

Freedom First

48TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

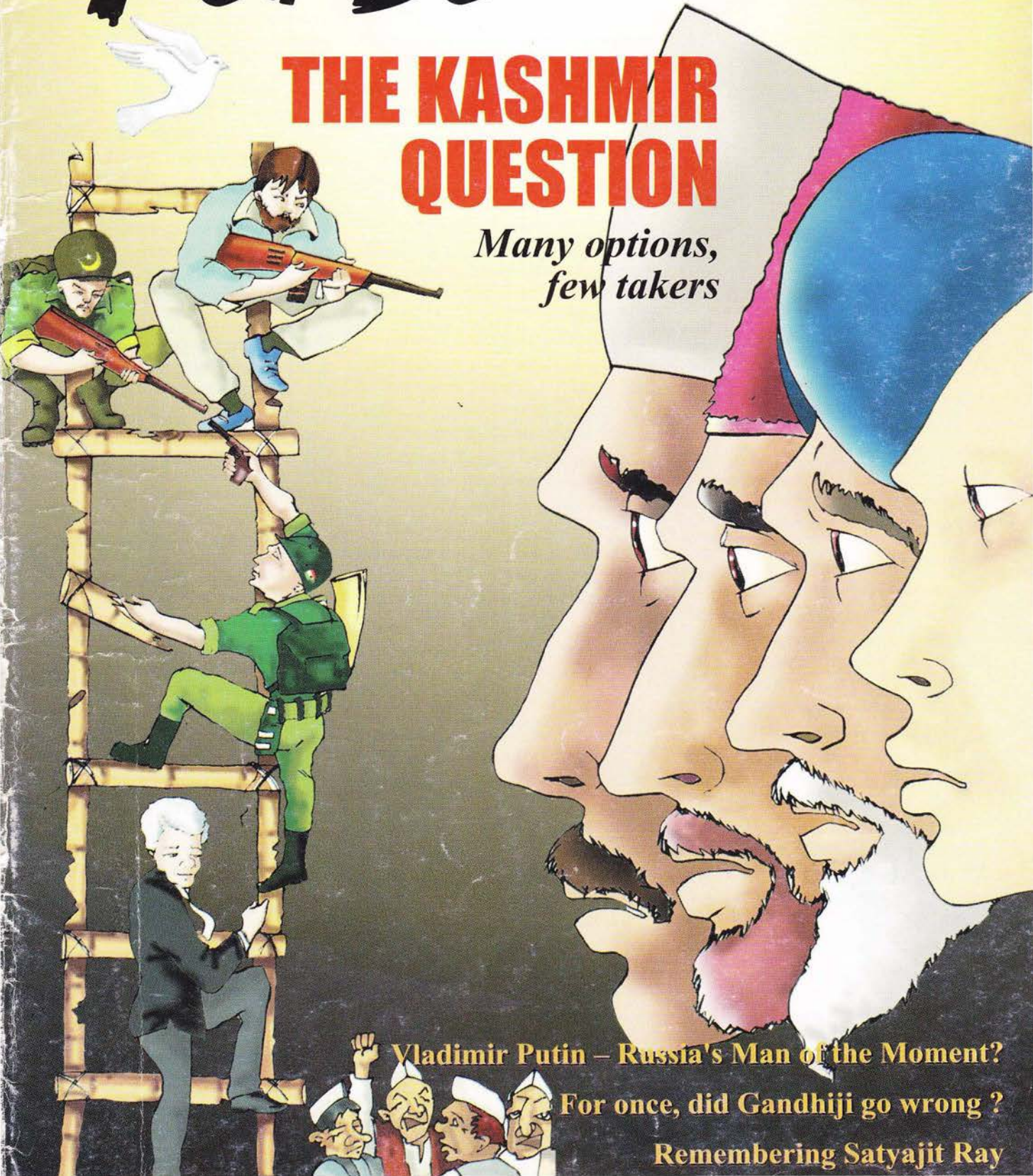
APRIL – JUNE 2000

No. 445

RUPEES TWENTY-FIVE

THE KASHMIR QUESTION

*Many options,
few takers*



Vladimir Putin – Russia's Man of the Moment?

For once, did Gandhiji go wrong?

Remembering Satyajit Ray

Justice Lentin : A Humane Judge



As a practising Advocate in the Bombay High Court, I have many happy memories of Justice Lentin who passed away on April 22, 2000. He was one of the humane Judges of our High Court. He was independent, fair and fearless – necessary qualities for every Judge.

In 1981, Mr. Antulay, the then Chief Minister of Maharashtra decided to beautify Bombay by forcibly evicting pavement and slum dwellers. He drafted the services of a fleet of S.T. buses and with the aid of police, planned to remove the pavement dwellers on July 21, 1981, when it was raining heavily. The information of the operation leaked out. Some of us Advocates who were active members of the Bombay Branch of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) drafted a Writ Petition on the morning of July 21, 1981 and moved it before Justice Lentin who was the Judge assigned for such work on that day.

On the early morning of July 21, the authorities had pushed into the S.T. buses whosoever were

available, including women and children, as the menfolk had gone to work, and destroying their humble shelters. The Kannada speaking people were to be dropped at Belgaum, Tamil speaking persons at Solapur and the Hindi speaking persons at Jalgaon.

Even though the operation had already started early morning, the kind-hearted Judge looked at the downpour outside the High Court and observed "in this wretched weather why does the Government forcibly evict the poor people from their humble shelters?" and granted us interim stay from further deportation and directed the Government and the B.M.C. to bring back the people from the destinations where they were dropped or about to be dropped and to rehabilitate them in their tarpaulin huts or humble sheds after reconstructing them, pending the hearing of the petition. The Judge personally visited the sites alongwith the lawyers.

There are many other memorable cases which Justice Lentin dealt with and decided. The most important was the Ahtulay Case in a Public Interest Litigation. They alleged that Antulay misused his powers as Chief Minister, collected huge donations in exchange for permits for cement which was not easily available at that time and founded a Charitable Trust in the name of Mrs. Indira Gandhi, by getting heavy contributions from the Government and sugar factories. Justice Lentin upheld these allegations, as a result

of which Antulay was compelled to resign as Chief Minister.

Justice Lentin also held the well-known enquiry at the J. J. Hospital to investigate the deaths of a number of eye patients due to the administration of adulterated drugs. The Judge held the enquiry openly and made adverse comments against the then Health Minister and a number of medical officers of the J. J. Hospital medical department.

Besides being a fearless and independent Judge, Justice Lentin was a thorough gentleman. It was a great pleasure to spend a few hours with him.

M. A. Rane

In a democracy, bad laws, like bad judges, are the worst form of tyranny. Men who have much to hope and nothing to lose become desperate, and it is here that danger lies. In recent years, our judicial system has much to answer for. The power of a judge is great; but then the greater the power, the more dangerous the abuse. If political power corrupts, judicial power corrupts absolutely. You need a steady hand and a level head.

We have judges who proclaim themselves to be committed judges. I am sure they mean committed to the Constitution they have sworn to uphold. That is character in democracy. Any other kind of commitment would be a danger to democracy.

Justice B. Lentin while addressing the Annual Meeting of the Leslie Sawhny Programme on May 16, 1990. The topic was: Can Democracy Endure without Character.

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BETWEEN OURSELVES ...

A solution to the Kashmir problem continues to elude us. There are many options but few takers. While India, Pakistan and organisations like the JKLF and the Hurriyat battle it out and the poor people of Kashmir are caught in the crossfire, a new dimension has been added – the entry of Islamic fundamentalists particularly the Taliban who don't give a damn how many people die or what the costs are in their campaign to Islamise. The misery of the Afghan people, particularly their women, is what awaits Kashmiris, should the Taliban succeed. Our cover feature deals with these and other aspects of a problem that continues to bleed the economies of India and Pakistan.

Not many have reacted to the new logo, but one of them who has, is a subscriber from far off Scotland. He approves. Thank you friend.

Our Next Cover Feature

The Cancer of Corruption – India a Terminal Case?

Last date to receive your contribution, Friday June 30.
We accept contributions by post, email - freedom@vsnl.com
or on a diskette (floppy)

An Appeal for Funds

We wrote in our last issue: "Some readers seem to forget that we are a Quarterly and are under the impression that we are a bi-monthly, because they phone or write to inquire why they have not received their copy in between one quarter and another. We would very much like to become a bi-monthly, but that means a financial commitment which we cannot take on unless you help us acquire the funds. For instance, if we have Rs.12 lakhs in fixed deposit, we would have an interest income of Rs.1,20,000/- which would enable us to publish six issues a year. Right now, we live a precarious hand to mouth existence.

"A well-wisher has made an offer. He would match rupee for rupee donations upto Rs.25,000/-. Cheques or drafts to be drawn in favour of ICCF (The Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom - our publishers)."

Donations received so far: Mr. G. M. Talpade Rs.1,000/-, Mr. A. Solomon Rs.1,000/-, Mr. Nirmal Raja Rs.500/-, an anonymous donor Rs.4,000/-. Total so far Rs.6,500/-. Our thanks to the donors. We look forward to many more readers coming forward with their donations.

Editor

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WITH MANY VOICES

*"The deep moans round with many voices. Come, my friends
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world" - Tennyson*

We are heading for a world in which the argument for free markets is not that they do it right, but that the alternatives are worse.

Paul Krugman, Professor Economics, M.I.T.,
Fortune, August 16, 1999

We badly need social justice, but this must ultimately be achieved through good governance for all, not a division of spoils among rogues of all communities.

Swaminathan S. A. Aiyar,
The Sunday Times of India, January 30

We are losing on character and on our secular fabric. Every two years they want me to prove my loyalty to the country.

Filmstar Dilip Kumar, *The Times of India*, March 21

Walk into Parliament House for the first time, and you wonder if you're at Pragati Maidan. Watching a car show for industrialists and business tycoons.

Mohan Sahay, *The Statesman*, April 28

The outstanding feature of the Central Government Budget 2000-2001 is that the country is living beyond its means. Various nomenclatures of "deficit" - Revenue, Fiscal and Primary - cannot hide this ugly fact.

M. R. Pai in a letter to the press, March 8

Terrorism is a disease whose cure is as long drawn out and painful as the disease itself. The mistake the State always makes is to treat terrorism as an enemy rather than an illness. An enemy is fought, a disease is treated.

V. M. Tarkunde, *The Radical Humanist*, May 2000

One Culture (in the BJP's political document of 1998) I submit is antithetical to the text and philosophy of our Constitution.

Solicitor Fali Nariman, *Asian Age*, May 4

Cricket in many ways represents the soul of India. It is one of our unifying factors cutting across economic, class and religious barriers.

Aroon Purie, editor-in-chief, *India Today*, April 2

...Bharat Mata is no longer *sujalam, sufalam, malayaja sitalam* (a land abundant in fresh water, fruits and mountain scented breeze) only because of bad governance and not because of poverty.

(The words in italics are from India's national song *Vande Mataram* - ed.)

Tavleen Singh, *India Today*, April 3

The Indian state has variously been careless, incompetent, arbitrary and irresponsible under different political dispensations. But it is not soft.

K. P. S. Gill, *Outlook*, January 17, 2000

Modern slavery differs from the past in one special way; slaves today are cheaper than ever in human history. In the same way that mass production lowered the cost of what we buy, overpopulation has made slaves plentiful, cheap and disposable.

Kevin Bales, *Index on Censorship*, 1/2000

Who will bell the cat (extortionists)? The network is deep-rooted and has become an integral part of the system. We are just safety pins fighting against razors in a climate of extortion.

A senior police official quoted in an article entitled *Law Makers Turn Law Breakers*, *Common Cause*, Vol. XIX No.2



'We' and 'They'

This talk of 'we' and 'they' is very dangerous talk. To blame 'them', the politicians or the government, for everything is not fair because we all have to share the guilt and the responsibility. A kind of void is there among us. People waiting to be led, waiting for a sign. The younger generation is singularly uninterested in public affairs, contemptuous rightly of their elders who have made a mess of affairs. They do not feel any respect for us. Every time the Government's powers are enlarged, more things can be done by 'them' to 'us'. They make the things we buy, the news we hear, the radio we hear, the rules we observe, they run schools and colleges, they are usually faceless. What I am trying to suggest is that this 'we' and 'they' is all wrong. We are all 'they'. If 'they are guilty', then reach one of us is guilty, even if he is not a politician. The daily exercise of vigilance is the price of liberty.

MINOO MASANI, January 18, 1969

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

The Drought

We Indians are no strangers to drought. Each year, it makes its appearance in some part of the country or the other. But thanks to modern means of transport and above all, a relatively free media, news of drought conditions in any part of India travels fast, and we are able to minimize, if not prevent, starvation deaths among the rural poor. Also there have been plentiful rains in the last ten years. An unusual bounty from nature. But this time on, it took the state governments (Andhra, Gujarat and Rajasthan) and the central government eight long months to take notice and act. Prem Shanker Jha correctly describes this as a "failure worse than Kargil". Village and district officials, he points out, must have reported to their state governments concerned that the rains had failed and ground water levels were very low and the local and regional press must have carried reports of the oncoming drought. Yet nothing was done. Observes Jha: "It is a measure of the growing insularity of the national media, especially the English press, that none of its gatekeepers sensed a story and followed it up".

He points out how in 1966 when the rains failed in Bihar, JP's Sarvodaya workers sounded warning bells, the *Hindustan Times* broke the story and JP's appeals for help evoked tremendous response. Why did this not happen this time. In the first place, we no longer have men of the calibre of Jayaprakash Narayan in our midst, and secondly, "In 1966 ... the lowliest bureaucrat had a sense of shared purpose. The drought reveals, as the intelligence failure at Kargil did last year, that this is what the nation's elite has come close to losing".

And of course, there is the question of priorities. TV and media are obsessed with things like cricket match-fixing - as if our future depended on it or beauty contests. These have been hogging the headlines in the last few months and occupied endless hours of prime time TV. Why? Because the purveyors of news find that this is what sells - not boring stories of people and cattle in rural India dying of thirst and hunger or of farmers committing suicide when crops fail and the debt burden became unbearable. As for governments at the Centre and the states, their first concern is survival and such other preoccupations like saving Hinduism from the massive Christian onslaught!

Should We or Should We Not!

The civil war in Sri Lanka has now been raging for well over 25 years. Before the violence erupted there were very reasonable Tamil leaders who were prepared to work out some kind of autonomy. The Sri Lankans were intransigent. Now 10 years after the ill-fated IPKF experience, the Sri Lankans, driven to a corner in Jaffna not very far from the Indian coastline are seeking help. Should we or should we not, is the big question.



That we should not send our boys is the near unanimous view of most Indians. On the other hand, we could be part of a SAARC or a UN contingent. Why not. But this would mean that Sri Lanka should be open to a resolution of the dispute by initially agreeing to a large measure of autonomy, a federal set up for a trial period followed by a referendum if the federal set-up does not work, to ascertain the will of the Tamils - Eelam or Autonomy. However there can and should not be any accommodation with the LTTE's Prabhakaran. He is wanted as an accessory to the murder of an Indian Prime Minister and thousands of others in his own country. We should not countenance deals with assassins. We should encourage Sri Lanka to reign in their Buddhist monks to be more tolerant and to be less chauvinistic, and to begin talking with the moderate Tamils just as we should do with the moderates in Kashmir.

Misleading the Public

The *Times of India* of May 6 carried a report under the heading "Swatantra party to merge with NCP without Sharad Joshi".

The General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, Maharashtra (which is different from the Swatantra Bharat Party founded by Mr. Sharad Joshi) in a clarification to *The Times of India* pointed out:

"The heading is misleading. The report refers to the Swatantra Bharat Party founded in the early nineties by Mr. Sharad Joshi and not to the Swatantra Party, Maharashtra. The two are different entities.

"The Swatantra Party, Maharashtra was founded in 1959. It was part of the Swatantra Party which split in 1974. The Swatantra Party, Maharashtra decided not to merge with the Bharatiya Kranti Dal, and later the Janata Party.

"In 1989, the Representation of the People Act was amended making it mandatory for political parties to register with the Election Commission for purposes of allocation of a symbol. The Swatantra Party, Maharashtra applied for registration. The Election Commission however rejected the application on the ground that the Swatantra Party,

Maharashtra was not prepared to swear allegiance to socialism as required by Section 29(A) of the amended Act ... the Swatantra Party, Maharashtra filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court on December 15, 1994 ... which is still pending.

Nowhere in the report by Mr. Prakash Joshi of *The Times of India News Service* is there reference to the Swatantra Party, Maharashtra but to the Swatantra Bharat Party. Since our writ petition is pending in the Bombay High Court, and your report could be used to mislead the Court, we expect you will show us the courtesy of publishing this correction to set the record straight".

Needless to say such courtesy was not shown.

As one of the two petitioners (the other petitioner passed away recently), I spoke to *The Times of India's* chief of bureau. He said he had discussed the heading with his colleagues and the reference was not to any particular party. Hence they had taken care to see that in the words Swatantra party the 'S' was in upper case and the 'p' in lower case! So my fears were unfounded and would not mislead the court. When I requested him to publish the letter, he said that he did not deal with letters to the editor and suggested I refer to the editor. The editor of *The Times of India* did not publish the letter. To those of you who read this, I ask - was the response of *The Times of India* fair?

We publish this in this journal to set the record straight.

And while on this subject, *The Indian Express* of April 25 carried a report from Nagpur that Mr. Sharad Joshi "admitted that the formation of Swatantra Bharat Party (SBP) was the biggest mistake committed by him." I asked Mr. Joshi if this statement attributed to him was true. He said it was except that he did not use the word "biggest" and also followed it up with reasons why he thought it was a mistake. I would like to deal with this - but in the next issue of *Freedom First*.

B. R. Shenoy Memorial Essay Competition

The Centre for Civil Society has organised a national essay competition in memory of the eminent economist Dr. B. R. Shenoy, on the topic "**Markets, Morality and Prosperity**". The competition is open to the general public including school and undergraduate students.

The topic is placed in the context of Sauvik Chakraverti's book "*Antidote: Essays against the Socialist Indian State*".

The length of the essay for the general public 3,000 words; for school students 2000 words.

Late date for submission: June 30.

For other details and submission of entries contact Centre for Civil Society, 112, Kailash Colony, New Delhi, 110 048 or by email to ccs@ccsindia.org. Phone : 011-6468282.

SVR

A Visual History of the Twentieth Century With a Difference

We have been treated to hundreds of photographs to remind us of events and personalities of the 20th century. *INDEX ON CENSORSHIP* (6/99) takes us through "much less familiar history" and offers a "very different version of the past hundred years." These are of "photographs that were banned or manipulated, photos blatantly used for propaganda, images of the body that disturb, records of events we are not supposed to know about, incidents we'd rather forget." We reproduce just a page that we thought would interest you.



