

SCIENCE, CULTURE AND DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS
Convention Papers

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PEOPLES' UNION FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS
DELHI

Report on the "Science and Democratic Rights" Session
of the PUHR Convention held in Constitution Club,
Delhi, on the 7th of November 1981.

(Prepared by Dipankar Gupta)

The "Science and Democratic Rights" session was chaired by Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty. In his introductory address Prof. Mohanty raised the question: Why are we talking about Science and culture in the background of such open brutality on the citizens of this country? He answered this question by referring Prof. Aswini K. Ray's opening speech of the Convention where the latter had said that the movement for Democratic Rights can be strengthened once people from diverse sources pool their information and thoughts on the matter of democratic rights. It is only then that the more obvious manifestations of brutality can be understood as part of a process whereby democratic rights are perjured in every walk of life. The entire issue thus become amenable to a more comprehensive understanding, and the more obvious affronts on democratic rights can no longer be seen merely as aberrations of the system. Moreover, Prof. Mohanty said, science has been understood in a very restricted way, and scientism has become the ideology of bureaucratic and authoritarian people. Scientists and artists, Prof. Mohanty averred, participate in human liberation. No true practitioner of these arts can ever be accused of throttling the deep forces of liberation in any society. Obviously, therefore, those who work against these people and call themselves scientists, are actually propagating anti-science. Dilli-Rajihara and the suburbs of Delhi stand testimony to the devastation that anti science can wrought on the people.

Mr. Prabir Mitra in his address developed the notion of "Scientism" and linked it to neo-positivism. It is this form of Scientism, aligned to neo-positivist ideology, that of ten legitimises those very forces of oppression and bureaucratization against which the movement for democratic rights is directed. Mr. Mitra went on to detail very systematically how scientism coupled with neo-positivist ideology serves as an ideal hand maiden to the given structure of interests and works consistently to occlude any true scientific endeavour.

Mr. Anil Sadgopal, the other major speaker in this session, said that the most crucial task of the democratic rights movement was to demystify science. He went on to elaborate that by employing the phrase "the demystification of science" he was actually aiming at the practitioners of scientism. He believes that no information, however scientific its origin, should be

kept away from the people. Scientific information should be freely disseminated to the people, and no scientific hubris should stand in the way. The common people, after all, argued Mr. Sadgopal, are very scientific. A farmer pays close attention to the stars at night to determine the time. He studies natural phenomenon so that he can carry out his agricultural operations more successfully. Even the ordinary bullock cart reflects an awareness of science, for it is best adapted to the needs and environs of the people. Very often elite scientific circles try to alter the age old techniques of the people without understanding the social situation well. Recently, the Khadi Gramadhyaksh commissioned an electrically operated potters wheel, without realizing that the demand for pottery is so low that it does not justify the use of electrically operated 'Chaks' or wheels.

Mechanisation is another way by which anti-people scientism manifests itself. The Chattisgarh labourers resisted mechanisation for ten to fifteen thousand people would then be unemployed. The SAIL documents also testify vividly to this. Very often only 15% to 20% of installed capacity is utilised and yet the cry goes up for more mechanisation. Scientific research too is conducted on areas most irrelevant to the masses of the people. The ICMR research projects are examples of this. He also quoted an instance where an Aeronautical engineer from I.I.T. wanted to conduct a study for improving suburban train services in Bombay which would help millions of commuters. His proposal was rejected. But when he put in a proposal to study rocket vibrations it was immediately accepted. Mr. Sadgopal also related how under the name of science and development, forests and natural resources were being decimated so that foreign exchange could be earned to finance the entrepreneurial demands of the entrenched classes.

Mr. Dinn Roy took up the last point of Mr. Sadgopal and said that forests in Madhya Pradesh were being destroyed to set up paper mills run by the Birlas. And, what is worse, the effluents from these factories pollute the nearby River Son. Mr. Roy compared science to a "Chankh" of folk mythology very effectively. He said that a "dhakorshankh" only makes promises and promotes illusions. This is precisely what science in the hands of the powerful sections has done for the common man. The paper mill, that Mr. Roy referred to earlier, pollutes 35 miles of water on River Son. But as a remedial measure the Birlas granted a project to Jawaharlal Nehru Krishi Vidyalay in Jabalpur to demonstrate that no pollution was actually taking place.

In conclusion Mr. Datta Roy said that without passion and commitment science becomes sterile and often used for wholly unscientific ends.

At this point, the audience was requested to participate by Prof. Manoranjan Mohanty. Before requesting the first speaker from the audience to comment, Prof. Mohanty said that from the previous three speakers it was quite clear that this was a sensitive area and demanded great attention. He said that the speakers had succeeded in generating a spark, and in so far as that, the session could be considered to be highly successful.

Mr. Ashok Rao from BHEL was the first to come up from the audience to place his comments before the gathering. He agreed with Mr. Sadgopal and said that the biggest problem was the lack of information flow. He cited the BHEL - Siemens deal which was shrouded in secrecy. But very often scientists are scared to help in the free flow of information for fear of being persecuted. Mr. Rao, therefore advised the democratic rights movement try and protect these scientists.

Mr. J. Bandopadhyay alluded to Mr. Roy's parable of the "Shank" and said that science could perhaps be likened to a third kind of "Shank" - one that promises and then takes away. The World Bank project in Karnataka, Mr. Bandopadhyay said, took away crop producing land to grow eucalyptus trees under the guise of social forestry. These trees would henceforward be used by Birla's Paper Mills.

Prof. J. P. J. Uberoi recalled the fate of Frederik Engels' Dialectic of Nature when it was dropped by Moscow after the Lysenko fiasco. According to Prof. Uberoi, Scientific ideology insists that dualism exist. In China they accepted dualism and the cultural revolution was not allowed to enter laboratories. Dialectics was reserved only for social science. Prof. Uberoi concluded by saying that physical scientists should reckon with social factors, and so should social scientists concern themselves with the development of the physical science.

The last intervention was from Mr. Shatrughna. He again highlighted the threat under which scientists work. He further suggested that the PUDR can help these scientists by seeking the repeal of those penal laws that sanction concealment of scientific information and inhibit the free flow of knowledge.

