

Freedom First

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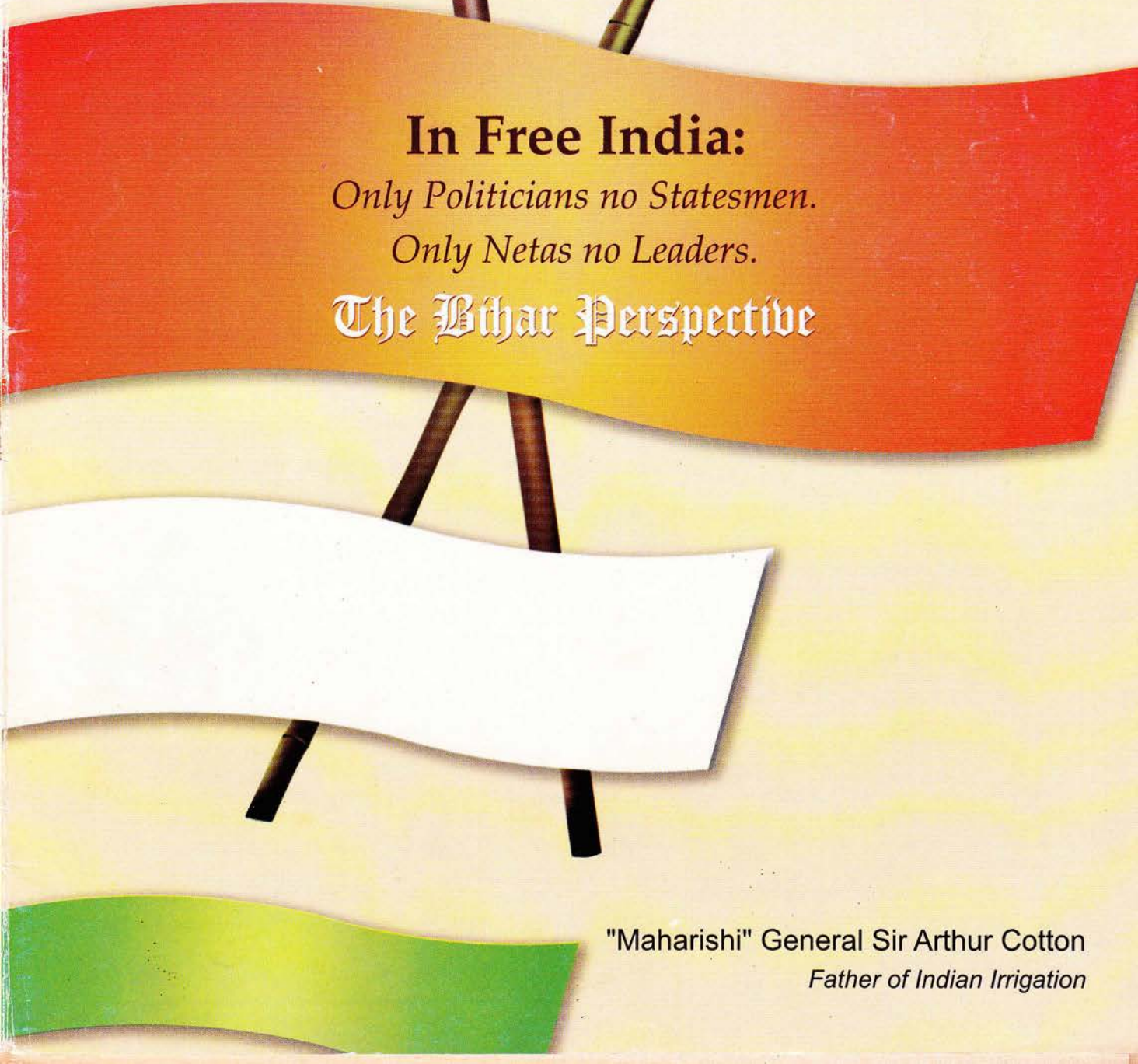
Back to the feudal age.

In Free India:

Only Politicians no Statesmen.

Only Netas no Leaders.

