter from Bombay to all Bengalee M.P's drew their attention to the total scrapping of programmes of Bengali songs from the Delhi A.I.R. station.

It cannot however be said that nobody knew about the censor's steamrollering on Rabindranath Tagore during the Emergency. It was after the discrimination against Rabindranath's songs in the A.I.R. that a statement welcoming the Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi was issued by Ashoktaru Bandyopadhyaya, Premendra Mitra, Manoj Basu, Gopal Haldar, Subhash Mukhopadhyaya and others. Despite the insult inflicted on Tagore during the Emergency, his pupil Pramathu Pishii could not pluck up courage to protest before Indira Gandhi. Maitreyee Debi who, exploiting Tagore's association, has earned a place in the world of letters and also money and awards from the Sahitya Akademi, even she was not in the least upset by this offence to Tagore's memory. She was ecstatic on being awarded "Padma-shree" by the regime of tyranny. The lady who had frowned upon the readers of Ananda Bazar Patrika on the ground that her sleep had been disturbed on Tagore's songs having been sung out of tune, even she did not protest nor care to build up protest at the imposition of censorship on Rabindranath's songs and poems. On the other hand, Suchitra Mitra did not feel ashamed at singing Tagore's songs wishing success to Indira Gandhi's election campaign for the maintenance of the Emergency.

The Opposition political parties in West Bengal have also shown that those who dabble in politics in this State are not worthy legatees of the Bengalee culture. During the Emergency, on August 15 and October 2, 1975, some political workers courted arrest while trying to garland Gandhiji's statue in Calcutta, and on January 23, 1976 defied the Government order to confine their speeches to his personal life while speaking on Netaji at the Calcuttamaidana. In this State, nearly two thousand satyagrahis belonging to non-Communist opposition parties went to prison by staging satyagraha to break the fear that crushed the people. But these could not be made to see that instead of chanting the "Bande Mataram" slogan while courting arrest at the hands of the police, if they had sung Tagore's songs banned by the A.I.R. authorities, its repercussions would have been far-reaching in West Bengal. They could not imagine what would have been the reaction if processions could have been brought out on the first day of Baisakh (the Bengali New Year Day) and on the 25th of Baisakh (Tagore's birthday) with the processionists singing Rabindranath's songs. The opposition political parties could not take advantage of the opportunity to end this barrier between Bengali culture and political culture in West Bengal. They did not keep track of the struggle for democracy against authoritarianism in other countries, even in Bangladesh. Even in Bangladesh Rabindranath had helped to further the struggle for the restoration of democracy in a death grip: if they were aware of this, they could have linked up the struggle for the restitution of respect for Rabindranath with the struggle for the restoration of democracy in West Bengal. They did not keep track of the struggle for democracy against authoritarianism in other countries, even in Bangladesh. 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entire Indian spectrum." (Where will Opposition Raise Its Head?).

Many could not accept censorship on Rabindranath Tagore. In March 1976, when Indira Gandhi came to Calcutta, a meeting was arranged for her to meet the writers and artists. In that meeting, Alokranjan Dasgupta not only protested against censorship but did not hesitate to tell Indira Gandhi off that she had not read Tagore well. And Annadasankar Ray sent to Indira Gandhi his article which had been objected to by the censor. When Mrs. Gandhi also withheld the permission to publish the article, he included it in a book captioned, "Cry the Beloved Country". But the writers of this State could not muster the protest against dictatorship in the country as did the writers in other States. When the Janata Party entered the election campaign for the Lok Sabha with the call for the demolition of Indira authoritarianism, then among the writers and intellectual > only Gauri Ayub came out with the appeal to vote against the Congress (Our Manifesto, Ananda Bazar Patrika). Even Maitriye Debi did not condemn authoritarianism.