Calcutta British India 1943. The Bengal famine completely hidden by the British during WWII for fear of alienating this crucial region on the border of Japanese-occupied Burma, was one of the worst on record, compounded by the diversion of food supplies to British troops.
Credit: Hulton Getty Picture Collection.



North Korea 1998. One of North Korea's best kept secrets. Despite international warnings of impending famine as early as 1995, the authorities refused food aid. By 1999, estimates from South Korea put the death toll at around one million.

Credit: Buddhist Shining Movement

THE KASHMIR QUESTION

Many Options, Few Takers

This is a report based on the proceedings of a discussion held on March 18. In fact this is the third of its kind on Kashmir organised by Freedom First. The first two were held in July 1990 and July 1995. The increase in terrorism, the injection of fundamentalist forces and the Kargil war clearly indicate a worsening of the situation. Kashmir represents, more than ever, a powder keg that could lead to an explosion that can destroy both our countries.

The discussions indicated that there were indeed a number of options. Some participants even went to the extent of saying that a solution to the Kashmir problem was easier than solutions to such problems as poverty alleviation, provision of drinking water and primary education! But, they added, first, we Indians must accept that there is a Kashmir problem! Interestingly many more opted for plebiscite than was the case at the earlier two seminars. This by itself is a hopeful sign.

There was encouraging response to our request to readers to participate in the discussion or send in their comments. This report is a mix of both. To the extent possible, we have sought to integrate the contributions received with the comments made by the participants. We trust you will find the report worth the time you will have spent reading it and, of course your views are welcome - as always.

Editor

Why the Promise of a Plebiscite

On 15 August 1947 when the British quit, partitioning the Indian Empire into India and Pakistan there were 565 princely States in the sub-continent. The British Government announced that with their departure, these princely States which owed allegiance to the British Crown would become independent. They were free to choose whether to remain independent, or integrate with India or Pakistan. Of these, 554 princely States were within India's boundaries. By the time the new Constitution was adopted on 26 January 1950 all these Princely States had been integrated into the Indian Union through individual treaties hammered out under what came to be known as Instruments of Accession to the Indian Union.

During this process of integration the hurdles were the princely States of Travancore (now part of Kerala) and Hyderabad (now part of Andhra Pradesh). The rulers in both these princedoms sought to choose Independence. They failed. The Nawab of Junagadh sought to merge his State with Pakistan. He failed as his people rose in revolt. The ruler fled to Pakistan and Junagadh is now part of Gujarat. The only problem that is a leftover of British rule is Jammu and Kashmir. It has remained a bone of contention between India and Pakistan, bleeding the economies of both countries.

Those who would like a dispassionate ball-by-ball account of the events leading to the integration of these princely States in general and the decision of the

Hindu ruler of Jammu and Kashmir with a Muslim majority to integrate with India, would be well advised to read a first hand account in Mr. V. P. Menon's 'Integration of the Indian States' published by Orient Longman. The following extract is from that book and explains why, despite the Kashmir ruler's voluntary accession to India, India promised a plebiscite to ascertain the will of the people of Kashmir.

"India's stand with regard to Kashmir will not be understood by those who are determined not to understand it. Even among friends and well-wishers of India, there are some who believe that India was wrong in accepting the accession of Kashmir. They argue that since the country was partitioned on the basis of the 'two-nations' theory, Kashmir with its predominantly Muslim population should have gone to Pakistan.

"Whatever views Jinnah and the Muslim League might have preached before the partition, the Congress leaders in agreeing to the partition did not endorse the 'two-nations' theory. If the division was on the basis of the Muslims being a nation separate from the Hindus and the rest, the Muslims who still remain in India would have become aliens - a proposition which is unthinkable. Further, if the country had been partitioned on the 'two-nations' theory, what necessity was there for holding a plebiscite in the North-West Frontier Province with its 90 per cent Muslim population, or for consulting the legislatures in Bengal and Punjab? The

THE KASHMIR QUESTION : Many Options, Few Takers

separation of predominantly Muslim areas from the rest of India was in the nature of a political division. The arrangement was that Pakistan would retain and look after its minorities, while India would do the same with regard to the Muslims. Thirty-five million Muslims still continue as citizens of India* and this would not have been possible on any other basis.

"Reverting to the 'two-nations' theory, what justification was there for Jinnah's attempt to secure the accession of the predominantly Hindu States of Jodhpur and Jaisalmer? That he failed to secure their accession was not through any lack of effort on his part. At least, in the case of these two States, he could have pleaded geographical contiguity, but even that was wanting in the case of Junagadh. When the Government of Pakistan accepted the accession of Junagadh, where the population was over 85 per cent Hindu, the 'two-nations' theory stood itself repudiated.

"When accepting the accession of Junagadh, the Government of Pakistan emphasised that in their opinion the ruler of a State had an absolute right to accede to either of the Dominions. But when the Maharajah of Jammu and Kashmir acceded to India, the Government of Pakistan denied that right to him. On the other hand, the attitude of the Government of India on the question of accession had always been consistent. They held that where there was a conflict between the ruler and the people on the issue of accession, the will of the people must ultimately prevail. That was the position taken up in Junagadh. In Kashmir, unlike Junagadh, the ruler's decision to accede to India was supported by the premier political organisation in the State – the National Conference. Nevertheless, the Government of India unilaterally announced that the people of Kashmir must decide their own fate after the tribal raiders had been driven out and law and order had been restored to normal. This was an offer by India to the people of Kashmir; Pakistan did not come into the picture.

"Personally, when I recommended to the Government of India the acceptance of the accession of the Maharajah of Kashmir, I had in mind one consideration and one consideration alone, viz., that the invasion of Kashmir by the raiders was a grave threat to the integrity of India. Ever since the time of Mahmud Ghazni, that is to say, for nearly eight centuries, with

but a brief interval during the Moghul epoch, India had been subjected to periodical invasions from the north-west. Mahmud Ghazni had led no less than seventeen of these incursions in person. And within less than ten weeks of the establishment of the new State of Pakistan, its very first act was to let loose a tribal invasion through the north-west. Srinagar today, Delhi tomorrow. A nation that forgets its history or its geography does so at its peril.¹

An Unfulfilled Promise

"...So while the accession was complete in law, and in fact, the other fact which has nothing to do with the law also remains namely, our pledge to the people of Kashmir - if you like to the people of the world - that this matter can be reaffirmed or cancelled or cut out by the people of Kashmir State if they so wish.

We do not want to win people against their will and with the help of armed force. And if the people of Kashmir so wish it, to part company from us they can go their way and we shall go our way. We want no forced marriages, no forced unions like this..."

(Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, addressing Parliament on August 7, 1952)

So we promised plebiscite because we wanted to safeguard our right to deny the Ruler's sole right to decide. It is also true that we promised plebiscite not once but reiterated the promise for the next ten years as the final solution. It was after 1956 that the then Union Home Minister Govind Ballabh Pant declared that the promise of plebiscite no longer stood. And, over the years, the Indian position has hardened.²

Since then, most Indian political parties and governments assert that Kashmir is an integral part of India and on this there can be no compromise. This stand is incorrect. There is a Kashmir problem and the only solution is to fulfil what we promised – a plebiscite.

We must, if it comes to that, act unilaterally and hold a plebiscite. As the Indian government is in possession of a larger part of the Kashmir Valley, Jammu, Leh and Ladakh, we should redeem our pledge by holding a free and fair referendum for the people of the Kashmir valley, Jammu, Leh and Ladakh, permitting the people from the three regions to vote separately as to whether they want to accede to India, or Pakistan or they want *azaadi* (freedom). If we do this, the Government of Pakistan will be compelled to follow.³

Mr. V. P. Menon (the late) wrote this account in 1955.

THE KASHMIR QUESTION : Many Options, Few Takers

But it can be argued that just as India's Constituent Assembly determined India's political future, Jammu and Kashmir also had a Constituent Assembly which, on 17th November 1957, adopted a Constitution called the Jammu and Kashmir State Act. Section 3 of that Act says that the State of Jammu & Kashmir shall be an integral part of India. Therefore the Kashmiris, have already ratified the instrument of accession and decided that accession to India is final. Does this not amount to a plebiscite?⁴

To say that the Constituent Assembly of Kashmir has ratified accession is ridiculous. That Constituent Assembly of Kashmir was a sham. It was wholly controlled by the Indian establishment. Moreover the other half of Kashmir was not represented.

Do the Kashmiris Hate Indians ...

That the Kashmiri people, especially the Kashmiri Muslims hate India and the Indian government is a fact of life. How else are the militants able to escape detection in Kashmir. 10,000 militants have been killed in the last ten years. Yet we have not been able to quell militancy? Why? Because people in the Kashmir Valley support them.

Why does the Kashmiri Muslim hate the Indian government? Because of so much of misrule in the state; so much of corruption; the resort by the Indian National Congress which was in power for 40 years in Delhi, to massive fraudulent electoral practices to ensure that stooges of the central government got into power. It was

also because for over 20 long years, Sheikh Abdullah was kept in jail by the Indian government.

Moreover whenever Indians, particularly those who favour holding on to Kashmir at any cost, talk about Kashmir, they treat it as a piece of property. We seem to forget that there are people who inhabit that part of the sub-continent. We insist on controlling them so that we can hold on to the property called Jammu and Kashmir.⁵

.. Of Course Not!

On the other hand, if we are really hated by the Kashmiris how is that we did not have a single case of sabotage during that war. Who provided us the manpower to keep our pickets going? They were all Kashmir Muslims. Even at Kargil today the stuff moves up on porters and ponies supplied by the Kashmir Muslims.

Who are the people of J & K? Only the Kashmiri Muslims? Or the Dogras, Ladakhis and Valley Sikhs as well or the so-called 'jehadis' who are engaged in the ethnic cleansing of the Valley. The first traditional inhabitants who were forced to leave were the Kashmiri Pandits who, for ages had lived in harmony with their Muslim brethren. Let us not forget that Adi Shankaracharya visited the Valley long before Islam came to Kashmir and if evidence is needed, there are the relics of his temples on the Uri-Baramulla-Srinagar Road and at Martand. Having succeeded in doing so, these so called 'jehadis' next directed their attention to the Valley Sikhs, hitherto untouched, by mowing down in cold blood 35 innocent Sikhs who till then never had any problems in the Valley. The Pakistani game plan is evident: get rid of all non-Muslims from the Valley so that if and when a plebiscite is held the results will be a foregone conclusion.⁷

The Punjab Model

Even ten years back at the height of the Khalistan movement in the Punjab few would have predicted that the situation would return to normal. The fact is that when the Government is weak, and loses control, the people either sit on the fence or side with the militants. That happened in the Punjab. But when the situation changed the Sikhs of the Punjab were with India not with Khalistan any longer.

A similar situation can be created in Kashmir. As

What Would Gandhiji Have Done?

Question:

Supposing Gandhiji had been alive today, would he not have gone on fast to force the government of India to hold a plebiscite as promised?

S. V. Raju

Answer:

It is difficult to say what Gandhiji would have done but he would certainly not have sat quiet all these years. He would perhaps have thought of going on fast. If Pakistan had allowed it he would perhaps have gone to Pakistan. In fact he had expressed a desire to do that once. He would certainly have tried his level best to see this question was solved one way or another. And certainly not by violence.

Dr. Usha Mehta

THE KASHMIR QUESTION : Many Options, Few Takers

for holding a plebiscite, just imagine what is likely to happen if the plebiscite goes against India. It would break the secular fabric of the country; it would create a holocaust for the 120 million Muslims who live in India. If the Muslims of Kashmir decide to join Pakistan or be independent there would be a demand within India that all Muslims in India should be thrown out. We must consider this possibility.⁸

Isn't this talk of giving freedom to let the people of Kashmir decide, has a great deal of idealism in it? In the real struggle for power, these things do not happen. The day we lose control over Kashmir, do you imagine that Kashmir will remain independent?

The Youth of Kashmir

Two years ago, a group of Kashmiri students visited Mumbai and stayed here for about a week. These youngsters were of the opinion that Kashmir should be left alone. And when someone asked them if in their view an independent Kashmir would be viable if India withdrew and would Pakistan let an independent Kashmir survive, their answer was 'we will face it when it comes.'

Regardless of the insurgency and trans-border terrorism, we should take to Kashmir things over which there is no quarrel. Education, for example. Let us establish in Kashmir, institutions of excellence which provide job opportunities and attract people from the rest of India to go there. If we think we are going to win over the feelings of the Kashmiris overnight, it is not going to happen. But if we are going to provide them things which will help them improve their lot they will be inclined to take a more positive view of their future. Therefore we need to give more attention to the youth of Kashmir - offering them options for their future development and growth.⁹

Some fifteen years ago, just out of curiosity, we went into what would happen if a plebiscite was held.

The surprising outcome was that 45% would vote for India, 30% for Pakistan and 25% for independence. Not that there has been any big change since then. To think that the Kashmiri people have gone totally against India would be making a cardinal mistake.¹⁰

The internal situation prevailing in Kashmir has deteriorated alarmingly, but the facts have been shoved under the carpet by government propaganda and by our own mistaken sense of patriotism. During the last decade, militants have killed 8037 civilians and 2085 security personnel. More than two thousand civilians have died in cross firing. The security forces claim to have eliminated 10,816 militants. More than 34,000 persons have been detained for varying durations of time. What is most surprising is that not a single militant has been convicted and punished. Witnesses refuse to testify and the judges and the lawyers have been so intimidated that the entire judiciary has been petrified into impotency. If all this is not a working definition of anarchy, then nothing can properly and accurately describe the ground realities obtaining in the state. We hardly grasp the gravity of the situation or the complexity of the problem that Kashmir is, unless we follow the lead of two Indian stalwarts, Jayaprakash Narayan and Minoo Masani. They were the only Indians who had a clear understanding of the problem. More importantly, they were bold and honest enough to voice their opinions without any fear.

Let us admit that our view on Kashmir is not shared by the world community. Contrary to what is being dinned into our ears day in and day out, the world does not accept that Kashmir is an integral part of India, but as a disputed territory between India and Pakistan. The UN maintains a regular and functioning office in Srinagar and also maintains a few defunct military observers in that State. Kashmir has been a subject matter of several lengthy resolutions in the Security Council of the UN.¹¹



When resources are so limited and the need so vast, a country in India's position must endeavour more actively to settle its disputes with its neighbours. I am not persuaded that this has been done, or that even an internal problem like that of Kashmir, which has cost us so dearly and continues to do so has been attempted to be solved with courage and imagination.

Jayaprakash Narayan, *Towards Total Revolution*, Vol.3

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Who Gave Kashmir A Separate Identity?

Right from the word 'go', we have done everything under the sun to make the whole world believe that, Kashmir was not an integral part of India to the same extent as the other States were. Sheikh Abdullah was installed as Kashmir's first Prime Minister and not as another Chief Minister, thus placing him on par with the Prime Minister of India. This was followed by a special status granted to Kashmir under Article 370 of the Constitution, to provide for its 'traditions' and 'susceptibilities' which were said to be peculiar to it.

We even allowed, and still do, the Srinagar radio station to identify itself as Radio Kashmir, and not as All India Radio, Srinagar, on the lines of all other radio stations in India. As if this was not bad enough, in the early stages, we went to the extent of allowing Kashmir to have a separate Constitution, a separate flag, and also a separate anthem. Of course, the last straw which broke the proverbial camel's back, was, when we took the case to the UN, to clear our own doubts whether Kashmir was really a part of India. We agreed to a plebiscite to resolve this issue.

The question is, if as we now claim and take it for granted that, there has never been any doubt about the accession of Kashmir to India, then what was the need to do all the above, and in the process, allowing our credibility to be suspect in the eyes of the entire world? Even at the expense of sounding unpatriotic, the specific question to be answered is, that if after 50 years of keeping Kashmir legally, constitutionally, and more so emotionally, separate from India, how can we still keep on harping on the inane and time worn cliché of Kashmir being an integral part of the Indian culture, ethos and its national lifestream.

Ever since Independence, even at the expense of draining our own meagre economy, we kept on pouring crores of rupees in that Valley, in the hope that we could wean over its people to our side. We have waged three wars with Pakistan over it, and an entire Army

The weakness of India's position in Kashmir is not that its most loyal leader in Kashmir, Farooq Abdullah has reached the lowest possible ebb of his popularity. But it lies in the near collapse of a democratic and secular alternative to him.

Balraj Puri, *Human Rights*, Sept -Oct 1999

formation is located there in a constant state of readiness. We have experimented with different political systems, and have changed governors galore, in the hope of seeing even a small flicker of light in that Vale's dark tunnel, but so far, there has not been even a glimmer of that hope. If anything, things have deteriorated.

Why Can't We Talk?

Why are we afraid to talk to Pakistan, giving the cross-border terrorism as an excuse for not doing so. The question to be answered is, if Israel and Palestine can talk in spite of bombing and even air strikes still going on, and if North and South Ireland can talk in the midst of killing which is still prevalent, why can't we talk?

Brig. (Retd.) N. B. Grant

We keep on blaming Pakistan for many of the troubles of our own making. We accuse Pakistan of organising training camps for terrorists along the Kashmir border, a fact that is true, and now has not been denied even by the US and the UK. However, what is our own record? Although the oppression and genocide of East Pakistanis was Pakistan's own internal problem, didn't India organise the Mukti Bahini and send our troops into East Pakistan to 'liberate' Bangladesh, as Pakistan is now claiming of 'liberating' Kashmir? Even if we succeed to hold onto Kashmir through the military and the police, and by passing legislation, unless we can hold that State emotionally, we are not holding it at all, and unfortunately, that emotional tie ceased to exist two decades ago.

The latest scenario today appears to be that, even the P5 and G8 countries are veering to the idea that, ultimately, the Kashmir issue must be resolved by the two parties themselves, without third party mediation. However, the hitch here is that, in the proposed bilateral talks, whereas Pakistan wants Kashmir to be discussed first before any other issues, India wants all other issues to be resolved first, before discussing Kashmir. The question to be asked is, what are these other issues which India wants to discuss? The pertinent question to be answered is, why are we hedging, discussing Kashmir 'first' and putting every other issue, if there be any, in the back burner? The answer to that question is, except for Kashmir, there are no other issues.

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Talk Peace, Not War

In the last 25 or 30 years our principal diplomatic effort in the world has been to prevent any kind of outside mediation. Why is it we consider our greatest diplomatic success to be our success in keeping outside people out of any discussion on this. I believe this is because we are so unsure of our case.

The problem is that in any discussion on Kashmir we tend to lose our bearings because of the villainy from across the border. Because Pakistan misbehaves, we say there won't be a plebiscite. The question is not whether Pakistan misbehaves or India misbehaves. The real issue is what do the people of Kashmir want. If we are sure of ourselves we should welcome international mediation into this problem. By failing to allow this we are depriving ourselves as a nation, the opportunity to develop our country. This year our Defence budget has gone up by Rs.13,000 crores, simply because we want to be strong enough to resist Pakistan.