REPORT ON THE CULTURE AND DEMOCRATIC
RIGHTS SESSION

(Prepared by Juliet Reynolds)

The cultural session was opened by the poet, SARWESHWAR DAYAL SAXENA who gave his keynote address in Hindi. Saxena began by defining culture as the voice of the independent and liberated spirit, which unites one person with another, and thus makes people stronger in their struggle. Authority, therefore, always fears it and tries to suppress it. He pointed out that in order to do this, authority today exercises cultural coercion through the propagation of a parallel culture which renders people indolent and diverts their attention from the real cause of their pain.

The voice of the liberated, independent spirit, said Saxena is thus becoming increasingly difficult to hear. It is authority not culture which has power over the mass media. But the inhabitants of straw palaces are nonetheless afraid of the smallest spurt and thus they suppress the little publication, street theatre, etc.

He added that cultural coercion is also exercised through the formalism of feudal and bourgeois culture. The art forms of this culture inhibit real culture and limit even that art which is intended for the people.

Saxena admitted that a solution is not easy, but the artist must raise his voice fearlessly against this cultural coercion, joining up with like-minded people to make common cause with those who are paying the price for raising their free and independent voice, so that they will know they are not alone. The rest is up to political organizations.

He finally suggested that poetry should break the constraint of rigid forms and must search for new aesthetics to reach the illiterate. Plays should be written to expose the forces which are crushing freedom, and support must be given to local cultural and theatre groups.

Next, the playwright, G.P. DESHPANDE spoke in English and said that in the past the ruling class patronized, but did not interfere with art. They were more modest at least, and did not tell artists how to execute their art. Nowadays, people like Antulay are pronouncing on what is good and/bad art. Additionally, he said, state interference is perpetuated by the current system of awards. A strong contradiction of the State versus Art is now being felt.

Deshpande was adamant that there is no such thing as people's art in India. Artists are neither creating it, nor are they capable of doing so. They don't even speak the people's language. Such claims are pretentious. At best, artists may be able to do something to enable the people to see themselves as part of a bigger struggle and a greater totality.

He pointed out that scientists are already fighting within an institutional structure, but in the arts total alienation is faced. Democracy in the field of culture must begin at home, by artists recognizing their ivory-tower existence. Most creative artists, he added, are part of the ruling class and they demand to be treated as something special. In almost every other field - science, academia, the law, etc. - people are aware of and reacting to revolutionary changes in society. But in the arts, the aesthetic liberal tradition reigns supreme.

Artists only think of individual expression, and to be like this or that European artist. But a potentially revolutionary situation requires a potentially revolutionary art which can only come about by awareness of that potential revolution.

The film-maker M.S. Sathya then followed with an address in English and pointed out that, unfortunately, people's art does in fact exist - in the form of G.P. Sippy, Amitabh Bachan etc! This helps to maintain the status quo. There is no good people's cinema because film-makers want to break away from old forms but audiences have been conditioned to the dance and song formula. Sathya felt, therefore, that this technique may have to be used to be acceptable. Other forms are only praised by intellectuals. The new cinema movement lacks concern to reach people. The training of artists is also wrong, he said, and is highly Western in orientation.

Sathya also stated that he had come to Delhi to see the bonded labour situation of ASIAD, since he felt that there is a need to expose the well-guarded secrets of the state/contractor conspiracy. He asked how organizations like PUDR could help artists to make films on this kind of subject.

He also pointed out that by creating the National Film Development Corporation, the State now has far greater control over the medium. One must be in their good books to obtain raw stock, etc. A new film policy is presently being drawn up through the backdoor. Censorship is being more and more directed towards political cinema, he added. Fighting censorship is perhaps a matter to be taken up by PUDR.

Finally, he pointed out that the short film is the most effective cinematic form, but this is totally under Government control. The Films Division is the only medium between a film-maker and the viewers both for TV and cinema, and this rule has not yet been challenged by any court of law.

The last paper on Culture and Democratic Rights entitled 'A Fascist Attack on Culture' was delivered in Hindi by KANCHEN KUMAR, the writer and active PUDR member. In it he said that when the rights of the common man are trampled on, the nation's humiliation is voiced by socially-conscious artists. He cited several instances of cultural repression during British times, but pointed out that nothing has changed since the Indian ruling class came to power. All the old evils are still rampant, he said. Hoarding and blackmarketing are increasing daily, and chronic unemployment is driving many young people to becoming antisocial elements. The ruling feudal and bourgeois cliques are benefitting from such conditions and thus wish to maintain this. But to do so they must first demolish the people's sense of values. For this purpose they hire selfish, ivory-tower writers who hide their crimes under the slogan of 'art for art's sake'. Their literature is packed with sex, crimes and the deeds of gods and goddesses, and has no relation with reality. And this literature, he emphasized, keeps people away from reality. This phenomenon is found everywhere from educational textbooks to newspapers, cinema, TV, theatre and publishing.

But he added that more and more conscious writers are coming out to fight it, but their democratic rights are being attacked by the authorities. In India, the ruling class and their intellectuals talk ceaselessly about 'freedom of expression' and 'freedom of the Press' but their ban on all pro-people cultural activities shows the hollowness of such slogans.

Kanchen Kumar went on to provide a long, well-documented list of acts of repression against journals and publications and plays throughout India over the last decades. He cited many instances of the imprisonment, torture and murder of writers, poets and journalists. Such acts of cultural repression are not confined to the ruling party alone. The left-front governments in Kerala and Bengal for example have also shown their true nature when under criticism or threat. In Delhi, the censorship of plays has now been handed over to the police. Artists and intellectuals must stand unitedly against this, he urged.

Kanchen Kumar also quoted the Bengali writer, Benoy Ghosh who said that it may become necessary for writers to take up arms to safeguard the freedom of their readers and humanity at large.

He finally stated that by launching their crusade against the freedom of expression and spreading war psychosis and national chauvinism, the government is trying to bring back the black days of the "emergency". The main task of artists today, he said, is to resist them.