The picture was totally different in other States. In Bihar, Phaniswarnati Renu opposing the Emergency had to go to Nepal to escape arrest. As a protest against Indira authoritarianism, Renuji had already returned the "Padmasree" title to the Government. Renuji had organised Hindi writers against the Emergency: some of the Hindi writers of Calcutta had participated in that movement. Renuji fell seriously ill while working in the conditions of the Emergency. And he died immediately after the restoration of democracy. In this period, many Hindi Communist writers lost faith in Communism because of the support extended by the Communist Party to Indira Gandhi's authoritarianism. Among the Urdu writers, those who were known as progressives, none of them had opposed Indira authoritarianism. Among the Urdu writers, those who had opposed authoritarianism included Dr. Zoe Ansari, Baqr Mehdi, Foizal Zafri, Aziz Qureshi and Yakub Rabi. Shamsuzzaman of Calcutta had also joined the movement against the Emergency. On the day after the imposition of the Emergency, Dr. Ansari was asked to speak at the inaugural function of the special number of the journal, Gagan in Bombay. In that meeting, without caring for his own security he had come out condemning the authoritarian rule. The matter became so serious that Kisan Chunder (a supporter of Emergency) pulled Dr. Ansari and forced him to sit down. It was Dr. Ansari who wrote against Khwaja Ahmad Abbas for having supported the Emergency. In Maharashtra, the fifty-first annual session of the Marathi Sahitya Sammelan held at Karad in December 1975 became memorable. Despite the fact that the Chairman of the Reception Committee was Yashwantrao Chavan, at that time the External Affairs Minister, the inaugurator of the conference, the venerable Lakhmanshastri Joshi condemned the Emergency. The main theme of the Presidential Address by Dr. Durga Bhagwat was how the Emergency harmed creative writing. The Government confiscated the Presidential Address and later arrested her. And Umashankar Joshi through his speech in the Rajya Sabha broadcast this news. At this conference, more than 150 writers, editors and publishers present demanded in a statement the revocation of the Emergency. The editor of the journal Sadhana of Pune, Jadunath Thate, and P.L. Deshpande and other Marathi writers carried on a ceaseless movement against the Emergency. How the film directors and actors and actresses of Hindi films in Bombay involved themselves for the ending of Indirashahi, is a remarkable story. Three papers published in English, Janata, Freedom First" and Opinion are memorable in this context.

On March 6, 1976 at the Gujarati Sahitya Sammelan held at Porbandar in Gujarat, the demand was raised for the lifting of the Emergency. The leadership for this anti-Government movement was provided by Umashankar Joshi, Chandrakanta Dam and others. Inspite of the fact of being a government nominated member of the Rajya Sabha, Umashankar Joshi had opposed every act of the Government; he cyclostyled and distributed all over the country his statement against the Government in the Rajya Sabha. Memorable was the role of Bhumiputra edited by Narayan Desai and also of Sadhana in Gujarati. On the completion of one year of the Emergency not only was the office and press of Sadhana put under lock and key, its editor, publisher and press manager were arrested. When the censor tried to suppress Bhumiputra on the charge of having published Shri M.C. Chagla's speech delivered at the civil liberties conference at Ahmedabad on October 12 1975, the matter was taken to the High Court and the two Judges who delivered judgement in favour of Bhumiputra were transferred elsewhere. It was in 1975 the writers and intellectuals of Ahmedabad had held a civil liberties conference and a "Save Constitution" conference.

Many of the cartoonists had opposed the Emergency. - Abu Abraham, Chandi Lahiri, Rajinder Puri—none was left out. In Karnafaka, the well-known author of "Sanskar", the novelist U.R. Murthi had been active in building the movement by organising a Human Rights Committee and bringing out pamphlets against authoritarianism. Tamil writers and journalists, in the name of writing the story of Mahabharat in the daily press, tried to expose the naked rule of the Indira Government. In Kerala, many through the medium of short stories in
Malayalam criticised the fascist Government. Many among the Bengali writers and intellectuals in West Bengal did not acquiesce in the Emergency, but did not oppose in an organised fashion the Government's authoritarian policy. Rabindranath through his pen had sought to make us courageous. Could one think that the writers and singers in that very language of Tagore would not stand up and protest at the insult hurled at Rabindranath? How many among them were even ready to face the consequences like the one faced by Gita Ghatak who had to go in for harassment of repeated police raids on her house on the charge of giving shelter to the protestors against the Emergency, or the readiness with which the actress and the Rabindra singer of yesterday, Binata Ray had provided shelter for secret work and meetings in her house?

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is Constitutional, she is democratic and all that she has done is permitted by the Constitution.

And lastly, friends, do not ignore the force of public opinion. Today our hands are shackled, our mouths are sealed, our pens cannot write anything because it cannot be published. But, public opinion can still assert itself. Here you are over a thousand people. You have heard what I have said. But word of mouth can carry this message outside. If public meetings are not allowed, hold meetings of 200 or 300 called by invitation to discuss the problems. Then gradually public opinion will assert itself.