There is something going wrong with the psyche of the Indian people. Gone are the days when we talked of adjustments, compromise and considering the other person's point of view. All we want now is to build up the army. And, in a peculiar way, we are all preparing for war. We are being pushed into it by the defence analysts, by the newly formed National Security Council. All these persons are not elected representatives. They do not have to face the electorate and seek their vote. They can say anything that they like. What I feel is that these shouts of belligerence that are coming out of our country could land us in a terrible conflict. We have got to make sure that we pursue the path of peace; that we do not think in terms of war at all because we are

too poor a nation to go to war. If 30% of our people are below the poverty line what will happen to them if we are going to spend all our money fighting each other. That we have to think in terms of peace not war is the one lesson that comes out of Kargil.¹³

Learn from History

Let us realise that war will not solve this problem. Now that both the countries are nuclear, it is all the more true. We cannot solve this even if we go ahead and get chemical and biological weapons. We must realise that the USA fought in Vietnam for 25 years without success and the same happened with the USSR in Afghanistan. We must learn from history and should not commit the same mistake again. Russia has not been able to contain a small state like Chechnya for the last 5 to 6 years. We should realise that Kashmir will remain a part of India only if the Kashmiris want to.

S. R. Kelkar

Regarding the increase in the defence budget, and the comment that the hike was at the cost of development, poverty alleviation, water, sanitation etc., it is not realised that much of the hike in the defence budget goes into the pay bill and increasing pensions, as over 60,000 Service personnel retire every year; and that to have a lean and mean Armed Forces to ensure our security interests, our troops need to be equipped with state of the art equipment. Can an elected government however good or bad afford to ignore the security of a billion people?

It is unfortunate that critics on our side of the border do not hesitate to 'pounce' on India's attitude. Where were they and our vociferous human rights groups when the Sikh carnage took place or when families were shot dead in other parts of the Valley? Why do not these critics refute the oft repeated Pakistani canard that there are 700,000 troops in the Valley? Simple arithmetic will surely point out that the deployment of over 2/3rds of the Indian Army in the Valley is a physical impossibility when the Army needs to be deployed along the international borders with Pakistan and China, in battling insurgency in the East, in providing troops for international peacekeeping in which two battalions are currently deployed, for relief and turn-over, and for

Nelson Mandela as Mediator

According to me the solution to the Kashmir problem is easier than many other social and economic problems that India faces. One practical solution which India as the elder brother can put forward and which will disarm the Pakistanis and enable India to hold its head high in the international community is by saying that we would like to hold a referendum under the supervision of an international figure like Nelson Mandela and making it conditional that we shall do so if there is no terrorism for the next three years.

Ashok Datar

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deployment in the Andamans. These exaggerations must be refuted strongly.

Similarly the charge about human rights violations by those who are certainly ignorant of ground realities. How do we expect our troops to conduct operations when these terrorists, armed with superior weapons are given shelter by the locals on the excuse that what these terrorists from across the border are doing is *jihad*? It is not to say that the odd case does not surface of such violations but one must place oneself in the shoes of a

jawan involved day in and day out in this frustrating game, who has little rest and who is subject to physical harm by anti-social elements who belong to the same ethnic group found on the sub-continent.

I recently returned from a two-week visit to Sri Lanka. The Sri Lankan forces are faced with the identical problem of being unable to distinguish friend from foe and so there are casualties daily. The nature of these operations are unlike a war situation where one knows one's enemy.¹⁴

Islamic Fundamentalism's Grand Design

Over the last few years Kashmir has no longer remained a problem between India and Pakistan. It is now a pawn in the hands of Islamic fundamentalists led by Hasan al Torabi based in Sudan. He has emerged as the ideologue and spokesman of Islamic religious fundamentalists. In the late nineties he came out with the thesis on how Muslims all over the world should meet the challenges posed by non-Islamic groups. Under his leadership Shia Iran and Sunni Sudan plus Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries have come together to carry forward a pan Islamic idea of how to expand Islam and conquer the world. This may seem a bizarre idea at the moment but it drives the Islamic world today. The civil war in Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, the

Philippines, Indonesia, and the unrest all over the Middle East, Egypt, Algeria and Turkey are part of this campaign

The first step in this campaign is to drive the West out of the Middle East. Hence the anti-American campaign by the Saudi millionaire-terrorist Osama bin Laden and his group. The Torabi and Osama bin Laden groups have centres in 50 different countries. We need to understand that Osama bin Laden is not a single individual, a crackpot hiding in Afghanistan. After the failure of the BCCI bank which was laundering drug money, it is Osama who is managing the finances of this Islamic campaign.

An Israeli's Perception

A hardened and experienced Israeli Brigadier General Brigadier General Yacoob Even, in a note to this writer after he had made a presentation on the 'White Elephant in Southern Asia' the reference being to the nuclearisation of the sub-continent, said:

"Thank you for a deep, analytical presentation. I take the liberty to point out what seems an intrinsic flaw (The 'flaw' pertains to a strong recommendation for a total ban of all weapons of mass destruction based on the writer's experience of visiting Hiroshima on March 06, 1946). (1) China has no security problem and yet she has nuclear weapons. (2) With or without nuclear weapons - China is not to be 'deterred'. (3) All our clout will never persuade China to give up its bomb. China will always be a threat to India (even without a Chinese bomb). (4) Of course you will wish to have a bomb always. (5) It is much less understood why you will accept a total ban "

Maj.Gen.(Retd.) E. D'Souza

For the Islamic world, Pakistan is an instrument to move into Kashmir. Not many may be aware that the Defence Services Staff College in Quetta, Pakistan teaches that the ultimate aim of Pakistan should be the break up India - not merely the conquest of Kashmir. This is to be achieved by first annexing Kashmir which will have a domino effect - the North-East will collapse, followed by resurgent Islamic movements all over India including the South. This would explain the bomb blasts in Coimbatore; otherwise there is no logic why Pakistan should be interested in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

What we have to wait for is the emergence of a liberal democratic government in Pakistan. Only then will the Kashmir problem get detached from the aims of Islamic fundamentalism and make it possible for India to have serious negotiations with Pakistan. But this is unlikely to happen in the next few years. The idea of the Islamic conquest of the world has to be defeated first.

Already there are disputes between Egypt and the

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USA. Egypt is now favourably inclined towards Iraq. The idea is to remove first the big obstacle viz., Western presence from the Middle-East. Thereafter the conquest of other countries wherever Islam exists. So the nations in the Russian Federation and the provinces in China where the Muslim population is overwhelming are the targets. Therefore, if we think that by giving away Kashmir or making Kashmir independent we are going to solve the problem for India, we are not being realistic. Kashmir is only one little part of this grand design.

Over a period of time if Pakistan realises that this is a no-win situation only then would good sense prevail and a negotiated solution likely.¹⁵

In fact, some Pakistani leaders have clearly gone on record to say that Kashmir is not the only issue for them. Pakistan considers itself as a frontline Islamic state and wishes to prove its credentials by keeping alive its confrontation with India. It is from this perspective that Kargil or Kashmir has to be viewed.¹⁶

What was basically a political issue between two

nations has been aggravated by the religious dimension. And what was basically an issue between India and Pakistan is now an issue between fascism and an open society. Fascism not only of the Islamic variety but also of the Hindu variety. While the allegations of human rights violations by Indian troops are true to a large extent, it is also true at the same time that these human rights groups have failed to treat the Kashmiri Pandits issue as a human rights issue and by not doing so they have provided the Hindutva people with an opportunity to sharpen the Hindu-Muslim divide. And this additional dimension has complicated the matter so much that now fears are being expressed that in the event of a plebiscite if the people in the valley decide to go to Pakistan, Muslims in other parts of India will have to pay for it. And if this happens it would be because we allowed fascism to overtake what could easily have been discussed in an open society.¹⁷

Indeed, while political fascism is dangerous, religious fascism is far more dangerous, because it promises heaven to its devotees.¹⁸

Some Solutions

Where do we go from here? Attempting a military solution will destroy Pakistan and they know it very well. We will not be able to hold it by brute force for a long time and we too know it very well. No third party can mediate because all outsiders are suspect. The suggested solutions are also not acceptable to the parties concerned. Neither India nor Pakistan will ever agree to the partition of Kashmir, nor give up their claims for the whole. To convert Kashmir into an independent State is an advise of despair because the area has no wherewithal to survive on its own.

It is also important to note in this context, that in the last five decades of despair and disturbances in Kashmir, a whole new generation has been brought up on a diet of frustration, hatred and violence. This is the generation deprived of the opportunities for development and denied basic human rights which is now emerging as the key player in the politics of the region. The question is how to draw them closer to such solutions based on peace and mutual understanding.¹⁹

Perhaps the only feasible solution where a

positive result may emerge is to freeze the present Line of Control with both sides agreeing to refrain from trans-border activities and the Pakistanis agreeing to stop cross-border terrorism. But can such an arrangement be considered within the realms of possibility with a military government in power in Pakistan, headed by General Pervez Musharraf, the General behind the exceedingly well planned Kargil intrusion? This question was posed to the well known Pakistani journalist M. B. Naqvi of *Dawn* (Karachi) and the *Deccan Herald* (Bangalore), as to whether all the attempts made by peaceniks from both sides of the border through people to people interaction would yield results with a military government in power. He replied: "Others make mistakes, Generals make blunders. And General Pervez Musharraf is no different from other Generals". When questioned by this writer whether the people of Pakistan were aware of the fact that the Indian Armed Forces are apolitical and do not interfere in political matters, he raised his eyebrows and replied that he was not quite sure implying that there could be such a possibility! If a seasoned journalist and writer of repute had such doubts how can even people to people interaction ever hope to reduce tension?²⁰

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The Tashkent Agreement

The solution to the Kashmir problem may not be difficult. However, firstly, we must admit that it is a problem. When we say that Kashmir is an integral part of India, it clearly means that we do not accept the existence of the problem.

We must accept the reality of Pakistan and stop lamenting over partition. Two generations have gone by since partition and for the present generation, a united India is a thing of the past. Mahatma Gandhi was not in favour of partition, but later accepted it and worked for friendly relations with Pakistan.

Some two years ago, a meeting was held at the Deccan Gymkhana, in Pune, addressed by Mr. Ram Jethmalani, now a senior minister in Mr. Vajpayee's government and a founder Vice President of the BJP.

According to Mr. Ram Jethmalani, there were positive steps in the Tashkent Agreement to settle this issue. The main feature of this settlement is the acceptance of the present line of control (LOC) as the permanent border between Pakistan and India hereafter.

What is wrong if we accept the reality that has existed for 50 years and make it legitimate. If it helps solve the stalemate, and bring about peace, it ought to be welcomed.

Nobody will call the late Prime Minister Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri a coward and a traitor. His spotless character is still a matter of pride for us. The agreement that he signed at Tashkent was done with the best of intentions.

I do not expect this issue to be settled till a person born after freedom becomes our Prime Minister. The

future generation is bound to be more pragmatic and would not have unnecessary emotional involvements. We have to wait till then.²¹

Some Options for a Settlement

For any progress to be made in Indo-Pak relations, we will have to de-link Kashmir from all other elements that make up for relations between two sovereign states. Trade, travel and tourism must be opened up; sports and cultural affairs need to be promoted and a free flow of information, books, newspapers, films, delegations of students, writers businessmen, etc. should be encouraged. These measures will reduce tension and make it easier to deal with the intractable Kashmir issue after a period of say, 5 years. After all, we have been living with the present situation for five decades; another five years should not make much of a difference.

Pakistan will however have to try and follow the example of the Irish Republic, which inspite of its sympathy for Catholics in Northern Ireland (U.K.) refused to interfere and give any kind of support. Similarly, Pakistan should desist from giving any moral, intellectual, material or military support to the terrorists and so called freedom fighters. At the end of the proposed five year period, and in the friendly ethos that might be prevalent at that time, we should consider holding an opinion poll in PoK and the Kashmir Valley, asking the people there, to choose one of the following options, viz.

- (a) Conversion of the Line of Control into an international border,
- (b) total independence with defence and security guaranteed by SAARC countries.

If we prefer going forward rather than wait for five years, there is one more possibility. India, Pakistan and China should unilaterally decide to give full autonomy to the Kashmir Valley, PoK and Tibet for 5 years, at the end of which, they can decide whether they are viable states or would prefer to again join their old countries.²²

Another Chance for Peace

The many years of insurgency in the Valley of Kashmir, which has taken the lives of several thousand people, soldiers, police, militants and innocent civilians is mercifully almost over. That is the message that comes through, loud and clear, with the army's announcement recently that it has commenced a "phased withdrawal"

Gorbachev's Example

Gorbachev walked out of Afghanistan unilaterally by stating that the economy of the USSR could not afford the continued occupation. He also decided unilaterally to reduce his nuclear arsenal compelling President Reagan to follow suit. More recently Indonesia held a plebiscite under international auspices in East Timor which resulted in the people of East Timor opting for independence from Indonesia.

M. A. Rane

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from the towns of Srinagar, Baramulla and Anantnag, all three towns earlier centres of terrorist activity.

The army will be replaced by the state police. The army will also soon withdraw from Kupwara and Pulwara. The withdrawn units will move to the rural areas to flush out the terrorists from these areas as well, thereby hopefully bringing militant activity to a complete end.

Nobody likes the army doing a job that should really be done by the police. However, there are times when the police are unable to cope up with a particular situation, especially when an unfriendly neighbour steps in and queers the pitch. This is what happened in

Kashmir some eight years ago, when insurgency reared its ugly head and terrorists were given arms and training from across the border.

Years of turmoil and bloodshed followed, with countless innocent people also being killed. Whatever public sympathy the militants initially enjoyed has largely evaporated. The main sign of this was the recent popular election in the state. Though the turnout was understandably not very large, it was a significant start in resorting to normalcy in the state.

Kashmir has another chance for peace and progress. It should not be missed.²³

Footnotes

1. V. P. Menon, Secretary, Ministry of States from July 1947 to June 1951 and worked in close association with India's Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The extract is from his book "*Integration of Indian States*", pp.472 to 474, Orient Longman, 1999 edition.
2. Professor Nagindas Sanghvi, retired professor of political science and a well-known columnist in the Gujarati press
3. Mr. M. A. Rane, the well-known civil rights Advocate (from a written note)
4. Mr. Nitin G. Raut, a lawyer practising in the Bombay High Court
5. Prof. Nagindas Sanghvi
6. Mr. S. V. Raju, editor, *Freedom First*
7. Maj.Gen.(Retd.) E. D'Souza
8. Mr. Ashok Karnik, a retired Central Government Officer,
9. Mr. Satish Sahney, former Inspector General of Police,
10. Mr. K. F. Rustomji, former Director-General of the Border Security Force
11. Dr. Usha Thakkar, Hon. Director, Institute of Research & Gandhian Thought and Rural Development, and Prof. Nagindas Sanghvi (in a written note)
12. Brig. (Retd.) N. B. Grant
13. Mr. J. B. D'Souza, retired Civil Servant
14. Maj.Gen.(Retd.) E. D'Souza
15. Mr. Ashok Karnik
16. Mr. Nitin G. Raut
17. Mr. Yogesh Kamdar, civil rights activist
18. Mr. A. Solomon, President, Indian Secular Society
19. Dr. Usha Thakkar and Prof. Nagindas Sanghvi
20. Maj.Gen. (Retd.) E. D'Souza
21. Mr. S. R. Kelkar, a consulting engineer in a note from Pune
22. Mr. Arvind A. Deshpande, Honorary Secretary, Leslie Sawhny Programme
23. Mr. B. B. Thadani a company executive and freelance journalist.

Participants at the Discussion on The Kashmir Question held on March 18, 2000

Mr. Ashok Datar • Mr. Arvind Deshpande • Maj.Gen. E. D'Souza (Retd.) • Mr. J. B. D'Souza • Mr. S. P. Godrej • Mr. A. V. Gopalakrishnan • Mr. K. R. Hathi • Mr. Yogesh Kamdar • Mr. A. V. Karnik • Prof. M. A. Mechery • Dr. Usha Mehta • Mr. Jehangir Patel • Ms. Kashmira Rao • Mr. S. V. Raju • Mr. Nitin G. Raut • Mr. K. F. Rustomji • Mr. Satish Sahney • Prof. Nagindas Sanghvi • Mr. A. Solomon • Dr. R. Srinivasan • Dr. Usha Thakkar • Mr. B. B. Thadani • Dr. Maneesha Tikekar

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The View from Pakistan

Maneesha Tikekar

While, for India, Kashmir was an “*atoot ang*” (inseparable part), for Pakistan it was “*shahrag*” (jugular vein). This was how the problem was viewed.

A high profile one-day seminar was held in Islamabad on February 23, 2000 on ‘Foreign Policy: New Challenges, Innovative Options’. The seminar which was organized by *The News*, of the *Jung* group of newspapers gives us a glimpse of the elite Pakistani mindset on India, Kashmir issue and Pakistan’s foreign policy.

The list of participants was a veritable who’s who of public life in Pakistan - Intellectuals, renowned journalists, politicians of all hues, military men, a former Director General of the ISI, strategists, Speaker of the National Assembly, foreign secretaries, secretary of the Hurriyat Conference, the President of JKLF and also foreign diplomats. As Imtiaz Alam, the editor of current affairs for *The News* put it in his welcome address among the participants were “most respectable members of the civil society” and both “hawks and doves”.

Surprisingly the hawks were not really hawkish about India and India’s policy towards Kashmir except for the usual rebukes of India viz., “predatory” “the highly centralizing state with the self image of the true inheritor of the Imperial Raj”, “adversary in the neighbourhood”, “belligerent neighbour”, and “Indian hegemony in South Asia”.

The Mangla Dam

The central issue in Pakistan-India relations is of course Kashmir. Why is Kashmir so important? Because, as Muhammad Siddiqui Khan Kanju, former Minister of State for Foreign Affairs put it, it is closely associated with the security of Pakistan. On the other hand, according to former Foreign Secretary, Iqbal Akhund the idea that India might launch an attack to undo Pakistan is an assumption that was not borne out by the three wars fought so far. In his opinion the danger to Pakistan’s security is more insidious and lies in the country’s internal strains and contradictions. Tanvir Ahmed Khan, Chairman, Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad, saw another danger. Pakistan’s security remains vulnerable as all the major rivers of the country flow through Kashmir and their most important dam, the Mangla Dam depends on the Kishenganga watershed.

If speakers were critical of India they were equally critical of Pakistan’s position on Kashmir, its excessive concern for security; following a myopic foreign policy

in the post-cold war era; its diplomatic failure to counter the terrorist image; its arms race with India and nourishing a militarized mind that was pushing the nation into isolation.

A number of speakers urged a reorientation of foreign policy in the context of the changed international situation; Pakistan’s increasing isolation and the dire state of Pakistan’s economy. Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Talat Masood, for example, feared that Pakistan was moving towards “convergent crises” - a crisis of security, an economic crisis, a political crisis, a developmental crisis and an international credibility crisis. He was appreciative of India’s economy, its relative self-reliance because of “a comprehensive industrial and technological base, its software industry and emerging Indo-US partnership”. All this, in his opinion demanded adjustment in Pakistan’s national policies without compromising on principles.