The Bihar Perspective



"Maharishi" General Sir Arthur Cotton
Father of Indian Irrigation

Professor P. R. Brahmananda (27.09.1926 to 23.01.2003)

Professor P. R. Brahmananda who passed away on January 23, 2003 was a brilliant thinker. He had vast scholarship, a great zest for knowledge, tenacity of purpose, courage and intellectual accomplishment to swim against currently fashionable ideas and, what is more, a powerful intuition. He put forth ideas which he felt to be true and good for the country. Vastly well read in classical and neo-classicals economics, his scholarship extended to literature also. He could come up with an apt quotation from Shakespeare, Mahabharat or a Kannada classic.



To-day, the word wage goods is on everybody's lips. He was the first to use it and weave it into a model as early as 1956-57. When the political establishment, general public and economists as a profession were enamoured of the Mahalanobis plan strategy of priority for heavy industries, Professor Brahmananda opposed it tooth and nail and also provided an alternative strategy. I can think of Professor B. R. Shenoy as the only other economist to oppose the then prevailing policy and suggest an alternative. In retrospect, both stand vindicated, though in their own time, they were either ignored, ridiculed or fiercely attacked.

He was so well versed with the writings of Indian economists, all the way from Dadabhai Naoroji that we could have obtained from him an interesting history of Indian Economic Thought.

Though a person of great simplicity and informality, he was a complete person. He bore the ridicule and fierce attacks on him, without rancour, without bitterness and he remained undeterred by them. He was a teacher with a life long devotion to economics, uninterrupted pursuit of knowledge, love and affection for his students, endowed with warmth and a delightful sense of humour, a sharp memory, and profound patriotism.

Extracted from a tribute by PROFESSOR V. N. KOTHARI in Vishleshan

S. Ramakrishnan (27.07.1922-14.02.2003)



Freedom fighter, Gandhian, editor, educationist and an able administrator, Sundaram Ramakrishnan hailed from a poor Brahmin family from Trichur, Kerala; a matriculate who came to Bombay in search of a job, unable to continue his education. Having worked for Larsen & Toubro for a while, he joined the Quit India Movement. He was imprisoned and got an opportunity to serve Mahatma Gandhi in prison. Later, he worked as the personal secretary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Impressed by his dedication, spirit of loyalty, integrity and capability, Sardar Patel recommended him to Mr. K. M. Munshi. Recognising the potential within young Ramakrishnan, Munshi entrusted him with his dream of building up an institution pioneering education and Indian culture, without any hesitation.

With single-minded devotion, he built up the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, an institution of international repute far beyond the expectations of Munshi. Rooted in the spiritual and cultural values of our motherland, the Bhavan has 115 *kendras* in India and 7 centres abroad.

Ramakrishnan was a keen judge of character. He believed in reforming individuals than chastising them. His favourite dictum was "Every saint has a past and every criminal has a future".

He would reach out to men and women of art, literature, education, spiritual gurus as well as the poor and the needy who enjoyed support from the institution. Living a simple life, till recently he drew a paltry sum of Rs.2,000/- per month as his salary as Director of the Bhavan.

Right now when our motherland is torn by intolerance and religious fundamentalism without spirituality, his absence will leave a vacuum, but his legacy will outlive him.

DR. MARY THOMAS, Professor of Political Science (Retd.).

K. F. Rustamji (22.05.1916 - 02.03.2003)

In the passing away of Mr. K. F. Rustamji, IPS, the country has lost one of the finest police officers, an outstanding bureaucrat and above all a fine, clean gentleman. He was a great visionary, and was an achiever and winner in life.

When I joined the Intelligence Bureau of the Government of India in 1957, he was my immediate superior. It was a unique privilege and pleasure to work with him. He was then the security adviser to the Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru and the President of India, and looked after all the security areas, work relating to foreigners and was also the editor of the prestigious *Indian Police Journal*, published by the Intelligence Bureau.

Mr. Rustamji was the architect of the Border Security Force, an elite para military force of the Government of India. In spite of red-tape and financial constraints, he built up a fine force and its efficient training institutions in record time.

The National Police Commissions' four monumental reports show to what extent his learned contribution to the work of the Commission was regarded by the Governments at the Centre and the States. No wonder the President honoured him twice by awarding him the Padma Bhushan and later the Padma Vibhushan, the country's second highest decoration.