I refuse to believe that my country which has had a civilization going back centuries, my country where the Constitution was drafted for a democratic State will always remain in the shadow of dictatorship. There is a saying in English that "when the night is darkest, the dawn is not far off." I see the night very dark. I am an old man and have not got long to live. But you younger people will see the dawn. The dawn is bound to come. This country cannot go under. For thousands of years we have survived invasions. We have survived all sorts of troubles and I think that we will survive both Indira Gandhi and her dictatorship.
Underground Literature during the Emergency:  
A View from Delhi

Amiya Rao and B.G. Rao

HERE WAS a time when a number of Indian journalists could with justifiable pride, repeat what Disraeli had said a century ago: "I am a gentleman of the Press and I bear no other scutcheon." Surprisingly, that was before India became independent. Since 1947 a steady though imperceptible decline had taken place in the morale and fibre of the Press. But few noticed this till two years ago when the minions of a dictator overawed, stamped upon and crushed the entire fabric of what pretended to be a strong Press.

In the absence of a free Press, uninhibited flow of news and comment ceased all over the land, and the country, as it were, got cut up into small pieces. What happened in one neighbourhood could not be known to people living just five miles away. Thus, the happenings in Turkman Gate, we found, were not known to our friends in Defence Colony even three months later.

In such circumstances two human traits asserted themselves to fill the vacuum created by the pusillanimous behaviour of our Press—a desire to spread news and a desire to hit back at the oppressor with whatever weapon one could.

Camus told us of France under the German heel, where "every morning for four years each Frenchman received his ration of hatred and his slap on his face... when he opened his newspaper". Here in India the reaction to the vapidity of the Press was to attempt to do what the Press was afraid to do—to collect correct news of genuine interest to the people, to put it on paper and to circulate it as widely as possible.

This was how the underground literature grew, nurtured by thousands and read by hundreds of thousands. Every one of the participants—even the readers-faced some risk; but risk brought excitement and excitement in turn led to a certain level of commitment.

News, views or exhortations could be put across by provocative posters displayed as widely as possible, by handbills distributed where people congregated or by news bulletins delivered to a smaller number of people, but with the expectation that they would relay one or more times to their friends, neighbours and relatives. While posters could be most effective, the risk in getting them printed and pasting them at spots where they would be viewed by large numbers of people was great.

Our one effort in this direction had unfortunate consequences. For the anniversary of the declaration of the Emergency, a coloured poster was got ready with the picture of Indira Gandhi standing behind prison bars and carrying the legend in Hindi, "Tanashah ki akhri jagah" (The last place of a dictator). Unfortunately, through the folly of a young man who was one of the "conspirators", the plan leaked out just as it was getting near the point of execution. A number of our boys were arrested and tortured; only a few posters could be pasted in a couple of New Delhi thoroughfares.

Handbills are much easier to draft, cyclostyle or print and distribute. Of those printed and distributed in Delhi two still remain fresh in our memory and were enormously effective. The first purported to be a 'fatwa' issued by the Ulema of Deoband, declaring that a forcibly sterilised Muslim ceases to belong to the Islamic brotherhood and therefore forefeits the rights and privileges of a Muslim. Printed with a black border, this small Urdu handbill gave to the Muslims of Jama Masjid the moral strength to stand up to the indignities heaped upon them by the minions of Sanjay Gandhi. Of the earlier handbills there was a brief one which mentioned half a dozen points relating to the arrest of Gandhiji in 1942 and of JP in 1975 indicating the ruthlessness of Indira Gandhi as compared to the British-Indian Government.

We produced another one showing how ridiculous Indira Gandhi looked in her attempt to prove that Kamaraj had, just before his death, decided to join her party. We gave it to a few friends who had it cyclostyled and widely distributed.

Of the handbills originating from outside, the two
Whether handbills or news bulletins, printed or cyclostyled, their circulation was as important as their creation. In large cities where there were suburban train services and buses and trams, we found that even leaving a small open packet lying on a seat was effective. Sending them by post was not as risky as people assumed. We used to send new bulletins by post marking them, "Printed Matter". To avert any suspicion we had rubber stamps made, tearing legends like "Hum do, hamare do" in Hindi or "From Authors’ Guild, Delhi" and names of similar loyalist organisations. With these we stamped the packets.