A Cold War Hangover

There was also a feeling expressed that Pakistan was living in fool’s paradise if it believed that the UN resolutions of 1948 & 1949 could still be invoked and implemented. Babar of the PPP explained the limitations of these resolutions arguing that their implementation required fulfillment of conditions that may not be in the interests of Pakistan for several reasons. Firstly it would require the Pakistan army and also the tribesmen (now Mujahideen) to withdraw from all parts of Kashmir but India would not be obliged to withdraw its army from Kashmir. Secondly, the government in Srinagar was recognised as legal and constitutional while that in Muzaffarabad and Gilgit as local administrations.

The Young Pakistani Officers

The younger Pakistani generation of officers, many of them who were prisoners of war after the 1971 conflict, have never forgiven India and continue to smart under that defeat. This became manifest when this writer sat next to a young Pakistani Defence Attaché at a meeting of retired Generals in Colombo. The hatred was evident when he made no move to acknowledge the presence of a retired General of the Indian Army, guest of honour, sitting next to him. It is highly improbable that this mindset can be removed in the present climate of distrust.

Maj.Gen.(Retd.) E. D’Souza

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Thirdly the plebiscite for all practical purposes would be arranged and conducted by India. And most importantly, independent Kashmir was not an option under the terms of the plebiscite. After having laid down nearly 70,000 lives Kashmiris were likely to demand outright independence.

The point was made that Pakistan's Afghan policy has been a part of its posture on Kashmir. The policy against the Indian *status quo* in Kashmir had forced Pakistan into a permanent posture of irredentism. This irredentism radiated westward towards Afghanistan and beyond. Pakistan's foreign policy failed to comprehend the post cold war scenario and its happiness, based on wishful thinking, that India would be isolated after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has been short lived. The cold war honeymoon came to an abrupt end in the late eighties and despite a fundamental shift in the international balance of forces, Pakistani policy makers continued to live with the cold war hangover of militancy and low intensity conflict.

A Two-Options Plebiscite

Most speakers appeared to accept the fact that self-determination by Kashmiris no longer necessarily meant joining Pakistan but could well lead to the Kashmiris wanting their freedom from both India and Pakistan. Ayesha Jalal, a well-known historian from Harvard's Academy of International and Area Studies felt that though Indian hopes of pacifying Kashmiris with offers of larger development grants and greater autonomy may be a sensible option it could be at best only an interim arrangement. She thinks, and this is important to note, there is the possibility of renewed troubles so long as a section of Kashmir remains under Pakistani military occupation. According to her this is because the monopoly of weapons in this region no longer requires state patronage. It has passed into the hands of a sprawling drug economy. Also "with resurgent Islam spilling over international frontiers, Pakistan is no longer the sole potential patron of Kashmiri militants." For Jalal, self-determination has to ultimately mean reunion of the two Kashmirs and independence.

Jalal suggests, what she calls, a "Sovereignty Association" between India, Pakistan and Kashmir. Under this plan the right of self-determination will be extended to all Kashmiris - Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. A plebiscite may be held first in Jammu and Kashmir including Ladakh and leaving Azad Kashmir out. There will be two options remaining with the Indian Union or independence and possible union with Azad

Kashmir or POK. This could remove Indian fears of a plebiscite. If the Kashmiris opt for Union with India then the matter will be over and India and Pakistan could negotiate a treaty settling the boundary dispute. If an overall majority votes for independence but Hindus in Jammu and Buddhists in Ladakh overwhelmingly vote against independence allowance should be made for these regions to remain with India. Azad Kashmir could then vote to decide whether it wants to unite with the rest of Kashmir. If both parts of Kashmir decide on independence, a constituent assembly of Kashmir as a whole would ratify the terms of association with the two regional powers and India and Pakistan could accommodate the new association within their constitutions. Kashmir will become a demilitarized zone with its territorial integrity guaranteed by both the countries.

The Chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberal Front (JKLF), Amanullah Khan rejects the Indian claim of Kashmir being its integral part. He is aware of the fact that any solution will be acceptable to India and Pakistan only if it does not hurt their "national egos, does not jeopardise their national ideologies or harm their legitimate national interests, does not cause mass-migrations, bloodshed or communal/ethnic disturbances".

A Phased Solution

His solution comes in two phases. Firstly reunite the divided Jammu and Kashmir in several peaceful phases and make it a fully independent state for 15 years with a democratic, non communal and federal system of government with friendly relations with both India and Pakistan. The international community should guarantee the independence of the new state. The new state must in turn guarantee that it would not allow its soil to be used against any country. In the second phase after 15 years a referendum could be held under UN auspices. Kashmir will have a choice between retaining its independence or joining either India or Pakistan. The popular verdict will have to be accepted by all concerned.

Whatever be the solution to the Kashmir problem all speakers agreed that war or threat of war was not a solution to be considered. Khaled Ahmed believes that after the Kargil Operation, Pakistan's Kashmir policy has reached its limitation. He urges that Pakistan should move towards normalization of relations with India and trade relations under the SAARC resolution must be resumed.

MS. MANEESHA TIKEKAR, Reader and Head, Dept. of Politics, SIES College of Arts Science and Commerce, Mumbai.

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For Once, Did Gandhiji Go Wrong?



Ekhnath Nagarkar

Duggani Avare, how come you didn't enter politics? His answer was simple: "Mahatma Gandhi told us the struggle was over and that we ought to go back to our respective vocations..."

Toothpaste manufacturers the world over, have been pouring their millions for decades over TV-Ad campaigns in a bid to persuade the viewers that a smile is all about sparkling white teeth and little else. But then a toothless smile, that of our Chief Guest that day Shri Jayadevappa Duggani by name, was better than any of those much hyped branded smiles. This was the thought that crossed my mind while watching this old man in his eighties who seemed to have some difficulty with his new set of dentures and in the course of delivering his speech, at one stage had absently removed them and was holding them firmly clasped in his left hand. The occasion was Independence Day celebrations, 1987.

The only available detail about this personality at my office – Mugutkhan Hubli Branch of Bank of India I had just then taken charge as Manager – was the fact, three of his family members, viz. himself, his wife and his eldest daughter were recipients of the *Tamra Patra* from the government in recognition of their role in the freedom struggle. Further, I was given to understand, this worthy had not only met Mahatma Gandhi on a number of occasions, the latter knew him personally too. His speech was quite lucid and interesting and enabled us to get a deep into the pre-Independence era. In fact, I was shocked to find him so very different from the so-called freedom fighters I had seen till then that I couldn't

help feeling curious to know, what could have prevented him from entering active politics.

A True Gandhian

Jayadevappa Duggani was a true Gandhian to whom Gandhiji's word was *veda-vakya* itself. He got emotional at one stage, while describing the communal flare-up in Noakhali in West Bengal and Gandhiji's reaction to it in particular, so much so that the narration was rendered incoherent. The long journey to and from our village Mugutkhan Hubli, of over 30 kms. had already taken its toll on the old man and there was no way I could goad him further. I therefore asked him one last question that was bothering me all through the morning "Duggani-avare, how come you didn't enter politics? With your background you could have looked forward to so much in that field?" The answer was simple yet so very surprising. "As soon as 'swatantrya' became a matter of certainty, Mahatma Gandhi told us that the struggle was over and that we ought to go back to our respective vocations..."

Certainly everyone has read about it. In fact, Mahatma is widely believed to have gone to the extent of saying the Congress Party should be wound up. But then it had not occurred to me till then, that there could be anyone who could have so faithfully obeyed the Mahatma's wish. Having seen one such, this left me wondering how many more Dugganis may be scattered all over the country. These are the leaders

who alone deserve to be called Gandhians. They have not only refrained from staking claim to any political spoils, they don't even seem to regret their decision. If still alive, may be in their nineties, if not past 100, each one of them must be patiently, putting it in the late Baburao Patel's words, 'waiting to be called up by Gandhiji'. Of course, the stronger possibility always being their having already died unsung, unmourned, a life-long sacrifice for the cause of country's freedom notwithstanding.

Unknown Heroes

What is absolutely distressing is to learn that even the media has virtually nothing on record about these real life heroes. My own experience in the course of attempting to get an update on Shri Duggani (whether he is still alive or not) will perhaps help elucidate the point.

The editorial guys of a leading English daily had not even heard the name! But then when their attention was pointedly drawn to *tamra patras* granted to him, I was told candidly, they had nothing on record about freedom fighters who are too numerous to handle. However, they were helpful in directing me to Nava Karnataka Publications who in turn felt the daily was simply trying to pass the buck, and suggested that (in all probability, Mr. N. R. Mathad, Secretary of the Freedom Fighter's Association would be able to help me. Mr. Mathad of course was quite helpful and having known Duggani and his family members as also their

contribution to the freedom struggle, was all eagerness to help but had his own limitations having lost touch with the Dugganis for over a decade now. Finally, when he got to know that all I wanted to know about Shri Jayadevappa Duggani was whether he is alive or not, and that this was very urgent, he pleaded his inability to give an answer either way with any certainty. He felt that 99% chances were that he was already dead and that I may proceed on that assumption and hence the past tense resorted to, in referring to Shri Jayadevappa Duggani. Even at the cost of appearing to digress, it may be interesting to go back in history in order to analyse what might be the various reasons for this sordid state of affairs.

The "Mela" Approach

Sometime back in 1945, the Congress Party had undertaken a membership drive. This was war time and black-marketing in essential commodities was not only rampant, those engaged in it were getting imprisoned also. The

country's freedom also had by then become a matter of certainty. The party in its drive to enrol new members adopted a 'mela approach' whereunder a jail term helped, reasons therefore may conveniently have been omitted to be looked into, as is bound to happen under this kind of an approach.

Secondly, what is most distressing to learn is, a great deal of political pulls and pressures were at play in identifying and finalising the list of freedom fighters entitled to pension. This proved to be totally disastrous to the interest of genuine freedom fighters.

Perhaps, for once, Bapuji had gone wrong in giving that call. At a time when there was acute shortage of honest and sincere leaders, this directive of Mahatma Gandhi perhaps amounting to pulling the rug from under the new regime headed by Jawaharlal Nehru.

MR. EKNATH NAGARKAR is a freelance writer.

"No, I Am Not One of You!"



"Oh, for Gandhi"! , says a very good cartoon in the *Organizer*. But suppos-

ing a Gandhi or Gandhiji himself came in answer to this and other earnest calls for help, what could we do with him? We will not do what he wants us to do and will do what he does not want done. Like Karl Marx rising from the grave, saying "I am not a Marxist", Gandhi too would exclaim "No, I am not one of you!" to the Congressmen who drag his name down and hang on it whenever they feel like slipping from power.

C. Rajagopalachari,
Swarajya, October 14, 1967

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Restructuring of Public Enterprises in Andhra Pradesh

P. Prasada Rao

The programme of the Government of Andhra Pradesh in the area of public enterprise reform is a continuous process

In 1983, a new ruling party emerged in Andhra Pradesh, securing a clear mandate for its policies. To implement these policies, it had necessarily to take up the task of bringing a number of institutional changes within and outside the Government. The public enterprise sector could not therefore escape attention. The Government of Andhra Pradesh initiated a review of performance of public enterprises to evaluate their objectives and relevance. As a consequence, the measures recommended cover a wide spectrum of reforms in management, amalgamation, restructuring and even closure. In actual practice, only some measures could be fully implemented due to legal and procedural constraints. However, what is important to note is that the basic thrust of the reform programme was initiated. As a sequel to this, Government privatised Allwyn Nissan to Mahindra & Mahindra in 1989, the Refrigeration Division of Hyderabad Allwyn to M/s. Voltas Limited in 1993 and more recently the Hindupur unit of Nizam Sugars Limited to Renuka Sugars, Belgaum. This was perhaps the first steps of the reforms process.

In 1991, the Government of India announced its new industrial policy, with sweeping changes in the direction of efficiency and effectiveness through liberalisation and globalisation of the Indian trade and industrial sector. Restructuring, merger, downsizing, privatisation or

closure of public enterprises became inevitable.

In this context, the programme of the Government of Andhra Pradesh in the area of public enterprise reform is a continuous process and the Government introduced far reaching institutional changes in 1995. The Government constituted a Working Group with Sri K. Subrahmanyam, a retired I.A.S. officer as Chairman to review the performance of each public enterprise, its relevance and utility to the general public so that necessary corrective measures could be taken to improve the performance of public enterprises, minimise public liability and promote the public interest. The Working Group reviewed the public enterprises and gave its recommendations on most of the small and medium size enterprises. Its recommendations included restructuring, merger, privatisation and closure of unviable enterprises.

The Andhra Pradesh government also constituted a Cabinet Sub-Committee to examine in detail the recommendations of the Working Group. The Cabinet Sub-Committee goes into merits of each case and finalises its recommendations which will be placed before the Cabinet for a decision. Thus the government has introduced a three stage examination, first by a Working Group, second by a Cabinet Sub-

Committee and finally by the Cabinet on the restructuring of public enterprises. Government would implement the option of closure as a last resort after making conscious efforts to turn it around through restructuring.

The public enterprise reform gained further momentum when the World Bank came forward to extend financial assistance under the A. P. Economic Restructuring Project (APERP). In consonance with this, an Implementation Secretariat has been constituted with private professional experts in the areas of Management, Finance, Legal, Media and Labour to implement the reforms on a time bound basis. As a first step, the State government has identified 12 public and cooperative enterprises for restructuring, downsizing, privatising and even closure over a period of 5 years, commencing from 1998. They are, as per Table-I on the next page.

The government has formulated a Voluntary Retirement Scheme as part of a humane exit policy which is more beneficial than compensation under the I.D. Act to workers who are affected in the restructuring exercise. The State Government has also constituted a State Revival Fund with an initial corpus of Rs.500 crores on lines similar to the National Renewal Fund to meet the outgo on severance packages and to meet partly the expenses on Social Safety Net

involving counselling, retraining and redeployment.

This programme gets financial assistance from the U.K. Government's Department for International Development (DFID). An Institute of Public Enterprises has been appointed as a nodal agency

to implement the social safety net programmes.

Re-training programmes have been planned and launched in such areas as computers, garment manufacturing for women workers and light vehicle driving for men. These training programmes impart technical skills to unskilled workers will help them

adjust in the emerging wage market or be self-employed. Demonstrable results of this programme are already visible.

DR. P. PRASADA RAO is Assistant Adviser, Public Enterprises Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Public Enterprises in Andhra Pradesh on the Reform List

Sl. No.	Name of the Enterprise	No. of Employees	Total Paid-up Capital	Total Liabilities	(Rs. In lakhs)
					Accumulated Losses
1.	Nandyal Spg. Mills	479	283.50	2397.85	1461.39 (upto 97-98)
2.	Rajahmundry Spg. Mills	886	83.17	1704.59	286.26 (upto 92-93)
3.	Nellore Spg. Mills	564	431.93	786.00	584.58 (upto 92-93)
4.	Adilabad Spg. Mills	717	222.84	1056.42	327.00 (upto 90-91)
5.	Nizam Sugars Ltd.	5401	3353.00	4690.00	2776.00 (upto 97-98)
6.	Allwyn Watches Ltd.	2147	30.00	40000.00	30000.00 (upto 98-99)
7.	A. P. S. Irrigation Deve. Corpn.	2125	10328.00	3269.61	2500.00 (upto 97-98)
8.	A. P. S. Agro Inds. Dev. Corpn.	606	989.90	1658.69	1234.66 (upto 97-98)
9.	A. P. S. Meat & Poultry Dev. Corpn.	404	776.00	47.00	518.00 (upto 97-98)
10.	A. P. Smkall Scale Inds. Dev. Corpn.	375	961.96	685.47	1608.83 (upto 97-98)
11.	A. P. Handicrafts Dev. Corpn.	282	200.36	49.25	95.33 (upto 97-98)
12.	A. P. Textile Dev. Corpn.	207	379.88	126.54	341.20 (upto 97-98)



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To Restore Character & Liberal Values in our Polity

- Yet Another Effort

S. V. Raju

Ask any political scientist and he will affirm that India is a 'Liberal Democracy' - even if the Preamble to the Constitution of India as amended by Indira Gandhi in 1976 after jailing most Opposition MPs described India as a 'Socialist' one. Ask any person on the street, literate or illiterate, and he or she will bemoan the fall in character and values in our society. And a large majority of them will blame it on the politicians.

'They' are responsible for the sorry state of affairs in which we find our country today in a Rajaji Birthday Lecture in 1969, Mr. Minoo Masani decried this 'we' and 'they' syndrome (see box on page 2).

And while this apportioning of blame goes on, the rot continues to worsen. It is in this context that *Freedom First* participated in an effort that began in 1998 to revive, as a first step, the Liberal dialogue in our country. Readers may recall the following principles featured in our cover story entitled "The Liberal Position"¹

- ❖ Liberty and individual responsibility are the foundations of civilized society.
- ❖ The State is only the instrument of the citizens it serves.
- ❖ Any action of the State must respect the principles of democratic responsibility.
- ❖ Rights and duties go together.
- ❖ Every citizen has a moral responsibility to others in society
- ❖ A peaceful world can only be built upon respect for these principles.

These were the principles that we circulated to a large number of people seeking their support in our effort. And, we are glad to say support was forthcoming in considerable measure resulting in the re-emergence of the Indian Liberal Group (ILG).

The ILG was founded by Mr. Minoo Masani on December 10, 1965. The objective of the ILG was to promote the Liberal philosophy through study, research, discussions, lectures, seminars, exchange of views and contact with other organisations with similar aims. Among the founding members of the Group were Mr. H. V. R. Iengar, Dr. F. A. Mehta, Prof. B. R. Shenoy, Mr. Khushwant Singh and Madame Sophia Wadia. Mr. Masani in his autobiography stressed the fact that the ILG was a "non-partisan body entirely unconnected with any political party. While some individuals may belong to one party or another, most of its members are not members of any party. This is as it should be."

The ILG did not mince words in challenging the socialist mantra, the buzz word those days, advocating private enterprise and limited government when the

expression of such views were considered 'reactionary'. Profit and private enterprise were dirty words then. Today liberalisation and privatization are the buzz words. Just as a noble concept like socialism acquired bad odour thanks to those who claimed to be socialists, there is danger that liberalism, liberalisation and privatisation will lose credibility either because the meanings of these concepts are not really understood or because vested interests particularly beneficiaries of the permit-licence-quota-inspector raj will do their best to prevent a successful transition to a free market and an open society. And, in the process destroy whatever is left of our character and values.

These are the enemies that Liberals, who have a stake in the principles adumbrated above, will have to take on.

To be better able to perform this task, the ILG has given itself a structure from the district level upwards and a sharper focus with a set of objectives that clearly spell out what the ILG stands for.