He was not only secular by conviction, but also could win people, particularly the press and politicians as well as their lackeys.

For me in particular and all police officers in general, in his death, we have lost a great friend and philosopher.

MR. K. P. MEDHEKAR, former Director General of Police, Maharashtra.



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BETWEEN OURSELVES ...

In this, the second part of our 'serial' on why in Free India we have only politicians and no statesmen; only *netas* and no leaders, we view this conundrum from the Bihar perspective. Bihar is a classic example of a relatively well managed state in the early years after Independence, rapidly descending into chaos and anarchy despite the presence of all the formal institutions of government that one associates with a democracy. Why, because it has too many *Netas*, too many politicians, no leaders and no statesmen.

The United Nations has declared 2003 as the International Year of Freshwater. 2003 is also the bicentenary of an Army Officer in the British East India Company who earned the title of '*Maharishi* Cotton' and is considered the father of Indian irrigation. This issue also carries an assessment of three outstanding officers of the Indian Army – two Field Marshals and a General – outstanding leaders, all of them. Their stories also mesh with the theme of leadership.

We invite your views and comments on other aspects of this puzzle that you would like to share with our readers.

You can send your contribution by email (preferred) to freedom@vsnl.com or on a floppy disk (word 95) or by fax 022 2284416. And if neither is possible just mail your contribution by ordinary post so as to reach us not later than June 30.

Editor

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WITH MANY VOICES

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

The truth is that the Supreme Court has no jurisdiction over the birthplace of Lord Ram. The court cannot decide where he was born; it is purely a matter of faith.

Acharya Giriraj Kishore, Vice President, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, *The Sunday Express*, February 16

For heaven's sake don't invite ministers, officials, politicians and industrialists who have earned a well deserved reputation for corruption to inaugurate schools, hospitals and charitable institutions.

India's Attorney General Soli Sorabjee, *The Statesman*, February 24

Only Gujarat can produce a Gandhi, but when required, it can also produce a Patel.

Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, *The Week*, February 23

Having built our cricketers into superstars, no wonder over-emotional Indian fans reduce their heroes to villains at the drop of a wicket and start stoning their houses and families.

Media columnist Amita Malik, *The Free Press Journal*, February 23

If the Thackeray family can cut a cake, why should they oppose Valentine's Day? They can use foreign products, listen to English music, fly in Michael Jackson ...but they have an objection to Valentine's Day, there is no logic to the protest.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister, Chhagan Bhujbal, *The Times of India*, February 13

Our Generation has grown on Baywatch.

Bhushan Kumar, Head of Super Cassettes, *Bombay Times*, April 28

It is unfair to compare India with China because there is some kind of democracy tax inbuilt in the decision-making process here.

Union Commerce Minister Arun Jaitley, *The Times of India*, April 24

Question: "You still need the Nehru dynasty to sell the product for you. Why this clamour for Priyanka Gandhi in UP?"

Answer: "Why is it that the Kapoors, the Khans and the Roshans succeed in Bollywood? They are not being forced on the viewers by anyone. They know their trade better because they learnt it from those who know better.

Salman Khurshid of the Sonia Gandhi Congress answering a question put to him by Rajesh Ramachandran of *The Times of India*, April 28

Ours is a secular state. We cannot fashion our politics or shape our conduct in the way Pakistan does it. We must see that our secular ideals are actually realised in practice. Here every Muslim should feel that he is an Indian citizen and has equal rights as an Indian. If we cannot make him feel like this, we shall not be worthy of our heritage and of our country.

India's first Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister, the late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, as told to Sauvik Biswas in 1950, cited in *Outlook*, February 17

What we are witnessing today is a diminution of the American dream, an abandonment of the great liberal values of democracy established by leaders of calibre ...

C.R.Irani, Editor in Chief *The Statesman*, March 16

Holi. Festival of Colours, my foot. That's tourist brochure pap. Frankly it is a festival of men. Men are the official funsters. Women are the official onlookers.

Meenakshi Shedde, *The Times of India*, March 19

Why should Mumbai bear the brunt of poor governance in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar?

