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interesting features

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE MADRAS REPORTERS' GUILD

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# NEWSMAN

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It is axiomatic to say that the police purpose cannot be achieved without public support and co-operation. In order to secure and maintain good public relations the police must establish satisfactory contacts with the individual citizen and also seek to influence the large majority of the people with whom it may not be possible to come into personal contact. It is the latter function with which we are concerned to-day, for the only satisfactory way in which the general public can be contacted is through the press. Our subject to-day therefore is "The Police and the Press."

The point arises immediately whether the police force which has the best press relations is the most popular and conversely whether the police force which is popular with the public has achieved that position merely by maintaining good relations with the press. For example, the British Police is without doubt one which enjoys the greatest amount of public support and good will. Is this due to the fact that the British Police maintain excellent relations with the press? The answer is yes and no. Good press relations is only part of the answer. Why then is the British Police so popular with the public? A certain official has stated that the excellent relations which always prevailed in England between the police and the community are due in large measure to the fact that the police are drawn from the people and have as their duty to serve the people.

This explanation does not get us very far for it is difficult to see from whom the police could be drawn but from the people and many officials who have as their duty to serve the people are not popular. A historian has sought to give an explanation by saying that the British Police are

popular because they are kind and helpful. It is true that the British Police have a long and splendid tradition of patience and courtesy but the explanation is not completely a satisfactory one because it does not explain how the British Police can afford to be kind.

### Popularity of British Police

The truth is that the popularity of the British Police is due to the fact that they enforce laws which are acceptable by and large to the majority of the people. This in turn is due to two causes. Firstly, the laws have been enacted by a democratic process

important factor because it is the mass medium which can be used to influence the large majority of the public with whom the police may not come into contact. The press has undoubtedly a tremendous capacity for moulding public opinion and it is therefore necessary for the police to cultivate the press consciously and continuously.

I do not wish to convey the impression that Police must maintain relations with the press promiscuously. The Police are members of a disciplined force and are governed by the Madras Subordinate Police Officers Conduct rules which has been published as an annexure to the Police Standing

**Publicity tending to adversely affect the Police Department which in turn hampers public relations should be avoided says Mr. F. V. Arul, Commissioner of Police in this article which analyses, what he terms the conflict of interest between the Press and Police—in the matter of criminal investigation.**

in a country where the common man understands what is being legislated and, secondly the police do not enforce unpopular laws such as Fuel and Price Controls, the enforcement of which is undertaken by special officers of the Ministries concerned. The third reason for the popularity of the British Police is that the British people are law abiding with a fairly high sense of social responsibility. Thus it should be clear that good press relations is not the only answer to the matter of popularity. It is at the same time a very

Orders. According to Rule 16, no police officer shall except in accordance with any special or general order of the Government or any instructions of the Inspector-General of Police or Commissioner of Police communicate directly or indirectly any official document or information to the press. Rule 17 also lays down that no police officer shall except with and during the continuance of the previous sanction of the Government own in whole or in part or conduct or participate in the editing or management of any

newspaper or other periodical publication. I also draw attention to Rule 18 which stipulates that no police officer shall, in any document which he publishes anonymously or in any anonymous communication to the press, criticise the policy or action of Government intemperately or unreasonably, that a police officer shall, in respect of any such publication or communication be subject to the provisions of Rule 16 and that a police officer may not become an accredited correspondent of a newspaper without the permission in writing of the Inspector-General of Police or Commissioner of Police. Rule 19 lays down that no police officer shall have any document published under his own name or in any communication, make to the press under his own name any statement of fact or opinion which is capable of embarrassing (a) the State Government in its relations with the Union Government, (b) the Union Government in its relations with any foreign country.

It is also enjoined on every police officer who intends to publish any document under his own name or to make any communication to the press under his own name containing statements in respect of which any doubt as to the application of the restrictions imposed by Sub-Rule (i) may arise shall submit to the Inspector-General of Police a copy or draft of the document which he intends to publish in the press and shall thereafter act in accordance with such orders as may be passed by the Inspector-General of Police.

### Reporter and the Police

Let us now get down to the subject proper of "The Police and the Press". The press in its search for news has its eyes fastened closely on the work of the police. News is the bread and butter of the press. By giving news it attracts the interest of the public, sells its papers and gains circulation. Broader coverage means higher advertising rates and these bring in the really substantial revenue of the press. Nothing is more fascinating to man's curiosity than the stories of human interest uncovered by the police. They are the stories of the plots, incidents, feuds, successes and passions of mankind. Criminal offences occur in all social and economic classes. In their investigations the police lay open the secrets of private lives for the curious and morbid public to feed on. These are the dramatic stories which boost

circulation. Every newspaper reader feels he has a right to such stories and it is this thirst for news which has produced the characteristically aggressive and competitive policy of the press.

One therefore finds that press reporters try to establish contact with the police at all levels. The point arises as to the manner in which news of police incidents should be purveyed to the press and how it should be channelled. Should a Beat Constable or an investigating officer be permitted to answer questions or release information about a police incident? It is felt universally by Police administrators that they are not sufficiently qualified to deal with representatives of the press. **The press for their part are reluctant to accept this point of view for the following reasons :**

1. Such a policy prevents the Reporters from obtaining a first-hand account of police incidents.
2. It prevents the Reporter from getting correct answers to all his questions.
3. It causes the Reporter additional work and very often keeps him from getting the story on time.
4. It often causes the Reporter to give the credit for good work to a supervisory officer when actually the credit belongs to a subordinate.
5. Many good stories of human interest are lost to the press because they are matters of official record and the source of such stories has been blocked.

### Safeguards.

These disadvantages to the press may result from the policy of prohibiting the lower ranks from communicating with the press. On the other hand it will result in the policy of the top officers of the Police Department being safeguarded. It will also eliminate the possibility of stories which are derogatory to the police not being printed and circulated.

In this connection I am reminded of a story which was given banner headlines in the local press sometime ago which reflected badly on the police. The news was given by an investigating officer to the press without realising the damage which it may cause to the Department as a whole. The incident related to the escape of a prisoner who had been arrested smartly by the night beat Constables with a gunny

bag containing stolen properties. The beat Constable duly handed over the prisoner with the properties to the Station Head Constable in the Station. The latter failed to register a case immediately and merely handed over the accused to the Station Sentry without making any entry in the Sentry Relief Book. The Station Sentry for his part hand-cuffed the thief to the Sub-Inspector's chair in the Station which had no lock-up. A little later while the Station Sentry was dozing, the culprit got up, carried the Sub-Inspector's chair on his head and walked out of the Station to his freedom. This was flashed in the local press with such head-lines as "Hand-cuffed Thief walks out of Police Station with Sub-Inspector's chair on his head". Such a publication naturally caused a lot of embarrassment to the Department as a whole.

It is not my case that wrong acts or mistakes should be hushed up. Any remissness on the part of the Police should certainly be taken cognisance of and disciplinary action instituted where necessary but publicity tending to adversely affect the whole Department which in turn hampers public relations should be avoided.

### Conflict of interest.

You will thus see that in the field of crime investigation there is an inescapable conflict of interest between the police and the press. The sole business of the police is to trace the criminal and bring him to justice. They are not concerned with the popular taste for sensational stories. In fact public interest is in many cases a hindrance rather than a help. The Press Reporter's business on the other hand is to secure stories—the juicier the better. Competition amongst papers and amongst reporters is keen. In the case of a sensational murder the Reporter's very existence depends on his success in presenting the public with a steady supply of information on every aspect of the case. He must watch the movements of the investigating officers. He may sometimes interview relations and friends of the victim and he is sometimes tempted to indulge in a certain amount of investigation on his own account. This inevitably embarrasses the officers engaged on the case who have to expend all their energies and ingenuity in eluding the attentions of the Reporters when they should be concerned solely with their problem.