Objectives²

The purpose of the Indian Liberal Group is to foster the values of freedom, responsibility, tolerance, social justice and equality of opportunity based on the Liberal belief that

- ❖ liberty with individual responsibility are the foundations of civilised society.
- ❖ the State is an instrument of the citizens it serves.
- ❖ any action of the State must respect the principles of democratic accountability and the rule of law.

The primary objective of the ILG is to defend the fundamental liberal belief of

- ❖ the right of individuals to personal liberty, liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
- ❖ the right of association;
- ❖ the right to private property;
- ❖ free choice of occupation;
- ❖ the right to information so as to enable the exercise one's right meaningfully.

While tolerance is integral to Liberalism, the ILG will not tolerate intolerance.

The Indian Liberal Group

- ❖ believes that the business of the government is governance not business
- ❖ is opposed to any kind of censorship
- ❖ believes that technology is needed to promote human development and draws attention to the fact that the growth of Liberalism has been contemporaneous with the development of science and technology.

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- ✧ affirms that active and participatory citizenship at all levels is essential for sustaining a liberal and democratic society.

Above all, the ILG believes in the need to uphold values and excellence; character and integrity. To develop men and women with such faith and principles is the real I before Liberals.

The ILG's Basic Principles - Guidelines for Action

Preceding the ILG's structured re-appearance, three regional workshops, 5 state-level workshop and a national symposium discussed at length and worked out the Liberal Position on a number of issues. The Guidelines for Action are based on these Liberal Positions. Lack of space prevents us from publishing the entire guidelines. The following is an extensive extract.

Individual Freedom and Liberties

The ILG views the following as matters of immediate concern:

- ✧ Muzzling of the freedom of expression in any media
- ✧ Illegal detentions of citizens by any person or authority
- ✧ Fundamentalism in any form that threatens freedoms
- ✧ The resort to violence and intimidation
- ✧ Criminalisation of politics
- ✧ The all-pervasive corruption.

Right to Information

The right to information is a corollary to the right of free expression. Citizens can exercise their rights meaningfully only if they are adequately informed...Under blanket terms like "state security" or "public interest" numerous acts of omission and commission are hidden from public scrutiny. Actions of Government should be both transparent and accountable.

Economic Prosperity Through Freedom.

The ILG believes that people in their individual capacities can contribute to the wellbeing and prosperity of the community no less than government. This can be achieved only under conditions of freedom and equity. This is possible in an economic arrangement which is alive to its social obligations. Such an economy, best described as a social market economy, implies that

- ✧ farming should be dealt with in a manner as to ensure that the Indian farmer gets a fair return on his investment and labour;
- ✧ the manufacturer and the trader are free to engage in industry and trade untrammelled by needless impediments in the conduct of their business;
- ✧ it is the consumer's purchasing power reflected by the demand for specific goods and services that decides what to produce and how much to produce;
- ✧ the government should focus its attention on the social sector. These include the provision of clean drinking water, primary healthcare, primary education, basic infrastructure like roads, bridges, ports and the like.
- ✧ the dismantling of the permit licence quota raj will have to be accompanied by a gradual elimination of the regime of subsidies.

- ✧ for free enterprise to take root the state must ensure private property rights. Unless each citizen has the legally enforceable right to own, buy, sell, trade, mortgage and invest in private property, a normal healthy stable market economy cannot exist;
- ✧ overall economic policy is guided by the principle of competition, efficiency, productivity, enhanced consumer satisfaction, full employment and well being of the people keeping in view the central liberal belief in the dignity of the individual.

Technology and Human Development

The ILG believes that Science and Technology can play a crucial role in enabling our people achieve a better quality of life. This involves

- ✧ encouraging private companies to invest in Research and Development. ..
- ✧ the state confining itself to promoting pure science research and defence that require long term strategic investments.
- ✧ restricting the government's regulatory sphere to setting up of standards. ...
- ✧ Ensuring that all scientific and technological development should take place with concern for the protection of the environment.

Active Citizenship

The ILG believes that the ultimate purpose of society and the state is to assure the dignity of the individual. But this will remain a dream unless the citizens are alive to their responsibilities to society. Citizens action groups should keep the elected representatives and public servants on their toes ensuring that they perform. ..

Governance

- ✧ The Rule of Law is central to liberalism. The ILG will strive to educate citizens in the principles of the Rule of Law.
- ✧ The ILG is concerned over the state of the judicial system characterised by shortage of judges, procedural delays and the consequent difficulties faced by citizens in securing justice.
- ✧ Powers should be redistributed in such a manner that the power wielders come in close proximity to the people. This will help enhance accountability.
- ✧ The need to review the Representation of the People Act has become imperative. A primary endeavour of the ILG will be to seek the removal of the stipulation that political parties seeking registration with the Election Commission need to affirm a belief in socialism. ..
- ✧ The concept of sunset legislation should be introduced wherein all laws should have an in-built obsolescence clause
- ✧ Liberals believe that taxation should be fairly balanced between the needs of the individual and the needs of society for saving and investment. ..

Social Issues

- ✧ To achieve a good quality of life the ILG believes that

a small family is essential. It advocates the education of the poor with particular emphasis on women's and children's education. ...

- ❖ The irrefutable evidence of history is that there is a definite link between education and development. The Liberals commit themselves to the promotion of education particularly at the primary level to target full literacy.
- ❖ Corruption is a manifestation of declining values accelerated by economic policies involving controls, permits, licences and quotas. Corruption is a cancer that eats into the vitals of democratic polity and destroys democracy itself. Liberals will fight corruption at all levels with positive action not only through public education but by advocating exemplary punishment that would act as a deterrent.
- ❖ The politicisation of any aspect of the problems of minorities should be opposed. The State should assume the role of a neutral referee with no interest in any one group. The Indian Constitution takes the position that India is a polyglot society wherein people of different religions and languages can coexist on the basis of equality. Liberals can contribute by promoting positive interaction between various groups and ensuring that the rights of the minorities are safeguarded.³
- ❖ All attempts should be made to avoid uprooting tribals (adivasis) from their traditional homelands.

- ❖ While the policy of reservations has undoubtedly done some good to certain sections of the population, the administration of this has led to great dissatisfaction amongst several sections of the population. The larger issue of reservations needs to be reviewed critically and periodically.

For membership and other details write to the

INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP, National Headquarters, 1st floor, Sassoon Building, 143, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001. ❖ Phones: 0091 22 284 13 40, 267 44 53 ❖ Telefax: 284 34 16 ❖ Email: freedom@vsnl.com.

¹ *Freedom First*, January-March 1999

² As spelt out in Article 2 of the newly adopted Constitution of the Indian Liberal Group

³ Some apprehensions have been expressed that the sentence "The politicisation of any aspect of the problems of minorities should be opposed" could be misinterpreted to mean that the ILG is opposed to the minorities organising themselves politically. This is not so. The word politicisation is used in the pejorative sense - that is the misuse of the problems of minorities by interested parties or politicians to gain political mileage for themselves.

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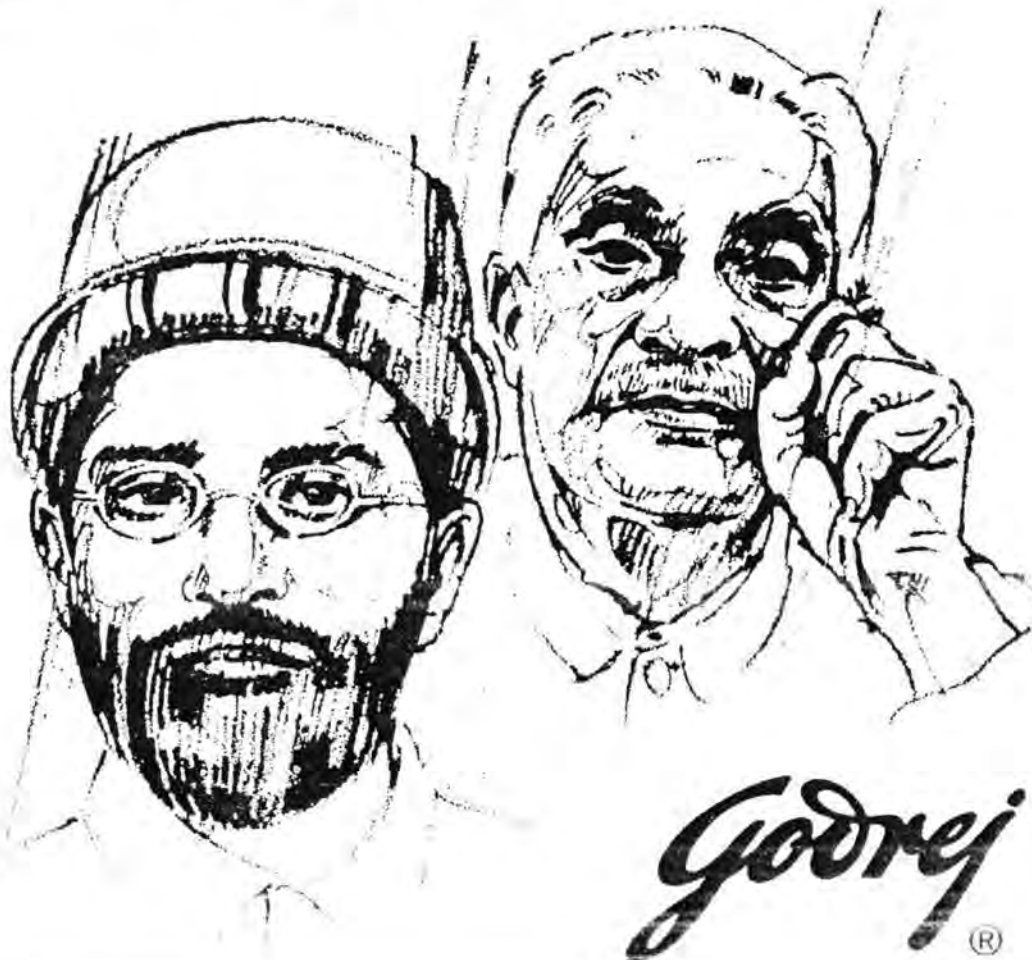
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Remembering Satyajit Ray

Prem Vaidya

Novice in the field of practical film-making, yet Ray was scholastic in the language of films. He had learnt the art by watching good films.



French President, Francois Mitterrand came all the way from France to Calcutta to honour Satyajit Ray: A Commander of the Legion D'Honneur during the bicentennial celebration year of the French Revolution.

"I will be a film director. I will go to Germany and learn and come back."

This was the sharp reply by six year old Manik, to one of his cousins Rubi in their Calcutta house in 1926 when during a play, she had wanted him to be a doctor when he grew up. Manik was Satyajit Ray's childhood name.

Unlike other film makers, who started learning the craft traditionally by working with film units, Ray's growth was astonishingly different. He was the first man in India to start a film society – The Calcutta Film Society,

in 1947. Mostly American and occasionally British, French and Russian films were screened, followed by group discussions.

In the same year, Ray developed a hobby writing screenplays based on the books, which were being brought for film adaptations. He would keep a track of the newspaper announcements of the adoption; would see those films when released; compare and evaluate what he had written with what the professionals had produced. A unique way to learn for a budding genius!

Influence of Renoir

While working with an advertising agency, Signet Press, in 1949, Ray was asked to illustrate an edition of *Pather Panchali*, a novel by Bibhuti Bhushan Bandopadhyay. To illustrate, he had to read the book. The story appealed to him as a possible film source. Incidentally, this was the year of two happy occasions in Ray's life - his marriage with Bijoya Das and the arrival in Calcutta of the famous French film maker, Jean Renoir, who was in India to make the film *The River* – a story revolving around an English jute mill manager and his family living in Bengal. The locales selected for shooting of the film were near Calcutta. A god-sent opportunity for Ray!

Ray knew Renoir through his films, *This Land is Mine* (1943) and

The Southerner (1945) as an unconventional film maker who worked for an American company, with American finance for American audiences, but with a European approach.

After duty hours at the Signet Press, Ray would visit Renoir as often as possible. And on weekends, he would attend location shootings.

Renoir's filming *The River* (1951), the lyrical adaptation of Rumer Godden's novel about English children growing up in Bengal was a feast for cinematographer Claude. While Claude filmed the river side, the boats, the fishermen with soothing Bengali songs in the background – Ray observed and studied and noted with appreciation the final touches by Renoir. Ray discussed with Renoir the making of *Pather Panchali*, the story, the backdrop of Bengal, the Bengali joint-family and their culture etc. "It sounds wonderful. Make it, I think it will make a good film". was Renoir's frank opinion. He also advised Ray, "If you could only shake Hollywood out of your system and evolve your own style, you would be making great films here". This was to have a lasting imprint on Ray's work.

Another was what Rabindranath Tagore wrote in Ray's autograph book in 1928:

"I have travelled all around the world to see rivers

and mountains, and I have spent a lot of money. I have to lengths, I have seen everything. But I forgot to see just outside my house a dewdrop which reflects in its convexity the whole universe around."

"That is the Indian tradition, presence of the essential thing in every small detail. This is the essence, I think. And it is becoming more and more clear to me", said Ray in an interview to *The Guardian*.

In 1950, Ray was sent to England by his advertising company for six months. During this period he saw about 100 films. One of them was an Italian film, Vittorio de Sica *The Bicycle Thief* (1949). Most of it was shot on location - a simple, truthful tale of a working man whose job depends on his bicycle. The man is completely dejected when

his bicycle is stolen. His only solace is his young son.

Ray was very impressed by this film. In his imagination, he could easily juxtapose making *Pather Panchali*. He counted the conceptional similarities: a low budget film ... shot on outdoor locations under all sorts of lighting conditions ... in the native language .. with a non-professional cast ... no make-up. Novice in the field of practical film-making, yet Ray was scholastic in the language of films. He had learnt the art by watching good films.

He had to take a cameraman who had never handled a movie camera in his life because all the professionals objected to his shooting in actual rain and in available lighting conditions on outdoor locations.

Versatility

Right from his first film to the last, they were all director's films. the selection of stories, script-writing, composing music, camera work, set designing, publicity posters - Ray dived deep with body, mind and soul into all these! Incidentally, the first Indian film maker Dadasaheb Phalke was the only other film personality who handled all aspects of film making including film processing!

"Ray was the first film maker in India to make the individuals' films", says Mrinal Sen. The writer of this article has seen Ray personally at the Films Division, Mumbai, on a recording-mixer, holding two knobs of music and effect track while mixing one of his documentary films *The Inner Eye* (1974), which won the President's Gold Medal.

Ray knew, where and how he would like to maintain a rhythm in his films. A perfection on celluloid. It is because of this, most of his films are a feast for the eyes and a treat for the ears. Humanism and a poetic approach to his subject was the watchword.

When Mrs. Indira Gandhi approached Ray for making documentary films on Social Welfare and some for the government media, he politely refused.

In the making of his first film, *Pather Panchali* in 1952, with a junk camera, Ray had to face Himalayan odds. Unknown in the film world, getting finance was almost impossible. He had to invest all his savings. For want of funds, the shooting was held up twice within a span of 18 months. Like Dadasaheb Phalke, Ray had to raise money by pawning his wife's ornaments. Finally, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, Dr. B. C. Roy came to his help. According to Ray's

Ray's Creative Offerings

With Awards

1955	-	<i>Pather Panchali</i>	13 national and international awards
1956	-	<i>Aparajito</i>	6 national awards
1957	-	<i>Paras Pathar</i>	4 national awards
1958	-	<i>Jalsagar</i>	2 national and 2 international awards
1959	-	<i>Apur Sansar</i>	4 national awards
1960	-	<i>Devi</i>	1 national and 2 international awards
1961	-	<i>Rabindranath Tagore</i>	2 national awards
1961	-	<i>Teen Kanya</i>	4 " "
1962	-	<i>Kanchanjungha</i>	
1963	-	<i>Abhijan</i>	1 " "
1963	-	<i>Mahanagar</i>	2 " "
1964	-	<i>Charulata</i>	4 " "
1965	-	<i>Kapurush-O-Mahapurush</i>	
1966	-	<i>Nayak</i>	2 " "
1967	-	<i>Chiriyakhana</i>	
1968	-	<i>Goopy Gyne Bagha Byne</i>	6 " "
1970	-	<i>Aranyer Din Rati</i>	
1970	-	<i>Pratidwandi</i>	2 " "
1971	-	<i>Seemabaddha</i>	1 " "
1971	-	<i>Sikkim</i>	
1973	-	<i>Ashni Sanket</i>	4 " "
1974	-	<i>The Inner Eye</i>	1 " "
1974	-	<i>Sonar Kella</i>	6 " "
1975	-	<i>Jana Aranya</i>	3 " "
1976	-	<i>Baia</i>	
1977	-	<i>Shaharaj Ke Khiladi</i>	
1978	-	<i>Joi Baba Felunath</i>	
1980	-	<i>Hirok Rajar Deshe</i>	
1981	-	<i>Pikoo's Day</i>	
1982	-	<i>Sadgali</i>	

biographer, Marie Seton, "A state government bureaucrat wrote on the file, *Pather Panchali* is rather dull and slow moving." But *Pather Panchali* (The Song of the Little Road) turned out to be one of the best Indian films with 13 national and international awards, and found a place among the classics of world cinema which brought unprecedented name and fame to this man of 6 ft 4.5 inches making him a colossus in the world of cinema. Ray never looked back thereafter and remained the only faithful mirror of India.

Pather Panchali proved a good investment for the State Government which netted till 1979, Rs.24 lakhs, including Rs.9 lakhs in foreign exchange on an investment of Rs.2.1 lakhs!

Ray belonged to a highly intellectual, progressive Bengali family. His father Sukumar Ray (1887-1923) made puppets which would attract people of all ages. Gurudev Tagore was one of his admirers. Satyajit's grandfather, Upendrakishore Ray (1863-1915) was a follower of the *Brahmo Samaj*, started by the great reformer, Raja Ram Mohun Roy (1772-1833), which brought the renaissance to Bengal. Upendrakishore was a writer, painter, photographer, lover of music and an expert in printing technology.

Britain and France were two countries where Ray had his most devoted followers. The French President, Francois Mitterand came to Calcutta to honour one of the great

One of the strongest motives that lead men to art and science is escape from everyday life with its painful crudity and hopeless dreariness from the fetters of one's own ever-shifting desires. A finely tempered nature longs to escape from the personal life into the world of objective perception and thought.

Albert Einstein

film directors of the century. On February 2, 1986, in the presence of a galaxy of intellectuals and dignitaries at the National Library, Calcutta, President Mitterand said:

"We make you a Commander of the Legion D'Honneur. France is paying tribute to a great director and friend. It is gratitude to a creator who with roots in this part of the world bears witness and continues to bear witness to the plight of all."

