

Freedom First

A LIBERAL QUARTERLY. APRIL – JUNE 2002. No. 453



Qutubuddin Naseeruddin
pleads for help during riots
in Ahmedabad

MEERA BHARAT MAHAN?

We dedicate this issue of *Freedom First* to **Geetaben**

Freedom First humbly salutes you for your courage

even when death at the hands of hooligans

was staring you in your face.

WHO WAS GEETABEN AND WHAT DID SHE DO?

This is what she did as reported by Siddharth Varadarajan in *The Times of India*

"Two weeks ago the resident editor of *The Times of India* in Ahmedabad sent our office in Delhi a photograph so shocking that it made my stomach churn...

"On a hot and dusty patch of asphalt lies the naked body of a woman, Geetaben, her clothes stripped off and thrown carelessly near her. One piece of her underclothing lies a foot away from her body, the other is clutched desperately in her left hand. Her left arm is bloodied, as is her torso, which appears to have deep gashes. Her left leg is covered in blood and she is wearing a small anklet. Her plastic chappals sit sadly alongside her lifeless body and in the middle of the photo frame, is a gnarled, red, hate-filled remnant of a brick, perhaps the one her assailants used to deliver their final blow.

"Geetaben was killed in Ahmedabad on March 25, in broad daylight, near a bus stop close to her home. She was a Hindu who in the eyes of the Hindu separatists currently ruling Gujarat had committed the cardinal sin of falling in love with a Muslim man. When the Sangh parivar mobs came for him, she stood her ground long enough for him to flee. But the killers seemed more interested in her. ...Geetaben's murder was never meant to be a furtive, secret affair...

"...Geetaben deserves to be worshipped. She is Gujarat's Jhansi ki Rani...I salute you Geetaben, from the bottom of my heart for your one brief moment of defiance. For even in death with your helpless, innocent body bloodied, and your clothes ripped apart, you showed more courage, humanity and dignity and more fidelity to the Hindu religion than Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee has done in the past month

(Extracted from an article by Siddharth Varadarajan in *The Times of India*, April 19, 2002)

Freedom First

A LIBERAL QUARTERLY
50TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

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BETWEEN OURSELVES ...

When we announced in the last issue that the cover feature for this one would be "Mera Bharat Mahan", we couldn't have dreamt of the horrors of the Godhra tragedy, much less its "action and reaction" sequel. *Freedom First* has never hesitated in condemning the violation of human rights wherever, whenever and by whomever. The journal itself was founded fifty years ago to expose the brutal face of communism, which it did consistently, unmindful of the taunts and slander emanating from the Moscow of the Soviet Union and its stooges in India. During the bogus 'Emergency', *Freedom First* stood up for human rights and freedom of the press. Today, when violent communalism has raised its head with impunity, *Freedom First* denounces it unreservedly and promises to oppose and expose the attempt of its agents to destroy India's secular and democratic credentials.

And so we decided that we shall, in this issue, stick to the cover feature, but ask how my India could be great (in other words, how could mera Bharat be mahan if its people, whatever their religion or caste or community be, are raped, maimed, burnt, tortured and killed – all in the name of religion and the enforcers of the law do little about it. The face on the cover page is the face of a frightened Indian. How can Bharat be mahan if even a single Indian has to beg for his life from a bunch of goons. The argument is advanced that the killings are essentially confined to Ahmedabad and Baroda, so why bring the whole of Bharat. For two reasons: One it involves all of India, because Ahmedabad and Baroda are part of India, and two, today it is Ahmedabad and Baroda, tomorrow it could be Bangalore and the day after Hyderabad. The cancer will spread and cannot be arrested if all those who love India do not speak up.

The picture of the frightened Indian is by a Reuter photographer. We acknowledge the source and trust Reuters won't mind the use of this picture on the cover because the fear in the eyes of this poor man reflects today's reality in Gandhi's India.

Editor

Cover courtesy Reuters

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April-June 2002
No.453

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MANY VOICES

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

It was not an attack on a woman but against a tendency.

Shiv Sena leader Raj Thackeray on the attack on NBA leader Medha Patkar, *VSNET Voice*, April 16

Ram went on *vanvaas* for 14 years just to keep the peace at home. Our leaders, on the other hand, are using his name to destroy the peace of the nation.

Praveena Shetty, *The Times of India*, April 20

The upper middle classes have formed the base of the BJP's support. Wealth has, in this case not led to moderation.

Ashutosh Varshney, Director of the Center for South Asian Studies, University of Michigan, *Newsweek*, March 18

It must be terrifying to be a muslim in this country today.

Arundhati Roy, *Newsweek*, March 18

The recent tragic events in Gujarat indicate that a section of our people have lost their sanity.

Civil Rights Advocate M.A.Rane, *The Radical Humanist*, April 2002.

It is not law that will prevent crime, not POTA that will curb terrorism, it is a culture where officers are accountable, but allowed to do their job without fear, favour or political interference.

Anita Pratap, *Outlook*, April 15

I am an Indian and believe in five-year plans. Meet me after five years and ask me if I intend getting married then.

Actor and model Milind Soman, *India Today*, April 8

We must be the only democratic country in the world without a justice department and that is nearly as scary as POTO.

Tavleen Singh, *India Today*, April 8

Bahujana Samaj Party leader Mayawati knew it was not forward to be 'backward' anymore.

Ajay Uprety, *The Week*, March 10

The most unfortunate thing in our nation is that while there are politicians who make laws for others there is no one to control the law makers.

Sandip Kumar, *India Today*, March 18

There is enough religion in Gujarat to hate one another.

Anosh Malaker, *The Week*, April 7

Hindus feel they (Muslims) only understand the language of Muhammed Ghazni, so let us become Hindu Ghaznis.

What is wrong in Gujarat becoming a laboratory of Hindutva?

Muslims will have to prove their credentials if they want to live in peace.

Pravin Togadia, General Secretary, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, *The Week*, April 7

Mera Bharat Mahan?

Editorial

Freedom First does not support the demand for the removal of Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi. He heads a party that was returned with an overwhelming majority in the last general elections to the Gujarat State Assembly. The next elections are due in September. Till then his party has the right to remain in office. In a mature democracy, considering the scale of violence and the near total breakdown of law and order, the Chief Minister would have accepted responsibility for his failure to stop the killings and stepped down voluntarily. But such things do not happen in India though we pride ourselves in being the world's largest democracy.

It is an accepted political axiom that when someone is elected to parliament or a state legislature he (or she) is the representative of all the people in the constituency and not only those who voted for him. In other words his primary responsibility is to his constituents and not his party or to sectional interests. This principle has been ignored in India by the large majority of members of legislatures and parliament. It surfaced brazenly and unashamedly in the ongoing Gujarat riots where, according to very reliable reports many elected members of the Gujarat legislature including some ministers were seen leading violent mobs and paralysing the police either into inaction or incorporating them as their partners in crime.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'pogrom' is a Russian word meaning 'organised massacre' (originally and especially of the Jews in Russia) and 'genocide' is the deliberate extermination of a race, nation etc.' In terms of this dictionary meaning what is happening in Ahmedabad and Baroda is undoubtedly organised massacre of a people simply because they belong to a particular religion. And, if this continues unchecked, it will lead to genocide and if that happens it will be end of India as a nation.

The demand for the sacking of Narendra Modi makes little sense. As Mr. C. R. Irani points out in his column in *The Statesman*, what if Narendra Modi resigns and is replaced by Dr. Pravin Togadia the international general secretary of the VHP? Calling for the imposition of President's Rule also does not make sense. Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi is an RSS activist, so is L. K. Advani, the union home minister. Can Modi's victims expect a fair deal in such a situation? Clearly, President's Rule too is not the answer. The only answer at this point of time is public pressure, national and international, to compel the state

and Central governments to do what is expected of any government - restore law and order and return to the rule of law. This means, *inter alia*, bringing to book the guilty wherever they are, in whatever position they may be, and to whichever community they may belong.

Is it reasonable to expect that this will happen? If the BJP is prepared to eat crow vis-à-vis Kanshiram and the BSP to stay in (or share) power there is hope that they may still do the right thing in Gujarat even if be for the wrong reasons. But it will at best be a strategic retreat.

Much has been made of the play-acting that goes on within that group known as the 'Sangh Parivar'. Take the widespread demand for the resignation of Narendra Modi. The drama (the Hindi word '*Natak*' would be more appropriate) that we witnessed before and during the now notorious BJP meet in Goa regarding this particular issue, is a case in point. The meet affirmed its confidence in their apparatchik (again a Russian word meaning 'agent of the apparatus'. In the Russian case the apparatus of the Communist party. Here the apparatus is the RSS and Narendra Modi is its agent. How could the BJP ask him to resign? Narendra Modi as an RSS activist is assigned the task of making Gujarat safe for the BJP. And he was doing precisely that. The horrific massacre of the innocent at Godhra was merely the trigger Narendra Modi pulled to further his mission. Why blame the agent when he was merely carrying out the apparatus's directive.

The Goa meet also brought out without any ambiguity the real objective of the BJP - Installing Hindutva as the national policy of the country. Very much like the Indian National Congress of Jawaharlal Nehru imposing on the country a 'socialistic pattern of society' forty years earlier, and almost converting India into a satellite of the Soviet Union in the process.

As for the so-called 'mask' worn by prime minister Vajpayee. There never was a mask. At no time did he hide the fact that he was part of the RSS; at no time did he publicly admit that he had given up his faith in Hindutva. He used his charm and his poetic gifts to good advantage. He undoubtedly is an excellent team leader and he put it to good use. The spin doctors worked overtime to build up his image as a charismatic leader. L. K. Advani was projected as the hardliner and Vajpayee as the amiable and reasonable person.

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There could not have been a more stupid statement than this one attributed to many: that Mr. Vajpayee was the right man in the wrong party.

It is time we accepted facts of life as they are and not as we want them to be.

Take the BJP for instance. Everyone views the BJP as an independent political entity. This it is not. It is a creation of and controlled by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh – the RSS. The BJP's separate existence is only apparent, not real.

There are two kinds of members in the BJP - the hard core consisting of the RSS swayamsevak (roughly translated: volunteers) and the fellow travellers, that is those who are not RSS cadre but those who joined the BJP for various reasons. These are the 'outsiders' are not taken seriously by the leadership. They are kept in good humour with a few crumbs thrown their way such as a governorship here, a chairmanship there, or membership of the Rajya Sabha or of legislative councils.

Similarly the VHP, the Bajrang Dal, the Swadeshi Jagran Manch and their organisations in the labour and students movements are all very much RSS owned and controlled. Hence the term *parivar* or family. By profiling the RSS thus I am not seeking to pass judgment on their basic passions but merely to focus on the reality.

The reality is:

When you vote for the BJP, you are really voting for the RSS

When you support the VHP you are supporting the RSS

When you support the Bajrang Dal you are supporting the RSS... and so on.

All the coalition partners of the BJP-led NDA government are therefore supporting the RSS. This they know but will not admit. When they voted in parliament against the opposition's motion on Gujarat they were really supporting the pogrom in Gujarat. This includes those who abstained or walked out during the voting. The RSS has got the measure of its' allies their love of office and the perks that go with it.

Even in the days when the RSS was being driven into a corner with vociferous demands that the organisation be banned, *Freedom First* opposed the demand. And, despite Gujarat, we still do not agree with the demands being made for banning the RSS or any members of its family. The RSS has as much right

as any other group in India to campaign and seek support for their point of view. It is for the people to choose. But if members of the RSS and their family are accused of breaking the law, they must be charged, tried and if found guilty, punished. The same holds good for members of muslim fundamentalist groups. This is the Liberal way.

We know where we Liberals stand *vis a vis* religious fundamentalist groups. But pitiable, if not contemptible are the non-BJP allies in and outside the NDA who, for the sake of the fishes and loaves of offices, are prepared to be accomplices rather than allies.

Mr. Narendra Modi has declared that 50 crores Gujaratis are behind him. The truth will be known in September when Gujarat goes to the polls.

Meanwhile there is need to examine the majority/minority question. Professor Bandukwala observed at a recent meeting that it is ridiculous to call a population of 40 million muslims a minority. In fact this majority/minority concept so badly misused by politicians if not dealt with head on could result in two nations living within one with one of them consigned to the ghettos. This is certainly not what the people of India want certainly not the muslims.

In our view, in the present context and after fifty years of independence, we are not qualified to describe our Bharat as Mahan. It is still a long way off.

S. V. Raju

The Masque – Atal Bihari Vajpayee

It was a wondrous painted masque,
With slits for twinkling eyes,
A slit, too, for a smiling mouth,
Through which poured words witty and wise.

The people were enchanted,
With the magical mask,
They took it at its face value,
Never took it to task –

Until upon a fateful day,
The masque slipped off the wearer's face,
A face both different and new:
Deprived of its old wonted grace.

The words spoken without the masque,
Were not what the wearer once said.
Could someone else have filched his place,
Or, was the wearer really dead?

Or was the man without the masque,
The real man inside?
The masque worn with firm purpose,
'Hindutva' self to hide?

Dr. Louella Lobo Prabhu

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Gujarat: The Beginning of the End?

Kusum Chopra

How many times will Gujarat have to pay the blood price for that Ram Mandir?

On the morning of 27th February, the Sabarmati Express from Ayodhya to Ahmedabad made an ill fated stop at the Godhra station, amidst raucous slogan shouting by its *kar sevak* passengers. Five minutes later, as it steamed out, the chain was pulled not once but twice.

In a very short while the S6 bogie of the train was in flames which engulfed 58 persons, mainly women and children, but none of the *kar sevak netas*, who had miraculous escapes. Within hours, chief minister Narendra Modi was at the site for a first hand inspection of the damage done. And by evening, Godhra, Vadodara and Ahmedabad were in flames.

The "Jehadi Hindus"

On February 28th, the ruling BJP supported a VHP bandh to protest the train carnage. What began as a protest bandh and communal violence turned three days later into a genocide by ethnic mobs, led by known faces carrying voters lists to zero in on homes, offices, shops, hotels, factories whatever, to wipe out the muslims totally.

Human beings were torched by the dozen, homes by the scores. And looters came riding in Esteems and Santros to denude branded shops like Zodiac, Pantaloons, Akbarally's and Metro apart from smaller establishments.

By the time the Army came

in, the social fabric had been rent asunder.

One wondered about these new foot soldiers of religion. They called themselves **Jehadi Hindus**. "Why should only they have jehad? We must also have our own jehad, our own agenda" they declare forcefully.

And the aim of their jehad is to exterminate the "kafirs" from Bharat.

Did they know the meaning of "Kafir"? One who does not believe in Islam.

Here the roles have been reversed. It is the foot soldiers of Hindutva who have become jehadis, out to convert or kill the Islamic Kafirs i.e. those who believe in Islam and not in *Hindutva*. Were these neo-Hindus or neo-Muslims?

In another attempt to stand tradition on its head, they went about building temples at desecrated sites instead of holy ones. It is an Islamic tradition to build a masjid at the site of another religion, not a Hindu one. But these new jehadi Hindus are putting up instant temples at the sites of razed masjids and dargahs; and giving them upto-the-minute names like "Godhriya Mahadev" (a take off on Godhra) and Hulladiya Mahadev (hullad means riot). The irony is that in these neo mahadev mandirs, the portrait installed is that of Ram Bhakt Hanuman the presiding diety perhaps of the Bajrang Dal.

Phased, Systematic Violence

The wounds go deeper every day, more than a month later, as individuals are now picked on in a sinister pattern, partners in inter religion marriages, the people who have helped them, their means of livelihood, all are grist to the killer mill.

George Fernandes flew in to induct two army brigades which stood by for hours while the last of the urban genocide was completed and the state authorities scoured Ahmedabad for trucks. Then it marched out with one hand tied behind its back, *a la* IPKF in Sri Lanka.

Violence shifted base to the rural areas, purportedly the sanskritised tribals attacking their Muslim oppressors. This was the first time any such thing has happened in any part of the country, leave alone Gujarat. Finally violence was controlled a daily simmer of death and arson and loot, carefully controlled so that Gujarat was an adequate blackmail issue for March 15 at Ayodhya.

Public Emasculation of a PM

That was the second phase of the violence. The third was timed to the Prime Minister's visit, before and after. Patently cornered by saffron loyalties into protecting Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi, the man who has won his government the ultimate international defame of being equated

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Putting India Down – No Matter What

A friend who has just returned from South China made some interesting revelations about how China manages to outprice everyone else in the market.

"It could put Hitler's labour camps to shame. The girls live on the premises, two-three dozen to a room in rows of four tiered beds. Up before dawn, they are at work by 5.30 and work through to midnight, or until they finish their daily quota, with three short breaks for breakfast, lunch and dinner, provided by the factory owner. It is worse than slave labour as the payment is minimal."

"What," I asked, "about the U.S. Human and Labour rights concerns?"

It is very simple. There are a number of showcase units which are shown off whenever the Americans come, while work carries on apace elsewhere in the vast hinterlands of China. The show cases can be those of factories, tourist spots, administrative excellence, cooperative farms or whatever.

Now, I find, we in India are following the China example. To attract foreign investment, we show off our tolerant culture and IT excellence. Tucked away in Gujarat, we continue with ethnic cleansing, which is denied by the state and central governments until both are blue in the face. With the boom lowered on the media, they may just get away with it, unless the NDA allies find their conscience. Is that possible?

Meanwhile the Goebbels phenomenon is in display. Tell a lie well enough and often enough to make it the truth. While Advani holds his counsel, and Fernandes struts the stage, Vajpayee and Modi insist that nothing is wrong in Gujarat. Normalcy is imposed at the point of bayonets and curfews.

And exam papers for the tenth and twelfth standards remind the students: "there are two solutions. One is the Nazi solution. If you don't like people, kill them, segregate them. Then strut up and down. Proclaim that you are the salt of the earth." Doesn't that sound very much like Gujarat's Narendra Modi?

It is a quote picked out from a lesson titled "Tolerance in the Advanced English course for Std.XII students. Coming in the context of the ongoing violence in the state which is now six weeks old and have been variously described as 'massacres', 'genocide' and 'ethnic cleansing', such a dramatic reminder of what can be done can only be a big question mark on impressionable minds already full of questions of what is going on around them. Why not select a more positive passage, given what is going on around the very exam centers where these students are writing their papers? Is it asking too much?

The government of India reacted very strongly to the statements of the European Union against what is going on

in Gujarat, and to the reports that Muslims in UK are exploring the possibility of filing a case for extradition of Modi in the killing of UK Muslims in Gujarat, with possible reference to the International court of justice for the genocide that is taking place.

There can be no doubt that any such development would mean terrible grief and shame for India which has always prided itself for its cultural plurality and its tolerance, especially on the world stage.

But what comes to the mind is the fact that it is our NRI cousins, so lionized by the BJP and its Sangh Parivar cousins, who are responsible for many a recent shame for India and its peace loving citizens. While they have chosen to go and settle and earn abroad, they wish to keep the fires burning back home so no home grown cousin can compete? Plain and simple sibling rivalry? Is that the aim of this exercise? Or is it a more sinister conspiracy of outside influences working on the NRI attempt to control events in India?

The organization of the so-called "Friends of BJP" in various parts of the world seems to have kick started secessionist and violent movements in various parts of India, as erstwhile migrants wish to recast the India of today as the India of their nostalgic memories glazed by rose tinted glasses which do not allow for development in India.

So we have the Sikhs who migrated decades earlier funding the Khalistan movement most enthusiastically, for whatever reasons. After over a decade of terrorist activity which cancerised the innards of Punjab, which has yet to recover fully even today, it was the turn of the JKLF.

Once again liberal foreign funding from NRI lobbies joined hands with local rabble rousers to tear apart Kashmir's fledgling economy stepping out of the tourist syndrome to much more. Many cooks spoiling the broth later, Kashmir has yielded the center stage to Gujarat thanks to whom, for the first time, the terms "genocide" and "ethnic cleansing" have been applied to events in the country which has prided itself in the role of Global Peacemaker since Independence.

Each of these divisive movements has, at some time or the other, been taken over by elements other than those who started it and gone off in varied directions. But the net loser has always been India and her people.

This time, for millions of Hindus of the "Hindu" mold, this about turn of their religion, by a fringe lobby campaigning for a macabre, extreme Hindutva, shamelessly modeled on the more violent percepts of Islam, cannot but be a stomach churning and shamefully heart rending experience.

Kusum Chhopra

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with the Taliban and jihadis, never was prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee more so evidently emasculated in public than when he stood by the impassive Modi. The prime minister resorted to a now familiar tactic: rhetoric eloquence.

His emotional appeal over the growing practice of burning people alive "*Kya hum insaan nahi rahe? Kya mooh lake jaunga?...*" met a stoic response when the crowd murmured loudly "*wahi jo hamare paas leke aye ho*". If he can face us, why not anyone else? deman-ded Nuriben at the Shah Alam camp, adding that if he had come earlier instead of waiting for "security reasons", he could have felt the heat of the burning for himself.

The absence of any clear criticism, as against implied criticism, of the Gujarat administration, was plain. Mr. Vajpayee did not say a word against the chief minister, his colleagues who participated in the instigation of the violence and the police that stood by.

Hindutva's Stormtroopers

No one is in a mood to give peace a chance. Something so innocuous as a poster campaign by the Citizens' Council of Ahmedabad has been viciously disrupted by hindutva stormtroopers who threatened the advertisement agency which got the contract, with dire consequences unless the hoardings were removed. These included "*sarv dharma ek samaan, bharatni saachi pehchan*", "*mandir todo masjid todo ya gurudwara girijaghar, usme baitha sabka malik ek*" etc.

Points to Ponder

Galling facts are now

crawling out of the woodwork.

- That the RSS warned the PM that any move to remove Modi will mean spread of violence all over the country. Having long viewed Vajpayee as a millstone around its neck, it is now pushing for early elections, never mind that means the opposition benches for the BJP. The saffron lobbies are apparently emboldened by the results of the vote polarization experiments in Gujarat that it had sent Modi to carry out.
- At the height of the violence, Modi sent out teams of his ministers into the districts to assess how far the violence and its aftermath could be translated into BJP votes in a snap poll. Party insiders insist that the responses were positive and things would have been in place, except for Vajpayee putting his foot down at Delhi on March 27 when he told Modi that relief and rehabilitation were to be his priorities, not elections.
- A big question that is whispered but not answered is "who planned Godhra?" the ISI theory has come apart and investigation stalled.
- The next question that arises is "Who planned post Godhra?" and the question rebounds off Gujarat. No one knows the answer. But hints have surfaced with records of a BJP survey done in mid-March 2002 to assess the effect of the violence on the BJP's share of the vote in case a snap poll was held immediately, instead of waiting for the scheduled February 2003 assembly election.
- CM Narendra Modi is reported

to have told off the PM that he could not be expected to better his efforts at controlling the situation and providing relief and rehabilitation. He was doing the best he could.