Some of the active groups had money enough to be able to use respectable looking envelopes with false and misleading addresses printed on them. One of our friends used to send us material in envelopes purporting to have been sent by the National Institute of Management, 78 ADN Road, Bombay-400001.

In winter, near midnight was the most convenient time for house-to-house delivery of underground literature. After 11.30 the streets were generally deserted and the two of us would go out carrying 80 to 100 packets under our shawl or overcoat and drop them systematically in the letter-box of each house we passed.

The method of collecting and disseminating underground news varied from group to group. There was very little coordination between these groups, even between those operating in the same city. The net result of the total effort which went into the production of news-sheets would have been greater had there been more inter-communication between different groups. Coordination was rendered difficult by two factors: first, there was the pervasive atmosphere of distrust and suspicion which was one of the "positive" achievements of the Emergency and none felt that he could trust his neighbour or friend in regard to matters like fighting the Emergency; and secondly, most of those involved in the underground work seemed unwilling to share with others the immense excitement which this work gave one.

We remember a discussion which was held at our house in September, 1975 in which persons responsible for producing Janavani, Yuva Sangharsh and Pratirodha, three printed underground news (and views) bulletins produced in Delhi, participated. Also present was the General Secretary of the Socialist Party of India.

The Janavani had a good network for distribution, but due to exaggeration and a desire to give the credit for all underground work to one single opposition party, it had lost most of its original credibility. Yuva Sangharsh was similarly attached to the leader of another party and was keen on puffing up his image. With the physical and financial resources of these two and of the much feebler, though better compiled Pratirodha, we had hoped that on merging they could produce a much more effective news bulletin which could be distributed to a much larger number of people. After some desultory discussion, lasting over three hours, the meeting terminated to resume a few days later in a house in Friends’ Colony. But nothing useful came out of these discussions. We were still far off from any desire to pool our resources to fight the enemy; on the other hand, it became clear that the strongest group of the three wanted to swallow up the other two who did not like the idea of being gobbled up. Thereafter the three continued separately.

It was only after the Turkman Gate tragedy that both of us decided that a serious effort should be made to produce a news bulletin giving at least some genuine, uncensored news items. We had by now some reliable sources of information in Bihar including two young friends detained in the Bihar jails. Also the superintendent of one jail had agreed to send us whatever news he thought would be useful to us. In addition, he promised to circulate among the political detainees in his jail such underground material.

In Delhi we had a few sources including the correspondent of a foreign news agency. With the material thus available we produced on May 1, 1976 a news sheet in 18 copies. We called it Satyasamachar (True news). On May 15 we produced the second number. It so happened that four days later, when we had taken two copies of it to a magistrate’s court in Tis Hazari to give them to some of our friends who were then in judicial custody, Digvijay Narain Singh, MP, who had also gone there to see some under-trial prisoners saw this bulletin. He offered to assume charge of cyclostyled...
and distributing them and help in collecting some more news items. On the anniversary of the Allahabad High Court judgement the first cyclostyled copy of Satyasamachar came out.

Our emphasis was on the "satya" (truth) of the "samachar" : (news) "The emphasis will always be on truth. Our self-imposed code will forbid incitement to violence, to communal passions and to anti-social behaviour; we will scrupulously avoid character assassination and tendentious writing; our constant endeavour will be to remind people that a personal dictatorship is working to perpetuate itself and that they have to fight it. Today's fighters will command tomorrow not for power but for justice, not for politics but for ethics; not for the domination of India but for her grandeur."

The first two issues contained items like the order of the Bihar Government to keep all "Naxalite" prisoners in fetters irrespective of their conduct; the barbarous shooting down of six "Naxalite" prisoners after they had been brought to the jail gate; JP's letter to Indira Gandhi, returning the donation from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund; Vinoba's decision to go on an indefinite fast if cow-slaughter was not banned throughout the country; the police raid on the Paunar Ashram and the seizure of Vinoba's magazine Maitri; the hunger strike by political prisoners in the Presidency Jail, Calcutta.

Assistance and advice came from unexpected quarters. One instance we remember relates to an excerpt which we reproduced from Bhupesh Gupta's complaint about V. C. Shukla's statement in Parliament. We had given the item a rather prosaic headline, "Bhupesh to Shukla". Reading the typescript in the hand of Digvijay Narain Singh, the star speaker of the CPI in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha a White Paper entitled, "Why Emergency". The document attempted exhortations to the citizens to fight the dictator, analyses of the changing political situation. They cannot be classified as handbills or news-sheets or pamphlets.