## Police should not ask Press To Subsist on "prepared foods"

[ *The relations between the Press and the police in this country have a sombre background, going back to the days of the old regime, commented INDIAN EXPRESS editorially "Shake off this incubus, and there can be more sympathetic understanding between the two agencies which alike serve the same purpose—the public interest" ]*

That established authority is generally irked, and often irritated by a free press and its agents is well-known. What misses people's notice is the harm that may result from the attempt, even when well-meant, to avoid embarrassments and annoyances by importing a large element of routine into a task, the essence of which lies in spontaneity and disciplined impulse. As a first step, one can fully sympathise with the Commissioner of Police in Madras not only in his sense of grievance at the difficulties created for his department by the activities of reporters and the accounts appearing in the press about police cases, but also his anxiety to provide against them by setting up a central agency which will be the sole source of information to the Press.

The complaint and the remedy have a close tie-up. But more is involved in this than the administrative convenience of the chief and staff of the City police: *Though the needs of efficient police functioning are important, they cannot be regarded as so paramount as to override the needs of the press. The Raison D'etre of a*

(from previous page)

Another more important point is that a certain degree of secrecy is necessary in many instances as it may be highly undesirable that a criminal who is trying to evade capture should be informed of what line of enquiry the police are following, what places they have visited and who they have interrogated.

### Frankness pays

How then is this conflict of interests to be resolved? What should be the

*free press in all democratic countries is the dependence of the public on newspapers for bringing to light what the authorities may have missed or may like to keep under cover for special reasons of their own. There is, therefore, as Mr. Arul has stressed, "an inescapable conflict" between the police and the Press. But the conflict should not be exaggerated. Nor is it a "conflict of interest," as Mr. Arul seems to suggest.*

For the press has no "interest" in the ordinary sense of the term which is different from, much less opposed to, the interest of the police. While some journals may pander to their reader's love for sensation, the press as a whole is as keen on the progress and successful termination of a criminal investigation as the police itself. News-hounds nosing their way to facts which are hidden from the public view may some times be too exhilarated by the discovery to be discreet about its use. But discretion may be and is brought into play at higher levels. Lapses, where they occur, are due to error of judgement and not to any conflict inherent in the position.

policy of the police in reference to withholding information from the press and what procedures of news release should the police adopt to implement this policy? **On the whole, the police should adopt an attitude of complete frankness with press representatives. They may however withhold information relating to:—**

#### 1. Subversive activities.

**2. The names of juveniles under any circumstances short of murder.**

The activities of news reporters in their efforts to find more facts or to get a new slant on them which may interest the ordinary reader are not to be compared, say, with the activities of private detectives in certain classes of crime stories. For these are no cross-purposes, but only, at the worst, an inadequate appreciation of the special requirements of the other side.

The relations between the Press and the police in this country have unfortunately a sombre background going back to the days of the old regime. It should not be difficult to shake off this incubus. And once this is done, there can be more sympathetic understanding between the two agencies which alike serve the same purpose, the public interest. The indispensable basis of such understanding is respect for the need of the other party in discharging its functions. **While newspapers may be wary about creating difficulties for the police administration, the Press cannot in fairness be required to subsist on prepared foods. The reporter today cannot be asked to act like an errand boy, collecting doctored accounts kept ready for him.**

**3. Names of female victims in sex crimes when the victim is not guilty or has no bad reputation or was not guilty of conduct that provoked the attack.**

**4. Facts the publication of which would interfere with crime investigation or the apprehension or interrogation of suspects of which would affect the Department as a whole thereby impairing public relations.**

I am sure that if these principles of withholding information are enunciated

to the press they will readily agree that it is in the public interest. The press will thereafter co-operate with the police in not publishing such information. In this way one phase of the conflict referred to by me earlier can be resolved. Let it be understood that on the other hand, if the police are secretive without taking the press into their confidence, leakage of information as is bound to happen in human affairs will be capitalised by the press, both to the discomfort of the victims and to the embarrassment of the police. I therefore reiterate that it is necessary for the top Police administrator in the City or in the Districts to enunciate the aforesaid principles and to secure the approval of the press thereto.

#### News Release: British Way

We shall now consider the technique of news release. In doing so, it will be profitable to examine what is being done in other advanced countries. It is seen that as early as 1835, only six years after the Metropolitan Police Force in London came into existence, the Commissioners of Police discovered the value of press contacts. We read of their establishing friendly relations with the editors of responsible newspapers and supplying them with facts relating to the many false accusations which were being made at that time against the police. It was however only in 1919 that a Press Service was formed in the development of public relations. It was the result of discussions between the Newspaper Proprietors Association and the Metropolitan Police on the desirability of having some central source where newspapers could check facts and information which had come into their possession. This arrangement was greatly expanded in scope in recent years and in 1945 the post of Public Information Officer was created. The emphasis in the aforesaid designation is on the word 'information' in order to emphasize that the object of the new appointment was the distribution of information and to avoid the criticism levelled at Public Relations Officers that their sole job is to praise or excuse their departments. The Press Bureau in the Metropolitan Police now comprises under the Public Information Officer a Press Officer, 4 Assistant Press Officers and 2 Clerical Officers.

#### Liaison with the Press

The function of the Public Information Officer, which post was filled up by a journalist of mature experience,

is to advise the Commissioner of Police on matters relating to publicity as also to supervise the press Bureau at Scotland Yard, cultivate personal relations with Newspaper Editors, News Editors, Newsreel Executives and with officials of the British Broadcasting Corporation. Liaison with the press is maintained largely through the Press Bureau. A room near the Bureau is set aside for Reporters and is open normally from 8-30 A. M. to 11 P. M. National daily papers, London Evening Papers and two News Agencies are usually represented there. After 11 P. M. urgent information is dealt with by an Inspector of Police on duty in the Commissioner's Office who, when necessary, contacts the Public Information Officer by telephone at his residence. Police messages about crime, accidents and other similar matters are sent to the Press Bureau by teleprinter and telephone from all the 23 Divisions and 176 Police Stations in the Metropolitan Police District and after being edited are given to the pressmen on duty in the adjacent room. The press Officers working in the Press Bureau are always available to answer individual enquiries from newspapers, to arrange interviews with police personnel and also to arrange visits by press and photographic agencies, news-reels, broadcasters and authors to various police establishments.

#### Press Bureau

The Press Bureau is also responsible for police advertisements in the National and Provincial press. It is also responsible for the issue of Police Identification Cards to press and radio reporters and to photographers which carry a request to any officer to whom they are presented to give the holder any reasonable assistance. In this way the press Bureau of the Metropolitan Police has been able to build up good will between the police, the press and the public to a very marked degree.

#### In Madras

You will thus be able to appreciate that the technique of news release in London is very advanced. We in Madras State have a great deal to learn from these procedures. Let us at the same time remember that, whatever procedures are adopted, inaccuracies will inevitably appear in the press from time to time. It is well known that newspapers work under great pressure. There is a continual fight against time and therefore it may be too much to expect them to check every item for publication. A

mere inaccuracy, however gross, is of no consequence to anybody except the paper and unless it could be shown that damage was done to the police themselves or to the course of justice or in some other important way there does not appear to be any occasion for further action. In recapitulation, I would say that the best procedure of news release is to set up a central source of information instead of news being given to the press at all levels in the Police Department. This central source would have the help of all Stations and units of the police force and also the advice of the top administrator whose policies would be subserved by the aforesaid central source of information.

#### Eliminate petty differences

It will thus be seen that the police and the press are vital to each other and there should never be a rift between the two. Of course the path to be traversed by us both will not be smooth always. By the very nature of our respective functions there is too much emotion and fighting against time to expect perfect relationship. But by constant vigilance we can develop better relations between the police and the press and eliminate many of the petty differences that sometimes lead to dangerous discord. In these circumstances it would be better to adopt a single code of ethics by both the police and the press. This common code may consist of the following points:—

1. Be tolerant, patient and understanding of each other's problems. Weigh every factor carefully before jumping to a conclusion.
2. Be honest in imparting news to the press and when forced to withhold information in the public interest, take the editor and reporter into your confidence and ask for their support and understanding. But do not overplay this practice and resort to it only when essential.
3. Never ridicule the police. It is the quickest way to tear down public confidence. Be careful in handling light-hearted stories and do not unnecessarily hold up the police to public scorn and ridicule.
4. Both the police and the press should build a solid bridge through personal relationship and fair treatment.