Satyajit Ray turned 70 in 1991. On December 15, 1991, a telegram from Mr. Karl Malden, President of the American Academy of Motion Pictures, informed Ray that he had been awarded the Special Oscar Award, joining in line with Greta Garbo (1955), Cary Grant (1969), Charlie Chaplin (1972), James Stewart (1984), Akira Kurosawa (1989), and Sophia Loren (1990), the other recipients.

With over 30 feature films and documentaries to his credit in three decades of film-making, Ray was very happy. He said: "I am absolutely enthralled by the sheer process of film making and the enjoyment that I derive from my work is what keeps me going as a film maker. Winning an Oscar is the climax because it is the equivalent of the Nobel Prize for a film maker and one cannot go beyond that."

On January 27, 1992, during a routine checkup, it was found that Ray had developed heart and respiratory complications. He was admitted for treatment.

On March 15, a two-member Oscar team, Mr. Al Schwartz, well-known TV producer and Mr. David Plakos, a Hollywood cameraman from Los Angeles came to Calcutta, and on March 16, they came to Belle Vue Clinic to film an ailing Ray for a live interview film capsule to be screened at the 1992 Oscar Award function in Hollywood.

EAVESDROPPER

By Sabu



If he has been conferred such a prestigious foreign award, he must be really good; and we'll look like fools if we give him anything less than a Bharat Ratna!...

Courtesy: Sabu, *The Indian Express*.

That same night, a *Rashtrapati Bhavan* communique announced that the Bharat Ratna had been conferred on Satyajit Ray! *The Indian Express* dated March 22, came out with an interesting cartoon by Sabu.

At the 64th Annual Oscar Awards function, Audrey Hepburn, in what was to be her last public appearance, paid glowing tributes to Satyajit Ray.

On 23rd April 1992, Satyajit Ray, a legend in his life time, passed away. He was 70.

Flags flew at half-mast on all official buildings and government offices remained closed as the West Bengal government declared State mourning for the day. In New Delhi, Parliament observed a minute's silence in his honour.

A British paper said that the mood in Calcutta, when Satyajit Ray died, was as if John Lennon and William Shakespeare had both passed away on the same day.

MR. PREM VAIDYA, a documentary film maker was with the Films Division of the Government of India.



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Papal Apologies

Do Ex-Post-Facto Apologies Mean Anything?

It was good to see Galileo rehabilitated, by the present Pope, for the great savant, remained a believing Catholic, despite his discovery, that the sun, not the earth, is the centre of the Solar System. The Pope has now apologised – or is about to apologise for the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the Holocaust. Does this enable one, to close ugly chapters of history, with a happy ending? Yes and No! We cannot restore to those who were tortured and killed, the lives that were snuffed out, by the above episodes. However, the “Apology” would be salutary, if with it, there came a greater Papal humility, on certain areas which need redressal.

The Crusades

In the name of wresting from the ‘infidel’, landmarks in the life of Jesus, under Muslim control, the Crusades perpetrated acts of great barbarism. Though Richard Coeur de Lion, was regarded as a “parfait” gentle knight, it is his foe, Saladin, who shines, by contrast – he even sent his own personal physician, when Richard, badly wounded, would have bled to death, while European physicians, applied the remedy of leeches, to a man already suffering life-threatening blood-loss! It is amazing that in their different ways, the people of ‘The Book’, regarded all other faiths, as heretical. The Jews, supposedly penned into ghettos, which seems cruel and inhuman, nevertheless look down upon non-Jews, even when their very own existence is in jeopardy! When Christianity and Islam,

developed side by side, Christians, as already mentioned, regarded Muslims as ‘infidels’, while, no doubt, among the races of non-Muslim peoples, orthodox Muslims thought, and think of them as ‘kaffirs’.

Islamic Culture Superior

At the point of its finest flowering, the Muslim world, especially in the Moorish conquest of Spain, shone, in the intellectual disciplines of algebra, astronomy (Omar Khayyam was as much a path-breaking astronomer, as a great poet); medicine. As happens to great religions and cultures, the zenith of Islamic intellectual achievement, was followed by a long dark night, even though today, Islam runs a neck-to-neck race with Christianity, in terms of numbers and geographical spheres of influence.

The Inquisition

The Inquisition remains a permanent blot on the history of Christianity; on world history too. Apart from the shocking physical cruelties, carried out in the name of Jesus, it raises the spectre of intellectual intolerance. This prohibits the free spirit of inquiry, which should infuse human affairs; scholarship in the physical and social sciences. The Inquisition is not dead, it exists, albeit in a shadowy version. Teilhard de Chardin, and currently Hans Kung, are under investigation, the latter prevented from teaching in a Catholic University.

The Holocaust

In making this apology, Pope John Paul II, has wittingly or unwittingly (?), laid open the question of Papal infallibility, which did *not* exist, at the time of the Inquisition, and the Crusades. It could, of course, be argued that the matter was one pertaining to Pope Pius XII’s political judgement, whereas the Pope is only infallible in matters of faith and morals.

However, the extreme rigidity of the present Pope on the subject of effective artificial contraception, is a stand, obviously taken, as one based on faith and morals. But what about the economic and political agendas of Third World countries, where poverty is rooted in excess population? “Vatican Roulette”, via the safe period of a woman’s menstrual cycle, depends on two fragile postulates: one, that the time of ovulation can accurately be predicted; second that a woman, highly-placed, or poor, can curb the lustful instincts of man, probably drunken and in “the mood”, for being told, “Not tonight, Napoleon!” It is sad, that a Pope otherwise so humane, cannot see repeated unwanted pregnancies, from a woman’s point of view.

Abortion, however, should not be on demand. In the countries where it is legally available, certain circumstances make sense: the first is the danger to the physical life of the mother (the Church accords priority to the life of the child, whereas the death of a mother in

childbirth would leave her other children, motherless. The life of a fully grown woman, with responsibilities to her family, should prevail, over the life of a foetus. Damage to the psychological health of the mother, arises, if she becomes pregnant as a result of rape. One of the most cruel things Mother Teresa did with ruthless religious bigotry, was to insist that Bangladeshi women, raped by Pakistani soldiers, should carry their babies to full term, as the price of her help. Every time a woman raped, looks upon the fruit of a union which was pure trauma, she cannot but curse, a religious establishment, which forces her, daily to confront, something she should mercifully forget!

The Mind-set of the Present Pope

The "Apologies" though belated, would be welcome – if they indicated a more open mindset for the present, and the future. Sadly this charismatic, and most widely travelled Pope, remains mired in the orthodoxy of the Middle Ages, on the question of family-size, and woman's right, to make at least some decisions, regarding her femaleness and her body.

The Teachings of Jesus

Lest I shock those who perceive me as a "Defender of the Faith", Christianity as taught by Jesus, was simple and broad: "Thou shalt love thy God with thy whole heart, and whole mind;" "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" "Love one another, as I have loved you". He was particularly kind to women, having an uncanny understanding of the feminine psyche. I believe, if He could speak today, He would leave it to the innate instincts and wisdom of women, to make their choices, as to family-size.

The Poor are the Worst Sufferers

I may add, that in Western Europe, the USA, and possibly upper class catholic Asia, priests dispense penitence, from the orthodox teaching on artificial contraception. Sadly, thus, the rich with their small families, give their children the best, and perpetuate their social dominance. The poor, who heed the teaching, get increasingly marginalised.

DR. LOUELLA LOBO PRABHU is Associate Editor of *Insight*.

The Willow has Wilted

The match fixing scandal involving players and bookies is not at all surprising. Cricket has ceased to be a game, but has become a business. Since a lot of unaccounted cash is involved, the mafia has moved in with their sleeping partners in such shady business viz., politicians and bureaucrats who protect them. This team-work ensures that eventually everything will be properly covered up.

Contrast this with what some of the all time Greats did and said. When Professor D. B. Deodhar who received the prestigious Dadabhai Naoroji Award in 1990 was asked for his advice, he said: "Play the game, on and off the field. Above all, lead a clean and honest life. Without it, all achievements are meaningless."



Don Bradman, in a rare interview in 1996 asked what he would like best to be remembered for, said: "Integrity"



West Indies player Malcolm Marshall who died recently, was offered a huge sum to play in a South African team during the days of apartheid. He refused as he was strongly opposed to apartheid. The disappointed promoter said, "You are a very good cricket player, but a foolish young man". Malcolm Marshall never regretted.



Today the willow has wilted. Most money-crazy players have forgotten that when their life's stumps are drawn, the great Fourth Umpire will give a verdict which will endure and not their 'records' nor ill-gotten money.

M. R. Pai

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Vladimir Putin – Russia's Man of the Moment?

Perumal Koshy



The Russian delegation cannot be blamed. Nobody knew who Putin was, till, on new year eve, Boris Yeltsin took the world by surprise, announcing his resignation three months ahead of his term and naming Vladimir Putin as his successor. Russian Presidential elections will be held on March 26, 2000 – three months ahead of schedule and Vladimir Putin is all set to become the second President of the Russian Republic.* Boris Yeltsin had appointed him as the fifth prime minister on August 15, 1999 and the general perception at that time was that Putin was going to be Yeltsin's fifth victim. However, Yeltsin's confidence in Putin and the appreciation that the Russians have shown over Putin's handling of the Chechan issue, coupled with the good performance of Putin's Unity Block in the 1999 elections to the Duma clearly indicate that Putin will get elected as the next President of the Russian Federation.

So, who is Putin?

KGB Background

Born in 1952, Putin graduated

The Russian delegation attending the World Economic Forum at Davos last year were asked about their new President-in-charge, "What can you say about Putin?" A hush fell over the audience, as the Russian delegates blankly looked at each other, and the audience burst out laughing as no reply was forthcoming.'

in law from the Leningrad University and joined the foreign intelligence section of the KGB. He spent most part of his assignment in Germany. Leaving the KGB in 1990, Putin joined Anatoly Sobchak, then Mayor of St. Petersburg; first as head of external relations and then as deputy Mayor from March 1994. After Sobchak's defeat in the 1996 elections, Putin moved to Moscow. On the recommendation of Anatoli Chubias, then deputy prime minister, he was appointed deputy head of management in the presidential administration in 1998. In July that year, he was appointed as head of the Federal Security Service, the successor to the KGB. Pleased with Putin's work and loyalty, Yeltsin appointed him as Secretary of the Security Council, which coordinates with the Minister of Interior, Defence, Federal Border Guards and Federal Security Force. In August 1999, he became Prime Minister, replacing Primakov.

Free Market ...

Putin is described as a "colourless bureaucrat" whose honesty and decency is endorsed by some of the Russia's best known liberals. His closeness to Sobchak, Chubias and other liberals, lends support to the hope that he may also follow reformist policies. Putin has pledged to stay with the free-market

reforms and liberal values. But, he prefers tighter state control over the economy and enforcing discipline and order. In one of his speeches, Putin has said that Russia's economy will improve only if its defence industry is beefed up. In an official statement issued four days before Yeltsin's resignation, Putin called for tax reforms, payment of wage arrears and an end to the role of the barter system. Indicating his awareness of the challenges Russia was facing, Putin compared Russia unfavourably with Portugal and Spain. He noted that it would take at least 15 years more and a growth rate of 8% per year if Russia were to reach the status of economic development of either of these two countries.

... but State Regulated

In a statement issued in December, Putin said that western style democracy was not suited to Russia. Russian society, he declared, "wants a restoration of the guiding and regulatory role of the state ... Russians are not ready to abandon traditional dependence on the state and become self-reliant individuals. The country, therefore, needs a comprehensive system of state-regulated economy". These are policies attributed to the communists. For, such ideas and a free-market economy do not go hand

* This was written before the elections.

in hand.

Richard Pipes observes that such sentiments hardly point to further political and economic liberalisation. Similarly, Marshall Goldman points out to Putin's confusion about the role of the state in a market mechanism. "He places an emphasis on the market, which is good; but when he says he wants an investment policy that would combine purely market mechanisms with measures of state guidance, he reveals his confusion. Certainly, market mechanism can mesh with state guidance, but reliance on purely market mechanisms means weak or no state guidance – not the strong state. Putin also emphasizes." Goldman refers to Putin's initial support of the Russian Central Bank's request that exporters turn over 100% of their export earnings to the state as an anti-market measure. It may appear to be the best way to curb the flight of capital, but in all likelihood, it will only serve

to increase capital flight as even more exporters get their customers to divert payments away from Russia.

Civil Liberties ...

In his new year address to the nation, Putin assured that civil liberties like freedom of worship, freedom of the press and property rights will be protected. What made him the favorite of the Russians who suffered a series of bomb blasts in Moscow and other cities in the last quarter of 1999, was his tough and decisive action in the war against the Chechen militants. Under Putin's guidance, the Russian army crossed over into Chechnya on 10th October, with a determination to destroy the militants.

... and Chechnya

Putin told the foreign protestors that what Russia does in Chechnya was an internal affair of Russia. Putin's Unity Block did well in the 1999 elections on the Chechnya factor alone. Does it mean

that the Russians admire a leader tough enough to punish non-Russian nationalities? Even Zhirinovsky of the Nationalist LDPR did well in the earlier elections professing Russian chauvinism. Add to this Putin's proposal to increase military spending by 57% to respond to geopolitical realities, both internal and external, second thoughts would be justified, not only about Putin's bonafides but also in the external funding agencies.

In the final analysis, Putin remains an enigma because of his past, his toughness and his contradictory statements with regard to economic reforms. His professed economic policies may bring joy to the lethargic Russians who were happy under the Soviet regime; to the armed forces because of promised enhanced budget allocations; and those who have not received their wages for months. But Putin's policy of introducing state-regulated economy will not appeal to the rich

Exit Yeltsin, Enter Putin

The coup against Boris Yeltsin illustrates the way they do things in today's Kremlin. They prefer deals now to dungeons and bullets, and very skilled they are at them too. Like everybody else in town, apparently, Yeltsin had become too greedy, and utterly careless. The Moscow media have taken to publishing damning details of his foreign accounts and credit-card transactions for sums way beyond his declared means. Charges of corruption looked certain to compromise him and his chosen successor, Vladimir Putin, in the run-up to the presidential election scheduled for June. If Yeltsin were to go immediately, Putin could hope to turn this election into a formality. In return, Yeltsin and his family are guaranteed immunity from prosecution, and even investigation, with other perks on top. All of the Yeltsins may continue as usual with their handy credit cards. It would be slapstick, except for that hint of blackmail.

No matter where the money came from, it might be argued, no amounts of it is enough to reward Yeltsin. His epic struggle for power with Mikhail Gorbachev did much to destroy Communism and the Soviet system. A thorough Communist in outlook and experience, Yeltsin after 1991 had to reeducate himself as best he could in the very different ideas and practices of a free society. He resorted to force against his own parliament and peoples, notably the Chechens, and in his resignation address he apologized for this after a fashion. When it might have been possible to play the Russian nationalist card against Ukraine and the Baltic states, he refused that dangerous temptation. Had he stood down at the time of the last presidential election in 1996, he might have entered the history books as something of a great man, flaws and all, rather than the sad figure he has become, out of touch, vodka bottle in one hand and credit cards in the other.

Putin became a KGB colonel in his twenties, and so by definition is an able man but not very nice. He makes no apology for deploying massive force against the Chechens and anyone else in need of a lesson. He claims to be holding Russia together, and this reappearance of the nationalist card delights many of his fellow Russians. Here is an old-style Party *apparatchik* in command of the new tricks of spin-doctoring, such as visiting the troops for photo opportunities and planting articles in major foreign newspapers. Is the Yeltsin deal a precedent? Will everyone with dubious credit-card transactions be able to count on the blind eye? The huge majority of Russians would pay a high price for the introduction of the rule of law. Putin may well be the man for that, but in that case, he will have to rethink and reform the methods he has employed so far.

COURTESY: *National Review*, January 24, 2000.

Russians. Yeltsin's sudden retirement and the appearance of Putin on the scene caught the Communists unawares. For a populace that abhors the very name Communism, a tough talking Putin is preferable. This is reflected in the Russian stock market, which rose from 108 on 10th December to 177 when Yeltsin announced his resignation and to 195 by 10th January, 2000.

Tough but Good – Maybe

To a world that had come to accept Yeltsin, Putin has yet to prove that he can be relied upon. In August 1999, Putin met his US counterpart, Samuel Berger and assured him that "Russia pays careful attention to US concerns in the areas of arms and nuclear technology, export controls and has a right to expect adequate reciprocal measures." "Sounds like a typical Soviet-era statement made in the course of discussions held in a business-like atmosphere". At the Davos meeting that we referred to at the beginning of this article, the way the Russian First Deputy Prime Minister said, Putin repeatedly emphasises "...", it sounded as if he could have been referring to

Brezhnev or Krushchev. "It is funny how easily these reformers can return to the hypocritical behaviour of the Soviet bureaucracy they say they despise." I hope the show of such reverence was intentional. May be Putin may prove a tough but good Russian president.

Postscript

In the elections held on March 26, 2000 Putin was elected President of the Russian Federation. Polling 52.52% of the total votes polled. His nearest rival was Gennady Zyuganov, the Communist Party chief with 39.44%.

The first major achievement of President Putin has been the ratification of the START-2 nuclear arms treaty. The treaty, under which both the US and Russia agree to cut the number of warheads from 6,000 to under 3,500 on each side, was ratified by the US Senate in 1996 but was stalled by the Russian Duma, for one reason or the other. Just before his first visit to the West, the Duma ratified the treaty on April 14, 2000 with 288 votes in favour and 131 against.

Taming the Oligarchs

But, Putin has a lot more on his hands. Improving the living standards of the people and bringing crime – all types – under control. In spite of being

a KGB man earlier, he has promised to uphold the rule of law but use "the dictatorship of the law" to fight corruption. And use state intervention for promoting domestic industry. But, will Putin, who has promised to cut the oligarchs down to size, be able to fulfil his promise? The new-rich Russians with multi-million dollar empires in Russia and similar bank accounts abroad, cannot be expected to give it all up. Those who say confidently that "the time when oligarchs gave instructions over the telephone to government ministers is over", are betting heavily on Putin. But, "it will never happen", said Berezovsky, who looms like a giant shadow in the Russian world of crime, shadow economy, money-laundering and related activities. He said that Putin's statements against the oligarchs were meant to seduce the voters and not scare the former. Putin, as the President of Russia, can always make the first move. But will he also make the last one against the oligarchs?

For the time being, Vladimir Putin is the one Russian leader, who is still an unknown entity, but on whom a lot of Russians have pinned their hopes.

MR. PERUMAL KOSHY is a Research Scholar in the Centre for Central Eurasian Studies, University of Mumbai.

Widows Dubbed as Witches and Accused of Eating their Husbands - in Bihar

Superstition and blind belief rule rampant in the rural areas of Bihar state. A recent study by Free Legal Aid Committee in Bihar reports cases of husbands of the alleged "witches" in the hills and forests of south Bihar killed and their wives accused of "eating them up with their evil power". In many cases the husband of the alleged "witch" is murdered in cold blood to deprive the ill-fated and ostracized widow of her home and hearth.