- Haresh Bhatt, president of the Gujarat unit of the Bajrang Dal says that the PM has hurt the sentiments of the Hindus by saying he was ashamed of what happened in Gujarat. "No one said he or she was ashamed when the Godhra incident happened. That is an insult to us".
- Can this be constituted as an admission that they have done whatever it was that the PM is ashamed of. If he was not given a chance to express his shame over Godhra, perhaps it was because before anyone could do anything, the after Godhra stage was underway in full force.
- On the other hand, Union Minister of State for Youth and Cultural Affairs, Uma Bharati who accompanied the prime minister claims to be appalled by the change she found in Hindu youth in Gujarat. Shocked by details of the torching of human beings, she wondered aloud why Hindu youth were not even repentant after such violent acts.
- Finally the Union Home Ministry has woken out of its deep slumber. A month after the Godhra train carnage, it has circulated a note to the state home secretary and police indicating that miscreants were determined to keep the situation simmering, that the state administration must rise to the occasion to thwart those

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designs, that police must be given a free hand to deal with external influences and that radical Muslim groups were mobilizing youth and preparing them for physical training.

- After the systematic pogroms against them, it can be no surprise that the ministry anticipates that Gujarat has become a fertile ground for recruitment by ISI and its affiliates. What is worth questioning is why the union home ministry never noted the earlier surveys and other preparations which allowed such a systematic ethnic cleansing to take place in such short order. After a terror-quake of this magnitude, is it any wonder that the 104 odd refugee camps are deemed "ripe ground" for jihadi recruitment's? Or since the Gujarat government has failed to conduct surveys of damages and needs, some other agency may do so, which may not be exactly conducive to our national interests? Already some 8000 odd Muslims are reported to have fled to safety in Uttar Pradesh after living in Gujarat for generations.
- The Gujarat High Court dismissed an application seeking the transfer of the investigations into the Godhra train carnage to the CBI and initiate action against IB officials for negligence. The court observed that "in the present situation it is too early to say that the state government has not taken any steps, as it has other important things to take care of."

Among those other important things is no doubt the dramatic

transfer of 27 senior police officers, with the focus on those who had ensured that no untoward incident took place in the districts under their jurisdiction. What followed was evident from the sudden outbreak of violence in Anjar in the first week of April, over a whole month after the Feb.27 Godhra carnage.

- The Indian Social Action Forum (INSAF) a national forum of 500 social action groups and intellectuals sent a team to investigate tribal excesses during the recent violence. Panel members discovered tribals promised liquor and jobs by VHP activists to overcome hesitation over violent attack on Muslims. They were threatened that if they did not attack, their own homes would be attacked. "tribals were used as a shield by right wing organizations to carryout the agenda of ethnic cleansing and communal genocide".

Like the Kargil war, the post Godhra riots were played out under the glare of TV camera, unblinking and even handed. They showed nauseating images of the Hindu corpses spilling out of the S-6 bogie at Godhra and haunting images of burnt down Muslim homes by the dozen all across Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Kadi and dozens of villages. While the S-6 images, which were stomach wrenching drew no criticism, the rest, along with the comments on the official instigators of such revenge lowered the boom on the electronic media.

Hindu gangsters could be identified by their saffron scarves and trishuls, the Muslims by their skull caps and beards; their reli-

gious places were so easy to identify that it was useless to use verbal subterfuges; so the media came right out and said "Hindu/Muslim mob", "masjid", "dargah" etc.

Modi and his officials were furious at being identified. His loud and abrasive denials, while backing the butchery, quickly turned him from a media darling to "chief monster" and the entire print and electronic media was clamouring for his removal louder than any opposition party.

Perhaps Modi miscalculated his famous clout with the Delhi media; for it was the Delhi media, print as well as electronic which has led the call for his head. Every word he utters is scrutinized for ulterior motives and he resents it. It showed in subsequent interviews and magnified the decibels of the call for his resignation.

Broad hints of a "hidden agenda" were extended to the agenda of the pogroms unleashed against the Muslims with total impunity; Ahmedabad's elected MLAs and Ministers were seen leading and instigating mobs; later they confessed that they dared not face their constituents in the refugee camps. Gangsters named in FIRs were not arrested. Was it another hidden agenda to use the post-Godhra outrages to blackmail the Centre into submission at Ayodhya?

How many times will Gujarat have to pay the blood price for that Ram Mandir? First after L. K. Advani's Ram Rath Yatra and V. P. Singh's Mandal yatra, again in 1992-93 after the Babri Masjid was torn down and now, after Godhra.

MS. KUSUM CHOPPRA is a journalist and a frequent contributor to *Freedom First*

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In the Grip of a Frightening Mindset

Nagindas Sanghavi

The Non-Resident Indians or NRIs as they are called are the most obscurantist sections of the Gujarati community. They have been the staunchest supporters and financiers of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

During the last six weeks, Gujarat has hogged the headlines in the national and international press all for the wrong reasons. So much has been written by so many from such a variety of angles and view points, that there hardly anything left unsaid about the horrendous events in that unfortunate State suffering from a series of calamities natural and man made. But all these projections are an exercise in futility because there are no words that can accurately and graphically convey what one has seen or felt about the happenings that would leave even the most insensitive person stunned. The cold figures are shocking enough – over 800 killed, 30,000 houses, shops and cabins burnt and /or looted, 3000 vehicles smashed and more than 1.07,000 refugees – uprooted and rendered homeless. But even this horrifying statistics pale into insignificance when viewed against the diabolical mind set that to day holds its sway all over Gujarat.

Communal Epidemic

Those who condemn the burnings and the killings of the innocents do not reflect or represent the psyche that has emerged to hold the majority community in its grip. Apart from a miniscule minority almost all the Hindus in Gujarat, not only support, the terrible vendetta for Godhra, but even justify it as a

necessary cleansing for an alien community of traitors. It is quite surprising, even shocking to hear such views from the most unexpected quarters, from the people least expected to be affected by the communal virus, from nice, sober mild mannered businessmen, academics, journalists and even government officials including the policemen on duty. Six thousand Home Guards called in to help curb the violence had to be sent back when they were found abetting the rioters.

Those who are not sufficiently acquainted with the Gujarat of today are overwhelmed by the upsurge and seek to explain it away by barking up the wrong tree. Those who deplore the intense communal hatreds in Gandhi's Gujarat have their perceptions outdated at least by three decades. They overlook the disquieting fact that though Gandhi did belong to Gujarat, Gujarat no longer belongs to Gandhi and probably never did. Gujarat has long back shifted its loyalties away from Gandhi and, at least from 1969, Gujarat has been marked out as "a communal riot pro zone" in the records of the Union Home ministry. There is a fairly long track record of communal riots, which erupt from trivial reasons and sometimes from no reasons at all.

Nurturing Hatred

These riots have left bitter

memories and latent antagonisms. It is a vicious circle in which the riots nurture the hatreds and the hatreds fuel the riots. It should not be forgotten that when Advani took out his infamous Rathayatra, he chose Somnath from Gujarat as his starting point and the Gujarat VHP proudly claims that in the demolition of the Babri mosque [1992], the largest contingent of the *Karsevaks* was contributed by Gujarat.

Gujarat was the first State and it is still the only State where BJP has captured power on its own and in spite of the smashing reverses suffered by the party in the Municipal and the Panchayat elections, the BJP in Gujarat is still a power to reckon with. Internal feuds, the administrative and political inefficiency of BJP leaders in the State induced unprecedented instability in the State [five governments in seven years] and Mr. Modi was sent in to arrest the rot. The events have played into his hands and even the most hostile press has to concede that were elections held in the near future, Mr. Modi would lead the party to a convincing victory.

Mr. Narendra Modi

But he has overreached himself and is deprived of such victory. His name is to day the most accursed one in all non-Hindutva

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quarters. He has been accused of unleashing the communal carnage to achieve his purpose. He is denounced as a fascist with a pogrom of genocide of the minority communities, of aiding and abetting if not instigating the devilish fury of the mob by forcing the administration into an 'immobilisme.' Police Commissioner Pandey pleaded with the Chief Minister for a free hand to deal with the miscreants. When he (the Chief Minister) acted at all, it was for punishing the conscientious police officers for curbing the anti-social elements amongst the rioters. Such officers were transferred to more innocuous posts. Some of the transfers were so blatantly unjust that even the Police Commissioner had to enter a protest against the orders. Modi did discriminate between the victims of violence in matters of compensation and he could hardly conceal his glee when he characterized the riots as a natural 'reaction equal and opposite.' Mr. Modi is known for his arrogance and his self righteousness; his alignment with the forces of hard core *Hindutva* was never in doubt. His sympathies are too obvious and some of his closest friends are suspected of organizing and leading the mobs on their prowl.

Modi has entrusted the judicial inquiry to a retired Judge who is uncomfortably close to the accused groups. Mr. Modi has been denounced as the single largest obstacle to the restoration of peace in Gujarat and the opposition parties are baying for his blood in the Parliament.

Economic Impact

The National Human Rights Commission and the Minorities Commission have commented

adversely on the doings of his government and the European Union has now added its very powerful voice by declaring the Gujarat events as comparable to the events in the Germany of the thirties. Powerful voices from US have warned about the drying up of investments not only for Gujarat but for India as a whole. There is a move afoot to haul up Modi and his government before the European tribunals and the report of the British High Commissioner is said to have gone against him. The ministry of External Affairs has registered a mild protest by saying that India "does not appreciate" such comments in public. India must realize that globalisation of economy involves globalisation of interests and it is within the ambit of their power to impose a ban on the goods exported by or from Gujarat as blood tainted goods. It may be recalled that India was expelled from the international conference at Rabat in 1969 for the Ahmedabad riots.

But even the Devil must be given his due. More than eight hundred deaths deserves strongest condemnation but for a community five million strong, it certainly cannot, by any stretch of imagination be described as planning and executing genocide. Mr. Narendra Modi or even his colleagues might be harbouring dreams of an authoritarian fascist regime but Gujarat is not India and they have neither the strength nor the will to subvert the Constitution – a protective bulwark for the minority rights in India.

Epicentre: Ahmedabad

Underlying much of the raucous controversies is the changing patterns of the Gujarat

riots which ought to be analyzed on the basis of geography and periodicity. It is interesting to note that large areas in Gujarat are left untouched by the fury, which is concentrated in the city of Ahmedabad. Out of 107000 refugees more than 75000 are in the city itself and Ahmedabad accounts for more than 50% of the total deaths so far. Ahmedabad and to some extent Vadodara appear to be the most vulnerable storm centers. Most of Saurashtra, almost the entire Kutch and most of South Gujarat are left almost untouched. This geo-graphical configuration requires a deeper and more incisive analysis to reveal the real character of the events, with its sociological, economic and criminal inter-relations and interactions.

The Godhra incident is a class by itself. But there is also a periodic graph. The riots erupted on 28th February and raged for nearly four days, and it is in this first phase that the most horrible crimes have been committed and the most severe damage to lives and properties of the minority community has been inflicted. It was largely one sided. The administration and the police were hamstrung and the minorities suffered the most terrible damage in terms of men and properties. Then there was a lull lasting for a week or ten days and it is this lull that has enabled the Chief Minister to boast of having quelled the disturbances within 72 hours. The riots spread into nearby towns in central and north Gujarat.

Minorities' Retaliation

During the renewed carnage after 15th March, in the city of Ahmedabad and Vadodara, the

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minority had started retaliating and the crowds on both sides often fought pitched battles. The police and the administration stung by the widespread denunciation of its inertia has been roused into a flutter of activities. But they seem to have concentrated on the lumpen elements from the minority community which had taken the field during this third phase. This is the reason why the Minority Commission of India has demanded the break-up figures of those killed in police firings and post mortem reports. The National Human Rights Commission has suggested that all the major carnages ought to be investigated by the C.B.I indirectly casting doubts on the impartiality of the Judicial Commission appointed by the Gujarat government. Even the Prime Minister visiting Gujarat with obvious reluctance, advised Modi to uphold *Rajdharma*, which insists on impartiality, fairness and equity for all citizens irrespective of their creed or community.

Criminalisation of Society

These events spanning six weeks have revealed a frightening face of Gujarat society where brutalisation and lumpenisation have engulfed even the middle and upper middle class of educated and socially respected families. Women and even children from such families have participated in looting shops and police have recovered stolen goods from them. Such criminalisation is bound to eat into the vitals of that society making Gujarat a bane of Indian civilization.

Ghettoisation

The events in Gujarat are terrible and the long term con-

sequences of this trauma are bound to sadden all those who love Gujarat and those who love India. One result has already started showing. The government of Gujarat straining under the heavy financial burden of maintaining 92 refugee camps is using every means both fair and foul to push the refugees back to their homes. But they have refused to return to the mixed localities arguing that their lives would be in danger in future riots. They now insist on being settled in their own separate and safe localities. The process of ghettoisation that has been going on for a long time has now been accelerated and the Hindus and Muslims of Gujarat would by and large live, work, study and think separately. The ghettos have always been the undoing of plural societies and it is a matter of deep regret that a society as mixed and as plural as Gujarat would now begin to break up into its constituent parts. The call for a social and economic boycott of the Muslims as demanded by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad will only hasten the process.

Export Quality Terrorists

Secondly Gujarat would emerge as the breeding ground for Muslim terrorist groups. The victims of riots who have lost everything, seen their family members killed, maimed or raped, who have no property and no hope of a decent life left would turn desperados and be an easy target for the recruiting agencies for terrorist activities in Gujarat or elsewhere. *The Week* has already reported one Salma Khan envisaging such a career for her young son. The Prime Minister's amazing statement about Muslims creating trouble wherever they live

is bound to further exacerbate such feelings. Mr. Vajpayee must be aware that terrorists have no particular religion. We have had Christian terrorists in north east India, Hindu terrorists in Assam and Bihar and of course, in Sri Lanka. Khalistanis were Sikhs and terrorists in Kashmir are Muslims. We have been blaming Pakistan and ISI for exporting terror. Now with Gujarat, we would need them no longer and with the business acumen of Gujaratis we may have home grown, export quality terrorists. The set back suffered by the Gujarat economy is the least damaging part of the riots but it will push the graph of poverty and hunger upwards and create a hungry mob ready for anything. The fury in Ahmedabad can be partly explained by the ruin of the textile industry and failure of the city to develop proper alternative sources of employment.

Role of the Gujarati Press

It is a matter of some confusion as to why the best sections of the Gujarat society have been the vociferous supporters of this terrible carnage. The Press in Gujarat has done its best by spreading rumours, by biased and unbalanced reporting and by inciting editorials. Gujarat unfortunately has no press worth its name. The entire press world is dominated by two giants from Ahmedabad with their local editions in all the major and in not so major urban centers. There is not much to be said about their quality and their approach. Their weight and their tactics have almost destroyed or silenced alternative sources of information and interpretation.

Non-Resident Indians

But the more perplexing part

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is the role of the Gujaratis who have settled in progressive and modern democracies of the West. The Non-Resident Indians as they are called are the most obscurantist sections of the Gujarati community. They have been the staunchest supporters and

financers of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. This is rather surprising because with their exposure to modernity and to the democratic values, they ought to be on the side of the progressive forces. But then this also happened in the case of

Sikh terrorist groups which were also nourished from abroad.

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The Case for 'Aggressive' Secularism

Shubh Saumya

Sometimes we assume there are only two sides to a story. One must be either a leftist pinko or a right wing apologist for murder. I am neither. Borrowing language from BJP slogans (and your subject line), I am proud to be a Hindu, proud to be secular, and committed to making India a great power. And there are many others like me. And there is nothing pseudo about my belief.

I will make here a case for secularism, for an aggressive brand of secularism, and for the need to crush the venom that the sangh parivar brings to our national discourse.

I am not a Nehruvian, a Congress man, a Muslim, a media person, a bleeding heart Marxist, or even part of the intelligentsia. I have a middle class conservative upbringing. I am a practicing Hindu from the Hindi hinterland who has family that (in part) supports the sangh parivar. Yet I am militantly secular.

I believe that secularism is a strategic imperative for India, and not a soft ideology that needs discarding. Every single Muslim citizen of India was born there, his/her parents and grand parents were born there, and his/her ancestors lived, died and are buried there. This makes them *ipso facto* just as Indian as any other. While the sangh parivar might argue that Muslims in today's India live free because of the generosity of Hindus, let me suggest that all Indians live free because of each others generosity. This generosity was not born out of high minded ideals alone, there is a strong strategic reason for having a compact where each of us will respect each other.

This buys us enormous strategic clout in the world. When Tom Friedman writes admiringly of India as a land where Muslims live free under democracy, that is a strategic advantage. We are viewed as an emerging great power precisely because we are an experiment that's working in a world that's increasingly diverse and doesn't know how to deal with diversity. If we pull off this experiment, we will be the model for a world that is mixing faster now than its ever done in its history. It is in our supreme national interest to ensure that our experiment works. If that means dealing with grave provocation in ways that are practically impossible, then that's what we have to do.

There is also strategic clout in not being China like. By being everything that China is not, free, open, tolerant, pluralistic,

we offer nations an alternative pathway to great power status. Surely that is in our national interest.

By deploying the second largest Muslim population on earth as a willing strategic asset to keep our relationships with the oil rich gulf strong, we act in our supreme national interest. Which other non-Muslim nation has such an asset?

It is in our supreme national interest to be the one rare developing nation that shares political values and strategic interests with the west, and because of its experience with Islam, is the strongest bridge to Islamic nations. This is not daydreaming. India has strong (might I say stronger than Pakistan) relations with Iran and most of the Arab world, and now increasingly with the Muslim nations of SE Asia. Has OIC been beating the drums on Kashmir in spite of Pakistan's exhortations? No. Think about it.

What happened in Godhra is despicable. The details are irrelevant. India's Muslims must be called upon to end their (ab)use by cynical politicians and India's foreign enemies. Justice must take its course and murder must be punished. What happened after Godhra is equally despicable. Some of us (Hindus) killed hundreds of people pleading for their lives. Worse, these acts hurt our supreme national interest. India needs to bring everyone responsible to book, no matter how high and mighty.

The Muslim killers and the Hindus killed, the Hindu killers and the Muslim killed, are all my brothers. Its a waste of time trying to pin the blame on one or the other. What matters is that our image is dented, and our supreme national interest has been damaged. Indians worldwide are embarrassed.

I want India to be a great power. Economically strong, militarily strong, politically strong and proud of itself. Anything that comes in the way of achieving that objective must be (and will be) resisted. *Hindutva* as subverted by the sangh parivar falls in that category. Its eloquent advocates must be debated and defeated.

From the IndiaPolicy site. Extracted from a debate on the internet, and published with the permission of Shubh Saumya.

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Caveats on Gujarat

C. R. Irani

Mirror on the Wall!

There is a great deal that resembles the RSS in the tactics and actions that distinguish Buddhadeb's CPI(M) than is good for governance either in Gujarat or West Bengal

Chief Minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee is justified in tearing into the BJP government and its leader for allowing Narendra Modi to continue to do his worst or best, depending on the point of view, in a state hitherto known for its industrious people and a sensitive government able to attract business houses by ensuring them proper and efficient facilities. Speaking at a rally organized by the Left Front in Kolkata for preservation of communal harmony, he lambasted Delhi and the RSS adding that he was *ashamed to be a chief minister when a person like Modi who justifies attacks on the minority population also passes off for a chief minister. Buddha said more. We don't want to learn Hinduism from the RSS, which uses religion as a mask to hide its fascist intention to capture power and cripple the minority both physically and economically.* There was a word of condemnation also for the assault on journalists at the Sabarmati Ashram. All this is valid and we applaud him for the position he has taken.

But there is a great deal that resembles the RSS in the tactics and actions that distinguish Buddhadeb's CPI(M) than is good for governance either in Gujarat or West Bengal. It is not enough to rant against the RSS and all its work. Buddhadeb's government should look into the mirror I hold up to his face. If the police are inactive in Gujarat because of communal prejudice, they are similarly inactive in West Bengal because of

Statesman's Editor-in-Chief C. R. Irani is among the few journalists who stood up to Mrs. Indira Gandhi, during the 'Emergency'. I have never known Mr. Irani troubled by the need to be politically correct long before the words gained their current currency. I have also known Irani to be infuriatingly objective. His columns in *The Statesman*, appropriately titled "Caveat" are hard hitting, going straight to the heart of the matter.

We reproduce four of his caveats on Gujarat. — Ed.

ideological prejudices. We have just had confirmation of the CPI(M)'s hand in the brutalities at Chhoto Angaria in Midnapore district; it is no satisfaction to be told that the people driven out from their homes there to the accompaniment of the same vulgarity were not religious minorities but political opponents. If Gujarat practiced a pogrom born of religious fanaticism, the CPI(M) did the same driven by ideological prejudices. The objective was common — political power by hook or more frequently by crook. To the victims, it is no consolation that their homes were destroyed, their women outraged and their menfolk brutally murdered because they were Trinamul supporters whereas in Gujarat the wrath was visited upon Muslims for no better reason than they were Muslims. Resettlement in Midnapore was

exclusively for CPI(M) supporters, the difference is that any kind of resettlement in Gujarat is still to commence. Alimuddin Street will not talk to Mamata Banerjee's Trinamul just as Modi will not countenance Muslim representations. A coin, Mr. Bhattacharjee, has two sides; the one you are holding is no exception!

This newspaper wears its abhorrence of intolerance, of vulgarity, of prejudice, of indoctrination of police and para-military forces, of the supine bureaucracy ever ready to jump to attention to serve political masters in abuse of due process of law, on its sleeve. And it makes no distinction whether the driving force is religion or political ideology now discredited in the land from which it was imported with foreign mascots like Lenin and Stalin. I insist on good governance; this is clearly the need of the hour. It is true in Gujarat, it is also true in West Bengal. I am at pains to debunk the notion that somehow there is virtue in democratic centralism as a scientific doctrine. It is a euphemism for suppressing dissent and has been given up in the land of its birth, the Soviet Union; however, the adrenalin still flows in the spectacle of sadly outdated Marxists raising their clenched fists on demand from fossils like Jyoti Basu and Harkishen Singh Surjeet. It is nauseating to see younger and more rounded personalities like Buddhadeb, who should know better, call these specimen leaders when they have

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been left far behind in the struggle for progress and well-being of the human race.