Of the casual pamphlets we would like to mention M.C. Chagla's speech at the All India Civil Liberties Conference held in Ahmedabad in October 1975 the text of which is reproduced elsewhere in this souvenir and the pamphlet containing speeches in Parliament by the Opposition members. These had been banned by the Chief Censor. The publisher of the Bengali magazine, Calcutta, produced an underground pamphlet, with the same title, containing English translations of selected articles from their magazine. This was avidly read by whosoever could buy it—it was a priced publication—or borrow it from friends.

Some pamphlets, formally published in one state, were seized by the police in other states. Of this variety were Karunanidhi's speeches, "The Sword and the Shield" and "Save Democracy". These were ultimately banned after the dismissal of the DMK Ministry in Tamil Nadu.

The underground literature in circulation in the larger cities also included photostat, typed or cyclostyled copies of selected articles from British and American newspapers and periodicals exposing the hollowness of Indira Gandhi's pretences and those of her colleagues and officers. These, though not formally banned, had suddenly acquired great value when the journals in which they appeared were prevented from entering the country. And, of course, there were Swaraj from Britain and Indian Opinion from the USA, periodicals started by Indians abroad for the exclusive purpose of fighting the dictatorship.

In addition to all these there were a few booklets which should be mentioned. Two of the earliest were Indian Press Gagged, a competently written story of the early days of the Press censorship, and The two emergencies, written in jail by a detained political leader, smuggled out, printed and widely distributed. The latter compared in detail the emergency declaration of Indira Gandhi in 1975 with that of Hitler in 1933.

Another book which needs mentioning is Torture of political prisoners in Indian jails, published by a firm of well-known publishers under a fictitious name. It gave an account of sadistic torture of persons arrested mainly for political reasons.

Our own contribution to this variety of underground literature was of a different sort. In July 1975 the Minister of Home Affairs had placed on the table of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha a White Paper entitled, "Why Emergency". The document attempted
to justify the declaration of Emergency by blaming Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan for creating a situation which compelled the Government to take an extreme step. In September 1975, a friend of ours, wanted by the Delhi police, had taken shelter in our house. It was he who suggested that we might write a refutation of it.

The idea was exciting. We began work. We lived with the constant apprehension that our house might be raided and the unfinished manuscript seized. Luckily, nothing so dramatic happened and the typescript was ready for the press by the end of October 1975. Another friend arranged with C.T. Daru, a prominent advocate of Ahmedabad and at that time still outside jail, to get it printed. Some copies were distributed but before long the person in charge of the stock was arrested. As a result a large number of copies remained undistributed.

The police raided a number of places in Ahmedabad and Delhi but was unable to trace them. Almost all those who were involved in the process of writing and distributing news bulletins are grateful to one or more comrades who were behind bars. It was they who arranged to send out news of serious incidents occurring in the jails, such as the lathi charge on the prisoners in the Tihar jail on October 2, 1975. There was a similar attack on the Iranian students in the same jail during the Iranian Premier's visit to New Delhi. The butchering of the "Naxalite" prisoners outside the gate of Bhagalpur jail and the breakout of the Calcutta jail by political prisoners were some of the other incidents. It was the political detenus who made a memorable contribution to the quality and sustenance of the underground literature.

When the Night is Darkest, Dawn is not far off

M.C. Chagla

The following speech by Mr. M.C. Chagla, made at the inauguration of the All India Civil Liberties Conference held in Ahmedabad on October 12, 1975, was not allowed to be published in the newspapers. It was subsequently reproduced and circulated clandestinely. Chagla, one-time Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court and former Minister of Education and External Affairs, was an outspoken critic of Press censorship during the Emergency.

The Conference has met to consider civil liberties in the context of the present situation. When I look at the present situation I wonder whether I am dreaming, or, to use perhaps a better expression, I am going through a nightmare. I rub my eyes to make sure whether I am awake or asleep and I find it is not a dream or a nightmare, but it is a stark, grim, ghastly, reality.