In other words, the common ethical code could be boiled down to a few simple words—justice, fair play, integrity and understanding.

# German Press, a powerful vehicle of popular opinion

[There are 1,500 dailies with 18 million copies in the Federal Republic. The more rapid the development of media of mass communication, the greater is the responsibility. German journalists recognise this.]

Seven German journalists are working in India "covering" this country, for supplying news and information to the people of the Federal Republic of Germany. They include representatives of daily newspapers, the Radio and news agencies and also free-lance journalists, and this representation of the German Press in India shows that West Germany is really interested in Indian affairs and in promoting proper understanding of India in Germany.

For a population of nearly 53.8 million, the Federal Republic and West Berlin have about 1,500 daily newspapers, with a total circulation of 18 million copies. Freedom of the Press is guaranteed by the Constitution of the Federal Republic. Article 5 of the Constitution, the *Basic Law*, lays down: "Every one shall have the right freely to express and to disseminate his opinion through speech, writing and illustration, and, without hindrance, to instruct himself from generally accessible sources. Freedom of the Press and freedom of reporting by radio and motion pictures shall be guaranteed. There shall be no censorship".

The German people have availed themselves of this constitutional right and developed the Press into a powerful vehicle of popular opinion. The advancement of the Press in recent times has followed the same pattern as the progress of freedom in the country. In 1932, in the Weimar days, there were approximately 4,700 newspapers in Germany, with a total circulation of 25 million copies. The decline of the Press began in 1933 when Hitler came into power. In September 1939, when World War II broke out, the Press had been so muzzled that only 2,300 politically regimented newspapers were left. The Press shrank still further during the War period, with the result that when hostilities ceased in 1945 there

were only 950 newspapers in the country. The occupation powers adopted a policy of licensing papers, but it was not till 1949 when the Federal Republic was established and the *Basic Law* was passed that the Press again came to enjoy genuine freedom. Free competition led to its resuscitation and rapid growth; within months of the constitutional recognition of freedom of the Press, nearly 1,000 new newspapers had come into existence.

## 5,000 Periodicals

Besides the daily newspapers, there are some 5,000 periodicals. The most popular ones among them are a dozen mass-circulation weeklies, some of them selling more than a million copies. Carrying vividly written articles and printed in colours, they are devoted to a wide range of special interests.

The newspapers adopt modern devices for rousing public interest in news. At important centres in big cities are seen electric news flashers which give the news of the day for the benefit of the people. One of these is a huge flasher seen at *Potsdamer Platz* in Berlin on the border between the eastern and western sectors of the city.

A very significant development in newspaper organisation has been that a number of the small and medium-sized newspapers have either combined themselves into "newspaper rings", with a common editorial set-up, or have transformed themselves into regional editions of the metropolitan newspapers with big circulation. The small newspapers, which were essentially local newspapers, known as *Heimatpresse*, each with a small circulation, have formed themselves into "rings". These papers have their own separate publishing houses and distribution arrangement, but have combined together for editorial work. They run

common features and, for reasons of economy, have a common editorial office, news bureaux and other journalistic services which are available alike to all members of the group from the common office. The material for use in each publisher's paper is issued on "matrixes". The publisher belonging to this group has only to lay out the local news, along with the prefabricated material, and issue the paper. The other type is a regional edition of one or other of the bigger newspapers, similar in content but different in its title.

## Students As Editors

A small but interesting part of the Press is the students' Press which has already made considerable headway in Germany. This consists of periodicals brought out by the students and dealing with a wide range of topics—from local gossip to serious problems of political interest. The circulation of some of these periodicals is confined to the universities to which the students running them belong, while others have a wider circulation extending to more than one province.

The daily newspapers are fed by a number of news agencies, besides the international agencies which have their own offices in Germany. The most important German news agency is the *Deutsche Presse Agentur* (dpa) which is owned jointly by the daily newspapers.

The more rapid the development of media of mass communication, the greater is the responsibility of the Press. German journalists recognise this. And they have taken a pledge to "organise methods of self-control and to work towards raising their professional standards" so as to prevent all misuse of the freedom of the Press.

# Journalists in Russia

## neither overworked nor underpaid

D. ANJANEYULU

*[In newspaper offices, as in other places like universities and publishing houses, in Russia there is less of insistence on office attendance. As long as one does the work expected of him, nobody is bothered]*

An Indian visitor to Leningrad in mid-winter cannot obviously help spending most of his waking time in protecting himself against the severities of the Arctic cold with layers upon layers of heavy woollen clothing. Under the pressing weight of a thick furlined overcoat and helmet-like skull cap, one would find it more than ordinarily difficult to go from place to place, seeing things of interest. And there are any number of places that one could ill afford to miss in this city of monuments and places. It is almost like running a handicap race to plod one's weary way through melting snow with heavy boots and heavier galoshes on.

In the midst of his other engagements a person, who had been a journalist for over a decade, would naturally try to find some time to visit some newspaper offices or pressmen's associations where he could meet members of his tribe. Nearly all the 150 newspapers, journals and periodicals in Leningrad (a city with a population of about three million) and suburbs are published naturally in the Russian language, the few magazines in English and other foreign languages being produced in Moscow. Some of the English language journals are: 'Moscow News', 'Literary Gazette', besides other periodicals mostly meant for foreign consumption. One of the foreign newspapers to be seen in wayside stalls and in hotels is 'The Daily Worker' of London. There are not many in Leningrad who can speak or understand English and unless the visitor knows some Russian he would find it hard to make his way. Without the aid of an interpreter it is well nigh impossible to visit any place, public or private, house

of entertainment or even purchase some odds and ends in the market place.

### Home of Journalists

There was, however, no need for me to engage an official interpreter, as my wife, who has been working, for the last one year, as Professor of Tamil and Telugu at the Leningrad State University, happens to know enough Russian to make herself easily understood. When I expressed a desire to meet some local journalists, she contacted a knowledgeable friend of hers in the writing line, by name Natasha Tolstoi (who was previously married to the son of the wellknown writer, Alexei Tolstoi), who readily fixed up an engagement with the Director of the Home of Journalists. This Home is the meeting place of working journalists in the city, numbering about 500.

Though the engagement was fixed for 3 P. M. we could not reach the Home ('Dorn' in Russian) before 3-30, because of the transport difficulty—the buses were often times too crowded and it took quite a lot of time to arrange for a taxi. Our apologies were gently brushed aside by the polite Director, a portly, professor-like gentleman in horn rimmed spectacles, by name Mihail Petrovich, who would make no fuss over formalities when they did not really affect the work for the day. He received us warmly in his well-furnished room and was happy to meet a visiting Indian Journalist. He was delighted to learn that an Indian Lady was on the teaching staff of the Leningrad State University.

Over bottles of lemonade and and a big tray of mandarin oranges, we

talked about the Press and pressmen in Leningrad. A picture of patience, our host answered every question of mine as thoroughly as he could, illustrating the talk with copies of newspapers and magazines supplied by his energetic secretary. There are three important dailies of general interest published in the city—'The Leningrad Pravda' (a four-page paper, different from the central 'Pravda' of Moscow (which has usually six pages) which has a circulation of 4,00,000, the 'Smena', a newspaper for the youth (circulation over 2,00,000), and 'The Evening Leningrad', (over 1,00,000), besides daily newsheets specially meant for army personnel ('The Nastrashe Rodina'), and for children ('The Leninskyskrd' literally meaning 'The Spark of Lenin'). Of tri-weeklies, each was devoted to one particular aspect of national life: e.g. constructive plans ('Stroichelni Gazette'), horticulture and forestry ('Lessaroop'), the north-west region of the country ('Transport'), shipping and maritime trade ('The Soviet Baltic'), and railway workers ('The October Way').