Shiv Sena leader Raj Thackeray, *The Bombay Times*, April 24

We invite you to visit www.liberalindia.com

The website of the INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

A Visit to Patna

I was in Patna last week and had first hand experience of what it is like to be in a city that is in the hands of the mafia of various kinds. To be a prosperous businessman or professional is to invite the attention of kidnappers who roam freely. In fact a friend told me that he is constantly on the alert and keeps looking back in case someone is zeroing in on him! Confirmed criminals having their own political affiliation can be seen freely moving outside their jails with many of them landing juicy contracts handed over to them by obliging ministers all the way in Delhi. I was assured that the NDA government though fully aware of the desperate situation will not act to save the situation as any such move will endanger their coalition. Survival is the name of the game. I was also assured that proxy Chief Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav may have held a huge lathi rally with the help of the self-same criminal elements, but he is no longer in control..

So who'll save Bihar?

*

And what About Gujarat

Gujarat is another once well-administered State that could well go the Bihar way for entirely different reasons. It is therefore not surprising to read a report in *The Times of India* of 19th March that in Ahmedabad guns are becoming status symbols. There are over 5000 licensed guns in Ahmedabad. Apart from guns manufactured by the Indian Ordnance Factory there are Walther PPKs (made fashionable by James Bond no less), Webly and Scott, Smith Wesson and a variety of Colts.

In the context of the shameless violence and looting during the riots late last year indulged in by the middle class and the well heeled, one wonders what these gun-toting guys have in mind.

*

People with Conviction and Courage

According to a report by Sucheta Dalal in the *Indian Express* of April 13, Cyrus Guzder, Chairman of AFL Private Ltd, who was to take over as the Western Region Chief of the Confederation of Indian Industry turned down the offer. According to Ms. Dalal, this is the "fallout over CII's contretemps with Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi. While the CII apparently sees no disconnect in its pusillanimous stand and its constant preaching about good governance, Cyrus Guzder decided that he couldn't bury his personal views even if the CII was doing so", the report said.

"the time has come," the walrus said,
"to talk of many things:
of shoes-and ships-
and sealing wax-
of cabbages -
and kings-"



According to another report in *The Times of India* a large number of ambassadors who were invited by FIICI to an interactive closed door meeting with Mr. Narendra Modi (the press was kept out) stayed away while some sent trade representatives from their missions...

These reports underline the fact that it cannot be 'business as usual'. This is particularly gratifying on two counts: First it is an endorsement of the fundamental Liberal belief that economics and trade cannot be isolated from human rights and a free society. Second, that so long as we have people like Mr. Cyrus Guzder, Ms. Anu Aga, Mr. Deepak Parekh, Mr. Rahul Bajaj and Mr. Jairus Banaji (who started it all by asking uncomfortable questions of Mr. Narendra Modi at the CII meeting in Mumbai in January this year and for which he was humiliatingly shown the door for knocking at the doors of our collective conscience) who had the courage to stand up for their conviction, there is hope that civil society can thwart its enemies.

The days of the permit licence quota *raj* so sedulously built by the then ruling Congress Party may be over. But reports have it that despite the economic reforms, the ruling establishment has fashioned new weapons of intimidation. It would be interesting if someone were to identify what these new weapons are to keep recalcitrant businessmen on leash. *Freedom First* would be happy to carry an article on this subject.

*

A Commendable Initiative

The Indian Liberal Group, has in a press release welcomed Prime Minister Vajpayee's initiative in seeking to restore a dialogue with Pakistan. It is also statesmanlike in that he has set no preconditions for the talks to begin, and that he is agreeable to the easing of tensions one step at a time.

However the bone of contention is Kashmir and any deals with Pakistan cannot be at the cost of the people of Kashmir. The Liberal position is very clear. Basing their belief on the right of people everywhere to self-determination, the ILG upholds the right of the Kashmiris to decide their future on the one hand and for the Government of India to keep the promise by the then Government of India to hold a plebiscite to ascertain the will of the Kashmiri people on the other. The plebiscite should be held on both sides of the line of control. If the Pakistanis refuse then we should go ahead and hold it in the rest of Kashmir under our control.