After all the above papers on culture had been delivered, the theatre activist, SHAMSUL ISLAM asked for the floor and pointed out that people are parochial and do not react to repression in places other than their own. The so-called progressive artists, he stated emphatically, serve the interests of the repressive establishment.

SUBHA RAO of Delhi University and an active member of PUDR, wound up the session by saying that revolutionary movements are using culture as a weapon. But the battle of ideas is different from the battle of arms. The former should be supported irrespective of political affiliations, and the right of speech and the propagation of ideas must be defended no matter whether one agrees with them or not.

WHY HAVE P.U.D.R. ?

What is the relevance of People's Union for Democratic Rights ? This obviously begs the question as to what are Democratic Rights ? Democratic Rights are rights which are enjoyed by the citizens in a democracy, which has been defined by Abraham Lincoln as : "of the people, for the people, by the people." In some countries, these rights are unwritten, - in some others written, as in India. After two-and-a-half years of deliberations, on 26th day of November, 1949 Constitution of India was enacted and adopted. The Preamble to the Constitution read with Fundamental Rights Chapter defines the democratic rights, which are inter alia: equality before law, prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth, equality of opportunity in matters of public employment, rights regarding freedom of speech and expression, freedom of assembling peacefully and without arms, freedom to form associations or Unions, freedom to move freely throughout the territory of India, freedom to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India and freedom to practise any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business. Untouchability and titles also are abolished by a stroke of pen. There is also protection given even to a person, charged of a criminal offence so that he is not prosecuted and punished for the same offence twice and is not

compelled to be a witness against himself. Article 21, which according to Mr. Justice Bhagwati is most fundamental of all Fundamental Rights, says: "No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty, except, according to procedure established by law." There are prohibitions of traffic in human flesh and forced labour and of employment of children in factories, etc. Articles 25, 26, 27 and 28 give right to freedom of religion. Articles 29 and 30 protect interests of minorities. Article 32 says that if any of the above rights is violated, a citizen has a right to move the Supreme Court of India for the enforcement of such right.

In addition, in Chapter IV, the States have been directed to follow certain noble principles. States are asked to secure a social order for the promotion of welfare of the people, to give equal justice and free legal aid, to organize village Panchayats, to provide for just and human conditions of work and maternity leave, to give living wage to the workers, to arrange for free and compulsory education for children, to arrange for participation of workers in management of industries, to promote educational and economic interests of the weaker sections, to improve public health and to separate judiciary from the Executive.

If it rested there, we would have a country over-flowing with milk and honey and the citizens rolling in material wealth and spiritual splendour with Acharya Rajneeshes and other Bhagwans, no less, abounding. Even if there was a partial attempt to achieve the above, 66% of the population, that means over 45 crores of people, would not have trudged along below poverty line and Smt. Gandhi, the present Prime Minister, could not have spent in November 1979 in Election campaign alone more than Rs.1 crore and Shriman Antulay could not have received for his ill conceived trusts over Rs. 25 crores in one month.

Therefore, there is a snag somewhere and that snag, if I may say so, has been placed in the Constitution deliberately by the founding fathers of the Constitution, who mouthed populist slogans, but, undoubtedly, represented minority, elite and bourgeois interest. Nehrus, Patels, Munshis and Ambedkars did not like to share power with the populace and it is evident from Schedule 7, List III, Entry 3 of the Constitution, where Concurrent power is given both to the Union and the States to pass Legislations for Preventive Detention for reasons connected with the Security of a State, the Maintenance of Public Order, or the Maintenance of Supplies and Services essential

to the community; persons subjected to such detention." Article 22 allows non-disclosure of facts to a detenu which the "Authority considers to be against the public interest of disclose." In addition, extraordinary powers are given to the Governors under Article 371 to lord over the citizens, like Mohammad-bin-Tughlaq, when such citizens belong to Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Hill Areas and Sikkim.

Inspite of noble sentiments expressed in the Constitution and inspite of various other excellent laws, which can contain unrest, black-marketing, law and other situation any day, - the history of Independent India is replete with Preventive Detention Acts, in the Centre as well as the States. Indian National Congress to its credit has Preventive Detention Act of 1950 (introduced by Sardar Patel), The Defence of India Rules, 1962, Maintenance of Internal Security Act, 1971, West Bengal Prevention of Foreign Activities Act, 1970, Andhra Pradesh Suppression of Disturbances Act, 1948, Armed Forces (Special Power) Regulations of 1958, the Nagaland Security Regulation of 1962, the Assam Maintenance of Public Order Act, 1953, the Travancore-Cochin Public Safety Measures Act, 1950, where by even a sheet of music can be declared to be dangerous and prejudicial and innumerable other similar Acts. The Janata Government to its credit has: introduction of the Code of Criminal

Procedure (Amendment) Act, 1977, whereby Preventive Detention was going to be a part of the ordinary law of the land (later withdrawn under public pressure), suggestion by the then Prime Minister to the Chief Ministers on the 11th November, 1978 to the effect that the Preventive Detention Acts were essential to maintain law and order in the States, introduction of Preventive Detention Acts and Ordinances in Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat and Maharashtra and a notorious labour legislation, which, if not withdrawn under public pressure, would have taken away valuable rights enjoyed by labour. Chaudhary Charan Singh not only has the dubious distinction of trying to bring in Preventive Detention by back door through the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Act of 1977 as the then Home Minister of Janata Government, but also the distinction of introducing on October 15, 1979, as the Caretaker Prime Minister, the Preventive Detention Ordinance, which was an improved version of earlier MISA.

On Smt. Gandhi's return to power, the above Ordinance was promptly made into an Act and she gleefully told the Opposition that if they did find merit in the Preventive Detention Legislations, who was she to stand in the way? In addition, now, she has brought in the National Security Ordinance, 1980, which has been made into

National Security Ordinance, 1980, on 27th December, 1980 and also Essential Services Maintenance Ordinance 1981 on the 26th July, 1981, which has also been made into an Act recently.

