

THE IMPORTANCE OF DEMOCRACY

WHAT SHOULD COME FIRST, REMOVING POVERTY AND MISERY...

... OR GUARANTEEING POLITICAL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS?

WHICH THE POOR HAVE LITTLE USE FOR ANYWAY?

AAAH!... HEH! HEH! HEH! OLD ARGUMENTS!



NOW... IS IT SENSIBLE TO TREAT THEM SEPARATELY IN THE FIRST PLACE?

WHAT ABOUT ALL THE INTERCONNECTIONS BETWEEN ECONOMIC NEEDS AND POLITICAL FREEDOMS WE HAVE SEEN?

YES, BUT POVERTY IS OBVIOUSLY THE MOST PRESSING NEED, IF YOU ARE POOR!

THE INTENSITY OF ECONOMIC NEEDS ONLY ADDS TO THE URGENCY OF POLITICAL FREEDOMS!



LOOK AT POLITICAL FREEDOMS... THEIR DIRECT IMPORTANCE AFFECTS OUR MOST BASIC CAPABILITIES!

THEIR INSTRUMENTAL ROLE ENHANCES THE PEOPLES' CHANCE TO BE HEARD AND TO AFFECT POLICIES!..

THEIR CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE HELPS US TO UNDERSTAND WHAT OUR TRUE ECONOMIC NEEDS ARE!

WHAT WE CAN DO FOR OURSELVES!

OPEN POLITICAL DISCUSSION!

LEGITIMATE SOCIAL NEEDS!



BUT... IF THAT IS SO, WHY ARE SO MANY OF OUR LEADERS AGAINST POLITICAL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS?

DEMOCRACY IS INCLUSIVE, SO WE MUST ALL DISCUSS ISSUES! BUT MANY SUCH LEADERS JUST WANT US TO DO THINGS THEIR WAY, WITHOUT DISCUSSION!

WHAT? WHETHER WE LIKE IT, OR NOT? EH?!

WELL, THEY SAY... THAT THE PEOPLE ACTUALLY WANT IT THAT WAY...





WHO KNOWS? NOBODY EVER OFFERS PEOPLE THE FREEDOM TO REALLY DECIDE! BUT BOTSWANA HAS TRIED IT...

BOTSWANA IS ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING ECONOMIES IN AFRICA NOW!

DESPITE THE AIDS PROBLEM!



... AND BOTSWANA HAS BEEN AN OASIS OF DEMOCRACY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA FOR MANY YEARS! DEMOCRACY HELPS IT TO GROW!



THAT'S RIGHT! WE HAVE TO LOOK AT THE IMPACT OF DEMOCRACY ON THE LIVES AND CAPABILITIES OF PEOPLE... EVEN ON THE DEMAND FOR PUBLIC ACTION NEEDED...

... IN TIMES OF MAJOR DISASTERS, LIKE ALL FAMINES! IT'S THE INSTRUMENTAL ROLE OF DEMOCRACY!

IN THE MID-70s, INDIRA GANDHI DID PUT THINGS TO THE VOTE, TO JUSTIFY THE EMERGENCY IN INDIA, ALONG WITH THINGS LIKE COERCED STERILIZATION...



RIGHT!

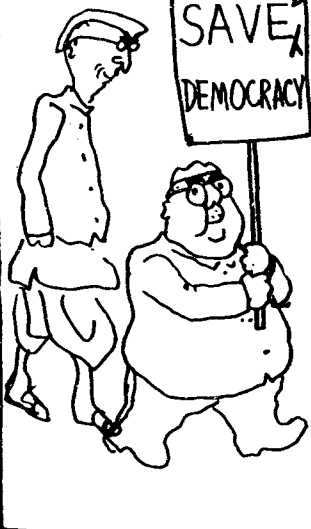


... BUT THE FREE PRESS, AND THE POLITICAL CULTURE, SURVIVED THE CENSOR, PREVAILING LATER A LITTLE AMENDED!

NOT TO BE PUBLISHED

PRIVATE VIEW

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'THE GAME OF EMERGENCY'
ABU ABRAHAM
VIKAS PRESS, 1977. 1872175

THE PEOPLE OF INDIA - AND THIS MEANS POOR PEOPLE - WERE AS KEEN ON CIVIL LIBERTIES, AS THEY WERE ON ECONOMIC RELIEF!