I must in fairness accept that there is another difference. The Marxists perceive, although dimly, that they have gone too far, their dilemma is that they do not know how to withdraw. When they do see their way clear, there is Jyoti Basu, ever ready to spike the guns of his successor for the sole

objective of protecting his son, Chandan. Gujarat is different. The loonies are at a primordial stage where they do believe that more of the same will see them through the next elections.

The debate in Goa will not be between good and evil, between right and wrong. No principles of good governance will intrude. No notice will be taken of public warnings by Rahul Bajaj and

Deepak Parekh, two respected industrialists, that Modi is taking Gujarat to ruin and disaster. The only question in contention will be – is Modi winning the next elections or is he likely to lose them? It is scarce believable that we have sunk so low. The Prime Minister is worried as to what face he will show to foreigners. I worry about what face we can show to ourselves!

April 10

The BJP Rope Trick!

If Modi is asked to leave what is the guarantee that someone like Pravin Togadia will not take his place?

Arun Jaitley, the brightest of the younger lot in the BJP, and the fact is not lost on him, came to Gujarat with a transparent ploy and he orchestrated it to perfection. Modi would offer to resign at the National Executive meet and it would be rejected with a show of injured innocence. Being the democratic party that they are, they would want to leave everything, including the rule of law, to the people's court – a phrase made fashionable by communists and also indulged in by prize specimen like Laloo Yadav and the born again ally of the BJP, Jayalalitha.

The fallacy in the reasoning should have been obvious to the Law Minister. The charge that Modi had to answer was organizing and supporting a pogrom of Muslims, implemented with speed and meticulous detail in Gujarat's polarized polity after the horror in Godhra. The story of a spontaneous outburst of action and reaction being equal and opposite – Modi denies he ever said that – is not substantiated. By the evening of 27th February, a sitting judge of the

Gujarat High Court is approached not by Gujarat's Gestapo but by military intelligence with reports that howling mobs were looking for a Muslim judge living in the area; the judge is escorted by the army to the Circuit House annexe for safety.

A retired Muslim judge's ground floor flat is attacked; he is advised to leave. The next day he finds the flat looted and burnt, only one room with clothes and some papers saved. Naroda Patiya and other areas were systematically looted and burnt. The *modus operandi* was for the Gestapo to take away knives even those to cut vegetables and ask questions like whether they have bombs and harbour any Dawood Ibrahim men? An hour later, large mobs with gas cylinders, swords and trishuls herd Muslims into their hutment and burn them alive. Instead of investigating the Godhra incident and bringing culprits to book, there are calls for vengeance. And the camps begin to fill. A reign of terror is let loose, which I did not expect to see in my lifetime – I have just

returned after four days in Modi's Ahmedabad. I will report on it fully later, Godhra is 50 km. from Madhya Pradesh, 150 km. from Ahmedabad. Why was MP not provoked?

To get on with the argument, Gujarat raises questions of disregard of criminal law; elections by contrast are about choosing between policies and programmes of contending political parties. Is Modi seeking approval of a policy of waging war upon minorities? He can do so if he wishes but this cannot be the excuse for evading responsibility for what has already happened under his tutelage.

The BJP National Executive asks Modi to test public opinion in elections. Is public opinion an alternative to the courts? Is that the law the Law Minister studied and practiced? Besides there are two hundred thousand traumatized people now living in camps, half of them in Ahmedabad alone. Ravaged women some stripped of their clothes, frightened children and old men arrive and are

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huddled there, their eyes expressionless. Sanitation is non-existent, only recently have NGOs installed some mobile toilets but they are woefully inadequate. Is Modi going to ask them for their photo-identity cards? It is well settled that a law and order situation judged satisfactory by the Election Commission is a *sine qua non* for elections. The Commission must satisfy themselves that conditions exist for a free and fair poll; the record in recent times does not suggest that the Commission are ready and willing to exchange their judgement for the optimism of the Home Ministry for instance.

And finally if Modi is asked to leave what is the guarantee that someone like Pravin Togadia will

not take his place? Resignation is not the answer either. I went to Sabarmati Ashram. I have no doubt that if Bapu were alive he would ask Modi to stay, group his storm-troopers into battalion strength, place them under army officers and make them restore the homes they have ravaged, the property they have looted, rehabilitate the victims and help them get over their trauma. Those who have lost their lives cannot be restored. That guilt they would carry to their graves; the brave among them should confess and pay the penalty at law. That is not going to happen because the Mahatma is forgotten in Gujarat. Witness the attack on Medha Patkar and the attempt to obstruct Mallika Sarabhai's peace effort inside the Ashram. On Modi's

return from Goa, Gujarat television broke into singing – *Raghupati raghav raja Ram; patita pavan Sita Ram; Ishwar, Allah tere nam; subko sanmati de Bhagwan*, with Modi's face doing the *arati* on the screen! Are there no limits to hypocrisy?

As I approached the Ashram on my way to the airport, police were preventing satyagrahis from squatting across the road in a dharna. I got out of the car and had the satisfaction of having the Gestapo make way for me. Perhaps *The Statesman* identity card round my neck helped. An ordinary press card would have been useless. And thereby hangs a tale!

April 18

Wrong Kind of March!

Spare a thought for the Prime Minister. I grant that he is deeply troubled but seems helpless to do anything except making reassuring speeches.

George Fernandes is the third person in authority to say that the media – the English media; apparently they have no quarrel with Ahmedabad's *Sandesh* and *Gujarat Samachar* for instance – are projecting the situation wrongly. Modi began it; he is media savvy and knows that to retain attention he has to embellish the lie just a little every time he repeats it. Accordingly, the chief minister has started articulating the injury done to 5 crores of Gujaratis by the media. From RSS pracharak he has risen in his own estimation to master of all who live in his state. The second in chronological sequence is Advani who made the same charge to journalists in Tirupati on 6th April. Don't ask me why he went to Tirupati. I am told people go there either to beg

forgiveness for their sins or to seek favours of the deity.

George has some questions to answer. On his way to Ahmedabad, he said the Army would be withdrawn from Gujarat as the situation was now normal. After a long conversation with Modi and while still there, he says something different – *it is for the State government to decide when the troops should leave*. Strictly speaking he is right, the Army was asked to come to the aid of the civil power and therefore will leave when the civil power requests. The events of 21st April however, give the lie to a presumption that the situation is in danger of returning to normal any time soon. I have reported in earlier Caveats that the modus operandi was for the Gestapo to be

in the vanguard, clear homes of any possible weapon, even kitchen knives, before mobs move in with gas cylinders, swords, petrol and acid vials and set men, women and children on fire, generally after raping the women; indeed fire and rape have been the major weapons of terror against Muslims. It is common to come back for the bodies of the dead in order to char them beyond recognition so that there is no question of seeking death certificates, indispensable to seek compensation. In the Jamalpur, Darwaja and Danilimda areas of Ahmedabad in the old city the violence is spreading; triggered by custodians of law and order who barged into Muslim homes and started violating women, one of them got stabbed and died in hospital. In the skewed logic on

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offer the injured party is the police who promptly go on a rampage and at the time of writing it continues.

Spare a thought for the Prime Minister. I grant that he is deeply troubled but seems helpless to do anything except making reassuring speeches. While the mayhem in Ahmedabad by the Gujarat Gestapo is continuing, he promises that *those involved in the Gujarat carnage will not be spared no matter to which religion they belong*. To bring the perpetrators to justice it is necessary to charge them; to charge them FIRs must be filed. Is the Prime Minister aware that the police do not register FIRs on various pretexts, like register missing, officer absent, and so on? He has not seen what I have seen – sheafs of FIRs already filed brought to the camps torn in two in an act of defiance and in the full confidence that nothing would happen to them for this outrage. The police are part of the problem; often they are the vanguard leading

the drunken mobs; the Prime Minister should insist on reading intelligence reports from Gujarat, although after the recent transfer of senior officers, I cannot be sure that they are worth reading.

What is needed is to send specific directions to Modi under Article 355 of the Constitution, failing which there is a clear case for imposing President's Rule under Article 356. But the BJP, steeped in democratic traditions, are opposed to Article 356. It is a Catch-22 situation for democrats in good conscience. Governor Bhandari would also have to be changed, but will this be enough. The administration will be effectively in the hands of the Home Ministry and who is to say what their view can be – on current evidence it is unlikely to be reassuring. The Constitution is only a means to an end. The end is good governance. To seek good governance in Gujarat today is to look for a black cat in a

dark room that is not there!

Let me return to George Fernandes for a moment. He wants to organize a peace march, presumably in Delhi, to which he has invited Chandrababu Naidu and Mamata Banerjee. After the collective performance of politicians over Gujarat, it is an insult to the victims to have them within a mile of any genuine peace march. Such a march should be by men and women of stature and substance, not empty vessels which will only make a great deal of noise. If George wants marches, these should be flag marches by the Army in Ahmedabad and elsewhere in Gujarat. The Army are the only ones with a reputation and they would be welcome. But they must be given a free hand.

Are you ready, Mr. Defence Minister?

April 23

All Hands on Deck!

Can a pogrom of a whole community be part of any country's internal affairs? Do we not concern ourselves with the plight of mohajirs and minorities in Pakistan?

The Gujarat experience is having a bizarre effect on all concerned and those not concerned. Instead of paying attention to duties of governance, the Vajpayee government is allowing itself to panic, summoning all hands on deck! Even the Ministry of External Affairs is roped in to make irrelevant and hysterical assertions of sovereignty, which no one in his right mind is challenging. The poor Finns are told that *India does not appreciate interference in its internal affairs, including utilization of media by foreign leaders as well as by visiting*

dignitaries to make public statements in order to pander to their domestic lobbies. The nervousness is palpable and demeaning. Foreign Minister of Finland, Erkki Tuomioja, merely observed what all except the blind and deaf accept – *The picture of carnage in Gujarat is very distressing*. What would the government have? Is the spectacle of the carnage edifying? Can a pogrom of a whole community be part of any country's internal affairs? Do we not concern ourselves with the plight of mohajirs and minorities in Pakistan? As for the accusation of

utilizing the Indian media in the insulting manner suggested, let me make it clear that the press is only doing its duty, that we do not need clearance from the Government for the purpose and that we categorically reject all imputations to the contrary. The utterly mindless reference in the Ministry's statement is to Finland's domestic lobbies to which the Foreign Minister is supposed to pander. Does Finland have a sizeable Muslim minority? The Nokia lobby? The fiords lobby? Finland as a Scandinavian country certainly has

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a strong human rights lobby! Is the world's human rights lobby causing such concern to the Government? In that case may I say that the only way to avoid such degrading but well-deserved comments is to avoid making wooden statements and instead behave in a way that makes them unnecessary.

The other hand on deck is Dr. Pravin Togadia, international General Secretary of the VHP. I spent two hours with him in Ahmedabad, which were interesting professionally. I am not at liberty to disclose details as it was for background and I am normally bound by a professional commitment of confidence. On 23rd April 2002, he upbraided my experienced correspondent in Gujarat for a statement in a story on the front page the previous day that the policeman in question had entered a home and misbehaved with women. The good doctor asserted, rudely I might add, that the allegation attributed to reliable sources was false and demanded to see the actual copy filed. At the threshold, the correspondent is not answerable to Togadia; on my

instructions, all our correspondents are accountable only to the Editor-in-chief and other senior staff specifically designated. Any question of what is published is my responsibility and mine alone. Unlike some of my peers I do not designate a member of my staff to take the rap for anything improper that may creep into the paper. If Togadia were to check with the Press Council, he would find that if a staff member is summoned for anything published, I appear.

Having cleared the air let me proceed. We tried to get the version of senior police officers without success. When the Home Minister denied the story the next day we promptly published the denial in quotes and on the front page. I am not saying that we admit that the story was false; we do not. But as Home Minister, Zaphadia is concerned with the police and in fairness we presented his version. Togadia then proceeds to intimidate my correspondent in various ways. *Statesman* correspondents are not for threatening, it does not work this way. I have a question. What is Togadia's *locus standi*? Is he chief

minister in waiting, warming up for the job? Is he directly responsible for the performance of the police force today? If so, how and in what capacity? If he is only an interloper he can send his view to the Editor and because he does not have a right of reply in these circumstances, the question of whether to take notice is entirely for the Editor to decide.

It is not my contention that all newspapers work this way; I would not dream of speaking for anyone else. But I do say that this is *Statesman* policy and shared by newspapers of repute and quality the world over where a free press exists. I make no allegations against Togadia. Except that he may be suffering from a misconception about the press shared by Indira and Rajiv Gandhi. *The Statesman* triumphed over both. Togadia and I have met once and may meet again. But this should not lead to any inference that we accept at face value everything we are told or that we will drop our standards. The distinction should be clear.

April 25



Every citizen of India is entitled to protection and the due process of law. When incidents occur between two citizens of India, even though they may be of different communities, the guilty individuals should be punished. The crimes of the individuals should not be allowed to be deemed to be the offence of any denomination or community. The family, friends and other members of the offender's community should enjoy complete protection from fear and mob violence. Any government official, minister or lesser politician found failing in his duty, in the discharge of this responsibility, should be dealt with severely.

C. Rajagopalachari
Swarajya, June 24, 1961

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Is Secularism Good for Business?

Cyrus Guzder

One lesson of history is worth remembering: that a society that turns against other minorities, soon ends up by turning on its own.

"The business of business is business," said Milton Friedman, the celebrated American free market economist. Most businessmen all over the world would, at first thought, agree with him. So why are we, a collection of businessmen, meeting today to discuss among other things, such distinctly "non-business" themes such as Secularism?

The answer lies partly in the implied other half of Friedman's statement, that: *"the business of Government is Government."*

So, if Government governs well, business should be free to concentrate on business.

Another great American thinker, Peter Drucker said while referring to the huge role that business plays in a healthy society. *"it is the social responsibility of business to make a profit."* Meaning, thereby, that businesses must remain profitable, if they are to continue to employ people, create wealth and enrich societies in the many ways that they do.

But what happens, when Governments don't govern? Or, they mis-govern?

They can misgovern by errors of commission; for example, by persecuting a section of their citizens, as is happening in Zimbabwe or Iraq; or by errors of omission, by failing to govern, by failing to maintain law and order, and by failing to provide to citizens

their fundamental rights to life and to work.

And when there is such a failure of government leading to disruption in civil life; the striking of terror among labourers, shopkeepers, teachers, judges; the closure of markets; an exodus of people who are consumers of the products we make and services we offer – then is it sensible, indeed is it even ethical, for business to say: "our business is only business..." and then to bury their heads in the sand and debris of the rubble created by almost four weeks of unlawful and barbaric behaviour? Because, when labour flees and markets close and consumers stop buying, what future do our businesses have?

In my view, we have no alternative – if we are concerned for the future well-being of industry and trade in Gujarat – to pause for a moment's reflection on the causes and consequences of the events of the last four weeks.

It will be a sad mistake, I believe, for us to indulge in wishful thinking that riots and civil commotion are just a part of our life, they come and go like the occasional hurricane off the coast of Florida, that the damage will be repaired, (courtesy government grants and insurance claims), and soon we'll be back to "business as usual". Because, what we are experiencing in Gujarat are not mere riots; nor will all the damage

be repaired; nor will business bounce back. Gujarat has been wounded deeply this time, it is still bleeding, and as we shall see, the seeds are being sown for still worse to come.

Who does Gujarat Belong to?

Your famous poet and social historian Narmadashankar Lalshankar (who died in 1886) is remembered for his great poem *"Jay Jay Garvi Gujarat"*, in which he celebrated all those cultural icons which provided a sense of identity to all who lived in Gujarat. In asking *"who does Gujarat belong to?"* he listed all the castes, communities, religions, sects; then says, not just these, because Gujarat does not belong to any particular group; he continues, that Gujarat belongs to all those who speak Gujarati; and then, not satisfied, goes on to say that Gujarat also belongs to non-Hindus, the Parsis, Muslims and the non *"sa-varna"* communities. Narmad believed passionately that, around such a cultural imagination – truly secular in spirit – a sense of belonging could be forged for the Gujarati people.

Narmad followed a great Jain tradition of compassion and tolerance; and Gandhi followed Narmad, converting a whole nation to espouse the idea of "ahimsa." So what has brought this great tradition, in this great State, to a point where a recent documentary title sums up the present situation; *"Genocide in the land of Gandhi?"*

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It may be best, though distasteful, to confront certain facts directly. The more openly we speak about these, the more likely we are to be able to deal with them:

- The horrific incident at Godhra was a crime against humanity and it is to be utterly condemned. Its culprits need to be found, tried and dealt with in the most severe way that our laws provide, including if necessary with the death penalty. In the words of Pro-fessor Bandukwala "whoever committed that crime was surely one of the worst enemies of the Muslims."
- The civil disorder in Ahmedabad, as it escalated into a combination of looting, arson and attacks on people, quickly revealed one clear pattern: that the maximum number of atrocities were committed against Muslims and Dalits.
- The vernacular press in Gujarat played a highly regrettable role in the run up to, and during, the disturbances. Many Muslim establishments bearing non Muslim names, were specifically listed by these papers; and all of these were subsequently torched to cinders:
- An amazing de-humanization could be seen in the behaviour of those on the streets. Most were young in age - in their twenties or less. To hear 12 and 15 year old boys screaming for rape and murder, reflects a brutalisation that is difficult to comprehend in a land that was the breeding ground of "ahimsa" A new and disturbing trend is now to hear women also expressing themselves in support of brutal retribution.
- As the genocide spread from

Ahmedabad to other cities and the countryside, a systematic attempt could be seen to target and destroy the economic base of the Muslim community.

A Riot... or Genocide?

Let us reflect on two dimensions of this tragedy. First, the specific targeting of the Muslim sectors of employment and commerce does not hurt Muslims alone. It requires no great intelligence to understand that they are a part of the larger economic chain in the Gujarat economy. So attacking Muslim traders, shops, establishments, factories - deals a blow to the economy of Gujarat, and hurts the larger community as well.

Second, the notion that a "kriya" (action) gives rise naturally to a "pratikriya" (reaction) needs to be firmly dismissed as being both fallacious and dangerous. We've heard this time and again in the history of mankind, as a justification for violent and aggressive behaviour. Again, to hear this from a leader in the land of Mahatma Gandhi leads one to wonder how a non-violent doctrine which once united the whole of India, has degenerated so rapidly into an alibi for not being able to - or not being willing to - maintain law and order.

Likewise, leaders of the Shiv Sena in Bombay, when threatened with a suit for damages by the owners of a fine private hospital in Thane that was recently set on fire by Sena activists, (because their leader died in that hospital after sustaining injuries in a car crash) pleaded that the rioters be excused because they were "naturally" emotionally upset by the death of their leader.

Consider the arithmetic of the situation"

- Fifty six 'Karsevaks are killed (let it be repeated) in an utterly condemnable atrocity.
- As a "natural" reaction, somewhere between 600 innocents, that too in another city, are killed; and then hundreds more are burnt or butchered in the other towns and villages in Gujarat.
- So, if the Government does nothing to swiftly punish the perpetrators of Godhra, Ahmedabad and the killings elsewhere, they, and we the public that elects our Governments, have accepted (or condoned) the principle that, 18 innocent lives are fair retribution for each kar-sevak killed.
- What if this chain of reasoning is carried one step further? For the thousand people now dead, would it be a "natural" emotional counter-reaction, in the ratio of 18:1, for 18,000 more innocents to be slaughtered? You cannot fault the logic, or the arithmetic?
- Therefore, the citizens of this state - and particularly we businessmen - must do everything we can to refute this utterly dangerous proposition, that an act of violence can lead naturally to a counter-action of violence. It is nothing but a self serving political argument, which if given greater currency, will surely wreak terrible damage on the economy of Gujarat and of India.

Who Loses?

Earlier, I had said that we can no longer contemplate the recent events as a passing storm and expect that soon it should be

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business as usual.

In today's economy, it can no longer be so.

- Workers can vote with their feet. Much good labour may desert the State, adding to poverty and unemployment in Gujarat and other states.
- The poorest, daily-rated worker always suffers the most in a riot. There are more Hindu daily rated workers than Muslims in most of our cities, so the majority community – at the lowest level of subsistence – is also dealt an economic blow.
- For every one person killed in riots, a dozen more may lose their breadwinner and hundreds more become homeless. What do we gain by impoverishing our consumers?
- Economies need stability and confidence in their future to attract investment. The flight of capital from this State cannot be counted at this moment; but in a

while, it will be evident. It is safe to predict that hundreds of crores of investment will be turned away over the next few years, if normalcy doesn't return *now*. Is this a price that the citizens of this State should pay in the long run, so that a few leaders may have the temporary satisfaction of "teaching some people a lesson."

- Finally, (staying only with the economic arguments) Indian business and industry, for ten years, have never lost an opportunity to berate the Government at the Centre for not doing enough to help Indian industry become globally competitive. Yet, what happened in Gujarat, without industry (except for CII) raising its voice, will directly result in Gujarat becoming less competitive in future.

Its access to a good workforce, experienced managers and Indian and foreign investment is already being undermined. We

know that already British Gas (due to invest \$500 m in the State) the foreign strategic partners of Maroli Port, McDonalds, Samsung, LG, and a host of others are openly discussing a review of their investments in Gujarat.

Are We A Secular State?

Thanks to much confusion in the way we use English, we seem to have lost our understanding over the last 50 years of the correct meaning of the word "secular." (It is interesting that there is no equivalent word for "secular" in Indian languages!) The English word has always been used in contra-distinction to the word "religious." While a purist definition would actually imply "anti-religious", the generally accepted meaning the world over, is that a secular state is one where the State remains indifferent to, and neutral between, the religious beliefs and practices of its citizens. In short, the separation of Religion from the State

Tokenisms

The fashion of coining slogans began with the dawn of independence. Our first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru coined the slogan "Araam Haraam Hai". Every one knew how hollow the slogan was, but everyone enjoyed quoting it nevertheless. The second Prime minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri gave us the slogan "Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan" we all knew that glory to the Jawan inevitably leads to the death of the Kisan, then Smt. Indira Gandhi's slogan "Garibi Hatao" (Abolish Poverty) abolished the poor themselves as also the poor's values of liberty and democracy. The present prime minister hit a sixer in when he hailed his government's nuclear test "Jai Vigyan" (glory to science)

"Mera Bharat Mahan" was coined by our youngest Prime Minister Sri Rajiv Gandhi who presided over the attempted pogrom of the Sikhs which, no doubt has inspired the present prime minister's Jai Vigyan gang to launch a pogrom of Muslims and Christians. As was the fate with

the other slogans, "Mera Bharat Mahan" has also been consigned to the dustbin of history.