What are the characters of these two ? Like the earlier MISA, National Security Act gives unbridled power to the Executive to rope in any citizen and put him behind the bars, even without disclosing the facts of detention if the Executive "considers to be against the public interest to disclose" (Section 8(2)). Under Section 11(4), no legal practitioner will be allowed to appear before the Advisory Board on behalf of such detenu. Under Section 9(2), the Advisory Board will be composed of three persons of whom two are only qualified to be appointed as Judges. Only Chairman has to be a past or present Judge of a High Court. Under Section 11(3) if there is a difference of opinion among the members of the Advisory Board, the opinion of the majority of such members shall be deemed to be the opinion of the Board. Therefore, two raw Junior members of the Bar, who belong to the Ruling Party, can over-ride the experienced opinion of the ex or present Judge Chairman of the Advisory Board. Therefore, it further means that all the political opponents of the Ruling Party can be kept, under National Security Act, behind the bars but, of

Course, with a facade of judicial process. Such a detenu can be kept in detention for 12 months from the date of detention, but according to Section 14, Sub-Section (2), "the revocation or expiry of a detention order shall not bar the making of fresh detention order under Section 3 against the same person in any case where fresh facts have arisen...."

Now a discerning citizen will understand that a person can be kept in detention indefinitely even without disclosing the facts of detention which is allowed under Section 8(2) and sanctified by Article 22(6) of the Constitution.

Suppose a citizen has been put behind the bars for obvious mala-fide reasons like personal animosity or the like. Can he get any relief against the offending order? The answer is a resounding No, - because Section 16 of the Act gives immunity to such officers and it says : No suit or other legal proceeding shall lie against the Central Government or a State Government, and no suit, prosecution or other legal proceeding shall lie against any person, for anything in good faith done or intended to be done in pursuance of this Act." Who will decide that such Acts were not done in good faith, when even the grounds of detention are not to be supplied to the detenu?

This is National Security Act and this is

now the law of the land. Now what is the Essential Services Maintenance Act 1981 ? "Essential Service", according to this Act, means, any postal, telegraph or telephonic service, any railway or transport service, by land or water, any service connected with the operation or maintenance of aerodromes or aircraft, any service in or in connection with the working of any major Port, any service connected with the clearance of goods through customs, etc., any service in any Section of any industrial undertaking to scheduled industry, any service in or connection with the working of any system of public conservancy or sanitation, hospitals or dispensaries, any service in connection with banking, oil field, refinery, mint, security press, etc. In addition, it means any other service connected with matters with respect to which Parliament has power to make laws. It further says that in connection with the above, "any service connected therewith", will also be included in the definition of "essential services."

A moot question can be asked as to what will remain outside the scope of this omnibus and "all pervading" definition of the "essential service"? Thereafter, it is said under Section 2(1)(b): strike means the cessation of work by a body of persons employed in any essential service, etc. It includes refusal to work overtime and also

any other conduct which is likely to result in or result in cessation or substantial retardation of work of any essential service.

It simply means, no strike is possible in any establishment in India. It also means that overtime can be forced "the gullet" of the employee and if he refuses to do such overtime, he can be punished under this Essential Services Maintenance Act. Under Section 3, the Central Government has been given the absolute power to prohibit strike in any essential service and after the issue of this order, no person employed in any essential service to which the Order relates shall go or remain on strike and any strike declared or commenced even before the issue of the Order shall be illegal. Under Section 4, any person who commences, such strikes goes or remains on or takes part in such strike or instigates or incites other person to commence, etc. any such strike, can be dismissed straightaway. Further under Section 5, a person who commences etc. a strike, which is prohibited by this Act, shall be liable to go to the prison for six months and to pay Rs.1000 as fine. Under Section 6, a person, who encourages such strike can go to jail for a year and pay a fine extending to Rs.2,000/-. Under Section 7, a person who gives any money in support of such a strike is liable to be imprisoned for a year and pay a fine

of Rs.2,000/- and under Section 8, any Police Officer may arrest without warrant any person who is reasonably suspected of having committed any offence under this Act. It is further said under Section 10 that if there is inconsistency of this Act with the Industrial Disputes Act or any other law, this Act will override other laws.

With these two Acts in force, the Fundamental Rights Chapter of the Constitution becomes irrelevant vis-a-vis the liberty and democratic rights of the citizens. That is where we come in. The purpose of the Union (PUDR) is to expose such inequities of the Government, expose the brutalities perpetrated by the Administration and the police against the poor and the indigent, hold public meetings, educate the citizens, including the Members of Parliament, so that the reign of terror which was unleashed in 1975 is not unleashed once again in the year 1981-82. Witness, in this connection, PUDR's investigating Reports on Aligarh Riots (1978), Andhra Disturbed Areas (1979), Repression in Singhbhum (1979), Firing on Faridabad workers (1979), Attacks on Kerala Writers (1980), Bilaspur: Attacks on Harijans (1980), Beggars in Delhi (1980), Assam Agitation (1980), Rape, State and Society (1980), Chhattisgarh Miners (1981), Indervalli Firings on Tribals (1981), Modinagar Killings (1981), Torture of BJP Workers

(1981), Contract Labour and Asiad - 82 (1981) and the Demolition of 499 Jhuggis in New Seemapuri (1981).

The question, which was to be answered by the citizens of this country is: "if two Acts of Parliament can take away all the Fundamental Rights allegedly given by the people to the people on 26th November, 1949, then did the founding fathers of the Constitution really mean that they said in the Preamble and Fundamental Rights Chapter of the Constitution?" The answer is No, and that is why it has been said earlier also that the minority, elite, bourgeoisie never wanted to share the power with the people. They only created an illusion to opiate the citizens and to a great extent succeeded in doing so with the active assistance of the un-suspecting Judiciary and gullible intelligentsia.

(Gobinda Mukhoty)
8.11.81.

PEOPLE'S UNION FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS:
A POLITICAL APPRAISAL

Civil and Democratic Rights are an essential component of democracy, and organisations aimed at protecting, promoting and popularising democratic rights provide mass base to the content of democracy. In a country like India, with its widespread social base of poverty and ignorance sustained by the traditionally oppressive structures of authority, organisation like the PUDR have considerable significance. In such countries like India, constitutional rights derive their true meaning and content only when, and to the extent they are, supported by democratic consciousness at the mass level sustaining mass movements.

