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28 January, 1991

To

The Editor
Mainstream
Perspective Publications Pvt. Ltd.,
F-24, Bhagat Singh Market
New Delhi 110001

Sir:

I was astounded to see the second paragraph of your (presumably approving) quotation from Swami Vivekananda on the cover of your Republic Day Special. It reads:

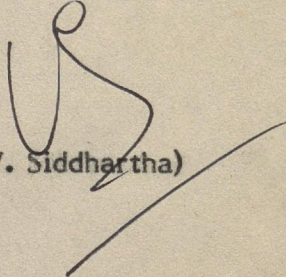
"A Brahmin is not so much in need of education as a Chandala. If the son of a Brahmin needs one teacher, that of a Chandala needs ten. For (emphasis added), greater help must be given to him whom nature has not endowed with an acute intellect from birth.....(etc)."

So, Vivekananda believed that the son of a Brahmin was, by virtue of being one, more intelligent, and therefore needed less instruction, than a son of a Chandala!

In the cow-belt, this is interpreted to mean "Don't bother with trying to educate the Chandala child, we have better use for our scarce teachers (The Vivekananda Factor (VR) being 0.1: EPW, do you savvy?). In the South, this is interpreted to mean "Don't bother with trying to educate the Brahmin child, he/she doesn't need it."

Who needs Burt, read Vivekananda!

Yours sincerely


(Dr. V. Siddhartha)

King Hussein of Jordan has exposed the US-British plans against Iraq in no uncertain terms. The following excerpt from his interview in late February to journalist Michael Emery speaks for itself:

ME: You seem convinced that this war resulted from a long-range US-British policy to weaken Iraq and Iran economically and allow a US-organised Gulf security force to control events in the region for decades. Is that a fair representation and if so, why?

King Hussein: Yes, I believe it is. Unfortunately, I've been convinced for a while that there was no effort to dialogue, no effort to reach a diplomatic solution and that there was preparation, from the word "go" for war.

This war was unprecedented in the scale of bombing by a superpower on a Third World state—enough to pulverise any country. Those like Norman Schwarzkopf who, after the war is over, seek to denigrate Saddam Hussein's military acumen, deliberately ignore the fortitude of the Iraqi people and their leadership who were able to withstand such savage bombing. And the world at large remained a silent spectator with most of the governments not even recording their sharp criticism of such barbarism. About the stance of our Chandra Shekhar Government the less said the better.

The role of the Soviet Union as having acquiesced in the crime hardly needs elaboration. It could have, if it had so desired, prevented the war from taking place by vetoing the US-sponsored resolution in the Security Council. It was necessary for Moscow to take a partisan stand in defence of peace and Third World

interests as it has done all along in the past. Even when the US Administration violated the limits set by the UN resolution by resorting to carpet bombing of Iraq (even napalm was used) in order to terrorise Saddam into submission, there were no strong protests from either Moscow or Beijing. What one heard were feeble critical notes only from Gorbachev.

The Soviets nowadays speak of "interdependence" and are striving their level best to be part of the "civilised West", a phrase coined in their "radical" media. However, the US by its very deeds in the Gulf war has furnished conclusive evidence of its barbaric proclivities to establish its sole hegemony in the world over. Contrast this with the civilised manner in which India conducted its war with Pakistan in 1971 that culminated in the birth of Bangladesh. There was no brutal bombing of the major Pak cities (nor was there any such attack from the side of Pakistan as well) during that conflict. Yes, we of the "uncivilised Third World" give a better proof of how deeply we cherish the human civilisation than the epitome of "Western civilisation" whose uncivilised behaviour—as glaringly revealed in the course of the Gulf war—is not a sudden development but a part of the psyche built by the sway of monopoly capital in the world's richest country—turned-largest debtor that systematically debase, degrade and devalue human life.

The price of only one thing continues to fall:
Man, who buys death in exchange of labour.

Mrityunjoy Kundu

□

COMMUNICATION

Chariot of the Lord

Mrinalini Sarabhai's piece ("Chariot of the Lord", *Mainstream*, Republic Day Special) I hope would bring peace all around us. The cult of militancy, sign of violence, chaos all around and war-mania would ruin the world and humanity. The Gulf war really has forced everyone to think in terms of 'humanity' and 'world welfare'. What science, technology and communication could not achieve the Gulf war has really forced each and every nation to think in terms of living in harmony and peace. The dream of Aurobindo would definitely come true.

Coimbatore

S.A. Srinivasa Sarma

Probing into Vivekananda

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51, Bharti Nagar, New Delhi

Dr V. Siddhartha

The Price of "Victory"

SUMIT CHAKRAVARTTY

The Gulf war is over. The guns have fallen silent. George Bush is enormously happy for having reinforced "pride in America" among his people although his principal aim of finishing off Saddam Hussein is yet to be accomplished.