Freedom First agrees with the ILG that this is a matter between the Government of India and the people of Kashmir, and Pakistan has no *locus standi* in this dispute. The choice before the people of Kashmir ought to be either to ratify the instrument of accession signed by the then Maharaja of Kashmir or opt for a sovereign independent state of Kashmir. In the latter event their external security must be guaranteed by the Government of India. If Pakistan follows suit so much the better. A position, we believe, is legally and morally correct.

With Kashmir out of the way, we can then work out a 'road map' for the formation of a Confederation of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

*

V. B. Karnik Birth Centenary



May 20, 2002 to May 20, 2003 was observed as the Birth Centenary Year of the late Mr. V. B. Karnik. He was an eminent trade unionist who opposed the politicization of the trade union movement and ensured that the unions he was associated with did not affiliate with any of the

central trade union organisations that are offshoots of political parties. For us at *Freedom First*, this was a special occasion. He was, for many years its editor and along with Mr. J. B. H. Wadia, Honorary Secretary of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (the ICCF) the publishers of *Freedom First*.

Several programmes were organised by The V. B. Karnik Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee (VBKBCCC) to mark the occasion. Programmes were also organised by the Western Railway Employees Union at a number of towns and cities along the Western Railway. The concluding programme was organised by the ICCF and the Leslie Sawhny Programme on 17 May at the Indian Merchant's Chamber on the subject: Trade Unions and Globalization.

A commemorative meeting was held on January 7, 2002 at the Chavan Centre, in Mumbai. Shri Sharad Pawar was the Chief Guest and Shri G. P. Pradhan, the well-known author and educationist delivered the keynote address. Others who addressed the packed auditorium were Mr. D. B. Karnik, well known writer, former Editor of *Maharashtra Times*, Dr. Indumati Parikh, President of the Centre for the Study of Social Change; Shri Umraomal Purohit, President of the International Transportworkers Federation and President of the Western Railway Employees Union and eminent; trade union leaders Shri S. R. Kulkarni and Shri Manohar Kotwal.

All the speakers recalled personal reminiscences of their encounters with Mr. Karnik and drew pointed attention to the many books he had written and in particular his biography of the late Mr. M. N. Roy.

Among the several books he wrote two stand out: *Indian Trade Unions - A Survey* and the *Political Biography of M. N. Roy*. They were outstanding contributions to understanding the labour movement in the country, and an appreciation of M. N. Roy the man and his mission.

To mark the birth centenary the VBKCC published a selection of Karnik's writings entitled "V. B. Karnik Views and Vision". A bilingual volume (English and Marathi) the English section is edited by Dr. R. Srinivasan former Professor of Political Science and the Marathi section by Mr. Pradip Karnik, Librarian of Ruparel College in Mumbai. The English section contains a large number of articles written for *Independent India* now known as the *Radical Humanist* and for *Freedom First*. The book was released on April 5 by Mr. Madhav Gadkari the well known writer and former editor of the Marathi daily *Loksatta*, at a well attended function at the Ruparel College.

Priced at Rs.200, copies can be had from the office of *Freedom First* Foundation, 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001.

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(From the Internet)

In Free India

Only Politicians, No Statesmen

Only *Netas*, No Leaders

Laloo's *Lathi* Raj

Shanker Prasad Tekriwal

Shanker Prasad Tekriwal, Bihar's former finance minister, on why Bihar needs a third alternative - an alternative to the lathi and trishul politics. Mr. Tekriwal resigned from the Rabri Devi government when several of his own relatives were kidnapped and also due to large scale corruption in all government departments. Since then he has been an independent MLA voicing the concerns of the trading community and warning people against Laloo's brand of politics.

Shri Laloo Yadav's *lathi* rally is just a sign of his own frustration and desperation. And its not surprising why. In the early nineties he began with his first major rally called the *Garib* (poor) rally, largely attended by half-clad dalits, the downtrodden and poor people. And from Patna's Gandhi Maidan he gave his clarion call for their social and economic upliftment. He gave this other slogan, "*Padho ya maro*" (Study or Perish) ... But sadly during his 13-year rule not a single new primary school has been opened. Instead, with much fanfare, he opened 80 *charwaha vidyalayas* meant mainly for children of cowherds. But today all of the *charwaha vidyalayas* are also shut. And in the existing primary schools 40,000 teachers posts lie vacant. The result is that even schools within reach of the poor are without teachers. The entire education department is reeling with corruption - from appointments of teachers to examinations. He announced that teachers from government approved *madrassas* will get pay equal to that of other government school teachers. Even that remains a mere promise. He announced the appointment of 15,000 Urdu teachers in the state but that promise too remains unfulfilled.