It is necessary to protect democratic rights when they are actually violated, as they so often are in this country, as would be borne out even from a cursory glance at the enormous literature now made available to the public through organisations like the PUDR, which only represents the tip of the ice-berg of the entrenched structure of social oppression in the country. But it is equally important to create the social base which would pre-empt such blatant violation by inculcating a mass consciousness in the social content of oppression and the nature of democratic rights guaranteed by the constitution, which, in retrospect, appears to be a case of absent minded generosity by the Founding Fathers, as the implications of the Emergency so sharply brought to focus.

To a considerable extent the functions of organisation like the PUDR supplements those of the democratic political parties. But there is a significant difference in their aims and objectives which determine their respective relevance. The primary goal of all political parties is the capture of political power, which involves political responses to democratic rights

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often requiring opportunistic compromises. By the very nature of its composition, organisations like the PUDR are free from such political constraints. For the PUDR, protection, promotion and popularisation of civil liberties and democratic rights is an input in widening the social base of democratic social transformation.

While the absence of political constraints helps in the credibility and legitimacy of PUDR among a section of the democratically - committed people, it is permanently faced with the prospect of being suspect by the organised political parties, and more particularly the ruling party. It is only such political parties who view democratic consciousness as an essential precondition for any egalitarian social transformation of the country, that can be expected to appreciate the contribution of such organisation as the PUDR. For the foreseeable future in this country it is difficult to visualise the PUDR as anything but an organisation consisting largely of the various sections of the intelligentsia committed to promote democratic consciousness and prepared to pay the price of ruling class hostility and the suspicion of organised political parties, as has been the experience of the PUDR in its brief, but by no means lack-lustre, history.

It is significant to recall in this context that the PUDR originated in the period of the most organised abrogation of democratic rights on a national scale in the country during the Emergency. It was born in the wombs of the civil liberties organisation that provided the catalytic force of political dissent to the Emergency. All major opposition parties professed their commitment to support the political struggle for civil liberties carried on by organisations like the Peoples' Union for Civil Liberties and Democratic Rights (Delhi Unit) which came into being in October, 1976 as the progenitor of the PUDR. About sixty such

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organisations came into being in the various parts of the country, all of them demanding revocation of the Emergency, restoration of constitutional rights and the release of political prisoners. Soon after the Emergency was lifted, quite characteristically, all the political parties because involved in the ensuing elections and lost interest in the movement for civil liberties. Even the national body, coordinating the activities of the various civil liberties organisations became defunct, and some of its important leaders plunged into the more exciting arena of electoral politics. Finally, with the Janata emerging as the ruling party in the country, the erstwhile political base of the civil liberties movement was eroded, as the Janata Constituents, in power, had reasons to perceive such a movement as an avoidable irritant in the midst of the worse attractive task of running the governmental machinery.

In this immoral and arid political milieu, in the context of civil liberties, the movement was sustained by organisations like the PUCL and DR (Delhi Unit), CPDR (Bombay), APCLC (Andhra) and the AFDR (PUNJAB). Deprived of any national organisation, these groups, run by a small, dedicated group of democratically committed intellectuals, ran their make-shift outfits with such coordination among themselves as was possible under the circumstances. What sustained these organisations in this atmosphere of political apathy to the movement was the conviction of the few people who constituted them, that though born in the immoral politics of the Emergency, such organisations fulfilled a big gap in the democratic movement of the country that made the extra-ordinary situation like the Emergency so easy to impose. What provided the bond of coordination between these few far-flung groups thinly spread in various parts of the country, was the mutual trust, confidence, and the impeccable credentials of

each others' commitment to civil liberties and democratic rights that had been established in the shortlived period of such struggle during the Emergency. The PUCL and DR (Delhi Unit) actively functioned in the period of the Janata rule because of its members' conviction that such a rule had not in any way altered the entrenched social base of oppression in the country, despite the political change. Hence the PUCL & DR (Delhi Unit), organised a national convention on the release of political prisoners, to remind the Janta Party of its electoral promises. The convention prepared and submitted a list of political prisoners and the need for improving the conditions in the prisons to conform to the requirements of a democratic state - apparatus as apart from a colonial apparatus. In the same period of Janata rule, it investigated and published reports of repression of miners in Dalli - Rajahara, workers in Kanpur, agricultural labourers in Pantnagar, Muslims in Aligarh, tribals in Singhbhum, peasants in Telengana.

The a-moral aspect of the politics of the civil and Democratic Rights movement in the country again re-asserted itself in the changed political situation that brought Mrs. Gandhi back to political power in the elections of 1980. Soon afterwards, the Peoples' Union for civil liberties was revived in November, 1980, and some of the superstars of the defeated Janata Establishment again re-activated themselves to the politics of Civil Liberties. Soon a National - level PUCL came into being, demanding of the existing organisations, like the PUCL and DR (Delhi Unit), to merge their identity with the National PUCL. The demand was aptly described by an eminent Delhi journalist as one, where the prodigal father who had forgotten about its progeny returning back to claim the filial duties with a child which had meanwhile established its moral legitimacy. The PUCL and DR (Delhi), as also some other sister organisations elsewhere in the country, quite obviously could not accept with equanimity the demands for its liquidation, in a situation where the need for vigilance about democratic rights have, if anything, assumed greater urgency after the elections of 1980; and less so, till such time as the organisation it its democratic wisdom perceived that the struggle could be better fought with men of intellectual conviction with proven

proven commitment to the cause of democratic rights in its social context. In a general body meeting of the PUCL and DR (Delhi Unit), the organisation welcomed the National PUCL, encouraged its members to become members of the new organisation, solemnly offered mutual cooperation in the on-going struggle for democratic rights, but rejected to endorse its death-warrant issued by the newly-revived National PUCL.

The new organisation was formed in March, 1981, and to avoid possible confusion re-named itself as Peoples' Union for Democratic Rights (PUDR), with a manifesto and constitution that were unanimously approved in the General Body.