AND COMIC RELIEF!



YOU SEE! IF RULERS HAVE TO SEEK ELECTION AND LATER RE-ELECTION, THEY HAVE TO LISTEN TO WHAT PEOPLE SAY, AND HEAR WHAT THEY WANT.



AND THERE IS ALSO THE CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE OF OPEN DISCUSSIONS... THE INFORMATION EFFECT!

YES! AS YOUNG WOMEN COME TO UNDERSTAND THEIR ECONOMIC SITUATION, FERTILITY RATES DO COME DOWN, LIKE IN KERALA, WITHOUT COERCION!

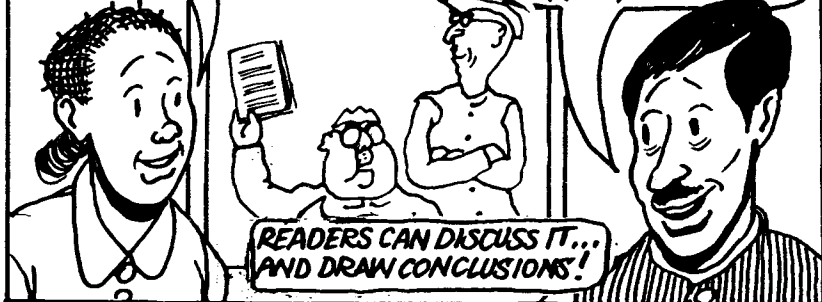


HAS DEMOCRACY GOT ANYTHING TO DO WITH, SAY, ILLITERACY?

OURS IS THE ONLY MANIFESTO THAT PROMISES NO EXCESSES

WELL, IT STRENGTHENS THE USE OF MODERN COMMUNICATIONS, AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, SO, YES, IT HAS!

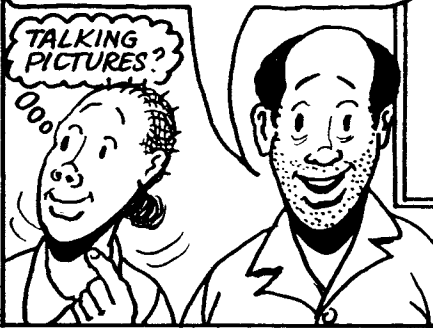
YES! DEMOCRACY HAS TO BE SEEN AS CREATING A SET OF REAL OPPORTUNITIES, AND THE USE OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES CALLS FOR THE WIDENING PRACTICE OF ALL DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL RIGHTS!



BUT, THE PEOPLE STILL HAVE TO DO IT THEMSELVES! GET IT?

SURE! DEMOCRACY SIMPLY PROVIDES THE RULES AND THE PROCEDURES - SAFEGUARDS THEM - SO THAT PEOPLE CAN GET ON WITH THEIR LIVES!

ORDINARY PEOPLE, LIKE US, HAVE TO MAKE DEMOCRACY WORK - BY PARTICIPATING IN IT! AND THAT EVEN INCLUDES THE OPPOSITION AND THOSE IN THE MINORITY!



THEY MAKE AN IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION! ALL VOICES NEED TO BE HEARD IN ANY PUBLIC DEBATE AND DISCUSSION...

... YES, SO THAT EVERYBODY UNDERSTANDS WHAT IS AT ISSUE, IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST!

THIS PLAYS A BIG ROLE IN DEVELOPING OUR SHARED SOCIAL VALUES, AND IN DETERMINING OUR PRIORITIES!



SO, TO SUM IT ALL UP, IT IS NOT ONLY IMPORTANT TO DEVELOP DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, IT IS ALSO VITAL THAT WE ALL PARTICIPATE!

YES! PRACTICE DEMOCRATIC WAYS IN OUR DAILY LIVES, AND WORK AT MAKING DEMOCRACY WORK!

REMEMBER, DEMOCRACY IS IMPORTANT FOR ITS OWN SAKE, NOT JUST BECAUSE IT HELPS IN ECONOMIC GROWTH!