Friends, we live in a country which is called Gandhi's land. Gandhiji worked for and obtained freedom for us. Not merely freedom from the British Government, but also freedom from tyranny, oppression, injustice of every kind. In a message which he wrote in Young India as far back as 1921, he said, "In a democracy people are not like sheep. In a democracy we must jealously guard freedom of expression and thought and action: Note the words "freedom of expression and thought and action". Then we had our Constitution. Now, wherever a revolution starts, there is always a proud proclamation as to the objects for which the revolution is being fought. In the USA Jefferson gave the battle cry, "all men are born equal and they are endowed with the inalienable rights of life and liberty and pursuit of happiness. When the French revolution broke out, the French soldiers marched not only to the strains of the "Marseilles" but also to the battle cry, "liberty, equality and fraternity". Then we ushered in our own Constitution and started working our own State. We also had the proud proclamation and that was in the preamble of our Constitution. Some jurists have said that there is hardly a Constitution which has a preamble of this character, and the two aspects of that preamble which I want to emphasize are that the State we were setting up is a sovereign, democratic republic.
I emphasise the word democratic. And the preamble emphasizes that the State will have liberty of thought, expression and liberty in other respects.

What is the position to-day? Is anything left of liberties in the country? A man today can be detained without any reason given to him, without his being told why he is detained, without his being able to give an explanation for his conduct or appeal to an independent body like an advisory council. Anybody like you and I may be shut behind bars. Most people today in the jails do not know why they are there and they cannot defend themselves, because where there is no charge, there cannot be any defence. They cannot go to any other tribunal because all that has stopped.

To my mind, the original sin, the fountain-source and the origin of what has happened, is the Emergency that has been declared in the country. In order to understand the Emergency we must look into the background. You see, the Emergency has been made non-justiciable legally. But it has not been made non-justiciable politically. And the speech I am going to deliver is a political speech not a legal speech. I do not think I can be hauled up for contempt (of Court) or be proceeded against for trying to make justiciable that which is non-justiciable.

Now let us look at the history, the drama, the first scene when the curtain goes up on the 12th of June, 1975. Two historic events took place on 12th June. To my mind, these two events marked the turning point in our history. The first was the decision of Mr Justice Sinha holding that the Prime Minister was guilty of corrupt practices. The second historic event was one which took place in this state when the results of elections were declared and the Janata Party was found to be in a working majority in the legislature.

These two events had a serious reaction. The Prime Minister did not feel assured of continuing to occupy the seat she is now occupying. Therefore, it was from the 12th of June that the idea started maturing in her mind that she should do something to make sure of her position as the Prime Minister.

The next event to which I want to draw your attention is what happened on the 25th of June when a public meeting was held of all the Opposition leaders, saying that the Prime Minister should not continue as Prime Minister, that political decorum required that she should quit the chair and that satyagraha would start from the 29th of that month.

Let me say one thing to you: satyagraha is not violation of the law. The very word connotes truth and non-violence. It is Gandhiji who introduced this word in the political vocabulary of the world. But why go to Gandhiji? Only the other day the Supreme Court gave the judgment that satyagraha is perfectly legal.

The leaders wanted the Prime Minister to quit office. That was their main demand. Is it a sin in a democracy to ask the Prime Minister to quit office? Is Mrs Thatcher's today asking Mr Wilson to vacate the office of the Prime Minister a sin? Did not Wilson go on asking Mr Heath to quit office as the Prime Minister? After all, with great respect to the Prime Minister of the country, she is not a deity to be worshipped, she is not a deity who cannot be removed from the temple.

Democratic every person has a right to say that we want a charge of Government, and that we want a new Prime Minister. What was her answer and what was the answer of these wonderful people who surround her? That in the present situation she was indispensable.

Now, for anyone to say that a person is indispensable in a democracy is to sin against the light of democracy: it is to be disloyal to the faith of democracy. It is indispensable and democracy cannot go hand in hand. In America, as they say, you can go to the White House from a log cabin. Therefore, I personally do not see that a very great crime was committed by the Opposition leaders in asking her to quit office.

She then said that there was a conspiracy to bring about a complete deadlock in the country, to ask the army to revolt and to bring about a situation whereby there would be chaos. Of course, when a Prime Minister speaks, one must respect what she says but still I am entitled to say as an ordinary citizen that she has not produced any iota of evidence for saying that there was a conspiracy.