In its new incarnation, the organisation emphasises its distinctiveness in two ways: firstly, its emphasis on the social content of democratic rights, as apart from merely their constitutional significance; this emphasis largely influences its choice of priority - areas for focussing public attention in the midst of the vast ocean of oppression that characterises the system in our country. This choice becomes unavoidable to make the most optimum utilisation of our meagre material and human resources which are only compensated by the sacrifice of dedicated people. For example, in a situation of general violation of democratic rights, even when the contractors are often victims of political corruption, the PUDR opts to highlight the plight of the labourers of Asiad'82 and the violation of their democratic right for fair wages. The second significant aspect of the PUDR is its concern for democratic norms within the organisation, without which our bonafides in the struggle for democratic rights in the country would be legitimately suspect, as we ourselves view many such dubious claims.

We offer enough opportunities for sweat and sacrifice to anyone sharing our aims on democratic rights to become members of our organisation, irrespective of their political views or affiliation. We cannot offer any loaves and fishes, for we have none to offer.

संस्कृति पर फासीवादी दबाव

०० कंचन कुमार

आम आदमी के मानविक अधिकार जब पैरों से कुचले जाते हैं तब उसके खिलाफ जाति की अवमानित चेतना उसके समाज सचेतन साहित्यकार, पत्रकार, कवि, नाटककार, गायक तथा कलाकारों के कंठ से सबसे शक्तिशाली तरीके से ध्वनित होती है।

अंग्रेजी राज में मुल्क की आवाज़ को मुँहार करने के लिए काज़ी नज़ुल इस्लाम को " देशद्रोहिता " के ज़ुम में जेल में डाल दिया गया। निलहे साहबों के जुल्म के खिलाफ लिखा गया दीनबन्धु मित्र का " नील दर्पण " नाटक, महात्मा शिशिर कुमार घोषा द्वारा स्थापित बंगला पत्र " असुत बाज़ार पत्रिका ", प्रेमचन्द का " सोजे वतन " कहानी-संग्रह तथा मुकुन्द दास की " यात्रा " ओं पर विदेशी शासकों ने पाबन्दी लगा दी। जनमुखा कला-साहित्य तथा समाचारपत्रों की आज़ादी का लड़ा घाँटने की दृष्टिगत उपनिवेशी परम्परा " जान की जगह गोविन्द " के तहत पर बैठने के बाद भी जारी रही।

सत्ता हस्तांतरण से चूंकि सामाजिक हालात में खास तबदीली नहीं आयी इसीलिए आज भी साम्प्रदायिक दंगे, हरिजन-दहन, बारी पर जुल्म, धर्म के नाम पर इंसान को बीधा दिखाने की कुत्सित सामंती परम्परा जारी है। एक ओर जमाखोरी तथा कालाबाज़ारी का बोलबाला है, तो दूसरी ओर बेरोज़गारी से अस्त युवा वर्ग का एक हिस्सा समाजविरोधी बनता जा रहा है।

इस मौजूदा हालात को जो लोग टिका रहना देना चाहते हैं, इंसान के नैतिक मूल्यबोध को ध्वंस करके ही वे इस काम को कर सकते हैं। सामंती तथा बुर्जुआ शासकवर्ग " कला के लिए कला " का राग अलापने वाले समाज-विमुक्त लेखक कलाकारों को इसी काम के लिए पालते हैं। उनके साहित्य की विषयवस्तु यथार्थ से कटी हुई कपोल कल्पित कहानी, गन्दे नाच गाने, यौन आवेदनमूलक रचनाएं तथा अलौकिक देवी देवाओं के तमत्कार से भारी अविज्ञानिक कथा तथा रोमांचक अपराध कथाएं होती हैं, जो आसानी से लोगों को गलत मार्ग में भाटकाती हैं। हमारी शिष्टा-व्यवस्था से शुरु करके तमाम पत्र-पत्रिकाओं, फिल्म, टी०वी०, रंगमंच से लेकर प्रकाशन संस्थानों तक हर जगह उनके ज़रूरीद गुलामों का लंगा नाच देखा जा सकता है।

दूसरी ओर अधिक से अधिक विवेकवान कलाकार तथा लेखक अपनी अपनी आस्था तथा अनुभाव के मुताबिक सारे देश भर के जुल्म के खिलाफ अपनी कला के ज़रिए मुँहार हो रहे हैं। माता ही सरकार उन पर हमला बोलकर समझा दे रही है कि वह उनके इस जनवादी अधिकार को स्वीकार नहीं करती। यानी भारतीय " लोकतंत्र " में लेखक, कलाकारों के विवेक के साथ अगर सरकार तथा उसके नौकरशाह या पुलिस गिराव के विवेक का संघर्ष हो तो लेखक कलाकारों को उनके नौकरशाह तथा पुलिस के ही विवेक के मुताबिक चलना पड़ेगा। इसीलिए " लेखक की आज़ादी " चूंकि सारे मनुष्य की वास्तविक आज़ादी है इसीलिए उस आज़ादी की रक्षा जरूरी पड़ती है, क्योंकि उस आज़ादी के छतरे में पड़ने पर लेखक भी छतरे में पड़ता है।

ऐसी ऐतिहासिक हालत उभार सकती है, जबकि महज कलम से उसकी रक्षा नहीं की जा सकती । "

मैं विनय घोषा जी के उपरोक्त कथान से सहमत हूँ - हमारा मुल्क आज इसी दौर से गुज़र रहा है । उसके शासक वर्ग तथा उसके छोमे के बुद्धिजीवी अक्सर "कलाकारों की आज़ादी " तथा " समाचारपत्रों की आज़ादी " जैसी छोटोछाली बातें करते नहीं थाकते । जनवादी पत्र-पत्रिकाओं तथा सांस्कृतिक कार्यकलापों पर पाबन्दी से इस तरह की तथाकथित आज़ादियों का चरित्र साफ हो जाता है । वे तमाम पत्र तथा संगठन जिन पर तरह तरह के हमले हुए कानूनी थे तथा उनके कार्यकर्ताओं का " अपराध " महज यह था कि उन्होंने अपनी रचनाओं तथा सांस्कृतिक कार्यकलापों के ज़रिए अपने मुल्क की प्रचलित राष्ट्रव्यवस्था तथा उनके संघर्षों की विभिन्न नीतियों के खिलाफ अपनी आस्था के मुताबिक अपना दृष्टिकोण जनता के सामने पेश करने की कोशिश की । इसलिए मजदूर किसान सहित आम आदमी के विभिन्न हिस्सों की तरह इन लेखकों को भी तरह तरह के काले कानून तथा वदीदारी पुलिस व बैर वदी के " गैर सरकारी " गुंडा गिरोहों का सामना करना पड़ा है ।