Besides these larger newspapers, every institution like a university, polytechnic, research institute, factory etc. has its own journal produced entirely by chosen members of its own staff. Nearly 115 such newspapers are published by the factories in the city of Leningrad and suburbs. The needs of lovers of art and letters are catered for by serious monthly and fortnightly periodicals, in the manner of our learned reviews, like 'Zwisda' (meaning 'Star'), a substantial production containing lengthy articles on art and politics, 'Neva' (after the famous



iver that flows through the heart of the city), dealing with people's art and creative writing, and the 'Propagandist', an essentially political magazine, as its very name indicates. Many more of them are published from Moscow.

### Printing Houses

I was also told that there were about fifty printing and publishing houses in the city, of which the Leningrad Publishing House was about the biggest. Many of the local newspapers were being published by it. It was heartening to learn from Mr. Petrovich that journalism was an honoured profession there and writers were greatly respected. Pressmen were neither overworked nor underpaid. The editor of a big daily was generally paid about 3,000 roubles and the Sub-editors and Assistant

Editors between 1,000 and 2,000 roubles. These might not be high salaries, but they do not compare unfavourably with those of doctors and lecturers.

### No night duty

It was with a sense of relief that I heard that there was practically nothing like night duty for the sub-editors as the morning papers were printed at 12 'O clock or so. In the newspaper offices, as in other places like universities and publishing houses, there was less of insistence on office attendance and hours of duty than on the work to do or get done. As long as one did the work expected of him for the day or the week, nobody seemed to bother how long he warmed his seat or was away from the desk. There was, therefore no question of late-marking by the boss or clock-gazing by the

employee concerned. When the conversation turned to transport, Mr. Petrovich said with a twinkle in his eye that he would not bother to keep a car even if he could afford to buy one. He then took us round the various departments of the Home, the reading room full of newspaper files (its walls were adorned by the originals of cartoons), the common room where two patriarchal figures were playing billiards, the lecture hall for weekly meetings and discussions, the little theatre, the canteen, the foreign language class and lastly the library on the ground floor containing about 70,000 volumes. These seemed to be no place for playing cards and I was not sorry that this 'Home' had little in common with some 'Press Clubs I had seen nearer home.

## Five maxims

Mr. C. K. Bhattacharya, Head of the Calcutta School of Journalism, taking part in the discussion on investigative reporting, enumerated to the World Press Congress five Indian maxims or rules which he said, should be applied.

They were: 1. State what is fair. But do not be harsh. 2. It must not only be true and not harsh but should be intended to do good. 3. Better understate your case than overstate it. ("This rule came to us from Mahatma Gandhi, who was also a great editor. He inculcated it into all of us who came to journalism," said Mr. Bhattacharya). 4. In judging others, one should not impose one's own standpoint on the person being judged. 5. When judging a person or party one should not impute motives.

Mr. Bhattacharya referred to the service rendered by the Indian Press to the attainment of national freedom.

"The service the Press has rendered in India, the sufferings it has undergone, the sacrifices made, make it a glorious chapter in the history of any country," he said.

## SOME DEFINITIONS

Here are some definitions of certain newspaper phraseology, given by Mr. Carl E. Lindstrom, retired executive editor of the Hartford, Conn. TIMES and Journalism Professor in the University of Michigan. A discerning critic of the U. S. Press, he had never hesitated to take clear and frequent aim at the challenges and weaknesses of his own profession.

**REPORTING:** A story is not a story when you have assembled a group of facts. You have to get to the heart of it."

**WRITING:** "The news writer is an artist. In its simplest terms, art is the business of selecting for effect—plus skill. The writer is the creative manipulator of the most plastic, the most resistant, the most mercurial and yet the stickiest substance known to man—the written word".

**EDITING:** "What you leave out is always much more important than what you leave in. A sculptor achieves

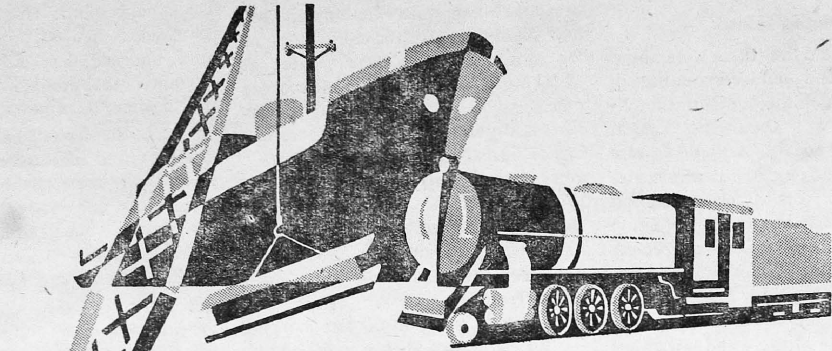
a work of art by what he chips out of the marble: if he left the marble merely as he found it, what would he accomplish?"

**DEADLINES:** "We are prisoners of the newsroom clock. It is crowding us farther off the narrow edge of journalism to which we cling and into the pit of entertainment, circulation gimmicks and advertising reader notices."

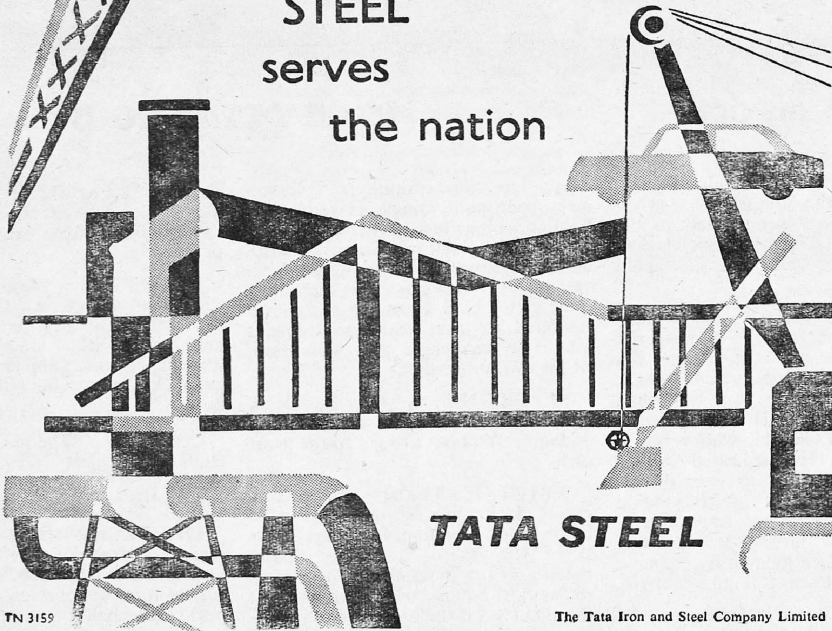
**CONTENT:** "The press as a whole tends to neglect people's cultural interests. There is too little attention paid to the arts, education, religion."

**THE FREE PRESS:** "We have a reasonably free press in this country, but there are far too many captive editors who cannot even be heard to rattle their chains.

**EDITORIAL POLICY:** "But after all, a newspaper is a piece of property, and the owner has a right to say what he wants.



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## Questions on 'sacred cow and rope trick' no credit to Indian publicity abroad

[There are many who think that India and Turkey are close neighbours, says the author who recently toured U. S. under the Leadership-specialist (Journalist-exchange) programme of the States Department.]

**M. Pattabhiram**

Prime Minister Nehru was all praise for the way in which our foreign embassies are working. During the recent debate in Lok Sabha on the demands concerning the External Affairs Ministry, when attention was drawn to the inadequate Indian publicity abroad, the Prime Minister declared that it might be broadly justified, but the reaction of a country to another country's policy did not depend so much on the publicity done as on the policy that was being pursued. The work of the foreign office could be judged broadly by the way it served the country's interests. Nehru had no doubt that our embassies abroad and the publicity sections have been doing tremendous work as a result of which "the name of India stands high in the world". How one wishes this were true cent per cent!