- Mera Bharat will be Mahan when it rids itself of the national disease of perversions of truth; when politics ceases to be a power gamble and grows into a value ennobling the spirit of the nation.
- Mera Bharat will be Mahan when it rids itself of militant cadres with animal instincts, belonging to different political outfits pursuing inscrutable & indecent goals.
- Mera Bharat will be Mahan when there is an outpouring of noble patriotic sentiments by every Indian, young and old; when some great spirit, whether an artist, a scientist, a statesman, or some one like that pours out his enthusiasm wherein he is inspired by love, nobility, magnanimity, and such other positive feelings.

V. N. Torgal, Bijapur

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The Constituent Assembly debates on the subject were heated, with many attempts to propose the concept of equal support for all religions, an idea contained in the phrase "*sarva dharma samabhava*" – a phrase now so misused and confounding in its practical application, that it ought to be given a holiday. This should stop our political leaders from rushing around the country, at your and my expense, worshipping at shrines of whichever religions are politically expedient for them.

Dr. Rasheeduddin Khan, former Director of the Indian Institute of Federal Studies, has often being quoted on his well accepted definition of secularism:

"... the secular character of the State is exhibited when it remains distant from, and distinct from, religion-dominated politics. In pursuit of State activities, it should show a respectful indifference to religion and keep a vigilant distance from political communalism

"... the State in India is not a federation of religions; nor an aggregation of religious communities. It is an association of citizens – free and equal – irrespective of caste, colour, sex, language, region or status. A modern State is based on a Constitution... therefore a secular State should act as a secular State, no less and no more."

In short, a society is secular when any individual can go about his business confident that no one will harm him on the basis of his religion. Religion belongs to the home, the family, the temple or Church or Mosque – but not in public life.

Why have we found it so difficult to operate secular forms of governance in India? Let us state

some more unpalatable truths.

Pre-modern India was very communal. If it was a Hindu State, there was no equality before the law, no equality of citizenship. It depended on your caste; even punishment depended on your caste. If it was a Muslim State, all others were second-class citizens. It is only in modern India that some concept of equality before the law is surfacing

Yet, in the 1970s, Indira Gandhi brazenly undermined this spirit by building her vote-bank of Kshatriyas, Harijans, Adivasis and Muslims, known as KHAM. Even now, when a major political leader in Bihar aggressively attempts to unite Yadavs and Muslims, we don't bat an eyelid. With over 35% of Gujarat's population consisting of Patels, Banias and Brahmins, is it surprising that caste politics is still in full play?

If we are failing as a secular State, it is because equality before the law is not being practiced. Unless we try to remove caste and religion from public life, secularism is going to be very difficult to uphold.

Can We Teach Minorities A Lesson?

Consider another set of numbers.

The population of Muslims in India is approximately 120 million. If they were a nation on their own, with a population of that size they would be ranked the 9th largest nation in the world! Does it make sense to threaten a war against such a large community in our midst, with slogans such as "*yon to Pakistan – or the kabaristan*"?

The moment people begin to

believe such slogans, seeds of deep insecurity will be sown in a vast population dispersed across every part of our country, cities and villages. Should such a community turn hostile, then in today's world of advanced weaponry and suicide bombers, it is not difficult to envisage the majority community being subject to immense threat and risk, that may endure for generations.

Omkar Goswami, CII's chief economist, in a recent article,

From Madressa to Gurukul

Schools for training Parsi priests, and there are a few of these in India, are known as *madressas*. According to a report in *Outlook* magazine (April 15), one such school in Bombay, afraid that it could well be mistaken for an Islamic school, changed its name from *madressa* to *gurukul*. Perhaps the authorities of this school were concerned for the safety of the students who are young parsi boarders. That this name change is born out of fear arising from the pogrom in Gujarat cannot be denied. But where will this madness take us? Are we going to change the Parsi Yasmins, Roshnis, Mahtabs and Faridas to Hindu-sounding names? And how is that going to protect us if the killings get reversed and the other community attacks the *gurukul*? Are we then going to rename it a convent? At this rate a day may soon come when we will be required to wear community identification badges. Let us pray that such a day will not come and those responsible for the present insanity realise that every person is God's gift to this world and nobody has the right, for whatever reason, to take the life of a fellow being.

Kashmira Rao
Mumbai

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quoted a few lines from a poem ("Remorse for Intemperate Speech") by Y. B. Yeats:

*"Out of Ireland we have come.
Great hatred, little room
Maimed us at the start
I carry in my mother's womb
A fanatic heart."*

The Sangh Pariwar may derive satisfaction for pulling Muslim minorities down a peg or two; but the appalling consequences of their actions will be to breed a whole new generation of terrorists both in their own fold and among the communities of Muslim and Dalit victims. Imagine an "intifada" type situation permeating the cities of India, where will the Hindus then turn? Especially when all the international goodwill we have recently built up will vanish and we shall be regarded as not different from our neighbours across our north western borders.

Is it not, therefore, our duty as educated, secular and modern

thinking Indians, to roundly condemn their hateful and suicidal slogans? Should we not be putting every pressure on Government to clamp down sharply on the distribution of pamphlets spreading virulent nonsense about minorities?

Minority Rights ... or Human Rights?

One lesson of history is worth remembering: that a society that turns against other minorities, soon ends up by turning on its own. Consider, too, that our nation is replete with minorities – not just Christians, Buddhists, Sikhs, Jains, Parsis and others; but most strikingly, Hindus have the largest minorities of all! Indeed, who or what is the Hindu majority? What happened to Brahmin superiority in Tamil Nadu? What's happening to upper castes as the lower castes form coalitions? Is the numerical superiority of Dalits in several States fully appreciated? Adivasis are now organising and striking back. Indeed going back a little in

time, have we forgotten that over half the Mughal elite that ran the Mughal administration were Rajputs?

The issue for all of us in CII is not to sweep these embarrassing caste-political issues under the carpet; but to take a clear stand with Governments that we do not believe in an India segmented by caste. We don't make our soap, shoes, TVs, cycles and pharmaceuticals for this caste or that. And, we would wish to recruit our work force from all communities based on competence and productivity.

It's high time we spoke up for industry and commerce and declared that we don't believe in religious rights or minority rights, but only in human rights.

(Based on an address to the CII, Gujarat, on March 30, 2002)

MR. CYRUS GUZDER is an ardent conservationist and a leading business executive.

My Beliefs

Dr. Subroto Roy

For some years I have held the position that each of the three main political groupings in India has one important and vital truth of value for our polity.

The Congress and its Non-Left offshoots have one thing important to say: India cannot but be a secular nation.

The BJP and its friends have one thing important to say: Every Indian should be proud of being an Indian, and certainly not ashamed of being an Indian (and NB. the Hellenic etymological roots of Indian and Hindu are the same, deriving from the River Indus; it is said that Muhammad Ali Jinnah once wished to see a Pakistan and a Bharat both under the same umbrella of an "India").

The Left has one thing important to say: The interests of India's masses are in general different from the interests of India's ruling elites/decision-makers.

I happen to believe in all three of the above, so I

am happy to be considered a secularist, a *Hindutvavadi* or a Leftist if that is what that makes me. But there are also problems with each of the groupings.

The problems with the Congress and its non-Left offshoots are personality cults, bad economics and vote-bank politics. The problems with the BJP and its friends have to do with the rapidity of their slide into intercommunal hatred or bileousness. And the problem with the Left in India is the same as that with the Left almost everywhere, namely, hypocrisy. Corruption is common to all three. So I should prefer for the moment only to be what I in fact am: a member of the non-party political group called the Indian Liberal Group founded by the late Minoo Masani. Enquiries may be addressed to its President, Mr. S. V. Raju at freedom@vsnl.com

Dr. Subroto Roy is Professor at IIT Kharagpur's Vinod Gupta School of Management.

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The Debauching of Secularism in India

Nitin G. Raut

Secularism has come to be redefined as anti-Hindu communalism.

It does not require anyone to tell that killing is inhuman. Therefore, what happened in Godhra and the rest of Gujarat deserves to be unequivocally condemned as something which no civilized society ought to countenance.

The enormity of the carnage cannot detract from the politicization of secularism which manifests itself during such grim tragedies. And Godhra, and the rest of Gujarat, like in the past, is a study in contrast.

Pseudo-secularism

To trace the communal tension to the Ayodhya issue is a travesity of truth. After all what happened on 6th December 1992 did not start happening on 15th August 1947. It took no less than forty two years of perverted notions of secularism for Hindus to react. So long as Hindu politics were divided on caste, region, and language, secularism was 'safe'. Appeasement of Muslim communalism both in domestic and foreign policy was a matter of fact, accepted by all and questioned by none without inviting the stigma of communalism. This brand of secularism is practiced unabashedly and indeed is a passport to secularism or to put it more appropriately, pseudo-secularism.

Therefore, if the Ayodhya Ram Mandir issue stuck a chord in the Hindu psyche, it was due to the

total marginalization of the Hindus in national politics. It came to symbolize the rallying point for the Hindu identity. It was a small demand to build the Ram Mandir where the Babri structure was built by Babar after demolishing the Ram temple in the 15th century. Although claimed as 'mosque' no namaz was offered since 1947. But there was marked indifference and insensitivity to the Hindu sentiments by the intelligentsia, the media and sections of political leadership styling themselves as secular.

The Hindus' Handicaps

The intransigence of the entire spectrum of Muslim leadership was no less callous. The Hindus were taken for granted in the name of secularism. On the other hand, imagine the electrifying impact on the national unity and inter-religious harmony if for once, Hindu sentiments were respected by allowing Hindus build the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. The RSS and the VHP on the other hand could have been told that beyond Ayodhya, Kashi and Mathura, no such demands would ever be raised in future. But the politicized secularism did not provide for any room for consideration of Hindu sentiments which largely remained inarticulate, disorganized and lacked the political value for the secular political leadership to take cognizance of. In spite of being in the majority, the Hindus lacked a political constituency. Ayodhya is

precisely the expression of Hindu sentiments which the politicized secularism refused to recognize. It is only in India that secularism is sought to be justified by criticizing the majority and its organizations.

If the Gujarat riots have agitated the secular leadership so much, it is not their faith in secularism as much as their concern for the Muslim vote bank. Secularism as practised in India has become a defining manifestation of anti-Hindu communalism that is packed and marketed as 'secularism'. And the Gujarat riots precisely proved such hypocrisy and double standards. The selective morality has redefined secularism as a politically convenient and expedient concept to mean maligning of Hindus and exploitation of Muslim vote banks.

The Intelligentsia's Poor Record

If violence and killing, or concern for preserving the pluralistic society was really the concern of the secular leadership, the media and the intelligentsia, their track record will hardly justify it.

For the last fifteen years, Hindus and Sikhs in Jammu and Kashmir are being butchered and killed by Islamic jihadis both foreign and Indian. The ethnic cleansing of Hindus and Sikhs in Kashmir is almost complete. Separatism in the name of Islam and jihad is openly justified. No

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secular politician visited J&K, no agitated marches of MPs to the President, no dharnas before Parliament, no condemnation of the State of Jammu & Kashmir government of complicity, or accusation of the J&K Police of communal bias or dereliction of duty. Not even pictures of slain Hindus and Sikhs and their burnt out hearths. The killing of Hindus and Sikhs is never described as a carnage of Muslim communalists. On the contrary, Islamic terrorism is sought to be projected as a movement for self-determination and death of terrorists is championed as violation of human rights. That section of Hindus and Sikhs are refugees in their own land is a non issue and ofcourse cannot be a secular issue.

A few years back, four RSS pracharaks in the North East were murdered. Far from making headlines, it barely made a ripple and obviously did not catch the attention of the secular leadership or the national media.

In West Bengal, the communist government has openly collaborated and even condoned Naxalite terrorism. In Kerala, the Marxist government was openly shielding its cadres who murdered RSS members. And if this sounds like a reaction of Hindu communalists, no less a persona than Trinamul Congress' Mamta Banerjee was constrained to point out the complicity of the communist government in eliminating its members in West Bengal.

The Pakistani Inter Services Intelligence activities are on the rise. Could it have succeeded without the support of a section of the Muslim communalists? Do the

secularists have the moral courage to call a spade a spade?

Prejudiced Views

Soon after the U.S. began bombing in Afghanistan, certain Muslim organizations called for a boycott of the U.S. and British goods. The ostensible reason was the killing of innocent people in Afghanistan. So it was in Jammu and Kashmir. Was there any corresponding reaction by any Muslim organization? What was the rationale of such a call if not communal. In the context of the war against terrorism, who was India's friend – the United States or the Taliban-Al Queda axis?

Selective Secularism

Why does the secular leadership observe smug silence or go into hibernation to selectively suit its politics? If Hindu organizations can be questioned and subjected to media trial why is the same activism lacking in questioning Muslim communal elements? Equally heart rending and poignant would have been the stories and photos of Godhra. Why did the media fail in its investigative journalism on Godhra or name the community or the organizations responsible for the Godhra train inferno. Who then is distinguishing the killings in Godhra from that of the rest of Gujarat?

If Hindu oriented parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Shiv Sena can be dubbed as communal, who aligned with the Muslim League in Kerala or supported the Muslim *Uthlhadul* in Andhra Pradesh. Why is it that the assiduous cultivation of Muslims by parties like the

Congress, the Samajwadi Party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal or Communists pass off as secularism. Why can't these parties be dubbed as Muslim communal parties? Is it a sacrilege to do so? Why is there a marked reluctance to take the Muslim communal bull by its horns by the so called secular leadership. When the West Bengal government wanted to investigate the activities of 'madrassas', it was dropped like a hot potato in the face of protests from Muslims and secularists. And what does one make out of this – secular or communal. Did the involvement of two Congress councilors in Godhra make the Congress communal or reflect on its secular credentials. Did the media question the role of the Congress in Godhra?

The Dilemma

The answer to communal violence is not in criticism of the Ram Mandir movement. There is a crisis of secular credibility that has gripped the nation. India is not at the cross-roads of secularism or theocracy. It is on the horns of a secular dilemma – genuine or pseudo. Such dilemma can be resolved only if each religion has a healthy respect for each other. If the minorities cannot be suppressed in a democracy, neither can the majority be subjugated. And that is the dilemma – the lack of moral leadership in India.

In the United States, after 11th September 2001 bombing, many suspected Muslims were arrested, not because they were followers of Islam but more as suspected terrorists. But unlike in India, the Bush administration was not accused of anti-Muslim bias by its media and political leadership.

Mera Bharat Mahan?

Neither was President George W. Bush's appeal to American pride and patriotism following the WTC bombing dubbed as fascist or majority communalism. Yet no one can question the secular credentials of the US where there is a clear dividing line between the State and the Church. In India, a similar situation would have raised an acrimonious debate that would have sidelined even security threats. The ban on the Students Islamic Movement in India is one such instance.

Abandon Vote Bank Politics

The failure to rationalize and deal with the communal monster in a detached manner can never be a motivating factor unless the political parties give up vote bank politics or shed anti-majoritism in the name of secularism. The secular fundamentalism and bigotry is equally responsible for vitiating the communal atmosphere in India. It neither combats communalism nor promotes secularism. In fact, there is a marked reluctance to even as much as to reprimand the Muslim communalism. Such is the inhibition that if at all there is token criticism, it is unfailingly attributed

to something because of the Hindus and their organization. Secularism has come to be redefined as anti-Hindu communalism.

The secular fundamentalism and bigotry is as much responsible for vitiating the communal atmosphere in India. It is redefining secularism in a manner that any view at variance will be stigmatized as manifestation of majority communalism. Are we then witnessing the emergence of secular fascism? There is no plausible answer as to how the BJP is communal and others secular. Is being with the BJP communal? And is being with the Congress or the Left-Communists secular? So if in 1999 Mulayam Singh refused to support Mrs. Sonia Gandhi for prime ministership, who does he become? Non-secular or non-communal? Incongruities of secularism can otherwise make a hilarious comedy of sorts but for the grim scenario. And indeed how secular is the Left-Marxist rule in West Bengal or of Mulayam in U.P. or Laloo Prasad in Bihar? And what about the Congress with the blood of the anti-Sikh riots on its hand and its ignominious surrender to

Muslim obscurantists over the Shah Banoo case. Secular avatars are of different hues and can reinvent itself to suit one's political chicanery.

Secularism Debauched

India is witnessing the debauching of secularism. The present leadership is incapable and indeed lacks the political courage to tell the people what they ought to be told in times of crisis. Political parties are obsessed about the outcome of the next election and their vote banks can never deliver the goods. And there is no moral courage to rise above petty partisan politics. Rajaji had rightly observed that a good leader must lead the people. India desperately needs statesmanship and moral leadership. If not the debauching of secularism will continue giving yet another opportunity to blame each other after yet another round of mayhem and killing. If the madness of communalism has to end, it is equally necessary to end the double standards and hypocrisy in the name of secularism.

Mr. Nitin G. Raut is a lawyer, a member of the Freedom First's Advisory Board and a BJP activist.



I am afraid the fallout of the Ayodhya development is going to be with us for a long long time. The recent disturbances in Bombay testify to the permanence of the mischief.

*

The absence of leadership in this country is obvious. But no section of the people suffers from the absence of leadership as much as the Muslims in India.

Minoo Masani
in his column 'The Masani Viewpoint'
Freedom First, January-March 1993

**In a country badly governed,
wealth is the problem.**



ESTD - 1910

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Elected Representatives as Trustees

Sadanand Varde

JP was a tremendous moral force in India's polity. I salute this great son of India who fought all his life against poverty, corruption and social evils.

Recent years have witnessed a fall in the standards of public morality as at no time in the history of our republic. The Tehelka tapes bear testimony to it. Politics and elected representatives are the major culprits responsible for this degradation of our public life.

In order to put my subject in the right perspective, let me quote JP on what he considered was the essence of democracy. He said:

"First of all, let it be pointed out that the problem of democracy is basically, and above all, a moral problem. Constitutions, systems of government, parties, elections – all these are relevant to the business of democracy. But unless the moral and spiritual qualities of the people are appropriate, the best of constitutions and political systems will not make democracy work. The moral qualities and mental attitudes most needed for democracy are: (1) concern for truth; (2) aversion to violence; (3) love of liberty and courage to resist oppression and tyranny; (4) spirit of cooperation; (5) preparedness to adjust self-interest to the larger interest; (6) respect for others' opinions and tolerance; (7) readiness to take responsibility; (8) belief in the fundamental equality of man; (9) faith in the educability of human nature".

Gandhiji considered men in public affairs to be trustees of the

public interest. He earnestly urged industrialists to consider their assets like capital and equipment as a trust to be administered by them in the public interest. In fact, Dr. M. L. Dantwala wrote an interesting piece analysing trusteeship in industry as an alternative to state ownership.

I consider all elected representatives right from the *gram panchayat* to the state and national levels to be trustees, that is, custodians of the public interest. True democracy as visualized by JP requires them to be cast in the mould.

What are the implications of this view of elected representatives, notwithstanding the certainty that it would be rejected outright by the political establishment? I would like to consider the problem in two parts: (A) Before elections and (B) after elections. An elected representative as a trustee has to observe a code of conduct which in good conscience, he himself has to oversee.

Before Elections

Whether as a party candidate or an independent, getting elected at any cost, is the *sine qua non* of past and contemporary electoral politics.

As a trustee, a candidate:

- (i) Shall not make promises he knows he cannot keep.
- (ii) Shall not use money or muscle power to mobilize votes.
- (iii) Shall refrain from using the

caste, community, religion or faith card in order to influence and garner votes.

- (iv) Shall endeavour to contact as many voters as possible personally.
- (v) Shall submit a true and not a concocted statement of income raised and expenditure incurred for his election.

(The list is illustrative and not exhaustive).

After Elections

Once elected, a candidate is a representative of the people in the constituency, including those who did not vote for him. A representative who does not listen to the grievances of the people on the plea that they did not vote for him is not a true trustee of the people.

An elected member

- (i) Shall not use his office to make personal gain or that of his party or his supporters at the cost of public good. A member who indulges in such evil practices is a disgrace to democracy and should cease to be a member. A glaring example which seems quite innocent in the context of present day massive malpractices is that of Shri Mudgal¹ in the first Lok Sabha.
- (ii) Shall regularly attend meetings of the body to which he is elected, read and study papers on the agenda

¹ An MP in the First Lok Sabha who confessed that he accepted money to ask a question for the Bombay Bullion Exchange. He was expelled from the Lok Sabha.

and participate in debates and shall not just sign the attendance register to mark his presence, not attend and yet collect the day's allowances.

- (iii) Shall not turn his back on the voters after election, but be in day to day touch with them; attend to their grievances and promote the development of his constituency, e.g. activating the administration for utilizing funds provided for a development project and/or making concrete suggestions for new projects to provide relief or facility to his constituents.
- (iv) Most importantly, shall be always vigilant and alert about unproductive and extravagant government expenditure, corruption and malpractice and raise his voice in the House and outside against policies which result in wastage of resources and abuse of the taxpayers' money.
- (v) Shall not leave the party on whose ticket he is elected and defect to another party on the plea that such a step is in the best interest of his constituents; if he wants to leave the party, he shall resign and go to the people who elected him and seek their mandate. (This principle should apply whether the defection is by a single individual or a group, large or small).
- (vi) Before he gets elected, he files a return on his assets under the law, and after the term of office is over, he must file another declaration of his assets.

Power At Any Cost

Politics has become, distressingly fluid. Elected

members change their parties like they change shirts. The power at any cost credo makes a mockery of democracy and trivializes common people, the sovereign foundation of our democracy. Recently, in Meghalaya, after defection and redefection, a stable government comprising both the Congress parties was formed. In a house of 60 members, the government has 37 ministers. In the newly formed Chattisgarh state, 12 members of the BJP defected and formed a separate group, sufficient to save their membership of the Assembly. Before the dawn of the next day, all the 12 joined the Congress, thereby giving a fresh lease of life to Chief Minister Shri Ajit Jogi whose claims to be a tribal are being questioned. All parties seem to have united to mutilate the constitution and deface Indian democracy.

Critics might say that expecting an elected member to be a trustee is easier said than done. True. But how many of us say it and say it loud and clear? Let us say here in this seminar and then in the wider world.