Schooling in Bihar is anything but education.

In a state where Mahatma Gandhi began his satyagraha, the practice of service latrines continue and night soil is still carried on the head.

Roti, Kapda aur Makaan

The red card scheme for the poorest of the poor remains unimplemented. Deserving families have to grease the palms of government employees to get the cards. The old age pension scheme approved by the Prime Minister is not being implemented. Though there is so much poverty around, the Bihar government failed to select the required number of deserving people with the result that this scheme for a lakh of old persons also failed to reach such people. In recent years about 12 lakh tonnes of free foodgrains or subsidized foodgrains were allotted to the state by the Centre but only 3 lakh tonnes foodgrain could be lifted. During the last floods one lakh tonnes foodgrain was given to Bihar for distribution among the flood victims but only 8,000 tonnes could be lifted. And with so much poverty, clothing is beyond the reach of many ... Talking

of housing for the poor, in just one scheme the *Indira Awas Yojna*, the poor have to pay as much as 3,000 to 4000 rupees as corruption money for the money to be sanctioned and colossal funds from the centre that could build one lakh houses have lapsed. Inspite of available funds to the tune of 135 crores of rupees in 1998 for rural electrification, 70 crores are still lying unspent! Besides, another 50 crores from the centre still remains unspent.

And road conditions in Bihar continue to be among the worst in the country. Good roads are conspicuous by their absence. Of the Rs.150 crores for the Prime Ministers Rural Road Scheme, only Rs.50 crores could be utilised in 2000-2001. And for 2001-2002, 302 crore rupees has been sanctioned long back but even tenders haven't been finalised yet. And finally, for the years 2002-2003 more than 400 crores were earmarked for the state but due to the sheer lack of work culture no funds could be sanctioned for 2003-2004.

Similarly, for the development of agriculture, the centre sanctioned 4,700 crores under the Micro-mode scheme under which the states contribution will only be 10 per cent.

In Free India - Only Politicians, No Statesmen. Only *Netas*, No Leaders

Here too the state failed miserably to utilise the scheme.

Bihar seems to top the country in the number of scams being probed by the CBI, right from the fodder scam, bitumen scam, *poshahaar* yojna scam, maidha scam, muster roll scam and so on. Since the exposure of the fodder scam, Bihar's animal husbandry department has become non-functional. And the number of scams being probed by the states own vigilance department are just too many. The state government is virtually being run by the High Court! Provision for drinking water, clearance of drains, removal of encroachments, holding of panchayat elections, giving the panchayats their constitutional powers, payment of salaries to employees and even their promotions are all being done on the orders of the Patna High Court.

Shri Laloo Yadav had said before the 2000 assembly elections

that Jharkhand will be created only over his dead body!! But after the elections and when he needed the support of the Congress Party to form a government, he readily accepted bifurcation of the State just to keep himself in power. He knows in his hearts of hearts that once out of power his only place is behind bars due to his personal involvement in corruption.

Since he has done nothing for either the development of the state or for the upliftment of the poor and downtrodden or farmers and labourers and the minorities – he cannot to defend himself against these charges. So now his *modus operandi* is to hurl accusations against the Centre and the BJP. He believes 'offence is the best form of defence'.

He is least interested in the welfare of the state. On the contrary his concentration is on the welfare of himself and his wife chief minister Rabri Devi's family. I have often said

that the state has two chief ministers and two treasurers. Laloo Yadav is the *defacto* chief minister. The lust for money in the family has crossed all limits so much so that even kidnappings for ransom are managed. It is well known in Bihar that both crime and corruption are state sponsored.