It is not the purpose of this article to attack or even criticise the work of Indian embassies abroad generally, but just to give one or two instances based on personal experience and the readers can draw their own conclusions. Some fifteen months ago, when I visited the United States, thanks to the State Department at Washington D. C. and to the United States Information Service Madras, the first thing I did on reaching the U. S. Capital was to get into touch with the Indian Embassy.

### **Expectations believed**

After an hour's visit, the impression that was gathered was that it was functioning just as any other government office we are so accustomed to seeing in India. Of course, I had gone there with too much expectation. I had even thought, all due to certain mistaken notions, that I would be greatly welcomed and that the Indian staff would be very happy to see another fellow Indian there. None of this took

place. An official who happened to be a South Indian assured me that I could make use of the library and even take books out. I, however, informed him that I was going to work with a newspaper in Toledo, Ohio, and he was good enough to suggest that I could indent on the library even from that place. This was the only encouraging result of my visit and for the rest of it, there was neither warmth nor sincerity in the reception that I got.

A couple of days later, I met some more of our countrymen who had landed there just then. They too had similar experiences with the Indian Embassy and I learnt that they did not go there a second time. It is not my contention that the embassy is under any obligation to do any service to Indians visiting U. S., but they could certainly be a little more useful. They could acquaint us with the conditions obtaining there, the problems one would have to face with, of course, suggestions for meeting them and so on. There are, in fact, a hundred and odd ways in which our embassy in Washington could make itself useful to visitors from India. It would be desirable for the embassy to come into contact with the State Department to find out at periodic intervals as to who are all that are coming from India to the United States. And for those who go there for the first time, any little help would be of immense value.

### **'Refreshing contrast'**

In refreshing contrast to this there is the Washington International Centre of the American Council on Education in the Capital. This is a purely non-official organisation with which the State Department co-operates, and its main function consists in organising orientation lectures for foreign visitors. It is here that all the visitors from

various countries get a clear picture of the vast country they are going to see in all its diverse aspects. Professors and businessmen and leaders of the community give lectures and answer questions on America so that before one starts on one's assignment or tour in the States, one would have a fairly good knowledge of the country. The Centre fills a vital need not entirely because it offers international visitors an introduction to the United States, but because here men and women from all over the world meet each other on common ground, learning how much more "we are all alike than we are different!". The Centre organises sight-seeing tours at no cost or at nominal cost. The organisers of the Centre accompany the visitors, and they make the tours very interesting. Actually, this Centre is in constant touch with the State Department to bring into its fold as many foreign visitors as possible. It is a pity that our own Embassy does not do for us at least as much as this organisation is doing.

### **The last straw**

After about ten days' stay in Washington, I left for Toledo, home of the Willys jeeps so famous in our own country. The TOLEDO BLADE, with a circulation of over 400,000 was my host paper. Its publisher is Mr. Paul Block Jr. who is known throughout the United States for the good work he is doing in the cause of journalism. He is intimately connected with the International Press Institute. He is a Doctor of Chemistry, and had served at one time as a Professor in Toledo University. Naturally, the paper was interested in getting articles on India published. It was here I needed the help of our Embassy. I had as a matter of precaution carried a few books from the library at the embassy. I wrote a couple of letters making a

request for one or two books. There was no reply. It could not be that both the letters had gone astray. My original impression about the Indian Embassy got confirmed and subsequently, I did not bother to think of the Embassy and I was none the worse for it.

It was about this time that the situation in the Middle East became very serious. With the launching of the Sputnik, Russian prestige had grown enormously and Americans were wondering whether the Russians, elated by their success, would actually start a war in the Middle East. The Frederick Douglass Community Association, which is doing excellent work for the coloured people in Toledo, wrote to me in the following words: "Since all of us are concerned with the Middle East situation, we would like you to talk about your country; its customs, its business and its relationship to our Western culture." I am quoting this as an instance to show how an intellectual association as this one did really believe that India was part of the Middle East! For the vast generality of the people living in cities like Toledo, India and Turkey are close neighbours! They do not know India is a vast sub-continent with a population twice as big as that of the United States.

#### Indian publicity, inadequate

Indian publicity is extremely inadequate, and it is the Indian Embassy that must be held responsible for this state of affairs. A Federal Judge to whom I was introduced thought that I was Spanish even after it was explained to him that I was from Madras in India. I tried to tell him that I belonged to the country, the government of which was being headed by Mr. Nehru (Incidentally, Mr. Nehru is the only prominent Indian they know). He pretended to understand and to save embarrassment, I did not pursue the matter.

At a high school function where I was invited to speak, the first question that was asked was: Are the newspapers in India strictly censored by government? It is a wonder how such an idea ever got into their minds. The other questions were: Why does the Indian government refuse to allow the people of Kashmir to vote whether they will be incorporated with India or Pakistan? To what extent is radio available in Madras? Is India prepared to fight Russians in case of an invasion?

These questions, sincerely asked of course, reveal that knowledge about India is extremely meagre. There are still numerous people who ask questions about the sacred cow and the rope trick.

#### Suggestions

It is for the expert to suggest ways and means to improve foreign publicity. For my part I would rest content by saying that there must be a network of organisations in the States to popularise India, Indian information centres must be set up in all leading cities. If all the Indians, and there are over 5,000 of them studying in various universities, are made use of, they could do a lot in this direction. There are a number of American organisations doing excellent work for India and other Asian nations. Such for instance are the Asia Society in New York and the Asia Foundation in

San Francisco. Our Government could devise active measures to co-operate with such organisations. Seminars might be organised by the embassy in important business and commercial centres as well as in universities to make our country better known. Such seminars would enable the Americans to understand our point of view on national and international affairs better and with greater sympathy. We get so much of aid from the United States for our nation-building project, but much more could be obtained if proper efforts are made. Every Indian must be made to feel that he is an unofficial ambassador of India there, and sufficient incentives as well as opportunities must be offered to him to serve his country from that distance. The Indian Embassy must become an institution of which every visiting Indian feels proud of.

### Statement about ownership and other particulars about NEWSMAN

#### FORM IV

(See Rule 8)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. <i>Place of Publication</i>   | MADRAS.   |
| 2. <i>Periodicity of its publication</i>   | Monthly.  |
| 3. <i>Printers's Name</i>  | C. G. Kurup (for Janatha Press).                              |
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| <i>Address</i>   | 66, Bells Road, Madras-5.                                     |
| 4. <i>Publisher's Name</i>   | R. K. K. Menon & N. Nageswaran<br>for Madras Reporters Guild. |
| <i>Nationality</i>   | Indian.   |
| <i>Address</i>   | Government Estate, Madras-2.                                  |
| 5. <i>Editor's Name</i>  | R. K. K. Menon & N. Nageswaran.                               |
| <i>Nationality</i>   | Indian.   |
| <i>Address</i>   | Government Estate, Madras-2.                                  |
| 6. <i>Names and addresses of individuals who own the newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital.</i> | MADRAS REPORTERS' GUILD.                                      |

We, R. K. K. Menon and N. Nageswaran, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of our knowledge and belief.

Dated March 23, 1959.

Sd. R. K. K. Menon  
Sd. N. Nageswaran

## Press should teach public the purposes of life

*[An additional responsibility, and a great charter of rights and duties of which journalists can be proud and happy.]*

**“Kaunteya”**

We are used to our being told or reminded by eminent statesman, publicists and other distinguished persons in other walks and callings, of the dignity and importance of the fourth estate, its great usefulness and responsible role it has to play.

Great spiritual heads are not usually among those who pay such encomiums. Some of them even consider newspapers as an obstacle and distraction from the great spiritual and moral advancement they seek to promote while yet others may consider them though not as obstacles, as irrelevant and secondary and not very useful or creative agencies for any purpose.

Viewed in this background the address of His Holiness Sri Sankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam to the journalists recently in the City is a source of great inspiration, delight and nay even pride to members of this profession. The journalists can well pat themselves on the back for having brought about this meeting with the great Acharya and occasioning those profound, significant and inspiring remarks.