You study the resolution passed at the public meeting on 25th June: you study the earlier resolutions passed by the leaders. They have emphasized non-violence. All that they talked about was gheraos, satyagraha and marches which is perfectly legitimate. There was not a single statement in any of the resolutions suggesting that either they wanted to resort to violence or that they wanted to take to illegal action. The only piece of evidence on which the Prime Minister has been harping day in and day out is that Jayaprakash Narayan said that soldiers and policemen should not obey illegal orders. This statement is legally sound. International organizations have approved that it is not incumbent upon a police officer or an army officer to carry out an order which is illegal.

You know what happened in Vietnam when an American officer shot 50 to 60 innocent villagers and was tried in America. What JP said, therefore, is legally sound. But he never called upon the army or police to revolt or to take up arms against the State. He was
merely enunciating a legal proposition and he was moved to do so because he found in Bihar, policemen and soldiers shooting down innocent people and students.

The only conclusion that I would come to, and I want you to endorse that conclusion, is that there was no conspiracy on the part of the Opposition leaders. The conspiracy was by the Prime Minister to put the leaders in jail, to have Press censorship and to deprive the people of Indias freedom of their civil liberties.

Now the Prime Minister goes on to say and says almost every day that India is a democracy. I am reminded of the story of *Alice in Wonderland*. Humpty Dumpty told Alice, "If I say that a word has a certain meaning, that word has that meaning. You cannot change it."

So when the Prime Minister says that dictatorship is democracy, you must accept her word. She is Humpty Dumpty and she thinks all the nations are Alice in the Wonderland. But, at least some of us are not fooled. Those of us who are here know what is democracy and what is dictatorship.

Why does she get so angry with the Western Press? They are right in saying that they are sorry that we, the greatest democracy in the world, have resorted to things which are certainly undemocratic.

To my mind one of the most serious losses to our civil liberties is the freedom of the Press. Democracy cannot function without a free Press. I was reading only two days back a speech made by US Chief Justice Burger. Burger is a noted conservative and was appointed as Chief Justice so that the Supreme Court should be safer. He says that the ordered liberty which prevails in America is due to the combination of a free press and an independent judiciary. He says, "These two concomitants are essential if the American system of ordered liberty is to subsist and to continue."

We have also a system of ordered liberty. Our liberty is not a licence. Look at Article 19, look at the exceptions where liberty can be curtailed. In America liberty is much wider than ours; there are no exceptions there. Freedom of the Press has no exception. But here we have exceptions and wisely the founding fathers provided the exceptions. So ours is a system of ordered liberty and not liberty without any restraint or without any control.

Freedom of the Press has two aspects: first, to get information and secondly to purvey that information. Today, both these channels are completely blocked. No paper or no news from outside can come into this country which contains any reference to India hostile to the Prime Minister or to the Government. No article, letter or statement, can be published in any newspaper, which in any way criticises the Prime Minister or the Government.

My friend Mr Mohan Dharia made a speech in Parliament which, (I do not want to flatter him) I feel, was one of the finest parliamentary performances I have read. Not a word of that speech was reported in any newspaper.

Take another case. My friend Kuldip Nayar, a leading journalist, was arrested and detained. His trial took place in the Delhi High Court. He was released, and, let me say to the credit of the judges, he was released even before the judgment came and the Government realized that it would lose the case. But the Judges said, "No. We are going to deliver the judgment notwithstanding your releasing the detenu." I do not know about Gujarat, but as far as Bombay is concerned, nobody knows that Kuldip Nayar was ever arrested; nobody knows the trial took place; nobody knows that he was released and nobody knows what judgment was delivered. If you want to read the judgment you will have to go to The Times of London which published extracts from Kuldip Nayar's case.

This is censorship. Censorship I can understand if it is related to a particular subject for a particular time under particular circumstances. Suppose there is a war. The Government may well say that no paper shall report the movements of troops or what is happening on our frontiers or how the enemy has fared or how we have fared.

But this is a unilateral censorship. You can sing hymns of glory to the Prime Minister, and they are being sung every day, you can shout 'Hosannas' in her favour, as they are being shouted every day, and they will be reported in full.

I am sickened to read today's newspapers. What do I see? Speeches by the Prime Minister, speeches by Ministers and opening ceremonies by some Deputy Ministers, Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries. As far as the newspapers are concerned, that is all that is happening. Do you think that my speech will be reported? I don't attach any importance to myself but I say is it going to be reported? It is running a serious risk of censorship. *The Times of India* has, of course, shown us the courtesy by reporting that today I will inaugurate the conference.