Nobody would suggest that elected representatives as trustees should do their work in a public spirit without expecting anything in return. Far from it. We know that they (MPs, MLAs) are adequately rewarded for the work they do or are expected to do. No one grudges these monthly payments. That is a legitimate part of democratic institutions. These payments are necessary to ensure that representatives do not take to illegal and corrupt means to make money. Notwithstanding these provisions, however, there are widespread complaints about their misconduct and dishonesty. Hence the need to emphasise their role as trustees, campaign against them when they cease to be trustees and may be,

make a provision in the Constitution for their recall by the people under such extreme circumstances.

I am far from tarnishing every representative with the same brush. That would be patently unjust to conscientious and dedicated representatives both in the assemblies and the parliament, who have been shining examples of representatives as peoples' trustees. But they constitute a small minority. Their number has to grow if the people's 'trust' in our democracy is to sustain.

But what about the citizen. He has a crucial role to play in ensuring that the elected representative performs his duties and is held accountable.

Active citizenship implies that democracy is not merely voting once in five years and complaining in between.

Active citizenship implies taking an active part in the life of the community and in the affairs of the nation.

Paper presented at a national seminar on "Trusteeship in Public Affairs" on the occasion of Jayaprakash Narayan's birth centenary year celebrations.

PROFESSOR SADANAND VARDE taught political science and was minister of education in the government of Maharashtra.

Professor Bimal Prasad of the Rajendra Prasad Academy, New Delhi has drawn attention to the fact that JP's letter to Mrs. Indira Gandhi (published on page 17 of *Freedom First* issue number 452 January-March 2002) is dated July 18, 1975 and not December 5, 1975 and was written from Chandigarh and not Jaslokh Hospital as erroneously stated.) We regret the error. **Ed.**



THE SOCIETY FOR THE RIGHT TO DIE WITH DIGNITY

Affiliated to the World Federation of the Right to Die Societies

Edited by Dr. Aparna N. Bagwe

NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2002

Right to live.....right to die?

Dr. Aparna N. Bagwe
Scientist, Cancer Research Institute, Mumbai
E-mail: anbagwe@vsnl.com

The landmark judgement on April 1, 2002, wherein the Dutch parliament legalized euthanasia, has led to a stormy debate all around the world, about whether or not an individual has the right to choose to die 'with dignity' faced with acute pain and/or indignity resulting from terminal illness. The twin issues of euthanasia and the individual's right to die with dignity need deep soul searching, both at the individual level as well as at the level of 'society'. One must not forget that society is in fact a conglomeration of individuals formed for the collective good of the individuals in question.

Humans, particularly 'intellectuals', have always been fascinated not just by life, but also by death. All human societies and organized religions have observed certain rituals associated with life, and with death. The scriptures of several religions emphasize the fact that as we are born, so shall we die some day. Death is as certain as life itself. No wonder then that several great thinkers and philosophers throughout the millennia have chosen a willing embrace of death, when they felt their worldly duties were done. In school, we learnt about the great Greek philosopher Socrates who chose to drink a cup of the poison 'hemlock' and die. Indian history is replete with tales of the 'Ichha maran' embraced by Gautam Buddha, Mahavir, Sant Dnyaneshwar, Sant Tukaram, Sane Guruji, Vinoba Bhave, to name just a few - who chose

to either forsake food and water, or enter the trance-like state of 'samadhi', and ultimately die. Even the sanctified practice of 'jauhar' by groups of women, who preferred death to loss of bodily dignity, provided a means for individuals/groups to choose the manner or time of their death.

The issues at stake today as far as voluntary euthanasia or physician-assisted euthanasia are concerned are straight forward, and touch the very core of 'humanity'. Reflect on this: when an individual is terminally ill and has no chance of recovery, when he is in unbearable pain and/or suffers from terrible loss of dignity, should he not have the right to choose a merciful release from a 'life' steeped in misery, pain and suffering?

Some of us who have owned a pet had to take such a difficult decision when our loved pet was terminally ill or suffering from complications of old age, and the veterinarian advised that the pet be put out of its misery! Some of us may even have seen at close quarters the suffering and pain of our own close relative/s in the final throes of terminal cancer - the terrible body heat and the pain that the strongest dose of painkillers is unable to relieve. How can one then justify letting one's loved ones suffer so much when a merciful release is possible?

Kon-Tiki's Thor Heyerdahl dead at age 87 following bout with brain cancer

(The Associated Press, April 18, 2002)

OSLO, Norway (AP) — Thor Heyerdahl, the Norwegian adventurer who crossed the Pacific on a balsa log raft and detailed his harrowing 101-day voyage in the book *Kon-Tiki*, died Thursday night. He was 87. Heyerdahl stopped taking food, water or medication in early April after being diagnosed with a terminal brain tumor.

***Dying is personal.....and it is profound.
For many, the thought of an ignoble end
steeped in decay is abhorrent.***

***A quiet, proud death,
bodily integrity intact,
is a matter of extreme consequence."***

Justice William Brennan, Cruzan Decision, 1990

Courtesy: <http://www.hemlock.org>

Book Review

Reflections on

- Freedom to choose
- Dying with Dignity
- Voluntary Euthanasia

by Dr. B. N. Colabawalla, Society for the Right to Die with Dignity, Mumbai, 2001, Paperback, 40 pgs, Rs. 40.

Dr. Colabawalla is a Urological Surgeon of distinction who retired as a Professor at the Grant Medical College and St. George's Hospital, Mumbai. He later set up the Department of Urological Surgery at the Jaslok Hospital and Research Centre, Mumbai. As part of his second career, he serves the Society for the Right to Die with Dignity and is currently its Chairperson.

Dr. Colabawalla has dedicated this slim book to Mr. Minoo Masani. The late Mr. Masani's many qualities of the mind and heart are well known to many, and the dedication reflects Dr. Colabawalla's admiration for him. As with Mr. Masani, so also with Dr. Colabawalla – a spade is a spade and not an implement meant to turn over the earth.

The inside cover of the book provides an all-too-brief glimpse of some of the facets of Dr. Colabawalla's life and work. The prefatory note outlines the scope of the book and states the reason for addressing the Indian audience differently from those in the West. Eight sections follow, ranging from perspectives on living and dying to Dr. Colabawalla's personal epilogue. These sections take the reader by the arm, gently but firmly, steering clear of ambiguity and lack of reason. The joy of living is emphasized, as is the inevitability of death. A distinction is made between measures

taken to save life and those that merely prolong death. The tragic aspects of modern medical high technology have been highlighted. Dr. Colabawalla provides the reader an understanding of his own reasoning and traces logically the means by which he has reached his own decisions on dying with dignity, the freedom to choose how he would like to die, and when it may be necessary for medical professionals or others to help a person die. There is no attempt at skirting delicate issues. Matters of philosophy and religion are treated with dignity and discussed without passion. The generation of light, not heat, has been the motive in the production of this volume.

I commend it. It will help you come to term with issues not commonly discussed. It may help you overcome prejudice and open your mind to further thought.

(Interested readers can obtain a copy of this book as well as of an eight-page booklet describing the living will and containing a model will that can be modified by the individual reader, from: Dr. Colabawalla, A-3, Ben Nevis, Bhulabhai Desai Road, Mumbai 400 026.)

Sunil Pandya.

The Dutch legalise euthanasia

(The BBC, London, April 1, 2002)

The Netherlands has become the first country in the world to legalise mercy killing, after a controversial law on euthanasia came into force on Monday. The legislation allows patients experiencing unbearable suffering to request euthanasia, and doctors who carry out such a mercy killing to be free from the threat of prosecution, provided they have followed strict procedures. The country has already tolerated the practice unofficially for decades, but parliament finally enshrined it in law last April.

Patients must face a future of unbearable, interminable suffering. Request to die must be voluntary and well-considered. Doctor and patient must be convinced there is no other solution. A second medical opinion must be obtained and life must be ended in a medically appropriate way. The patient facing incapacitation may leave a written agreement to their death.

Other states seem certain to follow the Dutch lead but opposition remains strong across the world. The UN Human Rights Committee has said it is not convinced that the Dutch system can prevent abuses such as pressure being exerted on the patient. Comparisons have also been made with Nazi Germany which put to death thousands of handicapped children and mentally ill adults, despite the fact that the Dutch law clearly stipulates that the request for euthanasia must come from the patient alone, while he or she is of sound mind.

Prime Minister Wim Kok has dismissed critics who argue that Dutch doctors now have a licence to kill. He says the idea is "bloody nonsense". And doctors themselves say the fact that a patient is aware of the option can itself be therapeutic. "For many terminally ill people, the fact that they can choose to die is an immense consolation," said general practitioner Coot Kuipers of the southern village of Uden.

Net News and Views!

Judge praises 'courageous' woman

(CNN, March 22, 2002)

A paralysed woman has been described as courageous and determined by the High Court judge who granted her the right to die. Miss B was paralysed when a blood vessel ruptured in her neck a year ago. She was unable to breathe unaided. Doctors had warned her in August 1999 that a malformation of blood vessels in her spinal column could result in severe disability, prompting her to write a will expressly stating her wish not to receive treatment if she was left suffering from a life-threatening condition, permanent mental impairment or unconsciousness. The 43-year-old woman, paralysed from the neck down, was granted permission from the court on Friday after doctors refused for ethical reasons to switch off her ventilator. Delivering her landmark ruling, Judge Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss said: "I would like to add how impressed I am with her as a person, with the great courage, strength of will and determination she has shown in the last year, with her sense of humour, and her understanding of the dilemma she has posed to the hospital. She is clearly a splendid person and it is tragic that someone of her ability has been struck down so cruelly. I hope she will forgive me for saying, diffidently, that if she did reconsider her decision, she would have a lot to offer the community at large."

*

Ms B to move to unit willing to end her life

(The Guardian, London. March 26, 2002)

Ms B, the quadriplegic former social worker who last week won the right to have the ventilator keeping her alive switched off, is to move after Easter to an intensive care unit willing to carry out her wishes. Ms B told the court that she was informed by the NHS trust caring for her that no doctor within or outside the trust was willing to carry out her wishes. She herself found the head of an intensive care unit at another hospital, Dr B, who was willing for her to transfer to his unit to come off the ventilator. He told the high court in a statement that he had discussed the issue with medical, nursing and management colleagues at his hospital and they all agreed that they would be prepared to carry out her wishes. "We believe that the advantage would be that none of us has any emotional attachment to the patient, which understandably the staff at [the hospital where she is at present] certainly do. In addition we do not seem to have the ethical dilemma that the staff [there] demonstrate."

*

Peaceful end for 'right to die' woman

(The Guardian, London, April 29, 2002)

A woman paralysed from the neck down who last month won a landmark legal battle to have medical treatment withdrawn has died peacefully in her sleep, the Department of Health announced today. The 43-year-old woman, who can be identified only as Ms B, won the right to move to another hospital and have her ventilator turned off at a time of her choice after doctors at her original hospital refused to do so. The Department of Health said in a statement today: "Ms B has chosen to have all artificial ventilation which she is receiving as part of her medical treatment withdrawn. She has died peacefully in her sleep after being taken off the ventilator at her request."

*

Paralysed women's fate fuels euthanasia debate

(REUTERS, April 30, 2002)

A twist of fate that saw two paralysed British women's fight to die end on the same day, but with opposite outcomes, has fuelled an emotional debate across Europe on the ethics of euthanasia. While "Miss B" fulfilled her wish to die in her sleep on Monday, Diane Pretty saw her last chance at controlling when she dies dashed by a European court ruling. Both aged 43 and paralysed from the neck down, the two women had battled in courts for the right to "die with dignity", but there the similarities end and the complex cases showed the minefield that is euthanasia law across Europe. Only one country, the Netherlands, has legalised mercy killing for the hopelessly ill who are desperate to die. Belgium may soon follow suit after its Senate passed a draft law. Some Scandinavian nations are also mulling such a move, and France's health minister wants to legalise euthanasia too. In Britain, assisting a suicide is punishable by up to 14 years in jail. In Monday's case at the Strasbourg-based European Court for Human Rights, judges upheld a previous British High Court ruling to deny Pretty's husband immunity from prosecution if he helped her to die. Pretty's case foundered because of her husband's active involvement.

The Voluntary Euthanasia Society (VES), a London campaign group, called on the British government to reform the laws on assisted death which it called "the most repressive in Europe".

*

Courtesy: Derek Humphry's ERGO! electronic mailing list.
Email: right_to_die@efn.org URL: <http://www.FinalExit.org>

Euthanasia: an endless debate!

Dr. Nagraj G. Huilgol

Chief, Division of Radiation Oncology, Nanavati Hospital, Mumbai.

E-mail: nagrajh@vsnl.net

Our constitution guarantees many fundamental rights, rights necessary for a life with dignity. But right of self-determination to die is not one of them. A family in Uttar Pradesh severely crippled by a neurological disease sought permission from the courts to die. The news got buried in the avalanche of war news coming from Afghanistan. Even otherwise, one suspects that any debate on issues related to dying would be ignored unless such a debate was capable of winning votes. Yet the debate on the right for self-determination to terminate life, by oneself or with professional help under strictly defined conditions, must continue.

The issues involved in such a debate are those of the right to die, right to seek help to die, rights of the physician to extend the help or otherwise, and the definition of a decayed state of living, which qualifies to be deemed fit for termination of life. The laws regarding medical termination of pregnancy have helped obstetricians to conduct medical termination under defined circumstances. There is a need to define and enact laws to enable dying (living) with dignity on similar lines.

It is not everyone's fate to die with dignity. "It was all quiet. No roaring waves, not even ripples. The blood in the heart was frozen. Like an old cherry, it was wrinkled. This man a few moments ago was alive. He was nurturing his glass, listening to his old classical music wafting through his bedroom. Now he is motionless. Now he will be back with the elements". Not everyone is fortunate enough to bid farewell so graciously. Accidents, assaults, progressive degenerative diseases and cancer can bring in both a state of hopelessness and lack of belief in the very existence of life. There are some who are conscious of their own predicament, while others become oblivious of the environment in which they are now forced to live. All the same, we all are compelled to assess the 'net worth' of life at various points in time. Should life be sustained at any cost as it is a gift of God? Is it the will of God that life-sustaining methods be employed to everyone with a terminal illness, even when it does not alter the outcome? Such

issues of terminal illness are being widely debated today.

Let us take the story of Tony Bland. Bland was in a persistent vegetative state following the Hillsborough Stadium football disaster. When considering whether artificial nutrition and hydration could be withdrawn, Lord Goff of Chieveley said the correct question was not whether it was "in his best interest that the treatment should be ended. But....whether it is in his best interest that the treatment which has the effect of artificially prolonging his life should be continued"! The House of Lords, in its case of Tony Bland, felt it is not always God's will that life-sustaining treatment be continued irrespective of the potential harm due to such procedures.

Life should be valued. Hence, life should be allowed to exit when it can no longer sustain itself. 'Quality of life', a phrase so common to oncologists, is a concept that needs to be discussed and defined in each society. Civilized courts are looking at the issue of quality of life more seriously. Courts in UK have specifically stated that the quality of life, which could reasonably be expected following treatment, should be taken into account when making treatment decisions. The decision to withhold life-prolonging treatment from a patient, 'R' - who was born with a serious malformation of the brain and palsy, was challenged in the High Court in 1996 on the grounds that it was "irrational and unlawful" to permit medical treatment to be withheld on the basis of an assessment of a patient's quality of life. That appeal was dismissed (BMJ). Courts have surmised that it is lawful and ethical to withdraw a patient's treatment if the condition of the patient has reached a level of severity from which there is no hope of recovery from the ailment.

The right to live is absolute....but not if one must live with misery and pain. A person unaware of the surroundings in which he lies, without any interaction with the outside world, and without the capacity for purposeful or self-directed action or the capability of achieving some goal of importance for oneself, may be deemed as one who is breathing but not living.

A mature civilization should spare some time to discuss such end-stage issues, as it could be one of us facing them some day.

Dr. Huilgol is the Honorary Secretary of the Society for the Right to Die with Dignity.

***"No one trusts the dying to know
what they want.***

***Dying can be slow and agonizing,
and some people simply want
to get it over with.***

***Good palliative care usually can help,
but not always and not often enough."***

Marcia Angell, MD, *Washington Post*, 1997

Courtesy: <http://www.hemlock.org>

For more information on the SRDD,
write to Dr. B. N. Colabawalla,
Chairman, SRDD,

A-3, Ben Nevis, Bhulabhai Desai Road,
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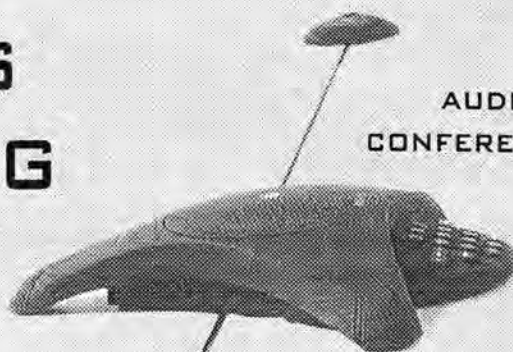
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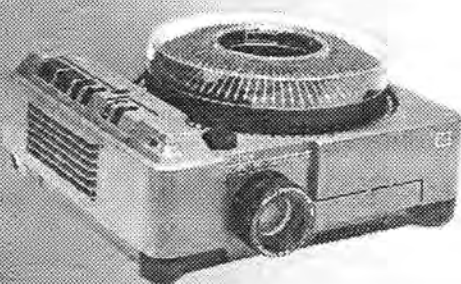
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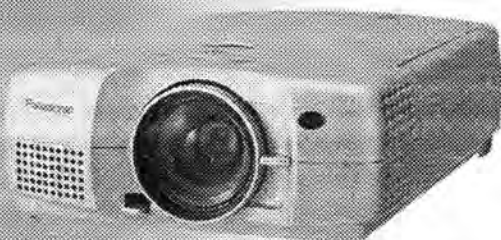
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N. B. Grant

The biggest accusation against the IAS is their total lack of concept of the word 'service'.

In a statement issued on 25th July, 2001, the Supreme Court has taken a serious view of bureaucrats buckling to pressure from parties and politicians in power, and has said that, senior officials are not supposed to mortgage their own discretion, volition and decision making authority, for carrying out commands having no sanction of law at the behest of politicians.

The Indian Civil Service (ICS), which was once regarded as the steel frame of our administration, acclaimed as one of the finest in the world, has given way to the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the core of which being made of straw, has neither the frame, and certainly not the steel, of its predecessors.

Today, this once coveted service, has become the pliable handmaiden of politicians, not respected by the public it serves, and not trusted by any of the other central services, like the Indian Police Service (IPS), the Indian Forest Service (IFS), and even the Military Services it supports.

The discontentment against some State governments' move, to give legal cover to the control, and domination of the IAS over other branches of the civil services in that State, has brought this aspect of mistrust to the forefront.

It may be recalled that in

April 1993, the Supreme Court (SC), in the now famous P. C. Wadhwa (Haryana) gave a verdict that, in future, the Confidential Reports (CRs) of the police force would be initiated and processed through police channels only, and that even CRs of IGPs and DGPs will be written by the Home Minister of the State, and not by the administrative heads, viz. the Home Secretary or, even the Chief Secretary, as was the practice so far. The Supreme Court, further ruled that, as the work of the police is technical, administrative authority though may form a part of the same administrative set up.

The above is not a solitary incident; the military has also been smarting under the over-bearing attitude of the IAS ever since Independence. The position in this respect is that, although the civilian administrators in the Ministry of Defence have an important and major say in the coordination of the three Services, strategical planning, financial control and in almost all day to day policy matters affecting Defence, nevertheless, they have no responsibility for any military failures.

To illustrate this, after the NEFA debacle in 1962 and for many of the failings in the 1965 and 1972 conflicts with Pakistan, and for the fiasco in Sri Lanka, although a number of military heads rolled, not a single civil servant of the Ministry

of Defence took the blame for any of the failures.

The second point is the grabbing of posts belonging to professional disciplines. On this issue, the IAS is on very weak grounds. Although the IAS officer is essentially meant to administer at the district level and to conduct government administration at the State and Central secretariat levels, he is today found everywhere. He is with the steel plants, the food corporation, electricity boards, port trusts, development authorities, AIR, Doordarshan, municipal corporations, etc. He also often holds the posts of registrar of co-operative societies, director of industries, commissioner of fisheries, agriculture etc. Till recently, the post of Comptroller and Auditor General, which used to be held in the past by officers of the Indian Audit and Accounts Service, was held by an IAS officer. It is on record that, in a certain province in U.P., an IAS officer also officiated as the District Medical Officer, in the absence of the latter being on leave.

Both law and order and district administration have steadily deteriorated. The high incidence of communal tension, caste feuds, increasing poverty, non-respect for law, ever increasing terrorism, and rivalry between the magistracy and the police are manifestations of this deterioration. Lacking the moral

strength and stature to resist political pressures, they are manipulated to serve individual and sectarian interests, as opposed to the welfare of the majority of the people of the district.

What is the role of the IAS? Perhaps an answer to this can be found in our definition of the word 'administration'. Paul Appleby, who was an advisor on the Administrative Reforms Commission, has put it thus, 'Administration is, within wide limits, the application of policy formulated in law'. Posts of district collector and secretary to government, seem to meet the requirements of this definition.

Today, clean administration and maintenance of law and order, which was given the back seat after Independence in preference to rapid industrial development, is at a premium, and has become the

biggest casualty not only to our political but even to our industrial growth, and for which only the IAS is mainly responsible. From now onwards, for at least a decade to come, the IAS must once again revert to and concentrate on this aspect only, leaving managerial functions to people more qualified than them.

If one were to judge dispassionately, it would be unrealistic to expect the IAS to have the same virtues as the ICS, because during the last three decades or so, mediocrity has slowly and steadily grabbed the top positions not only in the other services, but also in fields like politics, industry, science, education, etc.

Even accepting the domination of the IAS over certain connected functions of the police, etc., the biggest accusation against the IAS however, is their total lack

of concept of the word 'Service'.

They feel, that, 'Service' implies servility, and that there is something servile about doing their normal duty, which is to render service to the public. Every time the IAS officer serves someone, one gets the impression that he is performing an onerous task.

The old ICS, on the other hand, being the good psychologists that they were, had an unwritten code that, when replying to letters from the public, even the highest Secretary in the land was required to sign as "I remain, Sir, your most obedient servant". Today even the junior-most IAS officer will not venture to call any member of the public as 'Sir', lest they regard him as their servant, which he really is.

BRIG. N. B. GRANT (RETD.) is a freelance writer and a frequent contributor to *Freedom First*.