We are happy to recall that either the Acharya nor the newspapers ignored each others's presence during the last many months he has been with us in the City though the contact between them could have more been continuous, and intimate as in the case of men of eminence in the secular sphere. It should be said to the credit of the newspapers that they have by and large given due prominence to his discourses and statements. This was possible because the Acharya's life and teaching are of an universal character, integral and

inclusive excluding nothing which is vital to life both here and hereafter.

The spiritual tradition of which he is the custodian, exemplar and propagator recognises the place of *dharmā*, *artha*, and *moksha* in the life of an individual, of course emphasising that the pursuit of Artha and kama should be according to *dharmā* and such as to subserve the attainment of *moksha*. Religion in the real sense therefore embraces all activities and pursuits of man individually and collectively as society, state, nation and humanity. Only such an approach to religion will make it dynamic and purposive even as divorcing religion from life and conduct will make it an object of pure philosophical speculation or discursive dialectics and noisy but sterile controversy or mechanical ritualistic exercises.

While I do not wish to say anything as to whether under the inspiration of the present Acharya Hindu Society particularly in the south will be purged of the many exrescent growths standing in the way of real unity and harmony and good will and understanding conducive to all-round development of both the individual and the society and the ancient truths interpreted in modern terminology too, to suit present-day needs and requirements and challenges issuing from many quarters, I can say this that if this Acharya does not attempt it or does not succeed in it, I cannot think of another who can.

The reason why I say this is that listening to his discourses one was so deeply struck by his catholicity of outlook, freedom from bigotry and fanaticism and all-embracing regard and love for all, his deep devotion,

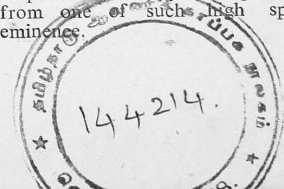
piety and authority coupled with a sense of delight and joy of existence and concern for the welfare of all. And the address he gave the journalists gives further support.

In that address he recalled how the common people were taught not only wisdom and higher knowledge and truth about morals and right and wrong but even practical guidance to live well in the work-a day world so as not merely to enjoy this life and world but qualify for *moksha* through the discourses on puranas, itihahas etc. The pauranikas were the real educators. But with the development of printing and publication of books, newspapers and periodicals the reading room and library had taken the place of such discourses.

What a tremendous responsibility therefore, he pointed out had devolved on the journalists. While writing things to amuse and tickle and interest the readers they should not concentrate merely on that, but also take care to instruct and educate the people with regard to higher values and purposes of life, to instil in them devotion to God and desire for a virtuous life. This pill of wisdom he pointed out graphically might be sugar-coated with humorous and witty things, but it should not all be sugar without any pill!

In this address His Holiness showed his clear grasp of the needs of the times, how they should be met and what the newspapers and journals can do in this regard. It is a great charter of rights and duties of which we can be proud and happy coming as it does from one of such high spiritual eminence.

JL  
22/11/58  
NSR



## Express freely but remember human values come first

The Union Home Minister Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, urged the Press in India to play its role in maintaining an atmosphere in which people's energies and resources could be harnessed for the achievement of national zeal and welfare.

The Home Minister, who was inaugurating the Press Club of India in New Delhi on February 21 said: "In our country, we stand for democracy and socialism. Non-violence is the basis whether in politics or in economics. Our main objective to-day is the attainment of economic abundance. Along with that we want also spiritual and cultural advance. All these have to advance together, not one at the cost of another. Our means are not coercive or totalitarian.

"We have to go forward with the co-operation of the people. So the journalists have to place before themselves this central purpose towards which the energies of the nation should be directed and all our resources should be harnessed and utilised."

Pandit Pant expressed the hope that the Club he was inaugurating would fulfil a genuine need and serve as a social and intellectual centre where journalists in the capital would meet in informal surroundings.

Pandit Pant hoped it would also serve as a meeting ground for "so many wise men, great leaders of thought in journalism and statesmanship who visit the capital."

Earlier, Pandit Pant was made an honorary member of the Club and presented with the Club badge.

### Freedom of Press

Pandit Pant emphasised the importance of the freedom of the press and its responsibilities. One of the greatest discoveries of primitive man was said to be fire, and an event of very great significance later was the discovery of the printing press, he said. Both shed light and warmth, but both could also burn and cause mischief.

"We have to maintain the spirit of freedom and for that it was necessary that there should be utmost regard for the freedom of the press.

The press has to be a social force and a vital medium of education. It has to raise the level of the people intellectually and socially", Pandit Pant said.

The press could neither be an industry, nor a monopoly. He said that there should be internal freedom in the press, so that not only those who controlled it could act freely according to their principles, but also the average reader might have before him the varieties of news and views "from honest seekers after truth." While a journalist should be encouraged in every way to express his views freely, he should bear in mind human and moral values which had a predominant place in a democratic country. Pandit Pant added.

Referring to the "great heritage and traditions" which the press in India

had inherited, Pandit Pant said that this heritage was built by leaders of the nation who during the fight for freedom took to journalism not for any advantage to themselves. They regarded the press not as a profession or an occupation, much less an industry, but as a mission. "They used it for creating that enthusiasm and determination which was needed for continuing the struggle, especially during the days of tremendous stress and strain."

He advised journalists: "Whatever be your functions and whatever be the type of news or information that you disseminate, let nothing be done at the cost of veracity or truth."

Earlier, Mr. Durga Das, speaking of the necessity for the Club, said that New Delhi had in the past decade become "one of the five important world capitals" and "the tribe of working journalists has grown to about 500." Those who might become associate members—people who were engaged in allied activities like public relations and the business side of the newspapers industry—ran into several hundreds, and the potential membership of the Club was estimated at 3,000.

He hoped the Government of India would help the Club in putting up a building in a central site.

Mr. D. R. Mankekar, Secretary-General of the Club, thanked the Home Minister.



# Gov't's peevishness at Press Criticism — a bad sign

*[When we are cutting new ground and embarking upon fateful new experiments in the country's economic life, a vigorous critical Press is all the more essential.]*

— D. R. Mankekar

There was a time, in the early years of independence, when the Indian press was dubbed "tame" and "supine". In those early formative years, there were good reasons why the press should have been more sympathetic and less critical of Government's acts of omission and commission.

The needs of political unity and the internal and external difficulties besetting the Government inhibited press criticism. Partly, this attitude of the Indian press was a hangover from the pre-independence days, when it got into the habit of supporting the Congress party willy-nilly. It took some time to shake off that habit. But genuine patriotic reasons too prompted it to mute its critical voice then.

Over the last ten or eleven years, as the newly launched Indian democratic State stabilised itself and developed self-confidence, the press gradually shook off its inhibitions and began to assert its role in the democratic scheme of things.

In recent months, the press criticism of Government has become sharper and grown in volume—which, one should think, is all for the good of Indian democracy. This development in the attitude of the press is, unfortunately, viewed by Government with impatience, nay, peevishness. This does not bode well for Indian democracy. For it is unfair to the Indian press to dismiss its opinions by labelling it the "voice of vested interests." It is incorrect to attribute the critical attitude merely to class conflict.

The far-reaching measures embarked upon by Government are indeed controversial. Many have genuine doubts about their efficacy or practicability. The great advantage of a democratic State is that such doubts can be publicly aired and debated so as to canvass public opinion and influence Government's policies for the better.

When we are cutting new ground and embarking upon fateful new experiments in the country's economic life, a vigorous critical press is all the more essential.

## Publicity occasions

The President's trips abroad are important publicity occasions, and one would therefore expect his publicity set-up to plot hard to capture maximum space for the event in the country's press. The president's visit to Japan last October was eminently successful from the P. R. point of view, as the topflight of Indian reporters, numbering over a dozen and representing the biggest papers in the country, accompanied the President, and cabled back elaborate stories, and they were played up in their respective newspapers.