Tepi Devi, 28, was the second wife of Baran Manjhi, whose first wife had failed to deliver any children. His relatives who had expected to inherit his land since he had no offspring did not like Tepi's arrival in the Manjhi household.

Last year in August when diarrhea broke out in the village and Baran's brother Sufal died of it Tepi was accused of having killed him by using her evil power. The villagers dragged her by her hair and brutally assaulted her. Later, she along with her husband was locked up with Sufal's body in a room and asked to either revive him or eat him up.

Not well herself, when released four hours later, Tepi was half-dead. Still her tormentors forced her to eat human excreta.

Unfortunately for Tepi, Sufal's wife also fell ill. Accusing fingers were once again raised at Tepi.

Baran Manjhi and she were forced to sell off their land and trinkets to pay for the ill woman's treatment. But Sufal's wife also died. Tepi was again subjected to torture and humiliation.

Some months back, her husband was killed while returning home from the village market. His head was crushed with stones and alcohol poured on his body. The blame again was on Tepi. This happened in Chouda village in Bokaro district of Bihar state.

Dania Devi of village Navadih under Chanhui block in Ranchi district (in Bihar state) is also an alleged "witch" whose husband was killed nearly two years back. Dania's relatives branded her a witch and held her responsible for every ailment that afflicted the village. "I was blamed for every sickness and death in the village," said Dania who lives in terror after her husband was lynched to death in a forest by unidentified men.

(Based on a report by Mr. Navin Upadhyay. Courtesy: RATIONALIST INTERNATIONAL Bulletin #27, 20 December 1999. Editor: Sanal Edamaruku. Address: P.O. Box 9110, New Delhi-110091, India.)

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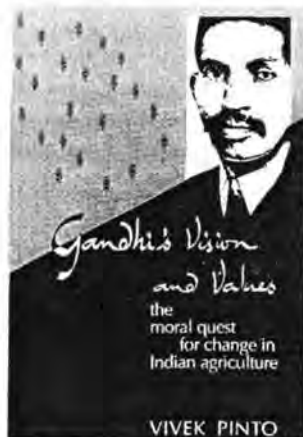
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BOOK REVIEWS

GANDHI'S VISION AND VALUES; by Vivek Pinto; Sage Publications, New Delhi; 1998; pp.176; Rs.295.



**Reviewed by
Prof. G. N. Sarma**

Hind Swaraj, the brief seminal work of Gandhi, was written in just ten days – November 13-22, 1909 – during his return voyage from London to South Africa. It would not be far from the truth to describe it as the core of Gandhi's thought and philosophy. It has held its unique place over nearly a century, has been commented upon widely and will continue to serve as the moral touchstone for the appraisal of civilisation and progress. Its relevance is bound to grow with the advance of modern industry and technology and the extension of urban culture.

The sub-title to the volume indicates that Gandhi's vision and values represent the 'moral quest for change in Indian agriculture'. This may, on the face of it, appear as a restriction of the scope of enquiry but it is not: the apparent limitation points to the undisputed fact that agriculture is the very basis of the

Indian economy, that it is more than a means of living but a way of life, not just the tilling of soil but the cultivation of moral and spiritual values, the virtues of simplicity, contentment and dedication to the common weal. Gandhi emphasises these virtues as the exclusive characteristics of village life, small scale economy and cottage industries ancillary to agriculture. It is an economy for man, not for money or acquisition and accumulation, the very foundation of spiritual living and swaraj or self-government. The final aim is the autonomy of the individual or 'enlightened anarchy' in Gandhi's own words.

What is important is that the author not only accepts Gandhi's exalted view of agriculture but shows how Gandhi's experiments in remodelling community life on the basis of agriculture and bread labour could be a model for free India. The experiments at Phoenix, Sabarmati and Sevagram, aimed at realisation of the ideals of *Swadeshi*, *aparigraha*, bread labour, trusteeship, non-exploitation and equality.

The author emphasises that the fight for India's freedom, according to Gandhi, was lacking in the moral and spiritual dimension. The result was a change of masters but no Swaraj that Gandhi envisaged; it was no more than a replacement of the British rulers by Indian rulers – Indians in name but not in spirit. Gandhi's criticism of western civilisation is directed towards the restoration of the forgotten or neglected spiritual and religious foundations of Indian culture. It was against this background that Gandhi emphasised the following constituent elements of his programme for agricultural

development: (1) the primacy of truth and god in the life of the individual and society; (2) the total acceptance of non-violence as a means to achieving honest ends; (3) adhering to the path of duty to and concern for one's fellow citizens as a basis for moral conduct, and (4) sharing one's material and spiritual values with all the others.

It would be incorrect to look upon Gandhi as a traditionalist in the pejorative sense of the term. He is a critical traditionalist as Nandy describes him. "Gandhi reformulated the modern world in traditional terms to make it more meaningful to his traditional society, thus updating Indian culture and making it a holistic alternative to modernity."

Gandhi's emphasis on agriculture and on the ethical values of a rural economy is the practical aspect of his critical traditionalism.

The author is of the view that "the present system has failed to resolve the condition of poverty because it has ignored agriculture and its development. This is based on a critical review of the progress of agriculture in free India. It is not enough, says the author, to aim merely at the augmentation of agricultural produce, though this too is important; "these goals necessarily need a moral and ethical quotient". Gandhi's criterion is ethical – economic, primarily ethical. The real question for policy makers is, who are the beneficiaries of economic growth? There can be no disagreement on this question – it is the poorest who ought to be the target of growth. The condition of this deprived section has remained unchanged in spite of the Green Revolution. The benefits of

development have eluded them and have only made the rich richer and promoted the greed for money and accumulation. This is the bane of the commercialisation of agriculture and the displacement of the principle of Food for the Hungry by the principle of cultivation for the market. We may recall Gandhi's poignant words: "To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God dare appear is work and the promise of food as wages" and ask whether God has yet appeared in this form, whether food and work have reached the hungry and the unemployed.

What ought to be the proportion of investment on agriculture and ancillary industries and heavy industry still remains unsettled; the bias has been towards the latter rather than the former in our anxiety to catch up with the advanced nations of the West, economically as well as militarily. Gandhi was not dogmatic on this question – his concept of Swaraj combined self-reliance and self-sufficiency with an openness to the winds from beyond our shores. His emphasis was on the complementary character of agriculture and industry. In a country with a large population of poor and unemployed, agriculture and ancillary industries ought to be the primary concern of policy-makers and administrators, development of heavy industry and industrialisation in general ought not to impoverish the countryside and reduce peasants to wage slavery and drive them from their rural homes and cottages into metropolitan slums.

It must be admitted that rural economy and moral values inseparable from village life according to Gandhi cannot, in the present day conditions, be isolated from the influence of industrial development and city life: latterly the

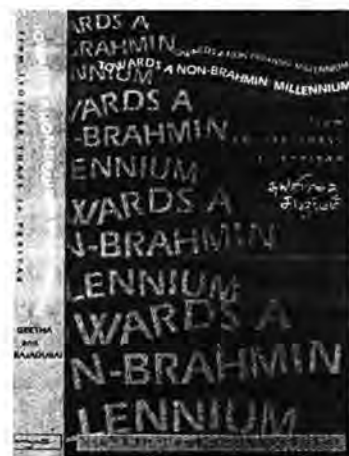
comparatively secluded village has been drawn into the world economy through the irresistible forces of globalisation. But it would be ruinous to life as a whole if these are allowed to dwarf and deaden the traditional economy and way of life, the age old skills, the large degree of self-sufficiency and the genuine spirit of joint living characteristic of unsophisticated rural life. One may doubt, as the author says, whether all that Gandhi said and practiced is practicable today, especially in the context of the prevailing large scale illiteracy, but he makes a fervent plea for a proper understanding and follow-up of Gandhi's experiments in Sabarmati, Sevagram, etc. He highlights the achievements of SEWA at Ahmedabad, Anna Hazare's reconstruction of rural life and economy along Gandhi's lines in Ralegaon and the self-imposed land use plan in the village of Seed in Rajasthan. The success of these efforts can serve as an inspiration for genuine followers of Gandhi's philosophy of life. As the author points out, these experiments derive their inspiration from Gandhi's teachings but are original in the sense that they are creative adaptations of the Gandhian model, relying more on the participants self-reliance and self-help than on initiative and help from above or outside. This shows, further, that Gandhi's teaching ought not to be looked upon as an inflexible steel frame but as capable of further experiment, interpretation and discriminate acceptance.

Pinto offers, in his *Gandhi's Vision and Values*, a sensitive understanding and appreciation of the entire range of Gandhi's philosophy. Gandhian studies have so far been compartmentalised as political, economic, ethical and religious, but Pinto achieves a synthetic and complete view, not losing sight all the while of

agriculture as the core of Indian life and the foundation of Indian cultural values. As he rightly claims, the present work in its emphasis on agriculture fills a serious gap in Gandhian studies. His approach is original and imaginative and reveals deep appreciation of, and one may say commitment to, Gandhi's view of life. It is at once lucid, perspicacious, well reasoned and altogether free from special pleading.

PROFESSOR G. N. SARMA retired as Head of the Department of Political Science, Marathwada University, Aurangabad.

TOWARDS A NON-BRAHMIN MILLENNIUM – FROM IYOTEE THASS TO PERIYAR by V. Geetha and S. V. Rajadurai; Samya, Calcutta; 1998; distributed by Bhatkal Books International, Mumbai; pp.556; Rs.300.



Reviewed by
Dr. R. Srinivasan

At the Marathi Sahitya Sammelan held recently in Shivaji Park, Mumbai, there were a number of pavement bookshops which displayed pamphlets containing accounts of Naicker (Periyar) also referred to as EVR with his venerable looking portrait adorning the front page. Also, we know that in U.P., an earlier government wanted to have statues of EVR

installed in public places. Periyar has become an all India figure and has joined the pantheon of the near 'mythic' figures such as Phule and Ambedkar.

In a sense this public acknowledgement completes a phase of Indian politics that ought to be commemorated as one of the achievements of Indian public life that began with the broadsides of Phule and the regulations of Shahu Chhatrapati. Using open fora, demonstrating, petitioning, organising and pressurising the governments both here and in London, the 'underprivileged' wrenched concessions from a government despite tremendous odds. With independence, the politics of democracy, the vote and the existing party structures have been taken advantage of for a place in the political sun. Where no parties existed, they have floated their own political parties.

The displaced upper echelons naturally have not welcomed these developments. And to get a proper perspective, one must turn abroad. When the working classes in Europe got themselves enfranchised and began to crowd the till then privileged arenas of public life, intellectuals of the calibre of Acton, Lecky and Erskine May, dyed in the wool Liberals, were to fear for the civilized values of governance and civil societies. They were frightened of the new forces that were being let loose and argued that the passion for equality would lay waste the hope for freedom. It was true that the course of subsequent history was not the same placid tranquil waters that they were earlier, but the turmoil was not because of the making of the new constituents of politics. For now it is too early to prophecy the course of things to come. For the newly enfranchised it is a partial fulfilment of the hopes of the fathers of the non-

Brahmin movement.

The book under review is a record of one of the regions – Tamilnadu – where the non-Brahmin movement has had a continuous history, beginning from the 1890s. It will remain for long an important work of reference and has utilised for the first time newspaper sources and the ample pamphlet literature in the narrative and analysis. We almost hear the contemporary voices, disputations in the extracts and can sample the frustration and anger of the then actors. Also, it has put in perspective the contribution of Iyothee Thass the great dalit leader whose pioneering work (to the shame of his followers) remained eclipsed for decades. The perspective is entirely that of the participants of the struggle, of their aspirations, of their grievances and their attempts – the 'Others' would get the feeling of being if not demonized at least of being painted in dark colours. Unfortunately, it is much too crammed with details and would put off the uninitiated by its sheer length and the twists and turns of narration. A shortened version may find a wider audience especially for those outside the region. Similar studies of other regions should follow.

In the Tamil districts, the movement was, simultaneously, a quest for a distinctive cultural identity, different from the Aryan tradition and an attempt at the establishment of an alternate historical memory, tradition and an ideology. Students know well the contribution of the Vellala intellectuals who contributed to this. The authors stress that Iyothee Thass led the dalits to play a distinct part in the development of this consciousness. The first quarter of the book covers this.

The second part chronicles the

record of the Justice Party and its spearheading the battle for a place for the non-Brahmins in the administration and the polity. Detailed accounts of the debate of issues led by the opponents and proponents of the party, mainly from the pages of *New India* (of Ms. Annie Besant) give these pages a glimpse into a rarely revealed aspect of history, where contestations took place all the time on almost every issue of policy. Dr. Nair, one of the most gifted leaders of the Party gave a thrust to the activities of the Party and its ideology and his contribution is well assessed. Equally significant was the role of Kandaswamy Chetty who is restored to his rightful stature as one of the conscience-keepers of the Party. That the Party was riven by factionalism and distrust only demonstrates that it was subject to the same ills that affected others. One of its significant contributions was to make certain Swarajist Brahmin leaders accept the inevitability of the policy of reservations.

The richest parts of the book are the chapters assessing the contribution of Periyar to the politics of Tamilnadu. Putting the Congress on the defensive, questioning the legitimacy of both the Congress and the Mahatma as representing the subalterns, prodding the Justice Party to effective action and raising issues that were embarrassing for the elite were some of his contributions. He mobilised the masses on a scale never done earlier. Two chapters explore in detail his revolutionary role in questioning the dominant religion and its institutions and in educating the masses to critically view its verities, absurdities and myths. The other equally important contribution was his role in awakening women, championing their cause and in encouraging them to participate in larger questions. In one generation, he woke up women sunk in dogmatic slumber for nearly



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a millennium. His attempt at basically restructuring the dominant social order by attacking the institution of caste and his finding some significance in a socialistic utopia are dwelt upon in detailed chapters. His championing of socialist egalitarianism (inspired by the USSR) and attempts to get these indigenised through the prism of caste made them different from the Congress Socialist Party. Inevitably, strains developed and a chapter narrates and analyses these fully. His ideology of Self-Respect was to encompass all that was antithetical to the existing social order and offered a utopia for the dispossessed. It was by and large non-political and a native variant of the Constructive Programme of the Mahatma. However, the dissensions within the movement and the breaking of the Young Turks meant that the original organisation as founded by him was to meet issues unanticipated by him. Periyar and his contribution have remained larger than him and his immediate institutions. No similar figure of equal eminence has emerged summing up the non-Brahmin aspirations.

There are limits to what any institutionalised party could do, particularly when it is centralised. Periyar's Self-Respect movement had the strength derived from spontaneity where innovations at the local level free from central directions were common. This was one of the strengths of the movement – for it generated enthusiasm and kept these from ebbing away. When Periyar tried to dominate the movement, many broke off and the later breakaway of the DMK was incipient in the movement itself.

Periyar had his own reservations whether even national freedom would usher in complete social justice for the common man. He was deeply aware of the infinite

possibilities of emerging areas where inequality would perpetuate itself and use the trappings of freedom for different ends. He was not as enthused by the prospects of national freedom as others were. The Indian who witnesses the continuing plunder of the land by the establishment and the entrenched political elements cannot but regretfully conclude that Periyar had perhaps a point and his deepest apprehensions have been reinforced.

DR. R. SRINIVASAN is retired Professor of Political Science, and associate editor of *Freedom First*.

WORSHIPPING FALSE GODS: AMBEDKAR AND THE FACTS WHICH HAVE BEEN ERASED by Arun Shourie; ASA Publications; 1997; pp.663; Rs.450.



**Reviewed by
Mr. J. B. D'Souza**

In the eyes of most Indians, particularly the Scheduled Castes, Ambedkar shines as a great patriot, a dauntless freedom fighter and the Father of the Constitution. Shourie's 660-odd pages try, with some repetitive tedium and some success, to undo that image. Time and again, to the great satisfaction of the British government, Shourie writes, Ambedkar proclaimed that

independence would be a disaster. It would leave the Untouchables to the mercies of the Hindus, and Untouchables were not Hindus. His declarations provided grist to the British mill, and they made full use of Ambedkar and his declarations in their divide-and-rule policy. Curiously, it was the British themselves who had given the Hindus the status of a huge majority. They did so when their census grouped Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and OBCs, all under the label Hindu. It was true, Ambedkar argued, that the Hindus and the Untouchables worshipped the same deities, but that only made them followers of the same cult, not members of the same community. Belgians, Dutch, Norwegians, Swedes, Germans, French and Italians are all Christians, but who can call them all a single community?

Ambedkar eagerly supported the government's Communal Award, which sought to create 'separate' electorates for the Depressed Classes – quite a different concept, a mischievous one, from the simple reservation of seats for them. At one stage there was even an attempt to allow two votes to each member of these classes – one in a separate electoral college and the other in a general local constituency. It needed a fast by Gandhiji to foil these endeavours. Eventually, as we know, simple reservations for the Scheduled Castes were approved, and persist to this day. Both in the legislatures and in the civil services. With typical upper-caste disdain, Shourie tells us what he thinks of them: "... even when some members of the group do rise, when because of the reservations that Ambedkar was so fond of for instance, they do reach positions of authority, their conduct squanders the opportunity. ..."

Mayawati and Kanshi Ram

are the natural offspring of Ambedkar's assertions. The conduct of officers in UP and Bihar who have come in through reservations is the natural consequence. The nemesis cannot but capsize society, and the group along with it." Bias? Possibly.

When Ambedkar insisted that his fellow-Untouchables were not part of the Hindu community that was not just a debating point. It is an argument we now hear from other castes as well, people who have lived on the fringe of the major communities. Listen to Kancha Ilaiah, of the shepherd community, writing in 1996 about Dalitbahujans (a term he uses for SCs and OBCs): "Suddenly since about 1990 the word 'Hindutva' has begun to echo in our ears day in and day out, as if everyone in India who is not a Muslim, a Christian or a Sikh is a Hindu. I am being told that I am a Hindu. I am also told that my parents, relatives and the caste in which we were born and brought up are Hindu. This totally baffles me. ... I, indeed not only I, but all of us, the Dalitbahujans of India have never heard the word – not as a word, nor as a name of a culture, nor as a name of a religion, in our childhood days. We heard about 'Turukoollu' (Muslims), we heard about 'Kiristianapoollu' (Christians), we heard about 'Bapanoollu' (Brahmins) and 'Kamatoollu' (Banias) spoken of as people who were different from us. Among these four categories, the most different were the Bapanoollu and the Kamatoollu. There are at least some aspects of life common to us and the Turukoollu and the Kiristianapoollu. We all eat meat, we all touch each other. The only people with whom we had no relations whatever were the Bapanoollu and the Kamatoollu. But today we are suddenly being told that we have a common religious and cultural relationship with them. This is not

merely surprising, it is shocking. In fact the very sight of this saffron-tilak culture is a harassment to us."