The CIA on Global Aging

Last July 2001, the Central Intelligence Agency published a fascinating and sobering report on global aging titled "Long-Term Global Demographic Trends: Reshaping the Geopolitical Landscape." Here are a few tidbits to whet your appetite for this international data.

Human population was 150 million in A.D. 1; 900 million in 1800; 2.4 billion in 1950; 5 billion in 1985 and 8 billion in 2020

"To truly appreciate what the projected population of the world's more than 7.8 billion people would look like by 2020, we have projected their mix into 100 people:

"Fifty-six of them would be from Asia, including 19 Chinese and 17 Indians.

"Thirteen would be from our hemisphere, including four from the United States.

"Sixteen would be from Africa, including 13 from Sub-Saharan Africa.

"Three would be from the Middle East

"Seven would be from Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union.

"Five would be from Western Europe."

Between now and 2050: "The population of the region that served as the locus for most 20th-century history – Europe, Russia – will shrink dramatically in relative terms; almost all population growth will occur in developing nations that until now have occupied places on the fringes of the global economy."

"By 2050, the global 65 plus age cohort will triple in size to about 1.5 billion, or 16 percent of the total."

"Despite the general trend toward aging, many developing nations will experience substantial youth bulges: the largest proportional youth populations will be located in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, and Iraq."

Log on at amy@centerlitc.org for more details.

This item is courtesy Bridgett Wagner, Director, Coalition Relations, The Heritage Foundation, U.S.A.

Reflections Serious and Facetious

Louella Lobo Prabhu

On Funerals

Writing in the *Sunday Herald*, Khushwant Singh briefly referred to the death of his wife, on whom he scarcely bestowed more than a sentence, saying that whatever he felt for her, was not helped by numerous condolence callers. He fled to Goa, so that he could be alone, with his grief, and his work – his writing. He regarded the last, as the only antidote to sorrow. But Khushwant being Khushwant, he ended with a bawdy story. An Italian husband jumped into the grave, with his wife's coffin, and was brought out with difficulty. When, three days after the funeral, there was no sign of him, his brother-in-law went to the house – and found it closed. He jemmied it open – fearing the worst! He found the mourner, happily banging the maid, and was so intent on his exertions that he merely waved the visitor away!

My husband and my mother, both died, late night, and it was not possible to have the funeral the next day. It takes time, to put the arrangements in place. These include, tolling the bells in all the Churches, inviting the Bishop, and as many priests as possible to officiate at the ceremony. This is as much a social one-upmanship as a wedding. We had the Bishop and 18 priests. Fortunately, smart undertakers now do for a price, the things which had to be done by the bereaved family, before. The day after the death, and before the funeral, was in both cases, very hard on me. I must have seen 200 people from the morning after the death, to the afternoon of the funeral, when the body comes back from the morgue, and lies in state. People kiss you on both cheeks, and then instead of condoling and leaving – they sit, and expect light conversation. I lost my voice at the end of the day and wondered how I could take the impact of the funeral.

The arrival of the body from the morgue, made me doubly sad. My mother's soft cheeks were like leather, and the three hours which passed between the lying-in-state and the burial, were truly doleful. My daughter, Ms. Giselle D. Mehta, brought some lovely tapes of religious music, played on an Irish harp. Later Ms. Vimala Lobo and a Choir took over. At one point, my household staff spontaneously did the funeral service in Konkani. We avoided ritual prayers, repeated over and over.

One of the things, that need to be changed, is the injunction that the fires are not to be lit in the house, until the body is buried. I do not like the fish curries which are specified by tradition, and lived on milk for three days. The servants were starving, but refused my request, that they light the fire and make something to eat.

Finally, like the Irish "wake" (of drinking one's sorrows, under the table), Mangalore has the "buson". Those who conspicuously helped, are called over, for a dinner, which often has drinks. I dispensed with this custom for my husband, as he was against it. My daughter assured me, that my mother had wanted that the "buson" should take place. It was held, with her as the hostess, and without drink. I did not come out.

After the burial, came the condolence visits, some from perfect strangers, who wanted to gatecrash the house, and make my acquaintance. There is hardly an hour when I don't think of my mother – but reminding me of my loss opens the wound again. My best relief from pain – like Khushwant Singh – has been my work.

The Nobel, V. S. Naipal and India

India always rejoices when an Indian, or a person of Indian origin, wins a major foreign honour. Sir V. S. Naipaul, Nobel Laureate, traces his roots to India, and his country-of-origin, feels justly proud of him. In fact, he has been a British citizen for 50 years, and is considered a part of the British Literary Establishment, though the theme of his books, borders on rootlessness – the relentless search for an identity. He finally finds this, not in countries – Trinidad, India

or Britain – but in his own creative sub-conscious. Coincidentally, one of his early titles, "*A House for Mr. Biswas*", was published in 1961. It is exactly 40 years later, that he has won the Nobel. The Booker Prize was a significant signpost along the way, and in 1991, his knighthood by the Queen.

His literary output is not large, but it encompasses many genres, of which the most

meaningful has been *"Among the Believers"*, a study of Islam in the Middle East. It turned out to be quite a prophetic volume, and is particularly relevant today. With his fine sense of nuance, he senses the phenomenon shaping under his eyes. The Nobel Academy referred to his prose style: an instrument of precision, finely tuned to the needs of the subject.

Sir Vidya is not personally a being of "sweetness and light". He wrote publicly about the fact that E.

M. Forster was "gay", while he himself confessed to using call-girls, and having flaming affairs, during his marriage to his recently dead wife: a bright girl whom he met during his literary studies in Oxford.

In fact he is naive to expect that those who create heroic characters, are themselves cast in the mould they made. It is enough that they give us reading pleasure. Sir Vidya certainly has.

Agatha Christie Revisited

A boxed item in dark type, on the back page of a daily, stated that one of Agatha Christie's titles (*Ten Little Niggers*) was found racist, and the title changed. A similar charge was also made against Enid Blyton, who was the most popular author for girls, in their pre- and mid-teens. Surely, these writers cannot be expected to have had "political correctness" when no such concept existed at the time they wrote. Children read Blyton, and adults, Christie because of the sheer unadulterated pleasure their catalogues of titles gives.

Agatha Christie obviously had Conan Doyle on her mind, when she created two memorable characters (Miss Marple and Hercule Poirot) who were, as vital to the book, as the murder mystery itself. Miss Marple found in the Victorian/Edwardian village the parallels by which she solved complicated mysteries. Msgr. Poirot is a character with his Frenchified English, his "little grey cells", which enabled him to sit in his

chambers, meditating on the psychology of the crime, allowing him to solve it, without leaving his chair. Captain Hastings, is his Dr. Watson. He too, is humanised with his glad eye for a pretty woman, especially one with red hair!

Apart from an exercise in his detection, her books have charm, because they conjure up a world of yesterday, with butlers opening the car, and parlour maids bobbed a curtsy. It is a "country" world, in which people with pedigree had a place (however poor) and brash new wealth was not accepted.

Her wide travels with her husband Max Mallowan, made her set her books in many parts of the Middle East: Baghdad, Egypt, Damascus, but not India. In Conan Doyle's books, Watson is an old India hand, and many stories have an Indian connection. Long may she enchant us with her exquisite craft - political correctness or not.

Children of Abraham

*In the Church of the Nativity,
Where Jesus Christ was born,
The rattle of gun fire is heard,
With the waking hours of dawn.*

*No doubt, driven from place to place,
The Jews for their own homeland yearned,
And after their long wanderings,
To Palestine, returned.*

*But in that homeland where they came,
There were other people too,
Both of the Semitic race,
And Abraham's children too,*

*Having known the pain of homelessness,
Can Israel not try,
To live, with their Muslim counterparts,
And let the fusillade of bullets die?*

Plaint of the Afghan Girl

*I am a little Afghan girl,
Who once lived in a happy home,
Blasted away by a stray bomb,
Now forced on bombed rubble to roam.*

*The Red Cross tent was also hit,
And now I beg my bread,
From restaurants with charity,
For children of the dead,*

*What used to be dark velvet night,
Is now, as bright as day,
While flare and squeal of dropping bombs,
Make us in hidden Cave-Combs stay.*

*I know, that bombs, civilians do not seek,
But all the same, on innocents they fall -
The cruel slaughter of the innocent,
Of war-crimes, may be deemed, the worst of all.*



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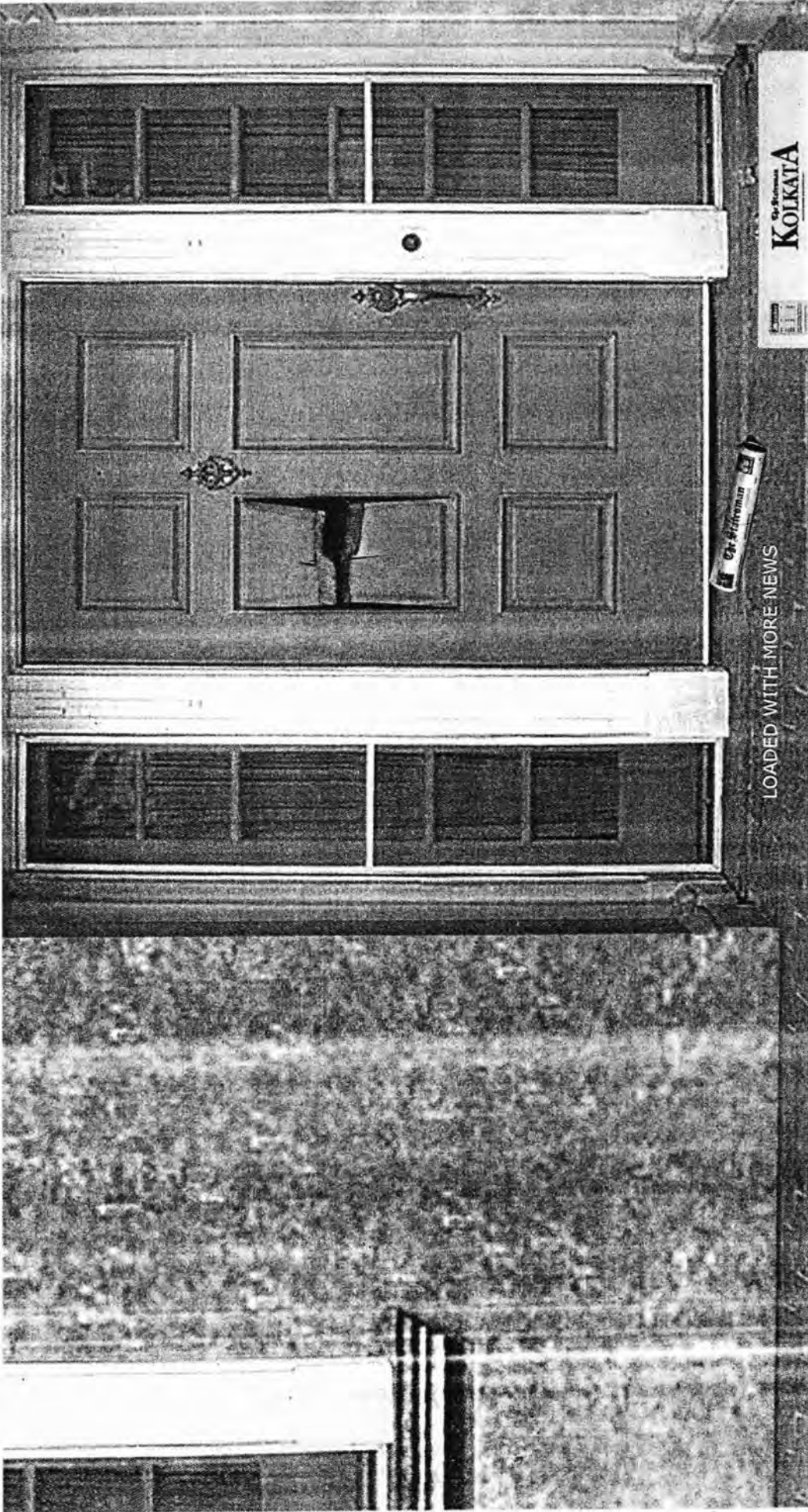
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Saad Ali

Intrepid Fighter for Freedom and Civil Rights

Najma



Born in Kobe, Japan, in 1918, Saad Ali was a product of two cultures. He imbibed Japanese values and traditions like their strong sense of hard work and achievement despite all obstacles. He thoroughly enjoyed Japanese food - eels, octopus, nori (sea-weed) and sukyaki (a mixture of everything), wielding his chopsticks like one born and bred to it. He moved on to diverse fronts all his life, with all the energy and zeal at his command. Till his last moments he was involved in various projects.

His schooling up to the matriculation was in Japan under an institution called F. B. Walker. This British gentleman was a friend and teacher to a wide range of foreigners residing in Kobe, individually taking them to the level of the Matric - where many failed! They then had to do a stint in an Indian school to pass.

He then went on to be one of the very few Indians who did higher studies in Japan - Textile Engineering at Kiryu University, fully in Japanese, to get a degree three years later. This was the basis

His achievement was not so much in having laws made as having them implemented as a right by the police and other departments concerned.

of his love of engineering, though in another form - electronic.

Back in India during the Second world war he worked in a number of places, starting as a supervisor in a night shift for the princely sum of Rs.35. He went on to become a trade union leader for the workers of General Motors during the Quit India movement of 1942. One day he decided to hold a meeting on Chowpatti beach at 12 noon. The British boss sweated, fumed and marked him for arrest along with about 100 other people on the historic 9th August, 1942. He was lodged in Yeravada Jail along with eminent persons like Morarji Desai, Ashok Mehta and Yusuf Meherally. As political prisoners, they had special jail privileges like receiving reading matter and special food. He would communicate with his aunt who was lodged in the womens' section, with a note hidden in the binding of a book and got caught one day red handed. He spent two and half years there, dreaming visions of a free India; the same India which made him run from pillar to post for twelve years to claim his Freedom Fighters' pension! But then Babudom was not to know that such people do not give up even in the face of ill health and red tape. He finally got it two months before his death and exclaimed that he could now die peacefully.

In 1947, some months before Independence, he married the girl of his choice. Of course, both families were totally against it, but as usual he won the day. Incidentally the "girl" turned out to be the ideal partner for him, supporting him during his eventful life for 55 years. She stood by him despite the fact that he would buy electronic parts instead of milk for the children!

Business seemed to be part of his blood chemistry. He started a number of ventures, from the manufacture of liquid gold, to taximeters, ultrasonic flaw detectors, cleaners and rat repellents, wire in Malaysia, mining rubies, transformers, probes, hand held terminals, etc. The number of organizations he started or was associated with were also numerous.

With three children, and ruing the abysmal state of education in Bombay, a few parents got together and started the Bombay International School. The controlling body was the board of directors comprising parents with the Principal as an appointee. It turned into one of the best schools in Bombay, and now, 39 years later, still maintains its position. He was the chairman of the board for a number of years, steering it through politics and lack of funds to finding a new permanent building.

Another great love was amateur radio. VU2ST was the grand old man of hams in India, ever ready to guide the new into its fold with advice, equipment and time - tons of it. His booklet "Guide to Amateur Radio" is the only textbook for people wanting to pass the Amateur Radio Grade I or Grade II exam. He founded the Federation of Amateur Radio Societies of India, and later merged it into the Amateur Radio Society of India, which is internationally recognized as the spokesperson for hams in India. Licensing work, allotment of frequencies, getting QSL cards (response from contacts) were some of the activities the society performed. It also published a journal of which he was editor till the end. For a lifetime of work for hams in India, he was felicitated in December 2000 with a "Lifetime Achievement Award".

The Yusuf Meherally Center at Tara, a village south of Bombay was another of his passions for many years. Teams of doctors, all top-notch, would go there on Sundays and attend to the patients from Tara and about 30 surrounding villages. They would have a picnic lunch there and return by evening. It was expertise taken to the rural people. Among the facilities offered were of specialized eye care and dentistry. In one of the earlier cataract camps, there was no electricity, so volunteers from the Rotary Club would be holding torches while the operation took place - as soon as one fainted, the next in line would take over the torch till...if you lasted one minute there was much back patting. Care included 10 days of post operative followup in a make shift camp. The center has grown so much now that it has its own resident doctors and hospital. It has branched into teaching woodwork, brick making, vermiculture, soap making and

other employment generating activities.

During the last two decades, he became very active in the field of environmental problems. It was not because of the birds of Salim Ali or the ecological work of his son Rauf, but concern for everyday things - noise pollution, PUC certificates for cars, Thal refinery, illegal building activities, cleaning up beaches, resettlement of displaced people, etc. His achievement was not so much in having laws made as having them implemented as a right by the police and other departments concerned. He was forever writing letters to Commissioners of Police, electricity, department, water, telephone departments, and also about auto driver rudeness, defective drugs - just about anything. Forever filing Writ Petitions and PILs! And - he

was getting answers! Everything started with a jotting in his notebook, followed by endless reminders, till the day when he could finally cross out that item.

Ill health (kidney failure) slowed down the last year of his life. With a haemoglobin of 5.5 %, he was still planning on new fronts. He would consult five doctors about his ailment. Invariably two would say one thing and the rest the opposite. So he would take the advice of that doctor which suited him the most. And he developed a marked preference for sugar pills over injections. He wanted to die at home, with his family around rather than in an impersonal ICU, and by God's grace, his wish was granted.

NAJMA is Mr. Saad Ali's daughter

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J. R. Patel
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Kissinger's New World Order and India

M. D. Kini

"India's conduct during the cold war was not so different from that of the United States in its formative decades".

- Henry Kissinger

Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State of the United States of America, is well known to Indians as the man who sent the Seventh Fleet to the Bay of Bengal during the emergence of Bangladesh. He used the good offices of Pakistan to make an overture to China. Neither India's democratic system, nor Pakistan's dictatorship, nor the human rights violation in the then East Bengal bothered the United States of America which claims to stand for freedom and democracy.

Now he seems to have re-evaluated the role of India in the new emerging world order. In his book, 'Does America Need A Foreign Policy?' he has emphasized the need for closer cooperation between India and the United States. "India", he writes, "is a democracy, by far the best functioning and genuine free system of any of the nations achieving Independence following the Second World War". He admits that military alliance with Pakistan "blighted America-India relations during the cold war". He also understands the Indian position saying, "India's conduct during the cold war was not so different from that of the United States in its formative decades".

Kissinger does not subscribe to the nuclear theology of former President Clinton that only five powers are entitled to atomic

weapons by virtue of their pre-eminence and status as the members of the Security Council.¹ However, he is for preventing the spread of nuclear and missiles technology rather than tilting against windmills – rolling back the nuclear capability of India. The United States has other common interests with India, which must not be jeopardized by over-emphasizing the nuclear issue and avers that "a closer cooperative relationship between the two countries is in their mutual and basic interests".

Kissinger believes that Indian security interests as formulated by the British depends on naval supremacy in the Indian Ocean from Singapore to Aden with friendly nations all around the area and also in the North. According to him, American and Indian interests are parallel and this could be strengthened by mutual co-operation.

Collapse of the Soviet Union

The break-up of the Soviet Union, as a result of its own contradictions, both in theory and practice, has thrown up many challenges to the world. One of the major contradictions was: building a society of free and equals through the dictatorship of the proletariat (this enfeebled its people) The other was: permanent revolution or support to communist parties in other countries (this antagonized all

non-communist countries). And the third one was: development of the armaments industry with a total neglect of consumer goods industry, which alone can satisfy human needs (this created dissatisfaction among its people). These and other contradictions undermined its capacity to build a prosperous nation and provided enough reasons for the democracies of Europe and the U.S.A. unite their people against the Soviet Union.

However, NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and the Warsaw Pact equipped with atomic weapons provided a stability to the world through a balance of terror. The non-aligned countries – the newly liberated countries of Asia and Africa – were wooed by both the power blocs. They mostly remained spectators in the clash of ideologies. Now, with the passing away or withering away of the Soviet Union, the world is in search of a new world order.

The Present Situation

The world, in the first decade of the 21st century, is a world living in different centuries. While the United States, Japan and the countries of the European Union have been able to provide a very high standard of living to their people through a free economy in a democratic set up, there are countries (especially in Africa) which are still struggling to establish states with a "legitimacy"



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in the eyes of their own people.

There are countries, which were liberated after the Second World War, especially in Asia, which have transformed the lives of their people. China, with a GDP growth of about 8 to 10% per annum for about two decades, and India, which joined this league a decade later, with a GDP growth of about 6 to 7% per annum, are poised to transform the standard of living of their people as well.

The countries of Latin America have a better standard of living, but the inequality in society has created problems of governance. The Gulf countries, thanks to crude oil, have all the wealth in the world. They have a free economy but no democratic system. In this world situation, the pre-eminence of the United States has been well summed up by Henry Kissinger as follows, "At the dawn of the new millennium, the United States is enjoying a pre-eminence unrivalled by even the greatest empires of the past. From weaponry to entrepreneurship, from science to technology, from higher education to popular culture, America exercises an unparalleled ascendancy around the globe. During the last decade of the twentieth century, America's preponderant position rendered it the indispensable component of international stability."

New World Order

The architecture for a new world order as envisaged by Kissinger is mainly based on the Atlantic Alliance of USA and the European Union. While enumerating different perceptions of international affairs, and certain conflict of interests on economic issues between the United States and the European Union, Kissinger

asserts: "It is not an exaggeration to say that the future of democratic government as we understand it depends on whether the democracies bordering the North Atlantic manage to revitalize their relations in the world without cold war and whether they can live up to the challenges of a global world order. If the Atlantic relationship gradually degenerates into the sort of rivalry that, amidst all its great achievements, spelled the end of Europe's pre-eminence in world affairs, the resulting crisis would undermine those values the Western societies have cherished in common".

As far as South America is concerned, he rightly advocates a stable and legitimate democratic political structure with transparent institutions and an independent judicial system. He has identified threats to this structure from narcotics, terrorism and guerrilla movements. Salvation, according to him, lies in an Atlantic Free Trade Area covering both the Americas and Europe.

Kissinger's prescription for Asia is based on a balance of power: not domination by any single power; superior American military establishment to thwart hegemonistic threats; alliance with Japan; constructive dialogues with India; China to be the indispensable component of a constructive Asian policy; preventing or at least limiting nuclear weapons; human rights to be a part of a dialogue reflecting America's deepest values". "It (America) must be present without appearing to dominate", he suggests.