The president's next trip, to Malaya and Indonesia last December, was also well covered, even though not on the same scale as the Japanese tour. But the event left a bad taste in the mouth so far as the press was concerned, as the reporters were herded in a freighter dakota, with not even proper seats provided.

**It is all a matter of priorities. If publicity for the event is vital from the national point of view, then the news paper reporters should be accepted as an essential part of the President's entourage. It is clear that the press is not considered as essential and therefore deserving high priority. If that is so, the appropriate thing to do is to cut the press out entirely.**

But to ask the reporters to travel in a dakota freighter for some twentyfour hours at a stretch, with irritating halts at intervals, is to put them to too much physical strain. Even a passenger dakota, with upholstered seats provided is unfit for long-distance international flights.

## Ill Conducted

With the latest trip of the President to Combodia, the publicity arrangements have been reduced to a farce. At first it was announced that six correspondents would be taken on the trip. Then the figure was reduced to four, and ultimately only three correspondents went on the trip and those three are supposed to represent language papers or "smaller" papers. One of the four correspondents selected was so little interested in the trip that he dropped off voluntarily in favour of a more exciting event in his home town. Of the remaining three, one is PTI representative.

Now, are the President's trips abroad no more than a matter of official patronage towards "smaller" newspapers and dispensing gifts of free trips to those who cannot afford to pay for them? Or is it a question of getting the best possible publicity for the event in the country's newspapers? How many of the "smaller" newspapers can afford to pay the cable tolls arising out of the trip?

The official answer is: But there is the PTI representative to cover the interests of the Indian press as a whole. Now, in the first place, it is common knowledge that an agency story does not get the same play in a newspaper as its own special correspondent's does. Secondly, that argument equally applies to the couple of "smaller" newspapers represented on the trip.

Way back in 1949, when Mr. Nehru visited the United States, there was a correspondent in the party who refused to "file" any cabled story on the plea that his proprietor was kind enough to send him on the trip, and that he would not be so mean as to mulct him with heavy cable tolls on the top of it!

One should not be surprised if the reporters of "smaller" papers now accompanying the President emulate the example of that happy correspondent who went on the P.M.'s trip to the United States and leave to P.T.I. the cabled coverage of the Presidential visit.

Unless press publicity is considered expendable and non-essential, it is difficult to believe that a presidential flight comprising an Ilyushin and two dakotas, can afford no more than four seats to newspaper correspondents. I thought the President's publicity set-up were interested in getting the maximum space for the event in the country's press. Evidently, I am wrong.

(By Courtesy: Indian Express)

## What others say about us

*Newsman is a monthly published by the Madras Reporters' Guild. It is very colourful in content and the greater part of it is devoted to the work of reporting and getting news. Among other things the first number devotes a whole page to the International Meeting of Reporters held in Bucharest. Individual contributions give a glimpse of the editorial work that goes on in Indian newspapers and provide an analysis of such problems as reporting in the Indian press, reportage, the position and tasks of the Indian reporter and correspondent, etc.*

*The Madras Reporters' Guild was only founded in Spring 1957 but it has already won considerable prestige and authority not only in India, but also abroad. Its new journal, which so far looks very promising, should be accorded every hope of success, especially in the laudable task of trying to raise the level of the Indian Press and to improve the social position of the Indian journalist.*

— The Democratic Journalist, January No. 1, 1958.

*"An elegant production"*

— Mr. C. Subramaniam, Finance Minister, Madras.

*"A publication which can on all accounts compare favourably with contemporary journals elsewhere devoted to the same purpose"*

— The Hindu.

*.....perhaps the best among publications by professional journalists in India. This is a journal with a promise and deserves to be encouraged.*

— The Mail. (December 31, 1951)

*"The choice of articles as well as extracts from other sources make an instructive study."*

— Indian Express, August 31, 1958.

பொதுவில் சிறந்த கருத்துக்கள் பொதிந்துள்ள இம்மலரை எல்லோரும், முக்கியமாக பத்திரிகைத் தொழிலில் ஈடுபட்டுள்ளவர்கள் படித்து இன்புறலாம். வாழ்க பத்திரிகையாளர்!

—சுதேசமித்திரன்

நன்றாக அச்சிடப்பட்டு வெளியாகி யிருக்கும் நிருபர்களின் இப்பத்திரிகை பாராட்டு தலுக்குரியதே.

—நவ இந்தியா.



# சிந்தனை அலைகள்

“வேம்பு”

தமிழ்ப் பத்திரிகை உலகில் இப்பொழுது புரட்சி வெள்ளம் ஓடுகிறது. சுதந்திரம் எய்தியபிறகு ராஜ்ய சீரமைப்பின் காரணமாக தாய்மொழி, மக்கள் மனதை எங்கும் கொள்சை கொண்டாண்டுள்ளது. இதனால் இந்தியப் பத்திரிகைச் சரித்திரமே மாற்றிவிட்டதாகக் கூறலாம். தமிழ், தெலுங்கு போன்ற இந்திய மொழி பத்திரிகைகளுக்கு நல்ல காலம் பிறந்துவிட்டது.

மேல் நாடுகளில் லக்ஷக் கணக்கில் ஒரு தினசரிப் பத்திரிகை விற்றையாவது போல் பல்வேறு இந்திய மொழிப் பத்திரிகைகளும் இனி விற்றையாவதும் வழி வந்துவிட்டது. அதற்கு ஒரு பாதையில்தான் நமது பத்திரிகைச் சரித்திரம் திரும்பியுள்ளது. அது எப்படி? பேச்சளவில் பெருமையுற்றால் மாத்திரம் போதுமா? என்ற கேள்விகள் எழுவது சகஜம்.

முதலாவதாக நமது நாட்டு மொழிகளில் தேர்ச்சியுள்ள மக்கள் எண்ணிக்கை ஆங்கிலத்தில் அறிவு பெற்றவர்களைவிட எப்பொழுதும் அதிகமென்பது யாவரும் தெரிந்துள்ள விஷயம். ஒரு சதவிகிதம் படித்தவர்கள், ஆங்கில பத்திரிகை பொன்றை ஒரு லக்ஷக் கணக்கில் விரும்பிப் படித்தால், பத்து சதவிகிதம் தாய் மொழியில் பயின்றவர் பத்து லக்ஷம் பிரதிகளை வேண்டிப் படிக்க முற்படுவதில் சந்தேகமா? அதிலும் தாய்மொழி அந்தந்த ராஜ்ய மொழியை பின் ஆன்ற பற்றுள்ள பத்திரிகை பரந்த முன்னேற்ற மடைவது திண்ணம். சீரும் செல்வமடையும் பெறும்.

இரண்டாவதாக, தற்சமயம் கல்வி வேட்கை கரைபுரண்டோடுகிறது. அரசியல் சட்டமும் அதற்கேற்ப இலவசமாகவும் காட்டாயப் படுத்தியும் பதினெட்டு வயதாகும் வரையில் நமது சிறுவர் சிறுமிகளுக்கு கல்விச் செல்வத்தைப் பகிர்ந்து கொடுக்கும் கடமையை இட்டிருக்கின்றது. ஏற்கனவே நாம் அத்துறையில் இறங்கி இருக்கிறோம். அரசியல் திட்டப்படி, பத்திரிகைகளுக்குள் அதை நிறைவேற்ற முடியாதெனினும், சற்று கழித்தாகிலும் நோக்கத்தை அடைந்தே தீருவோம். விடுதலை வேகமும் கல்வி ஆர்வமும் ஒருங்கு சேர்ந்ததின் கைகண்ட பலன் நமது நாட்டு மக்களை யாவரும் தாய்மொழியில் எழுதப் படிக்க ஓர் அளவாகிலும் தேர்ச்சியடையப் போவதே யாகும்.

கல்வியற்றவர்களும் இக்காலத்தில் உலக அறிவுபெற முற்படுவதை நாம் கண்டகூடாகப் பார்க்கிறோம். சற்று அச்சத்தானப் படிக்கச் சக்திபெற்றால், பொது விஷயங்களைப் புரிந்துகொள்ளும் பேரவா மேலோங்கும் என்பதில் என்ன ஐயம்?