24 अगस्त, 1972 की शाम को " इंदिरा गांधी युग युग जिओ " " राष्ट्रीय कांग्रेस ज़िन्दाबाद " के बारे लगाते हुए कांग्रेसी कार्यकर्ताओं का एक गिरोह सियलदह के " दर्पण " " बंगलादेश " तथा " सत्ययुग " के हाकरों पर टूट पड़ा और उनसे उपरोक्त पत्रिकाओं की लगभग तीन हजार प्रतियां छीनकर जला दीं । " रेनेसांस " तथा " जनतार मुखा " के सम्पादकों को कांग्रेसी कार्यकर्ताओं के एक जुलूस ने घामकी दी कि उन्होंने आइन्दा पत्रिका निकाली तो उनका छात्मा कर दिया जाएगा । "फ्रंटियर " के सम्पादक समर सेन को भी घामकी दी गयी । इन तमाम पत्रों का गुनाह एक ही था : वे सभी शासक दल के विरोधी थे ।

उत्तर प्रदेश के आजमगढ़ से प्रकाशित " अरिमर्दन " के 3 जुलाई 1973 के अंक में " उत्तर प्रदेश में पी०ए०सी० तथा पुलिस सिपाही संघर्ष की राह पर " शीर्षक लेखा छापने के जुर्म में उसके सम्पादक एडवोकेट तेजबहादुर को " भारत रक्षा कानून " में गिरफ्तार किया गया । राजस्थान से प्रकाशित दैनिक " अधिकार " के सम्पादक विष्णु शर्मा, अरुणेश तथा प्रबन्ध सम्पादक शोभा कुमार शोभा को भारत रक्षा कानून में इसलिए गिरफ्तार किया गया कि उन्होंने सरकारी तथा पुलिसी सूत्र से प्राप्त सूचना के आधार पर लिखा था कि " आंदोलनकारी राज्य कर्मचारियों पर लाठी चरसाने के आदेश को पुलिस ने मानने से इनकार किया तथा उस दमनक के हिस्से के तौर पर इस्तेमाल होने की खिलाफत करते हुए कुछ जवानों ने छुट्टी ली और बहुत से जवान ड्यूटी से गैर हाज़िर रहे । "

पंजाब के " किन्तु " तथा " रोहलेवान " के सम्पादक को तरह तरह से परेशान किया गया। हरभाजन हलवारवी को लुधियाना जेल में बन्दकिया गया । तलवंडी गांव सलेम के निवासी कवि तथा " सियाड़ " के सम्पादक पाशा, रूपात गांव के निवासी दर्शन डाक्टर, मल्हाड़ी गांव के पादिक " ज्योबन्दी " के सम्पादक महेन्द्र सिंह संधू, मासिक "मा" पत्रिका की सम्पादिका केवल कौर तथा उमेश रमेश हांडा को गिरफ्तार किया गया ।

आंध्र के विपत्तवी रचयिताला संघाम । विरसम । के सदस्य लेखकों को जेल की सलाखों के पीछे डाल देता आम बात सी हो गई है । 1971 में ज्वालायुक्ती, चेरवंडा राजू तथा निष्ठालेश्वर को निरोधक नजरबंदी कानून के अंतर्गत गिरफ्तार किया गया । 1973 के अक्टूबर-नवम्बर में विरसम के तीन लेखक कवियों चरवर राव, एम० टी० छान्ना तथा चेरवंडा राजू को आंध्र प्रदेश सरकार ने आंतरिक सुरक्षा अधिनियम के तहत जेल में डाला था ।

विचाराविम्वित को गैर कानूनी और शांति के लिए खतरा मानने वाली सरकार उपरोक्त अधिनियमों को कारगर न होता देखाकर लेखकों के विरुद्ध सरकार के खिलाफ षडयंत्र का आरोप लगाकर सब बोलने, धामने-लिखाने के अधिकारों को जनता से छीन लेने की दिशा में कदम बढ़ा चुकी है । तथाकथित सिकन्दराबाद षडयंत्र केस में विरसम तत्कालीन मंत्री टी० मधुसूदन राव, "सुजना" पत्रिका के सम्पादक चरवर राव, तेलुगु के जाने माने आलोचक के० वी० रमन्नारेड्डी, एम० टी० छान्ना, "पिलुपु" के सम्पादक एम० रंगनाथम और प्रसिद्ध कवि चेरवंडा राजू को जेल में बंद किया गया । उनका गुनाह यह था कि उन्होंने अपनी रचनाओं में देशात्मिक विचारों को प्रचारित किया, जिसमें दलित वर्ग के अमानवीय स्म से शांति तथा स्थापित इंसान का ज्वलंत संग्राम चित्रित हो रहा है - जिससे रुढ़िवादी सामंती विचार ढहते जा रहे हैं । इसीलिए उनकी "संज्ञा" "मार्च" "रक्त गणम" "हृत्पद्म विस्तृतानाली" जैसी प्रगतिशील साहित्य कृतियां तथा "सुजना" व "पिलुपु" मासिक के कई अंकों पर पाबन्दी लगायी गयी ।

यह एक ऐसा इशारा है जिससे देश के सभी लेखकों को सबक लेना चाहिए यह पूरे देश में हो रहा है । बंगाल के कवि सुजन सेन और प्रगतिशील पत्रिका "नक्षत्र रोद" के सम्पादक सत्यसावी देव तथा उनकी पत्नी रत्ना देव को गिरफ्तार किया गया । "अनीक" के सम्पादक दीपक चक्रवर्ती, समीर राय, शंकर बसु, देवव्रत भाट्टाचार्य, शांतनु गृह, रवि सेन, रजत दास तथा अर्जुन गोस्वामी पर जेल में वहशियाबाज जुल्म किया गया । केरल के उदयभानु, पुरुषोत्तम, प्रभाकरणा तथा सिविक चन्द्रन आदि लम्बे असे तक जेल में बंद रहे ।