And hence this *lathi* rally. The *lathi* rally is only to pat the criminals and illiterate people. For the rally both public and private transport were hijacked and that too during Bihar's marriage season ... many brides and grooms had to postpone their weddings. Some 50 crore rupees *rangdaree* was collected from businesses and government officials. The message is very clear that he intends to capture power in the next elections with the help of criminals and the bureaucracy.

MR. SHANKER PRASAD TEKRIWAL, a former Finance Minister in the Bihar government.

Living Dangerously in Bihar

Manuwant Choudhary

For the people of Bihar, Laloo Yadav isn't funny, not any more.

"Bihar will be divided over my dead body"...famous lines from Laloo Yadav...India's funniest politician. Many voted for him only for this posture. He won the elections and formed a coalition government with the Congress Party. And they together agreed to the BJP's viewpoint to divide Bihar.

For the people of Bihar Laloo Yadav isn't funny, not any more.

On India's Independence day, a youth, Chandan Bhattacharya,

self-immolated himself at the gates of the Patna High Court as his father who worked for a state-owned corporation wasn't paid his salary for ten years. It hit national headlines. A media campaign, followed by a PIL filed by Kapila Hingorani resulted in a Supreme Court order asking the Bihar government to pay Rs.50 crores as arrears to the starving employees. More than a thousand have died in penury and for want of medicine. I think if Bihar wasn't divided there was still some hope...nobody

committed suicide in Bihar the way Chandan did. Bihar, an already poor state, lost all of its industrial base, revenue, forest cover and even educational institutions to the new state of Jharkhand. Bihar was left with nothing but floods. And no politician quit his party over the division of Bihar.

Even two days before Bihar's bifurcation, RJD ministers only spoke in their master's voice. So I asked a senior RJD minister whether his party was more important or the

state. He naturally replied, 'Bihar'. So I asked him shouldn't he quit a government bent upon destroying Bihar. And he replied, "I will ask the Prime Minister of India that he dismiss my government but please, please don't divide Bihar." The interview over, he said, "You know even you the media are responsible for all this. You will not be able to have this telecast. He went on to say, "You know people ask me so when is Laloo Yadav dying". I tell them, "He is already dead." Death is not literal. For a leader death is when he doesn't have his way.

The minister's interview was not telecast.

Bihar's bifurcation, some said, is a *fait accompli*, but I saw in it India's disintegration. The way it was done went against the grain of democracy. You now only need a handful of MLAs from one region and a shaky coalition at the Centre needing your support to be able to have your own state!

And what followed the bifurcation was only expected. IAS officers, policemen opting for Jharkhand, businesses moving to Ranchi. They all had their reasons.

But it did strike me when I heard CARE (Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere)-India, was also shifting to Jharkhand. I went to their office and found they were packing up, all set to go but I did manage to get a statement from their Country Director in New Delhi. His fax statement said since CARE is an international aid agency it works under the directions of the Union Human Resources Ministry and this year Bihar had not been listed as among the states where CARE was to work.

In the past 50 years Bihar's condition has if anything worsened. And current Planning Commission figures put Bihar at the bottom. And yet CARE was being moved out of Bihar. I filed a public interest petition in the Patna High Court and my lawyer Dharmesh Kumar without charging a fee argued for over a year to get CARE back to Bihar.

There were two reasons why I filed the case. One was because I was shocked how the Supreme Court had moved all the public interest petitions over the division of State from the High Court to the Supreme Court and secondly CARE's being moved out of Bihar was perfect proof of discrimination against Bihar. And this time Laloo Yadav was a part of the discrimination!

Don't give up on Bihar. Not just as yet. The fight to revive Bihar is already on. Whenever I think of Bihar I think of Dr. R. Suman, an activist in Patna who's on a *maun vrat* (he does not speak at all) for four years now against Bihar's bifurcation. His PILs are still pending before the Supreme Court. He's hired the country's topmost lawyers and when I asked him how he can afford them, he tells me in writing Bihar is more important than a few lakhs of rupees. He will sell his home.