இந்நிலையில் பத்திரிகையாளரின் கடமை என்ன? நம்மைப் பொறுத்த வரையில் தமிழ்ப் பத்திரிகையின் போக்கைக் கவனிப்போம்—பத்திரிகையாளரின் போக்கை என்று கூறுவதே அதிக பொருத்தமாகும்.

இதில் இரண்டு சாரார் புலப்படுகின்றனர். ஒன்று, ஆங்கிலக் கல்வி பெற்று, ஆங்கிலப் போக்கிலேயே சிந்திக்கும் பேசியும், தாய் மொழியின் உண்மைத் தொடர்பில்லாதவர். மற்றொன்று, ஆங்கிலவாடை இருப்பினும் இல்லாவிடனும், கல்வினும் கடிய சக்திமீழ் பித்தர்கள்! இரண்டு ஆகும் ஊட்டிய குட்டிபோல, இவர்கள் மத்தியில் தமிழ் மக்கள் தவிக்கும் நிலை பரிதாபமானது. ஒருபுறம் மக்கள் ஆங்கில சிந்தனையை மட்டும் மட்டும் தமிழில் மொழி பெயர்த்து மக்கள் மனதை எளிதில் தொடரமுடியாத பரிதாப நிலை.

மறுபக்கம், தமிழன் இதுவரை சரசுல்லாமாய்ப் புரிந்து வழங்கிய சொற்களைக் களைந்து “எது-யாது” எனப் பிரமிக்கச் செய்யும் புதுப் பதங்கள் குவியும் மலை.

முதல் சாரார் மேலும் இரு வகைப் படுவர். ஆங்கிலச் சொல் அலங்காரத்தின் அழகைப் பாழ்படுத்தி அதை தமிழில் மொழி பெயர்ப்போர் பலர். நோய்க்குத் தகுந்த மருந்து கொடுப்பதற்குப் பதிலாக உயிருக்கு உலைவைக்கும் பாணியைப் பற்றி தமிழ்ப் பண்பிற்கு விரோதமாக ஆங்கிலக் கருத்தை அப்படியே அமைத்து “வியாதிபைவிட சிகிச்சை கடுமை கொண்டது” எனப் புலம்பும் பேதமை ஒருபுறம். Red-tapism என வழங்கும் ஆங்கிலக் கருத்தைத் தழுவி “சிவப்பு நட்டா கொள்கை” எனக் கண்டிக்கும் அவலம் மறுபுறம்.

“ஒரு கூடை செங்கல்லும் பிடரி” எனும் கூற்றுபோல் நமது நவீன சினிமா எழுத்தாளர்கள் பாரபட்ச மில்லாமல் இந்த இரு வித கைவரிசைகளையும் காட்டுவதில் தயங்குவதில்லை. ஏனெனில் சினிமா பித்துக்கொண்ட மக்கள் இந்த எழுத்தாளர்களும் கதை, வசனகர்த்தாக்களும் வைத்ததுதான் சட்டம் என நம்பத் தயங்குவதில்லை. அதையறிந்த சமயவாதிகளும் முறையையே பற்றிகவலை கொள்வதில்லை. ஆங்கிலத்தில் சினிமா பக்தன் “FAN” என அழைக்கப்பட்டால் தமிழில் அவன் “விசி” யாகிவிடுகின்றான். தமிழரின் கலை அன்பும் மொழிப் பண்பும் விசிவிவிடப் படுகின்றன. திரைக் கலையில் சமஸ்கிருத ரஸிகளும் இல்லா விட்டாலும், தமிழ் அன்புறும் இருக்கலாம். அதுமட்டுமா?

தமிழ் திரையுலகில் புதிய “வில்லன்” “வில்லி” ஜாதிகள் தோன்றியுள்ளன. வில்லன் என்றால் “காண்டபன்” போல கரத்தில் வில் ஏந்தியவன் என்று ஏமாரு

தீர்கள். “Villain” (வில்லன்) என்னும் ஆங்கிலப் பதம் அது. கொடியவன் அல்லது பொல்லாதவன் என இனிய தமிழில் கூறுவதற்குப் பதிலாக “வில்லன்” அவதரித்தான். தமிழில் இது ஆண் ஜாதிக் கே உரித்தாக்கப் பட்டது. பெண் ஜாதியிருந்தால் “வில்லி” யாய் விடுவார். இருள் வகுப்பைச் சேர்ந்த வில்லி யல்ல. “வில்லன்” என்ற ஆண் மகனைப்போல் வெள்ளித்திரையில் கீழ்த்தர, பாதக, கொடிய பாததீரமாகக் காட்சியளிக்கும் பெண் மகள் தான் “வில்லி”. இதை நான் கூறுவது “silly” எனத் தள்ளிவிடாதீர்கள். நகைச்சுவையும் நவரஸமும்பாட பாடுபடும் நவீன சினிமா சஞ்சிகைகளில் போட்டியிடும் பேரெழுத்தாளர்களின் பேரிகை இது.

அதே சமயம் “Motor”, “Cycle” போன்ற பாசாமக்கள் வாயில் கூட பரிமளிக்கும் பதங்கள் “சுய இயங்கி” “சூர் உருளி” என்னும் புதிர்களாய்விட்டன. மாநாடு, மாவட்டம், பேரவை, சிற்றவை, தனிக் குழு, செயற்குழு முதலியவை குறிஞ்சிப் பாலை போன்ற பிரதேசங்களுள் அல்ல அவற்றில் தோன்றும் புழுக்களும் இல்லை. செந்தமிழ் நாடெனும் போதினிலே காற்றில் தேன்வந்து பாயுது காதினிலே எனப் பாரதியார் பாடியதை ஒட்டியோ, ஒட்டியதைப் பிரித்துக் கிழித்தோ கண்ட கடுந்தமிழ்.

வெள்ளையன் இந்தியாவை பல நூற்றாண்டுகள் ஆண்டான். ஆனால் அதற்குமுன் பல நூற்றாண்டுகளாய் வழங்கிவந்த “ஜமாபந்தி”, “கில்லி”, “கஜாது”, “ஷரிஸ்த தார்”, “தாசீல்தார்”, “ஜில்லா”, “தாஜாக்கா” போன்ற எண்ணிறந்த ஆட்சிக் கருத்துக்களையும் ஆட்கொண்டான். தமிழ் மீனவனின் “கட்டுமரம்” ஆட்சியாளரின் ஆங்கில அகராதியில் கூட “Catamaran” எனக் கட்டுண்டது. இந்த ஸ்தானியில் “வண்டியோட்டி” யான எளியன் ஆங்கிலத்திலேயே “Gharriwala” “காடிவாலா” வாகப் புகழ்ந்து விட்டான். குரிய சந்திரர் இருக்கும் வரை அவற்றைப்போல் எவற்றையும் கிரஹிக்கும் சக்தி பெற்ற ஆங்கிலம் வாழும் என்பதில் என்ன ஐயம்.

தமிழர் இதைப்பேற்றுவது இழிவா அல்லது தாழ்வா? புத்தியிர் பெறுவது வாழ்வா அல்லது அதைப் புறக்கணிப்பது வாழ்வா?

பழையன கழிதலும் புதியன புத்தலும் புகுத்திறவுடன் செயல்படல் வேண்டும் இதுவே எனது துணிபு— “தாழ்மையான கருத்து” (humble opinion) அல்ல; ஆங்கிலத்தில் அவ்வாறிருக்கலாம். தமிழில் ஓங்கிய எண்ணம்— “மேலான கருத்து”. அதைப் “பணிவாக”க் கூறுகிறேன்.

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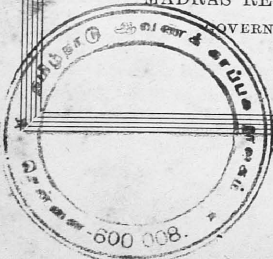
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