The Arab-Israel conflict in the Gulf region has made it a tinderbox. Though the resolution of the conflict may still be far away, the creation of a Palestinian state and the

security of Israel have to be parts of the final solution. Since crude oil is essential for all advanced industrial nations, it is imperative to support moderate countries in the Gulf region and try to improve relations with Iran and Iraq, which may not be possible in the near future. He envisages an important role for India in this region. "The Gulf should play a major role in an increasingly intensive strategic dialogue with India".

Africa is a challenge, points out Kissinger, to all nations of the world and all international organizations to reach health and education to all its teeming millions. Apart from South Africa and Nigeria, all other nations in Africa require tremendous mobilization of resources to uplift its people.

Concert of Nations

The architecture of a new world order that is delineated by Kissinger has the United States as its kingpin and its bedrock is the Atlantic Alliance. Though it is based on freedom and democracy, it is a concert of Atlantic nations than a concert of nations. He has not brought the United Nations in the discussion at all. The United Nations was created as a forum for all nations to come together and solve international issues on a cooperative manner. It has not fulfilled its promise is well accepted and that is mainly because of the cold war that erupted soon after its inception.

Now that the cold war is over, it would be in the fitness of things that it was further strengthened by giving a legitimate voice to all the nations of the world. That means that the concerns of security and development of all nations to be given equal importance in deciding the course

of action by the United Nations and its various affiliated organisations. The most important way of strengthening the UNO was to submit to its decisions by the members of the Security Council. No nation, however powerful, should ever take any unilateral action against other nations in all international affairs – political, military or economic.

The Security Council should be restructured to reflect the new emerging world. It should have as permanent members all the major nations of all the continents, such as India, Japan, Germany, Brazil and Nigeria. The disputes between countries should be taken up by the Security Council to evolve a consensus and a compromise rather than impose a solution. The

problems should be tackled at an early stage before they degenerate into conflicts and wars. This should be possible if every country's interests are taken care of. It should be a concert of nations rather than that of Western nations.

Terrorism

This piece was written just before the terrorist attack on the twin towers of the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon. This attack has brought home to America and others the shape of the new menace to all the nations of the world. India, among others, has been a victim of this terror for quite some time. The time has now come for all civilized nations to formulate a policy to protect nations, which suffer from this scourge. As President Bush announced on the

day of the attack, it is necessary to bring to account not merely the terrorists but those who harbour them.

Borders of nations cannot be re-drawn by blood. Today every country is multi-ethnic and multi-national. Self-determination for every minority is neither possible, nor necessary. In a democratic system all minorities have all the rights that the majorities enjoy. Their grievances not merely expressed but redressed as well. There could be an international convention to protect the interests of minorities. I believe that a new world order should be based on freedom and democracy, and a community of democratic nations.

MR. M. D. KINI is a freelance writer and a former editor of *Freedom First*.

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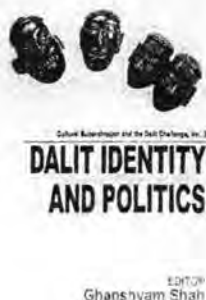
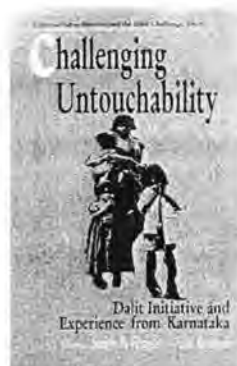
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BOOK REVIEWS



CULTURAL SUBORDINATION AND THE DALIT CHALLENGE (In two volumes)

- Volume 1: CHALLENGING UNTOUCHABILITY
DALIT INITIATIVE AND EXPERIENCE FROM
KARNATAKA**
Edited by: Simon R. Charsley and G. K. Karanth
Year of publication: 1998. No. of Pages: 323. Price: Rs.275
- Volume 2: DALIT IDENTITY AND POLITICS**
Edited by Ghanshyam Shah
Year of publication: 2001. No. of Pages: 363. Price: Rs.295

Published by

Sage Publications, 32 M Block Market, Greater Kailash 1,
New Delhi 110046

Reviewed by

Dr. Father Rudolf Heredia, a well known sociologist and commentator who has been specialising on the problems of dalits and tribals. Currently he is the Rector of St. Xavier's College.

The first volume in this series focused on *Dalit Initiative and Experience from Karnataka*. It consisted of seven case studies introduced by two chapters setting the context and elaborating the background against which more general conclusions are drawn in the final chapter: "though Untouchability remains a serious problem for most and at times becomes an issue of urgent practical and moral significance for the lives of those subjected to it, its effects are now increasingly variable. The contexts in which discrimination is exercised against them are in many places reduced, and avoidance, subversion and challenge are now widely practiced." (p.287). Yet reports of atrocities against dalits have shown an increase. This may well indicate that they are no longer willing to accept their old submissive role even when they have to stand up against opposition at great cost. Hence the conclusion is "to this limited but significant extent, optimistic." (p.296). This is within the Karnataka context.

The second volume in this series on *Cultural Subordination and the Dalit Challenge* takes a broader national

perspective. This book is surely essential reading for anyone concerned with dalit issues, though its very broad spectrum does not allow any specialized focus. It covers the broad spectrum including culture and literature, economics and politics. The central thrust of the volume is this: that while the dalit movement has in fact come centre stage in contemporary politics, it certainly has not fulfilled the promise that it started out with, but rather seems to be getting lost in the desert of electoral politics, state co-optation and backroom bargaining. This is happening in both civic and in political society, in the cultural and the economic spheres as well. Moreover, greater caste mobilization has seen a marked increase of class divisions within these communities.

In his introduction to "Dalit Politics" (p.17) Ghanshyam Shah discussed at some length this increasing alienation of the dalit movement from its promising beginnings. Indeed, it is a most significant and yet disturbing conclusion of this volume. Here he foregrounds the main issues and sketches Ambedkar's perspective on

them before giving an overview of later chapters in the collection.

S.K. Thorat and R.S. Deshpande set out to explain continuing relationship between "Caste System and Economic Inequality" (p.44), and how both neo-liberalism and the Marxist miss the continuing economic inequality associated with caste, whereas Ambedkar's approach of "analyzing the economic base of the caste system" (p.49) provides a more fruitful theoretical perspective that would yield more useful policies as well.

Examining "The Structure of South Indian Untouchable Castes", Sudhakar Rao tests the view of Michael Moffatt and others who see a replication of the same hierarchical principles among the untouchable castes, and he makes a more nuanced conclusion "that the hierarchy among untouchable castes, wherever it is claimed, is based on different principles: proximity to high castes, association and incorporation into village life, and emulation of the dominant high castes." (p.83). These are

more important than the ideology of purity, though this is not entirely discarded.

The cultural context of the dalit literary movement and the political discourse associated with it, is taken up by several authors in the volume. Gopal Guru shows how the category of "dalit" constructed in a context of struggle, has the active subversive potential in the "Dalit-Bahujan Political Discourse" (p.105). In a later chapter, he looks into "The Interface between Ambedkar and the Dalit Cultural Movement in Maharashtra". While its contribution to mainstream Marathi literature is granted, yet in the opinion of some dalit writers "dalit literature has not been able to reach out to the life of common Dalits" (p.187). Thus while the literary establishment becomes elitist and is co-opted by the state, the 'mudhouse' dalit writers (p.192) who represent the vast majority of dalits are left out in the cold.

Punalikar in the same line traces dalit identity through dalit literature, which demonstrates "not a small measure of subversive consciousness" (p.217). This identity formation and assertion of self-worth and self-confidence, is not just restricted to Neo-Buddhist Mahars but to Christian and Muslim dalits as well (p.216).

Kancha Illiah attempts to establish the epistemological basis for the "Dalitism vs. Brahmanism" (p.108) conflict that he reads into history. On a somewhat different tack Eleanor Zelliot considers "The Meaning of Ambedkar" as an icon, and the tremendous symbolic and evocative resonance it has with dalits not just in Maharashtra but throughout the country now.

There is a shadow side to this, as Gail Omvedt shows in tracing "The Dalit Movement in India" (p.143). She establishes that it has in fact remained a reformist movement in spite of Ambedkar's embryonic theory that

surely had great potential for revolutionary change (p.148). As a result, dalits politics has been caught in the vortex of electoral politics. It has moved from 'vote banks' controlled from the outside by the Brahman-bourgeois elites to 'vote blocks' more autonomous and bargaining with larger parties (p.156). But there is no deeper revolutionary change envisaged for the system or radical reform in civil society as Ambedkar wanted.

In this context then Lancy Lobo brings out the ambiguities in the "Vision, Illusions And Dilemmas of Dalit Christians in India". Here is a group that has undergone a different kind of conversion from the one Ambedkar had lead dalits into. And yet the basic quest of conversion remains the same. As Ambedkar put it: liberty, equality, fraternity. To dismiss such people as 'rice Christians' as is often done amounts to a rejection of this quest for the new freedom, equality and identity that they seek. And yet while they seek social status as Christians, they still pursue economic benefits as dalits (p.249).

Another aspect of this light and shadow is demonstrated by Sudha Pai in her study of "Identity Formation, Political Consciousness and Electoral Politics of the Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh" (p.258), where caste is used as a tool for mobilisation and capturing political power, but for little else. There is no ideological interpretation of caste that might provide some sound principles for electoral politics and the reform of civil society. Hence with diminishing returns on short term gains "the BSP has reached an important turning point today" (p.287).

Pushpendra's study of "Dalit Assertion Through Electoral Politics" (p.311) comes to a similar conclusion and carries this further to show how in spite of caste mobilization there is a growing class differentiation within

the SCs. His final conclusion is certainly pertinent for dalit politics today: "political institutions of Indian democracy seem to enjoy the support of SCs but the political actors stand more or less discredited." (p.338)

Power politics, electoral deals, etc. have corrupted any kind of broader regional or ideological commitment. Abhay Kumar Dubey brings this out quite starkly in his "Study of Kanshiram" (p.288). He dissects the "Autonomy of a Dalit Power Player" to show how contradictory such power games ultimately are. They are self-serving to start and self-defeating in the end! Thus while dalit politics certainly has come to centre stage with dalit mobilization, with this so too has the dalit crisis become increasingly critical.

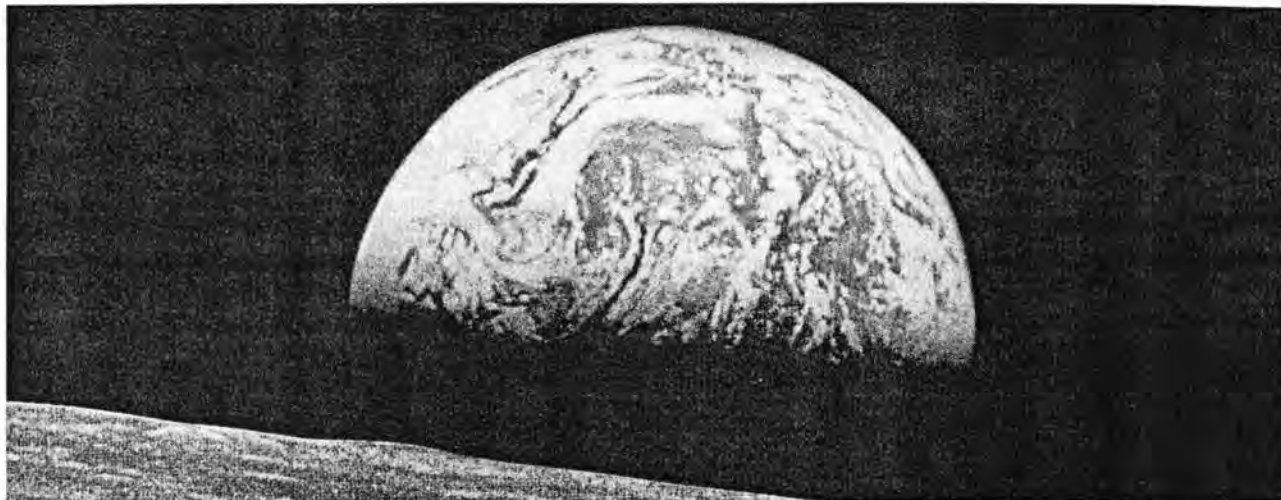
In the present context of the Sangh Parivar forces inspired by an ideology of Hindutva attempting to co-opt dalits to their alienating agenda, the ambiguities and contradictions in the dalit movement become more critical and the movement itself easily manipulated by such forces. Already OBCs and others are being used as muscle power to spearhead the saffron brigade. This will only consolidate this upper caste-class hegemony and marginalize others with a false identity of 'cultural nationalism', and a subversive militarization of Hinduism and a perverted religionising of politics.

Hence Ambedkar becomes increasingly important and critical. A hopeful silver lining in this rather grim scenario is Ambedkar as an icon and symbol of a movement for which he provided great inspiration and incisive perspectives. In fact by turning back to Ambedkar, not just by naming themselves Ambedkarites, and by genuinely picking up the challenge he has left, not just dalits but all of us, there lies some hope for future for both dalits and for our caste-class ridden society.

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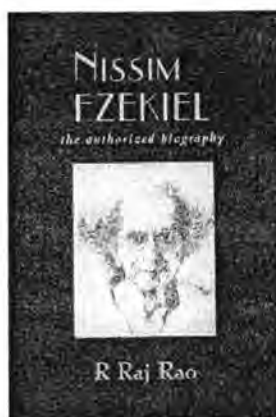
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NISSIM EZEKIEL, THE AUTHORIZED BIOGRAPHY

By R. Raj Rao

Published by

Viking, Penguin Books India (P) Ltd.,
11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi 110 017
Year of Publication: 2000. No. of Pages: 401. Price: Rs.495

Reviewed by

Dr. R. Srinivasan, retired Professor of Political Science, and
Associate Editor, *Freedom First*.

This book on Nissim Ezekiel should interest readers of *Freedom First* for he edited the journal for some years with distinction. Earlier he set standards of a high order and made *Quest* a journal unique of its kind. Among the inner circle of *Freedom First*, it has been the non-poetic aspects of Nissim that impressed his colleagues and friends, such as his serious commitment to individuality, to freedom and the foundations of a liberal humanist society. His poetry and the writing of it was always in the background, respected and admired but kept at a distance, for the group was not one that was deeply devoted to poetry.

It is likely that this book will be the most authoritative account of Nissim's life and his poetry for some time to come. The author has been thorough in combing all the published accounts of Nissim's poetry, has had extensive interviews with Nissim and had his support for the project; besides, he also had the advantage of extended sessions of discussions with friends and fellow poets. It is a complete portrait of Nissim, warts and all.

The book gives a detailed account of the ethnic and family background of Nissim and the chapters on the early years are revealing as to how easily he was able to blend Jewish and Indian identities and how deeply he became attached to the city where he was born. The third chapter covering the period of Nissim's life in the 1940s is absorbing for it unravels the vacillation of Ezekiel between the attractive poles of politics and the arts. He came to reject Gandhi and all that he stood for; M. N. Roy and the Radical Democratic Party (RDP) fascinated him,

and he empathised with the stand of the RDP in its opposition to the Congress position on the War and Britain's war efforts. Also, it sets out in fascinating detail Nissim's active work for the party in the slums of Bombay, working with Tarkunde and V. B. Karnik. His standing for a municipal election and getting defeated also comes as a revelation for, who among us, had any inkling of this? Extracts from the letters that he wrote to his friend Abraham Solomon (President, Indian Secular Society), reproduced extensively in the first hundred odd pages of the book reveal Nissim's mind indicating his deep involvement in RDP politics, his protracted stay in Lucknow and working with the activists of the party. This aspect of Nissim is not at all known and we should thank the writer for highlighting this. Once M. N. Roy disbanded the Radical Democratic Party, Nissim bade farewell to politics and turned to literature seriously and finally.

His stay in London for three years and the varied jobs that he engaged himself in have remained unique; now he had a renewed education in more senses than one. He took formal courses in college and in other institutions, visited libraries and poetry readings, did a brief stint in the High Commissioner's office, visited Paris, Oxford and made a living by doing odd jobs as well as by sending poems to journals. His first book of poems, *A Time to Change*, was published just as he left England. Passage back to India had to be earned in a ship by "washing decks, stoking coal and wiping furniture" (p.79).

His return to India, serving in different establishments close to literature and the arts are narrated – a two year stint in the *Illustrated Weekly*, to be followed as a copy writer at Shilpi, an advertising agency (with an interlude of six months in New York) and manager of Chemould, who were important frame makers for pictures. All the while, he acted as a midwife to budding poets helping them to polish, rewrite and make final their earlier drafts. A group of poets who were to emerge as significant voices in the world of poetry was trained by Nissim. Finally, he worked as professor in a college and later in the University and here he found surroundings congenial for he remained in the teaching profession till his retirement.

Considerable pages are devoted to his love life, the strains at home, the final decision to separate, though the relationship on Nissim's part seems to have been amiable. For instance, even after separation, he continued intermittently to do marketing for the family. Ample details are provided of his "friends", and relationships and those interested in this aspect of Nissim will turn to this. More importantly, are accounts of close association with fellow poets, many of whom he trained with patience and persistence and were to emerge as front rank poets; however, strains and difficulties with them were to develop later. Nissim above all is a contemporary major poet of India and it is only appropriate that several pages are devoted to an analysis of his poems. Not only the poems but occasional prose writings in journals too are discussed.

The final chapter, 'Totem Pole'

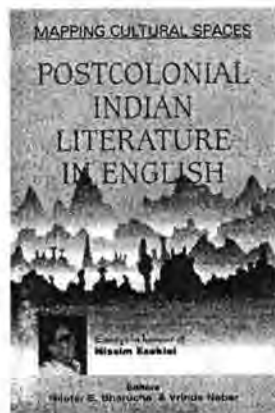
examines the estimate of Nissim by fellow poets and has other anecdotal details. These certainly do not always enhance the image of Nissim as a poet or as an individual. The gradual dissolution of his personality, his becoming a victim to Alzheimers', his confinement in a nursing home make for distressful reading. The Nissim that we know of and recall with fondness is not the one that is revealed in the final pages of the book. A revealing appendix reproduces an Interview with

Khorshed Wadia Ezekiel which would interest those curious about personal details.

Modern Indian poetry in English, in a sense, begins with Nissim and those interested in it will certainly read this. Whether later generations will find it to be of equal interest is an open question.

Some mistakes. The Secretary of State for India was Montagu not

Montago (pp.45-6). G. D. Parikh was never Registrar but Rector of the University and a distinguished one at that. Sophia Wadia is consistently misspelt as Sophiya Wadia. The translator of Tulsi *Ramayana* is Lutgendorf, not Lutendorf (p.171). Berkeley is not Berkley and the University situated there is University of California, not University of Berkeley. ♦



**MAPPING CULTURAL SPACES
POSTCOLONIAL INDIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH
(Essays in honour of Nissim Ezekiel)**

Edited by

Nilufer E. Bharucha and Vrinda Nabar

Published by

Vision Books, 24, Feroze Gandhi Road, Lajpat Nagar III,
New Delhi 110 024.

Year of Publication: 1998. No. of Pages: 376. Price: Rs.285.

Reviewed by

Professor E. V. Ramakrishnan, Professor of English,
South Gujarat University, Surat.

The present volume which contains twenty three essays on various aspects of Indian English literature is a *festschrift* in honour of Nissim Ezekiel. It also contains a long conversation with Nissim Ezekiel on various aspects of his life and art. As Ezekiel is better known as an Indian English writer it is indeed proper to devote such a commemorative volume to the field of Indian English literature. While there are twelve studies on Indian English fiction, in keeping with its new-found prominence, there are only six essays on Indian English poetry. The essays cover a wide range of topics such as modernism and post-modernism in Indian English poetry, Ezekiel as a Bombay poet, expatriate Indian Novelists and the anxiety of Indianness in Indians writing in English.

The conversation with Ezekiel traces his evolution as a writer and critic. Ezekiel is candid in his observations and comments on his personal life, his life as a writer, political beliefs and the genesis of some poems. As a mentor of younger poets, Ezekiel has done more for Indian English poetry than anyone else. Ezekiel says that he

never considers it a waste of time discussing poetry with young poets. Ezekiel has a keen eye for poetic form and has set high standards in precision of language. In one of his best poems he wrote, "The best poet waits for words ...". In his essay on 'Recent Indian English Poetry', Makarand Paranjape writes: "Nissim's poetry is no esoteric exercise with words, nor an avenue of unrestrained emotional catharsis. Poetry to him is a communicative act, a discipline" (p.45).

Meenakshi Mukherjee's essay on "The Anxiety of Indianness" clarifies several issues regarding the vexed problem of Indianness in the Indian English novel. She rightly points out that colonialism and its history are not central to the fictional works written in Indian languages. The *bhasha* novelist is haunted by "many other forms of internal dissension, dislocation and oppression". While an earlier generation of Indian English novelists, like R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Anand, remain rooted in their separate ideas, the new breed of 'third-world cosmopolitans' whose works were made possible by Rushdie's *Midnight's*

Children, appear to court and flaunt their rootlessness. But, as Mukherjee rightly points out, for those writers who live in India, Indianness implies not a series of metaphors but a set of problems to come to terms with. A writer like Amitav Ghosh seems to understand this problem as his *Shadow Lines*, "interrogates rather than defines the concept of a totalizing India" (p.92).

The articles in the first section, with the exception of Mukherjee's essay mentioned above, are overviews that map the general direction taken by Indian English literature. The consensus seems to be that fiction has achieved a major breakthrough in the 1980s, while poetry has remained in the margins. The marginality of poetry should be seen as one of its assets as it has not attempted to 'totalize' India, the way Indian English fiction has done. Indian English poetry has captured something essential about India. In his article on Ezekiel's Bombay poems, Raj Rao comments that India is Bombay and Bombay is a microcosm of India. Ezekiel has always emphasized his attachment to Bombay, even when he highlighted its squalor and

violence. In Keki Daruwalla's poetry there is a deeper awareness of the ethnic and religious conflicts that divide Indian society. In her piece titled "Keki Daruwalla as a Parsi poet", Anjana Desai suggests that 'the tone of self-protective, self-directed irony' one encounters in Daruwalla and some other Indian English Parsi poets is a mark of their status as "the privileged minority with a supercilious but assimilative status" (p.150).

In his review article on Makarand Paranjape's "Macmillan Anthology of Indian English Poetry", John Oliver Perry is highly critical of Paranjape's selection of poets as well as his criteria of selection. He rightly feels that Paranjape is consecrating the archaic and the regressive in his attempt to re-canonise the Indian English poetic tradition. Sarvar V. Sherry Chand's essay on Imtiaz Dharker's collection, *Purdah*, demonstrates how the poems in the sequence represent women as resisting subjects. Her analysis of the experiences presented in the poems and the several recurring images and

symbols is illuminating. Sahana Das has chosen to focus on the narrative technique of *The Golden Gate*, a much acclaimed poetic novel which has not received the critical attention it deserves.