At what price has this "victory" been achieved? The loss in human terms is still to be tabulated. But as Air Commodore Jasjit Singh, the Director of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, has written in *The Hindustan Times* (March 4):

US coalition estimates of Iraqi military casualties range between 85,000 and 100,000. However, no firm reports are available, except that 170 Iraqi wounded soldiers are being treated in allied hospitals. The 175,000 prisoners no doubt include additional injured troops. It is also likely that thousands of Iraqi soldiers are still adrift in the deserts of Kuwait and Iraq. Unless they get rounded up, their survival will become debatable within a matter of days. Many may have managed to escape northwards. But this may still leave upwards of 200,000 dead (out of the 321,000 missing at this stage)—a terrible loss of life for a nation of 18 million which has already lost perhaps 250,000 men in the recent war with Iran.

This gives some measure of the ferocity of the war unleashed by Bush and his multinational allies (not UN troops) in utter violation of the UN Security Council mandate that spoke only of ejecting Iraq from Kuwait "by all possible means" (and not pulverising Iraq with massive air strikes on military and civilian installations alike).

This was the first hi-tech push button war in human history brought live to the fortunate few in five-star hotels by the celebrated Cable News Network of the United States. As the noted cartoonist-cum-writer, Abu Abraham, quotes in a recent write-up from his daughter's letter from the US, the Americans watched the Gulf war on their TV sets as if they were viewing a baseball match. One had the same feeling when one watched the CNN a couple of times at five-star hotels in the Capital. It was nauseating in the extreme, the viewers' sensibilities dulled by the media's technological innovations. Even the horrifying scenes of the tragedy that marked the bombing of the Al-Amerieh air raid shelter in which over a thousand civilians (according to latest estimates) perished, failed to make any impact on those expressionless faces glued to the CNN while sipping whisky or gin. This is

the basic dehumanising aspect of this war—no less shocking than the war itself.

As far as our media is concerned, the criminal nature of the Gulf war was by and large ignored. However, there were some notable exceptions. And among these one must make a special mention of the New Delhi TV. This set-up, headed by Prannoy Roy, the main originator and anchorman of the programme, merits handsome compliments for having exposed the brutal face of war in general and this war in particular. In the process the real face of Bush was also unmasked, puncturing the moralist overtones that he adopted as per his characteristic trait. For example, it was most appropriate for Prannoy to reveal that the US President's "single action" of refusing to pay heed to the Gorbachev peace proposals and stubbornly persisting with the ground offensive alongside the incessant aerial bombardment of Iraq even after Saddam had declared that he was pulling out his troops from Kuwait "cost an additional 50,000 lives". It was equally refreshing to find the programme bringing into focus through eloquent visuals the horrendous devastation wrought by successive wars since the First World War before concluding with the moving lines of Pablo Neruda written in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War (carried below).

George Bush may gloat over having buried the "spectre of Vietnam in the desert sands of the Arabian peninsula". But the fact is that the world in general knows today that the war could have been avoided.

Nothing

Nothing, not even victory
will erase the terrible hollow of the blood:
nothing, neither the sea nor the passage
of sand and time, nor the geranium flaming
upon the grave.

Pablo Neruda

(From *Offended Lands*,
in *Spain in My Heart*, 1938)

Republic Day Special

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The upper classes will no longer be able to repress the lower, try they ever so much. The well-being of the higher classes now lies in helping the lower to get their legitimate rights...

A Brahmin is not so much in need of education as a Chandala. If the son of a Brahmin needs one teacher, that of a Chandala needs ten. For, greater help must be given to him whom nature has not endowed with an acute intellect from birth. It is a madman who carries coals to Newcastle...

Practical Advaitism, which looks upon and behaves to all mankind as one's own soul, was never developed among the Hindus... If ever any religion approached to this equality in an appreciable manner, it is Islam and Islam alone... I am firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind... For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope. I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body.

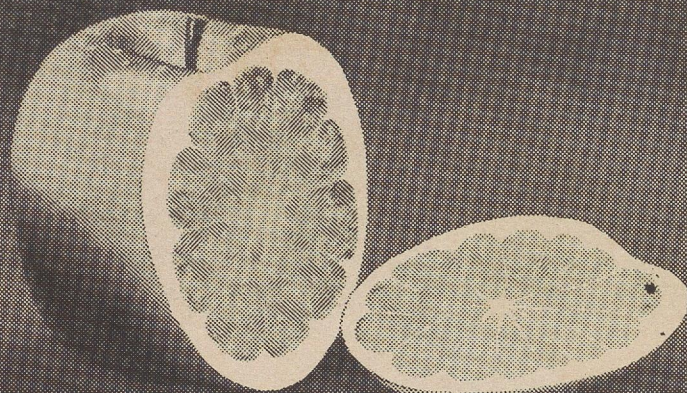
Swami Vivekananda

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Neither Apple nor Orange

*You can't judge SAIL by standards
made for others*

Understand it with us : Comparison is always between apple and apple. The public sector steel industry has its unique history, psychology and driving forces. That's why you can't interpret values in SAIL by standards set for others. We have our own aims and values dovetailed to the country's growth. We're open — our actions are constantly under public gaze. We don't sacrifice national priorities and interests for commercial gains. All the same, customer service and quality are top on our agenda. In a massive, far-flung State organisation, our most valuable asset is the 2.38 — lakh workforce who believe in our core values and are constantly striving for a better India — with a resolve of steel.

That's why SAIL is different



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