

oppressed by a foreign power as in Ireland or Poland).

The “final conflict” in our age is not between religious belief and unbelief. It is between the democratic form of secularisation, dedicated to the broadest religious tolerance, and the totalitarian forms of secularisation intolerant not only of religion but of all variations in art, philosophy and other works of the human spirit. In that struggle Whittaker Chambers and those who think like him are uncertain allies because of

their insistence on lumping all the “secularists”, all the “naturalists” together. Just as those who propagated the doctrine of Social-Fascism weakened the struggle against Fascism by splitting and confusing the ranks of those opposed to it, so today those who insist on lumping liberals with Communists—and humanists who are staunch defenders of religious freedom with the militant atheists of Iron Curtain countries—weaken the struggle against totalitarian Communism.

In No Time

Wednesday July the 26th
Nineteen seventy-two,
Which mayn't mean much to you,
Was—at least on a Buddhist view—
My dearest, deepest day.

Nothing whatever happened.
I didn't even breathe
—Literally! The whole seethe
Of love, hate, thought, faith
In world or woman wasn't.

We flew at mid-Pacific
In a flick—not even that:
No skip of the heartbeat
Or drop of the jet's note—
From 25th to 27th.

M 31 in Andromeda,
Northward blur of light
—The limit of naked sight—
Declared distance right:
But duration's by days!

Metaphysic? conceit?
Then why the odd feeling
Of the missed, conceived thing,
An absurd soft sting?
Ten thousand metres below

The International Date Line
Lay, abstract, upon a smooth-
looking, starlit wraith
Of a sea. Faintest froth
Outlined unnaturally

Regular walls—artefact
Of polyps, not thought,
Each, though, a seeming fort
Strung silent in support
On the Tongan approaches. . . .

Well, what (which I've not done)
Of those who gain a day
Going the other way
With the same date twice? Do they,
Would I, come to that,

“Have my time over again”
At least that once? Correct
Retrieved regret, perfect
A little some lapsed act
Of Nandi or Suva

In Papeete? But that's a mere
Thought, and I yet feel
As in a crazed way real
My lost unwasted shell
With whorls of nothing.

Days after one in the Nineteen-
blanks (or Twenty-blanks if I last
A little longer than most)
Will have the same taste
Perhaps: sweet or insipid?

What coronals of answers! . . .
As for that Wednesday the rest
Of you had but I missed
—Was mine really the best?
We arrive at ourselves.

Robert Conquest

EAST & WEST

Letter from India

By *Minoo Masani*

YOU HAVE ASKED ME for a postscript to the conclusions in my little book *Is JP the Answer?*, extracts from which I understand you are reproducing in ENCOUNTER. It is not an easy assignment at a time like this, but I feel like responding in view of my old association with ENCOUNTER and your own warm invitation.

Perhaps I should explain that I retired from active politics as far back as 1971. I have since attempted to view the scene, even when a good friend like Jayaprakash Narayan is involved, as a student of history and it is as a student of history that I have observed the sad events of the last four months in our country.

Under the heading of "The Prime Minister's Options", I sketched in my book the alternatives of a confrontation *à outrance* on the one hand and an adjustment between the Prime Minister and Jayaprakash Narayan on the other. Things have moved in a very different direction from what I had suggested was in the country's interest, but I must confess to being somewhat unrepentant on this point. It can hardly be claimed that what has happened during the past four months has proved my fears about the dangerous consequences of a clash to be unfounded.

MINOO MASANI, whose portrait of Jayaprakash Narayan appeared in the December issue of ENCOUNTER, is a Member of the Liberal International and a Member of the Executive Committee of the All-India P.E.N. Centre. He is the author of several books including "Our India", India's all-time bestseller.

Mr Masani withdrew from the Presidentship of the Swatantra Party, India's major opposition party, in 1971. In earlier years he participated in the struggle for India's independence, and was thrice imprisoned. A member of Parliament for over two decades, he has also been Mayor of Bombay, India's Ambassador to Brazil, and Chairman of the United Nations Sub-Commission for the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities.

True, some readers of the censored Press and users of the Government-controlled Radio and Television may perhaps be led to think so. Isn't everything quiet? Has not discipline been restored in the factory, the secretariat of government, and the campus, and have not illegal strikes been eliminated? Do not trains run on time? Is it not true that there has not been a single act of violence and that the Emergency has been welcomed by the people at large?

If that is so why, one may ask, are thousands, including men and women of influence in the country and the leaders of democratic parties, still imprisoned? Why are *détenus* under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act held in prison without a reason being given and without recourse allowed to the Courts of Law which are valiantly trying to perform their duties under the Constitution? Why are Jayaprakash Narayan and some other distinguished *détenus* kept incommunicado and denied company?¹ Why is it necessary for the Press to be fettered and denied the right to comment *inter alia* on the Emergency, on Parliamentary proceedings, and on the Supreme Court proceedings on the Prime Minister's case according to the latest guideline which is held out as a "relaxation" of press censorship?

The nature of this alleged relaxation is evidenced by the fact that even at the end of October the number of political prisoners, the arrest of individuals and the location of *détenus* were not allowed to be published in the newspapers. So too the very fact of censorship and the contents of the "guidelines" issued from time to time. In mid-October, I addressed in the capital of Gujarat—which possesses a non-Congress Government—an All-India Civil Liberties Conference attended by around 1,000 people, presided over by a former Chief Justice of India and inaugurated by a former Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court, who had also been a Cabinet Minister and an Ambassador. Next morning, not a line was allowed to appear about that event in the nation's Press. Is it any wonder that such a situation breeds a crop of rumours, many unfounded, which follow one another in quick succession?

AS EDITOR of a little monthly named *Freedom First*, I decided right from the start not to submit to the whims and fancies of the censor. I therefore suspended publication of the monthly and applied to the High Court of Bombay for a writ of mandamus against the censor. That was on

¹This was written shortly before the ailing Narayan was released on parole (in mid November) to obtain urgent medical attention.—ED. NOTE.