On several occasions Ambedkar's anxiety over the future of the minorities in an independent Hindu-dominated India led him to suggest that, on leaving, the British should by treaty bind the successor government to allow British intervention if minority rights were violated. Of course, no one took that seriously. But in the event, independence, which Ambedkar feared, brought the Untouchables little relief, notwithstanding the Constitution for which he is given credit. The persistence of discrimination – part of the disaster he had foretold – ultimately prompted Ambedkar to lead a large following to embrace Buddhism.

But that was much later. One of Dr. Ambedkar's less creditable endeavours was his persistent canvassing with the British rulers for a place for himself in the official hierarchy, preferably the Viceroy's Executive Council. He succeeded eventually, and used it to promote British interests. The archives, which Shourie has carefully researched, reveal the kind of esteem in which he was held by his masters, who counted on him to dilute the nationalist movement.

Arun Shourie's second attack undermines Ambedkar's reputation as the author of the Constitution. That reputation has really rested on his chairmanship of the Constituent Assembly's Drafting Committee. "That the myth has come into being and is now taken as a fact is a tribute first of all to the power of illiteracy in India. You have just to put out a slogan, there is a stampede behind it and it comes to be regarded as one of those 'truths that we hold self-evident' No one looks up anything. Most have not heard anything

beyond the assertion that Ambedkar wrote the Constitution, a 'fact' that by now has sunk into their visual cortex because at every turn they see statues of Ambedkar holding the Constitution. The more knowledgeable have heard a bit more. 'But was he not the Chairman of the Drafting Committee?' they ask. But they never ask, they have never bothered to look up what this so-called Drafting Committee was set up to do." Systematically quoting chapter and verse, Shourie shows how many people really, and far more tangibly, contributed to the making of the Constitution. If authorship is to be ascribed to any single person, which again would be less than proper, it would be to B. N. Rau, an outstanding civil servant who served the Constituent Assembly as its Constitutional Adviser and did the major study and spade work which guided the Assembly's various committees. Ambedkar had, in fact, opposed the very idea of setting up a Constituent Assembly. An enormous amount of careful study has gone into Shourie's assessment – and denigration – of Dr. Ambedkar. One wishes he hadn't tried so hard. The effect on the reader is an impression of repetitiousness. The book suffers too from spelling errors, too insignificant to list, but distracting nevertheless.

Writing on 'Ambedkar, the Great Leader' in *Sadhana* last year, Dr. Y. D. Phadke took Shourie to task for inaccuracies: The Maharashtra government's publication of Ambedkar's works number 9996 pages, says Shourie; they are actually 9756. At the 1952 Lok Sabha elections, Shourie reports, Dr. Ambedkar's Federation won not a single seat. In fact, says Phadke, the Federation won one seat. And again, B. N. Rau's draft of the Constitution contained 243 sections, according to Shourie there were really only 240.

It is surprising, adds Phadke, that a Ph.D. of America's Syracuse University cannot count. He lists more errors still, all of them of comparable weight, none of them worth noticing. He does make a more valid criticism: Shourie ignores Ambedkar's valuable efforts to promote a Hindu Code. And he couldn't have read Ambedkar's Marathi writings and speeches, so that his quotes are to that extent selective. But surely those utterances could not have been so far out of line with his outpourings in English; Ambedkar has not been accused of major exercises in doublespeak, even by Shourie. Phadke goes on to set out some of Dr. Ambedkar's more attractive qualities, such as his aversion to his own deification, but none of them are relevant to Shourie's tirade and theses in his book.

The book's last two chapters are a denunciation of the physical and other attacks on him in 1996 by the Republican Party of India, which was incensed by Shourie's earlier writings against Ambedkar. His face was blackened with tar. His anger is understandable, but how does he countenance the attacks by groups affiliated with his party – on Christians in Gujarat, Karnataka and Orissa, on Muslims in Mumbai in 1993, and on the making of Deepa Mehta's films in 1999-2000?

Should we repeat to him his book's closing line: "Unless this ideology is rolled back the problems that plague us will intensify no end – and paint throwing will be the least of them."?

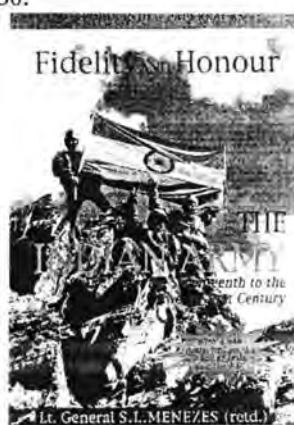
After his castigation of Ambedkar as a compulsive British collaborator, perhaps it would be useful for Shourie to hear what that eminent historian Sumit Sarkar has to say: "... both in the direct struggle for freedom and the other kinds of

anti-British activity, the RSS and the Hindu Mahasabha are conspicuous by their absence.

"Their right-wing Hindu movements share with the Muslim League a particular honour – they were the only groups that were never repressed by the British". In fairness, I must admit that Shourie may have been unaware of his associates' share in such particular honours when he wrote. A little learning is undoubtedly a dangerous thing.

MR. J. B. D'SOUZA is a retired civil servant. Among the positions held was that of Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra.

"FIDELITY AND HONOUR": THE INDIAN ARMY FROM THE SEVENTEENTH TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY by Lieutenant General (Retd.) S. L. Menezes, PVSM, SC; Oxford University Press, New Delhi; pp.655; Rs.350.



**Reviewed by
Maj.Gen.(Retd.) E. D'Souza**

Thanks to Kargil, there is today, a perceptible groundswell of interest in the Indian Army. In fact, the front cover of this worthwhile publication depicts the capture of Tiger Hill in the Kargil Sector by the 18th Battalion the Grenadier Regiment. The author of this book not only belonged to this Regiment but he was the Colonel of the

Regiment for the full tenure of 10 years.

Most civilians invariably pose the question as to what made the Indian Army click during the Kargil Operation VIJAY, what motivated the infanteer to do what he did against such insurmountable odds against a well entrenched and well armed enemy occupying the dominating heights, the formidable mountainous terrain devoid of cover, the extreme cold weather and the altitudes ranging from 16,000 to 19000 feet.

This thoroughly researched and documented work provides the clues. It is perhaps the first scholarly work written about a volunteer Army by a senior officer who served in its ranks for 38 years, from 1942 onwards.

In this revised soft cover version are included such burning topics as the nuclear tests at Pokhran, its fall out at the national and international level and the signing of the C T B T, and the much touted proposal to set up a National Security Council, a subject with which the author is *au fait* having served as the Vice Chief of the Army Staff before retirement.

There is no gainsaying the fact that within its 655 pages it contains not only military views but socio-political aspects as well which influenced the growth of the Indian Army. There are many priceless quotes including one by a famous military correspondent writing on the ill-fated campaign in Mesopotamia during World War I where he describes the British Military Leadership of the Indian Army as "Lions led by donkeys".

This is one work which cannot be read in one sitting. It needs time to digest this fascinating story,

of how from modest beginnings of a force of Native Sepoys raised to guard commercial interests of the East India Company, it has grown into a full fledged professional Army that it is today. This Sepoy Army which had no Indian Commissioned Officers until 1921 has taken part in two World Wars contributing over 1 million men in the Great War, and over 2 million in World War II. Thereafter, post independence it has been on the *qui vive* without respite in four hot wars, the on going cold war in J & K and the North East which has developed into a Low Intensity Conflict, on UN peace keeping duties from the very first essay of the UN in Korea, in the 1962 disaster against the Chinese and the ill-conceived involvement in Sri Lanka.

The author, decorated with the Shaurya Chakra, the Chief of the Army Staff's Commendation Card and the Param Visisht Seva Medal for distinguished service in the 1971 war against Pakistan is known for his phenomenal photographic memory and eye for detail. These attributes are readily manifest in this book. He has, in addition, experience in command, staff and instructional appointments in prestigious Schools of Instruction, Army HQ and in the field both in the West and the problematic Eastern Sector when in command of 4 Corps.

Though there are no maps which perhaps may have helped the reader to better understand the text, the author has included a number of vintage and current historical photographs: the execution of 21 mutineers by the British in 1915 a questionable decision, Indian Prisoners of War with the Japanese in 1942, hoisting the tri colour at Jaji Pir in 1965, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman addressing troops in Dhaka, Indian troops on peace keeping missions and one of Siachen.

The Indianization of the Officer Cadre has been covered in depth and features the efforts of Curzon and Kitchener, to the very active and positive role of Field Marshal Claude Auchinleck. The *raison d'être* of setting up the Indian Military Academy in 1930 is covered in detail. General Menezes brings out the important fact that until the end of the Great War of 1914-18, there were no Indian Commissioned Officers except a handful belonging to the Indian Medical Services. This is in complete contrast to the large number of Commissioned Indian Officers who participated in World War II both in the East and the West. The highest ranking Indian Officers at the end of World War II were Brigadiers - Cariappa, Thimmaya, Thorat, Shrinagesh and others of the Punjab Boundary Force. The transition into the Indian Army of today would not have been possible but for these officers.

The author acknowledges that the secular and apolitical Indian Army we have inherited owes much to the British who, in their own need based way introduced mixed class regiments but at sub unit level. The author does well to draw the reader's attention to what some of our leading politicians, at the time of independence felt that the policy of "the balance and counter poise" the British sought to achieve would be counter productive. This argument is countered by the author who very rightly asserts that it was for this precise reason that enabled the pre partition Indian Army, through the Punjab Boundary Force, to prevent a greater carnage of human lives during the trans-migration of Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims.

It was former Viceroy, Field Marshal Lord Wavell who remarked that he was of the firm belief that the stability within the ranks of the Indian Army would be the deciding

factor in the future of India. In this context the author quotes Pandit Nehru agreeing with Lord Louis Mountbatten the last British Governor General of India that the final guarantor of law and order, based on its morale and discipline, was the Indian Army. And the final stamp of approval as it were was what General Sir Francis Tuker, then Eastern Army Commander, remarked "that the Indian Army was an oasis in a desert of chaos". Prophetic words indeed. The institution of the Indian Army, till today, continues to be called out at the drop of the hat to bail out the civil administration when catastrophes loom large on the horizon; the Bombay riots, the Latur earthquake and now Orissa are outstanding examples of this contention.

The 1962 fiasco and the ill fated Sri Lankan intervention are covered in depth and though the Indian Army suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the Chinese and suffered over 1200 casualties in the Sri Lankan misadventure, the author is right in stating that the Army continues to retain its balance. The Indian Army paradigm for all times, the 1962 humiliating defeat notwithstanding, spells out its resilience and ability to bounce back.

Yet another point that emerges is that some detractors opine that democracy and a large standing Army are inconsistent. The author proves otherwise, as over the last 52 years it has continued to remain apolitical, secular and subject to civilian authority. Therefore these two attributes must continue to remain untouched. The Bhagwat affair is a pointer.

The post partition era should be of special interest to the reader. General Menezes emphasizes the all important point that "understanding of the present is the inevitable

consequence of ignorance of the past. But a man may wear himself out just as fruitlessly seeking to understand the past if he is totally ignorant of the present". Therein lies the value of this book. The author justifies the writing of this 'epic' when he says "History is a catalogue of mistakes. It is our duty to profit by them".

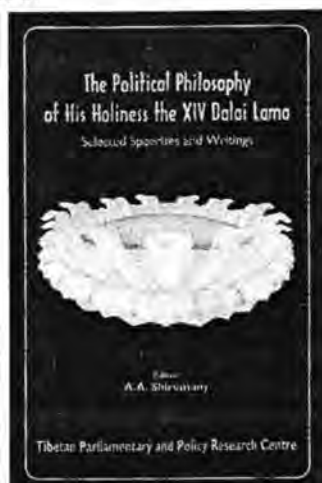
This absorbing soft cover edition has been updated with a postscript to explain the *raison d'être* of the Pokhran II nuclear tests and the consequences of taking any hasty decision on signing the CTBT. In addition comments are offered on the setting-up of a National Security Council and establishing the Defence Chiefs of Staff system.

This readable and absorbing story of the Indian Army spells out the efforts of a distinguished soldier to analyze, in its entirety, the various factors that went into its evolution to enable it to carry out its roles and responsibilities in far flung battlefields, within the national boundaries, on missions of mercy, on international peacekeeping missions on behalf of the UN, and when the civil authority and law enforcing agencies express helplessness to control a given situation.

This then is what *Fidelity & Honour* is all about. The author, Lieutenant General S. L. Menezes needs to be congratulated on undertaking to write this book. This work proves beyond doubt what Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw pointed out after the victory in liberating Bangladesh: "Glories in the field are achieved by the Indian Army because it is a family of men imbued with patriotism and selfless devotion to duty".

MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) E. D'SOUZA, PVSM is a regular contributor to *Freedom First*.

THE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY OF HIS HOLINESS THE XIV DALAI LAMA. SELECTED SPEECHES & WRITINGS edited by A. A. Shiromany; Tibetan Parliamentary & Policy Research Centre; C-1/127, Basant Kunj, New Delhi 110070; 1998; pp.490; Price not stated.



**Reviewed by
Prof. R. V. Chari**

"I am for autonomy, genuine autonomy for the Tibetan people to preserve their distinct identity and way of life. I do not seek any privileges or position for myself; on the contrary I have made it categorically clear many years back that I do not wish to hold any official position once we have found a solution to the Tibetan issue" so says His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama in a statement on November 10, 1998, after meeting U.S. President Bill Clinton, included in the third of the series – *The Political Philosophy of His Holiness The XIV Dalai Lama*.

Tibet, the heartland of Asia between India and China has a history of more than 2100 years. It has been a sovereign state with its own language, customs, culture and political system, with an achievement of considerable progress, spiritually as well as materially. The blatant

violation of the sovereignty and independence of a self-respecting peaceful nation by surreptitiously invading parts of Tibetan territory early in 1949 was followed by a formal attack by China on October 7, 1950. The Chinese describe this shameless occupation as "peaceful liberation of Tibet". Following the forcible occupation by the Chinese army, The Dalai Lama left Lhasa on March 17, 1950. He was 24.

If one were to carefully go through the speeches of the Dalai Lama in Part I, one would get a very clear picture of the goings-on in Tibet after the Chinese occupation. During this period of fifty years, the Chinese have brought about catastrophic changes that are quite harmful and disastrous for Tibet. The atrocities perpetrated by the Chinese in Tibet are simply mind-boggling. According to the exile administration, 1,73,221 Tibetans died in prisons and labour camps, 1,56,758 were executed, 3,42,970 died of starvation, 4,32,705 in battles and uprisings, 92,731 by torture and 9,002 committed suicide. All the 5,700 monasteries and 500 temples have been razed to the ground. Amongst their losses are their valuable irreplaceable ancient Sanskrit, Pali and Tibetan texts, which have been completely destroyed by the Chinese.

In spite of such cruel treatment meted out to Tibetans in their own land, it is highly commendable that the Dalai Lama has been maintaining his mental equanimity and spiritual supremacy, requesting the Chinese to come to the negotiating table for a middle-of-the-way approach to the Tibetan imbroglio. When the Nobel Prize for Peace was awarded to the Dalai Lama, the citation said: "... in his struggle for the liberation of Tibet, he consistently opposed the use of violence – and developed a philosophy of peace with a great

reverence for all things living and upon the concept of universal responsibility embracing all mankind as well as nature".

In September 1987, the Dalai Lama proposed a Five-Point Peace Plan:

- 1) Transformation of Tibet into a peace sanctuary.
- 2) Abandonment of China's population transfer policy.
- 3) Respect for the Tibetan peoples' fundamental human rights and democratic freedoms.
- 4) Restoration and protection of Tibet's natural environment and abandonment of China's use of Tibet for the production of nuclear weapons and dumping of nuclear waste.
- 5) Commencement of earnest negotiations on the future status of Tibet.

On June 15, 1988, these proposals were put forward to the members of the European Union in Strasbourg. They later came to be known as the Strasbourg Proposals. When these proposals were announced, the Chinese government rejected them outright.

The reasons for the rejection of the Strasbourg Proposals are not far to seek. According to Chinese documents, there are over 160 mineral resources in Tibet, some with very high commercial value including Uranium. Apart from the suffering and cultural erosion of the people, even the land is being denuded. During the last five decades, the Chinese have done very little to improve the life of the Tibetans. Instead, they have been destroying the culture and plundering religious treasures, enslaving the native Tibetans who

have been virtually reduced to a minority with the influx of millions of Chinese into Tibet.

On March 19, 1991, at a speech delivered at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, the Dalai Lama wanted to know whether "the Tibetans are any less entitled to a homeland than the Kuwaitis or the Palestinians?" On April 18, 1991, he addressed the US Congress. Though this speech contains the usual pleas seeking the support of the super-powers in solving the Tibetan impasse, he makes a telling comment: "My guide explained that two hundred years ago, this bell pealed forth to proclaim liberty throughout your land. On examining it, however, I couldn't help noticing the crack in the bell. That crack, I feel, is a reminder to the American people who enjoy so much freedom, while people in other parts of the world, such as Tibet, have no freedom".

Part II details the interviews the Dalai Lama gave to the media. In an interview to NBC on August 19, 1987, the Dalai Lama felt that the situation in Tibet was improving as the Chinese were appreciative, more moderate and more reasonable. However, he felt that the destruction of property was quite immense and the sufferings of the Tibetans quite indescribable. As late as June 28, 1999, in an interview to *The Times of India*, the Dalai Lama said: "I am still open. But China continues to be tough. The government and local authorities are continuously making efforts to reduce the Tibetan population ... so they have devised new methods: Corrupt the Lamas ... incite feuds ... forcing young Tibetan women into prostitution."

Every year on March 10, the Dalai Lama sends his message to the people of Tibet. Part IV contains these messages from 1961-1998.

These lucid statements bring out the depth of feeling, sincerity and his commitment to the cause of his people. The radical changes brought in economic reforms in China and the aspirations of the people in general forced the Chinese Communists to take stringent punitive steps against their own people which culminated in the Tiananmen Square massacre.

The volume is a must for the reader who wishes to update his knowledge of Tibetan affairs.

MR. R. V. CHARI, a freelance writer, is retired Professor of Management and Commerce.

In the Name of Communism

I remain at a loss to explain... how the noble ideals of so many good men and women become transformed into senseless barbarity. Nor can I understand what motivated those people within the Chinese leadership who actively counselled the total destruction of the Tibetan race. It seems that China is a country which has lost its faith, as a result of which the Chinese people have themselves endured unspeakable misery ...all in the name of communism.

... the pursuit of communism has been one of the greatest human experiments of all time, and I do not deny that I myself was very impressed with its ideology at first. The trouble was, as I soon discovered, that although communism claims to serve 'the people' - for whom there are 'people's hotels', 'people's hospitals' and so on - 'the people, does not mean everyone, only those who hold views that are held by a minority to be 'the people's views'.

The Dalai Lama in his autobiography, *Freedom In Exile*

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