The Government has a great deal to lose by this censorship, for what does freedom of thought or of speech mean? That you have a right to criticise, a right to comment, a right to point out mistakes. The Government does not know whether it is making mistakes, because there is nobody to point it out. The voice of dissent is muted, more than muted. It
is completely repressed; the voice of criticism is also repressed, with the result that the Government thinks it is omniscient.

This is one aspect of civil liberties—the freedom of the press—to which I attach the greatest importance. But the curious thing is this: we are accused of being fascists, of being right revisionists (a phrase borrowed from the Soviet vocabulary); they are the democrats. I do not think that there can be a greater limit to this linguistic perversity than to call us fascists and call themselves democrats.

What do we stand for? We are not standing for the overthrow of Government. We know that the Government should be overthrown by constitutional or democratic methods. We are not standing for rebellion or revolt, because we are not violent, temperamentally and constitutionally. All that we are saying is, restore to this country the liberties which were guaranteed under the Constitution. Liberty is inalienable, that is what Jefferson said. I will not go into the question of fundamental rights, for liberty is the basis of democracy and no democracy can exist without liberty. It is a contradiction in terms. Therefore we say: grant us our inalienable right to liberty, give us freedom of the Press and revoke this emergency for which there is no justification.

Going back to the Emergency for a minute. What was the occasion for it? They say, "internal disturbance". Was there any internal disturbance? As a matter of fact, the Prime Minister goes on saying day in and day out that the situation is perfectly normal. The other day the Home Minister said (I know it because the statement was in an affidavit in Bangalore, where I was arguing a writ petition) two days after emergency, that there was not a single act of violence in any part of the country. Then what is the justification of this emergency?

The only reasons which the Prime Minister gives for its continuance is that it has taught people discipline. See how disciplined we have become, that in order to enforce discipline you can declare emergency! If that was so, we must have emergency in perpetuity because I believe in discipline. I think no ration can be a great nation without being a disciplined nation. But, as I said, if emergency can be justified on grounds of discipline, then keep this emergency for all time, though it would be against the Constitution (after all, who cares for the Constitution now?)

Our first demand in this conference should be that the Emergency should be immediately revoked. For all evils flow from it. The: you must remember again, to quote Gandhiji, the end does not justify the means.

But even Gandhi's quotations are censored, Jawaharlal Nehru's quotations are censored and even Indira Gandhi's quotations are censored. In her earlier years, when she saw the light, or perhaps she saw the dark, she said things for which she is feeling sorry now. But, people quote her and the Press says: No, you cannot quote the Prime Minister; the Prime Minister speaking against herself cannot be quoted.

Not only can you and I not be quoted but her own quotations are censored. Gandhi's philosophy was that if your means are evil, your ends get contaminated. In order to keep your ends pure your means must be equally pure. But, what are we being told to day? Means do not matter, put people in jail, have censorship, deny people their civil liberties and the ordinary democratic rights which every citizen should have, provided that we get more production, more discipline, no strikes, more profitability in industry. But surely it is our ends which may be justified but they do not justify the means by which they are being brought about. These means are destroying the democracy and democratic values which means really the end of the Constitution which was conceived and framed by our founding fathers.

The question I ask myself is, do I want to live in a police State? Or, do I want to live in a democratic State? This is a police State, when a man cannot write what he wants and have it published, when newspapers cannot publish any comments, when people can be sent behind bars without any reasons being assigned. There is not much difference between a police State existing elsewhere and what is existing here today.

The second question I want to ask myself is, do I want to live in a free society or a captive society? Do I, as an Indian who looks up to Mahatma Gandhi as his preceptor, want to walk with my head up, a free man saying what I like, writing what I like, expressing my comments, my dissent, my criticism or am I going to be controlled, restricted and put down by an omnipotent Government?

These are the questions that this conference will have to answer. Absence of civil liberties makes a society a captive society, a society which is governed not by laws but by men, a society which can be trampled upon by the Government. There is no worse form of dictatorship than what is known as Constitutional dictatorship. If behind the facade of the Constitution, technically observing the rules that the Constitution lays down and violating the spirit, you build up a dictatorship, then you have a Constitutional dictatorship. I would rather have the Constitution abrogated than to pretend that she

(Contd. on page 23)