विजय घोषा ने कहा है, "ऐसा दिन अगर लेखक की ज़िन्दगी में आता है जब लेखनी छोड़ हथियार पकड़ने के अलावा कोई चारा नहीं रहता, उस समय अपने पाठकों तथा बृहत्तर मानव समुदाय की आजादी की रक्षा के लिए उन्हें यह करना पड़ेगा ।" हमने देखा है, हमारे युक्त के जनकवि सुब्बाराव पाणिग्रही तथा कवि सरोज दत्त ने ऐसा ही किया । बंगाल के युवा कवि कलाकारों में से तिमिरवरणा सिंह, अमिष चट्टोपाध्याय, दोणाचार्य घोषा, तुष्णार चन्द्र, मुरारी मुखोपाध्याय, स्मरणा चट्टोपाध्याय, आशु मजुमदार तथा समीर मिश्र ने ऐसा किया और अपनी बेशकीमती जानें देकर अपनी आस्था की कीमत चुकायी ।

20 जुलाई, 1974 को कलकत्ता के कर्जुन पार्क में "20 जुलाई सामाजिक विरोधी कमेटी" द्वारा आयोजित एक जुलूस तथा नाट्य प्रदर्शन पर अचानक हमला बोला । पुलिस की लाठी से प्रवीर दत्त नाम का एक छात्र मारा गया ।

इधर इंदिरा की ताबाशाह सरकार ने नये सिरे से सांस्कृतिक कार्यकर्ता तथा लेखकों पर दमन शुरू किया है। पिछले दिनों उत्तर प्रदेश के बस्ती में महिला रंगकर्मी के साथ थाने में पुलिस द्वारा बलात्कार, राष्ट्रीय जनवादी सांस्कृतिक मोर्चे की नाटयमंडली जब गाजीपुर में भागत सिंह के जीवन तथा विचारों पर आधारित नाटक "इनफिलाब जिन्दाबाद" खेल रही थी तो पुलिस ने उस नाटक पर प्रतिबन्ध लगा कर उन्हें बिला छोड़ने को मजबूर किया। गुजरात के अहमदाबाद के पास जेतालपुर गांव में पिछले 26 दिसम्बर 1980 को साकराभाई नाम के एक हरिजन युवक को उच्च वर्ग के पटेलों ने पंचायत भावन में जलाकर मारा। इसके प्रतिवाद में गुजरात के दलित पेंथार के साप्ताहिक कविता-पत्र "आक्रोश" के पिछले 13 अप्रैल के अंक में गुजरात के सुपरिचित कवियों की बहुत सारी कविताएं प्रकाशित हुईं। पुलिस ने उस अंक को जूट किया। उसका कहना था, उस अंक से स्वामी नारायण ! जिनके मंदिर में हरिजनों का प्रवेश निषिद्ध है! के अनुगामियों के दिल में चोट पहुँचाकर दंगे की स्थिति पैदा हो सकती है।

पुलिस का दायित्व यहीं छात्म नहीं हुआ, सम्पादक सहित चार व्यक्तियों के खिलाफ मुकदमा दायर किया तथा तलाशी के नाम पर उनके घरों को तहस-नहस किया। हाल में ज़मींदारों के गुंडा-गिरोह तथा पुलिस की चौकसी बढ़ी है। हालांकि जनवादी साहित्यकार तथा कलाकार भी जनता की मदद से प्रतिरोध छाड़ा करके अपना सांस्कृतिक कामकाज जारी रखा रहे हैं।

पिछले दिनों तेलुगु के कवि राजलोकन को सरकारी स्कूल के शिक्षक की नौकरी छोनी पड़ी। राज्य के शिक्षा विभाग की शिक्षायात थी कि "उन्होंने गरीबों के पक्ष में, कालाबाजारी तथा जमाखोरी के खिलाफ कविताएं लिखी हैं।"

एक तरह से पंजाब, बिहार तथा तमिलनाडु में सांस्कृतिक कार्यकर्ताओं पर प्रत्यक्ष तथा परोक्ष दबाव डाला जा रहा है। कुछ दिन पहले बिहार के "सिंहभूम एकता" के सम्पादक अजय मित्र को गिरफ्तार किया गया। "इनफिलाब जिन्दाबाद" नाटक के रचयिता तथा पंजाब के साहित्यपत्र "समता" के सम्पादक गुरुशरण सिंह को भी गिरफ्तार किया गया था।

यह हालांकि प्रियदर्शिनी छाप महान लोकतंत्र रक्षा के लम्बे हैं, मगर जो लोग जन संस्कृति कर्मकांड के एकमात्र कानूनी प्रोत्साहक तथा "अपसंस्कृति" के जाही दुश्मन हैं -- उन वामफ्रंट सरकारों की "जन-संस्कृति" प्रसार के प्रयासों पर जरा गौर किया जाये। केरल के स्वर्गीय मार्क्सवादी मंत्रिमंडल ने 1980 के 15 जुलाई को अलयालम के कवि सच्चिदानंदन, साहित्यिक मासिक "प्रेरणा" के सम्पादक, एक वकील तथा एक छात्र को गिरफ्तार किया। उनका गुनाह यूजीन पोतिए द्वारा रचित मजदूरों के गीत "इंटरनेशनल" गाँव के ज़रिए क्रांतिकारी विचारों का प्रचार करना था। 31 जुलाई को कवि सिविक चन्द्रन तथा सांस्कृतिक संगठन पीपुल्स क्लवरल फोरम के चार कार्यकर्ताओं को गिरफ्तार किया गया तथा उन्हें अपनी नौकरी से हाथा धोना पड़ा। औरतो का नंगा नाच अब तक बड़े होटल-रेस्तरांओं तक ही सीमित था -- वामपंथी सरकार ने उसका तथा जुए का जनवादीकरण करते हुए तमाम जिमा मुख्यालयों में आयोजित आल इंडिया एक्जीबिशन के प्रदर्शियों के जुए के साथ