The essays in the third section are concerned with novelists and novels. They are mostly academic in nature and have very little to offer by way of fresh insights. Richard Allen's reading of Naipaul's *The Enigma of Arrival*, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia* and Barry Unsworth's *Sacred Hunger* highlight the allegorical nature of these texts to bring out their treatment of certain post-colonial themes. Allen reads the texts closely and establishes some interesting parallels. Cicley Palser Havelly's essay on 'The Postcolonial Legacy in Sahgal, Deshpande and Markandaya' does not go beyond stating the obvious. In her essay on the recent novels written by the Parsis, Nilufer Bharucha notes a growing assertion of their ethno-religious identity in the novels of Bapsi Sidhwa, Rohinton Mistry, Firdaus

Kanga and Boman Desai. Vrinda Nabar offers some general remarks on *Midnight's Children*, *The Great Indian Novel* and *The Trotter-Nama* regarding their treatment of history. There are two essays on Amitav Ghosh. Usha Hemmadi presents an over-view of his achievement as a novelist while Anjali Karpe explores the concept of freedom in *The Shadow Lines*. Rangrao Bhongle's essay on the women characters in Mulk Raj Anand, Preeti Shirodkar's study of Salman Rushdie's *Shame*, Rochelle Almeida's comments on the characters in Kamala Markandaya and S. Varalakshmi's analysis of Nayantara Sahgal's women follow predictable patterns of run-of-the-mill academic readings.

Taken as a whole, this is a useful volume on Indian English literature reflecting its new directions and current achievements. However, one is left with a lingering thought that a poet of Nissim Ezekiel's stature deserved something more substantial and durable. ♦



Having studied innumerable books detailing the basics of WTO, "Salvaging The WTO's Future - Doha And Beyond", breaks new ground in evolved analysis of the importance of WTO from a developing country's perspective.

However, the first impression imparted by the sub-title of the book indicates a post-Doha analysis of WTO issues. Quite to the contrary, the introduction clarifies that the book investigates post-Seattle sentiment reflecting faltering faith in WTO's role as an international trade body. It

elucidates the uncertainty after the debacle at Seattle, which had succeeded in undermining WTO's credibility at facilitating global trade. Besides, the book also reveals the proliferation of anti-globalization feelings and the palpable impasse in North - South trade relations. It also brings out the bearing that the Doha Ministerial would have on international trade and the North-South divide on the heralding of a new trade round.

This edited volume is an adroit collection of papers detailing various aspects of global trade under the aegis

of WTO, while, simultaneously, elucidating vital elements from a developing country's perspective on certain important Agreements.

One particularly interesting paper highlights the structural problems faced by developing countries in their efforts at complying with the demands of various Agreements. This is revealed in the inadequate research studies on various issues of negotiations, in advance of the launching of the negotiation process. Also, awareness on the impact of the various Agreements on the operations of the

SALVAGING THE WTO'S FUTURE - DOHA AND BEYOND

Edited by

Amit Dasgupta and Bibek Debroy

Published by

Konarak Publishers Pvt. Ltd., for the Rajiv Gandhi Institute for Contemporary Studies.

Reviewed by

Mr. J. K. Mukhopadhyay, Economic Adviser, Department of Economics & Statistics, DES, Tata Services Limited, and
Ms. Tanvi Popat, Economist, DES, Tata Services Limited.

industries is very sketchy. As a likely solution, the paper stresses, and rightly so, on a close link between the negotiators of the government on one hand and industry and research bodies on the other. This becomes pertinent, especially with the prospects of the launch of a new round of trade negotiations, which would necessitate a well-chalked out strategy before endorsing new commitments. This calls for developing countries to intensify their understanding of the implications of various agreements. One key factor is taking a comprehensive view of the WTO Agreements and deliberating on the options available. Outlining of a road map in the paper to enable developing countries to face challenges posed by the new trade regime is appreciatively attempted.

Detailed examination of pertinent issues all through the book exhibit intellectual aptness in comprehending the nuances of these issues. Some vital issues covered are as under:

- **Development Aspect:** Analysis of Agreements reveals that these lack in their focus on developmental needs of the developing countries and instead limit their options in undertaking development policy. Illustrated are the "anti-development" nature of Agreements like SCM, etc. Herein, an appeal is made to the developing countries to garner support over "common" issues and present a united stand in the New Round. The concessions on compulsory licensing under TRIPS for developing countries at Doha Ministerial has validated the significance of a united stand by developing countries during negotiations.
- **Tariffs:** The fact highlighted here is that developing countries should be open to the inclusion of a new round of tariff negotiations. Efforts to gain from greater market access and reduction in industrial tariffs are emphasized.
- **Non-Tariff Measures:** A study incorporating quantitative estimate of NTMs on India's exports makes

interesting reading. These NTMs are increasingly being used as trade barriers. NTMs, the study brings out, are mainly the result of a Government's response to the needs of civil society. However, an attempt at continuous inspection of each NTM and its compatibility with WTO is essential. In fact, NTMs gain importance in furthering the concept of fair trade. The study emphasizes the need for these NTMs to be effectively employed in order to eliminate malpractice in trade. If not executed in the right fashion, these hold the potential of threatening the very survival of trade.

- **Anti-Dumping Measures:** Anti-dumping measures are used as weapons by developed countries to deny market access to developing countries. The paper suggests specific modifications in the Agreement for it to not hamper developing countries' exports unreasonably. All the same, India has mastered the use of anti-dumping instrument. Witness the 68 anti-dumping initiations in 1999 made by India in 1999.
- **TRIPS:** Thankfully, the author of the paper departs from the view taken by sundry analysts who view TRIPS as having only negative implications for developing countries. The paper objectively brings out the importance of strong patent laws with special reference to the pharmaceutical sector and how LDCs need to take advantage of the flexibility given by TRIPS Agreement. It stresses the role of developing countries in forming domestic laws to optimize national interests, especially in the area of patents.

Another informative paper reveals interesting results on the comparison of the progress of liberalization in SAARC countries. This is made through detailed analysis of the Trade Policy Reviews of SAARC countries conducted by the WTO. The study reveals the lack of a common

negotiating position. While India & Pakistan from the SAARC members would want negotiations in textiles, they, barring others, would contest any negotiations in the area of agriculture. SAARC is a forum where Indo-Pak bilateral disagreement is the dominant force. The members instead of joining hands on common issues at the WTO believe in approaching these in isolation. This important fact should not be forgotten.

The book also discusses the implications of the inclusion of some of the 'new issues' like Competition Policy, GATS, etc. in the WTO ambit. It also has a separate chapter on the importance of integrating LDCs in the multilateral trading system. The various aspects of the Agreement on Agriculture are discussed in great detail in three different chapters. In contrast, one pertinent Agreement, especially from the viewpoint of the industry that receives only a passing mention in the book is the Agreement on Subsidies & Countervailing Measures. This is an indispensable issue as far as the competitiveness of Indian industry is concerned. A road map on this aspect of trade is indispensable.

All in all, this edited volume throws light on the pragmatism of a trade order led by WTO rules. Every paper makes an effort in obtaining solutions to structural problems faced by developing countries in trying to comply with the provisions under specific Agreements. Developing countries need to be equipped with the right mix of strategies to participate, rewardingly so, in the negotiations. Agreement-wise analysis conducted in the book will prove to be beneficial to policy makers in outlining their strategies to take advantage of the time leeway accorded to developing countries under WTO. It clarifies that benefits from WTO are not illusory. Efforts have to be made by developing countries to internalize these benefits. At the same time, since the book was published in September it may already prove to be *passé* in terms of the post-Doha road-map for globalization. ❖

**"When the people fear the government, you have tyranny.
When the government fears the people, you have freedom."**

- Thomas Paine



SENTINELS OF THE SAHYADRIS

(Memories and Reflections)

By E. S. Modak

Published by

Originals (an imprint of Low Price Publications), A-6, Nimri Commercial Centre, Near Ashok Vihar, Phase IV, Delhi 110 052.

Year of Publication: 2001. No. of Pages: 287. Price Rs.395

Reviewed by

Mr. K. P. Medhekar IPS, Retired Director General of Police, Maharashtra.

Mr. Modak introduces his book by saying "I am persuaded that the time has come for me to speak about things that have happened to me. In the matter of Kashmir, in particular, I have kept my silence too long ..."

A distinguished police officer of the colonial days' Imperial Service, Mr. E. S. Modak, Indian Police - 1941 (Retired), took over charge as the Assistant Superintendent of Police at Satara on December 15, 1942. Those were very difficult days for the British Raj because of Mahatma Gandhi's 'Quit India' movement, and Satara was by all accounts the most disturbed district in India. An Englishman, one Mr. Yates, IP, was his first Chief as the District Superintendent of Police. After a long and meritorious service, Mr. Modak retired from the Indian Police Service (as the service came to be known after Independence).

On March 8, 1970, he was the Inspector General of Police of Maharashtra when Mr. Vasantdada Patil was the Chief Minister. As destiny would have it, young Vasant Patil was one of the most wanted *Patri Sarkar* militant activists, in the Quit India Movement when Mr. Modak was the ASP in Satara District. Mr. Modak describes "*Patri Sarkar*" as the Government of Bastinado. "Elusive Vasant Patil" was finally captured by Mr. Modak during the height of this agitation for Independence. When Mr. Modak joined at Satara in 1942, Satara was an important district of the erstwhile Presidency of Bombay, a trilingual province of British India. When he retired, the map had changed. The state was the unilingual state of Maharashtra of Marathi speaking

people, including large and historical areas of Vidarbha and Marathwada respectively from the old province of C.P. and the princely state of Hyderabad.

It is, indeed, difficult for me to offer fair comments on many of the facts and controversies so vividly narrated by the author for two reasons: Firstly, I was away from Maharashtra, from my own cadre state, on deputation from 1957 to 1980 with the Intelligence Bureau of the Government of India serving in Delhi, Bhutan, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The second reason is that I do not have access to the sources of Mr. Modak's personal history to verify those episodes. When I read and enjoy an autobiography, I try to convince myself that the writer is true and honest to himself. If any factual contradiction or criticism is called for, I would like to leave those comments to the personalities involved in those episodes or happenings. I would certainly feel competent to say something about the lessons drawn by the author, his assessment of the situation, his conclusions and judgements, as well as the advice he would like to record for future generations.

Let me first of all say that the book is highly interesting and eminently readable. It is written in good fluent 'Queen's' English, with a sprinkling of catchy phrases and appropriate words. Mr. Modak himself claims to be a voracious reader and a keen student of Shakespeare. The chapter on 'The Police and Shakespeare' is novel, interesting and absorbing, to say the least.

Without delving much deeper into other chapters of the book, suffice it to say that the book will be useful to and make an interesting reading for administrators, magistrates, judges and even politicians if they have time to read. Police officers in particular must read this autobiography of a senior colleague of theirs. Mr. Modak's professional knowledge about policing, man-management as well as law and order and crime investigation seems to be worth studying. It is highly relevant even today.

The most thought provoking chapter is 'Interlude in Kashmir', in which turbulent state he was specially deputed as the Inspector General of Police in June 1966 by the Government of India. One would agree with him when he reasons out why the administration in Kashmir is failing so badly in dealing with the complicated internal situation in this unfortunate part of India. With some knowledge and authority, I can say here that had great leaders like Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel been allowed to deal freely with Kashmir and the states in the north east, the picture of those areas today would have been more rosy and the people would have been much happier and integrated with the rest of India.

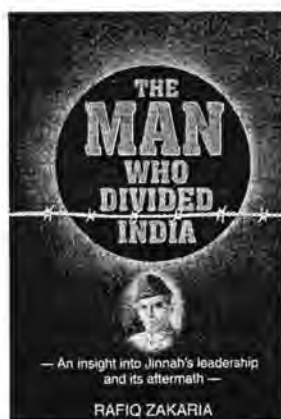
Mr. Modak's story "From Them to Us", from British colonialists to our own Indian political masters tells a very sad story of how the lot of the 'poor' police force has not changed for the better as far as their welfare is concerned. Some of the good measures taken by the author and other individuals have not even touched the fringe of the human problem. Policemen still remain the 'flogging

horse' of the 'mai baap sarkar', politicians of all hues and the press too. Policemen's families remain neglected.

There are, unfortunately, a number of editing and printing errors in this book even though the print,

paper and overall production of this volume are presentable. The cover design is eye-catching and appropriate. I understand that the author had desired to dedicate the book to the memory of his father, who was an eminent administrator in the provincial

civil service as a Collector and District Magistrate. That important page is, however, missing in the book. Mr. Modak needs to be congratulated for his much belated effort in recording his memories and reflections. ❖



THE MAN WHO DIVIDED INDIA – AN INSIGHT INTO JINNAH'S LEADERSHIP AND ITS AFTERMATH

By Rafiq Zakaria

Published by

Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd., 35-C, Madan Mohan Malaviya Marg,
Popular Press Building, Tardeo, Mumbai 400 034.

Year of Publication: _____. No. of Pages: 290. Price: Rs.350

Reviewed by

Professor R. V. Chari, retired professor of commerce and
management and a freelance writer.

Prior to 1876, Karachi Municipality did not keep proper records of births and deaths. The maintenance of records started in right earnest from that year. Jinnah's father while filling the form for admission, furnished 20th October 1875 as the date of his son's birth. The family belonged to the Khoja community, owing allegiance to the Aga Khan.

In his early days, Jinnah did not show any inclination for formal education. This perturbed his father to such an extent that he brought his son to Bombay and admitted him to the Gokuldas School. Later, he was moved to the Anjuman-I-Islam School. But this did not in any way improve matters. Worried with the progress and performance of his son in his studies, his father consulted some of his business associates who advised him to send young Jinnah to U.K. to take up legal studies, realising his aptitude for arguments and discussions. He was admitted to Lincoln's Inn. Before leaving for England, his mother insisted on his getting married prior to his departure to London, which he did. When he returned from London, after completing his legal education, both his mother and teenage wife had passed away.

After being called to the Bar, he did not return to Karachi to meet his

ailing father, who badly needed his moral presence and financial support, having incurred heavy losses in his business. Ignoring his father's pleas, Jinnah landed in Bombay to chart a new life for himself. For over a year, he remained briefless, but finding Bombay quite expensive, he applied for a job as presidency magistrate, which he secured within a short time. He resigned his post, as he was unable to reconcile himself to the isolation a judge lived in.

While in London, along with Law, Jinnah started taking active interest in political developments. Of the books he read, Lord Morley's "On Compromise" influenced him. During his later years, he was to regrettably jettison the same principles which he had admired in his youth.

Having experienced failure in his attempt to forge a semblance of unity between Hindus and Muslims, Jinnah, out of sheer frustration, started working feverishly to consolidate his position amongst the Muslims, with the ultimate object of carving out a separate nation.

Though initially he faced opposition from members of the Muslim League, he succeeded in convincing them of the rationality of his demand for a separate nation, for

Muslims. Whatever efforts he had taken for a united India earlier, he now systematically denied and sabotaged.

In the spring of 1933, Rahmat Ali, a graduate student, invited Jinnah, who was in London at that time, to a dinner at the Waldorf Hotel, where he proposed to Jinnah the creation of Pakistan, exclusively for Muslims, by carving out parts of India. Jinnah rebuffed him by stating that his proposal was "an impossible dream". However, with the passage of time, what was impossible then, started taking demonic shape now and became almost an obsession with Jinnah. He was hell-bent on diving India, come what may.

The First Round Table Conference (RTC) was convened by King George V in St. James Palace on November 12, 1930. Nothing of any importance took place, though "the deliberations at the Conference lasted for ten weeks". Hindu and Muslim delegates stuck to their respective demands. Undeterred, the British Government convened a second RTC on September 7, 1931, promising a better outcome.

The proposals put forward by the Congress and the British representatives from time to time were torpedoed by the Muslim League, with

Jinnah in the lead. To hasten the transfer of power, the British Government sent a Cabinet Mission comprising Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A. V. Alexander to India. The primary purpose of this mission was to somehow maintain the unity of India. With this objective, the Mission met Gandhi and Nehru as well as Jinnah separately. However, Jinnah did not deviate from his set goal – a separate homeland for Muslims.

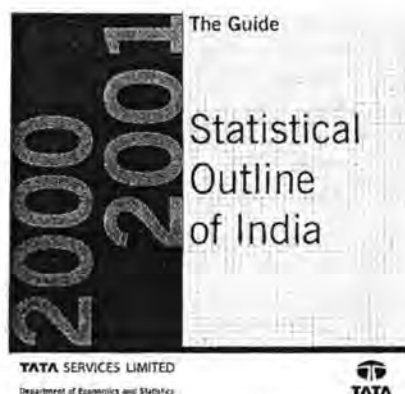
The situation in the sub-continent alarmed Clement Attlee so much that he quickly decided to replace Lord Wavell by Lord Louis

Mountbatten, who arrived in Delhi in March 1947. Separate talks were held with Nehru and Jinnah, but Mountbatten could not succeed as he had expected to do, and was left with no choice but to divide the country. Initially, his proposal faced stiff opposition, but he succeeded in overcoming such opposition. He also preponed the transfer of power to August 15, 1947, stating that on that date, he had won the decisive battle against the Japanese.

Dr. Rafiq Zakaria describes the effect of Partition thus: "The result was that more than a million Hindus and

Muslims died in the most gruesome manner and hundreds of thousands of women were raped and equal number of children either massacred or orphaned; ... What a price India had to pay for its freedom!"

Dr. Rafiq Zakaria is to be complimented for his lucid and simple style. The publishers, Popular Prakashan, should be complimented for getting the book printed on excellent paper with readable types. This book should be read by one and all to gain an insight into the character and nature of the man who dissected India. ♦



STATISTICAL OUTLINE OF INDIA 2001-2002

Compiled and Published by

The Department of Economics and Statistics, Tata Services Limited

Month and Year of Publication: December 2001.

No. of Pages: 292. Price: Rs.195.

Reviewed by

S. V. Raju

The 28th edition of the Statistical Outline of India (SO) is now available. The SO is an annual publication of the Department of Economics and Statistics, Tata Services Limited. Over the years, the SO has come to be recognised not only as an authentic source of reliable data but also evolved into a 'user-friendly' handbook containing data far more than the size the little book suggests. The SO offers meaningful insights into the changing economic profile of India. Normally those who are not economists or statisticians are not very comfortable reading statistical data and even if they do, they are often not able to understand their significance. But the SO data have been so designed that it is rather easy to locate the kind of data required and, even more, be able to draw appropriate conclusions.

A new section on the Information, Communication and Entertainment (ICE) is an innovation in the latest edition.

The feature "Profile of the Indian Economy since Independence" mirrors the state of the Indian Economy.

According to this profile, between 1950-1951 and 1999-2000:

- Our population grew by 2.2%, while real per capita income at 1993-94 prices went up by 2.1% per annum.
- Foodgrains production increased from 50.8 mn. Tonnes to 208.9 mn. Tonnes (or at a compound annual rate of growth of 2.9%).
- Industrial Production increased by 4.5%
- The public debt of the Government of India increased by 12.7% from Rs.2865 crores to Rs.1,021,029 crores!

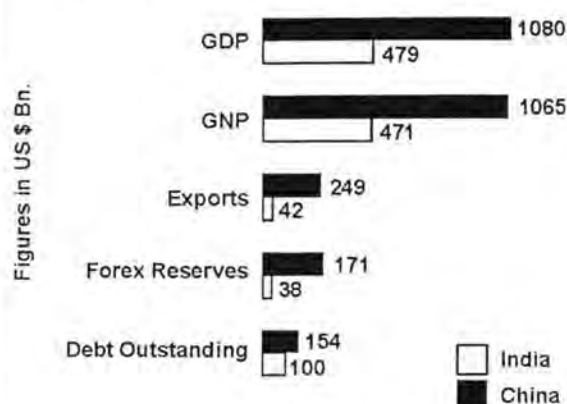
The reforms process is stumbling along with many a hiccup and plenty of correct but nervous

initiatives that ended nowhere. Other than Mr. Arun Shourie, and maybe, upto a point, Mr. Pramod Mahajan, one wonders how many others in the NDA government really believe in disinvestment in particular and the reforms process in general. Here are some parameters in the SO that indicate fluctuations in the performance parameters.

GNP growth in real terms recovered significantly from 1.1% in 1991-92 to 7.5% p.a. in 1995-96; slowed down to 4.8% in 1997-98, went up to 6.5% in 1998-99; maintained this level in 1999-00; fell to 5.2% in 2000-01 and is expected to recover only marginally to settle at 5.3% in 2001-02.

Industrial growth gained momentum from 0.6% in 1991-92 to 13% in 1995-96; dropped to 6.1% in 1996-97; registered an increase to 6.7% in 1997-98; dropped to 1.1% in 1998-99; up again to 6.7% in 1999-00; fell to 5% in 2000-01 and is expected to sink as low as 2.5% in 2001-02.

India & China : A Comparison



In addition to data on parameters like national income, census data, government finances and monetary issues, one can find sector specific information pertaining to the capital market, industrial sector, the ICE segment referred to earlier, corporate performance, agriculture and the rural sector.

Another interesting section is the one entitled "International Comparisons". Not very flattering to our country but revealing nevertheless, is a comparison of our economic growth

Tobacco, Sugar. Despite this, agriculture and rural India until very recently got step motherly treatment whereas industry got all the attention despite the fact that we are number twelve (12) in terms of GDP and number 30 in exports of goods and services.

And, bless them, I mean the team which produced this handy SO, for a "Glossary meant essentially for non-economists".

vis a vis Communist China. See graph below comparing India and China for instance.

Where does India stand in global rankings. Table 282 provides you with some selected indicators. For instance, did you know that we are number one in Tea, Milk, Butter and Ghee; second in Rice (paddy), Wheat,

This is a volume that should be in the briefcase and table of every Indian who is a businessman, industrialist, trader, journalist, politician, bureaucrat or social worker.

The current edition of the SO is available on CD-ROM, with hi-tech features, including the convenience of exporting data to EXCEL spreadsheets and search facility.

The price for a copy of the book (without postage & packing) is Rs.195, while the CD-ROM costs Rs.275. Discounts are available for bulk orders. Besides major book shops, the SO can also be obtained from:

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