The caste riots, tribal *versus* non-tribal riots in Jharkhand only confirm that the creation of a new state was a mistake. The increase in naxal violence where in two years 200 policemen have been killed by naxals in Jharkhand, confirm Jharkhand is a big, very big mistake. And, as if to equal that, unemployment has led to criminalisation, and kidnappings have become an industry in Bihar where even politicians are involved. Kidnappers

take shelter in the official residences of politicians. And sometimes there is no difference between kidnappers and politicians.

Corruption is common to both Bihar and Jharkhand. Forget the 600 crore fodder scam...now every development activity in Bihar and Jharkhand involve misappropriation of funds. Did you know that Bihar and Jharkhand should have nine Engineers in Chief, it has none; instead of 47 Chief Engineers, there are just 7 and only 20 per cent of Superintending Engineers remain. It must be remembered that for projects above 1 crore rupees the technical sanction of an Engineer-In-Chief is compulsory!

So is there any alternative to Laloo Yadav?

Samata Party's Nitish Kumar has been often projected as the alternative; but if that ever happens it will not be an alternative. Nitish Kumar as railway minister has encouraged criminalisation by granting large railway contracts to the men of several dreaded gangsters now in prison. Some of them have even won elections because the Samata Party didn't field any candidates against them.

It is ironical that Bihar needs an alternative like no other state. But all political parties continue to patronise criminals thus leaving no choice to the voters.

So politicians like Nitish Kumar and communal parties like the BJP in many ways are reasons why a Laloo Yadav continues his 13 year misrule in Bihar.

One senior minister asked me whether in the near future would

there be a place for traditional politicians at all! And as I explained to a foreign researcher how powerful politicians even ensure panchayat funds go to their men, another senior minister clarified, 'Powerful means criminally inclined'!

Laloo's only strength is his secularism. In other words, it is BJP's communal politics that keeps Laloo Yadav in power. Or look it this way,

it is secularism's weakness that its survival now depends on politicians like Laloo Yadav. One Muslim from Bihar said he just couldn't comprehend this secularism bit, "In secular Bihar do Muslim's not feel the bump on potholed roads?".

If you ask me 13 years of even good governance is a long time in a democracy. In Bihar, it has been 13 years of misrule.

Check out this RJD slogan on the day of the lathi rally, "*Laloo Yadav Nahin aandhee hai, aaj ka Gandhi hai!*"

As I drove home that night a sandstorm swept the capital. Patna and its people just couldn't see...

MANUWANT CHOUDHARY is a Reporter with NDTV in Patna. The views expressed are his own.

The Bihari: Prisoner of his Own Image

Manoje Nath

The Bihari - simple, loyal, friendly, yet he continues to have a label of mild reproach. The author investigates why everyone including the Bihari himself feels comfortable with the stereotypical image.

A Bihari is apt to suffer from low self-esteem. Unquestioningly and for so long has he submitted to and tried to live by the image of him created by the media and folk lore, that often enough his authentic self is masked or lies dormant. Just as the Punjabi is believed to be pushy and overbearing, a Tamil wily and unctuous, the popular image of the Bihari reinforced by the films is that of an affable, home-sick person full of innate talent and resourcefulness but somehow good only as domestic help or indentured labour. Generous, gullible and a bit of a fool. In short a rank interloper in a world determined to succeed at any cost. A Bhojpuri saying maintains that the wife of the weak is fair game for mild flirtation for everyone. So, a Bihari is a standard butt of joke and ridicule all over. And no offence meant, mind you!

And yet can this popular image be related to the facts of

biology? A Bihari can hold his own against most inhabitants from other states. In intelligence, drive, perseverance and other attributes he is more likely to carry the day than not. His poverty cannot for that matter be defined in terms of deficiency of resources of the state. Bihar is a rich, green, luxuriant yet a poor state where everything of value is abundant and bountiful.

It ensures farming operations in the Punjab while labour is in short supply at home; it provides the grist for formidable academic competitions in the institutions of Delhi while the state could have done well to retain the alumni to lend a semblance of life to the morbid and moribund academic institutions here. In fact Bihar is the classical poor. He underwrites the prosperity of the richer states by conniving at his own exploitation.

The state has sunk slowly

while the rest have climbed. Mutely and uncomprehendingly it has watched the others march ahead while it has fallen into a time warp. The fabric of space-time is bent not only temporally but also in terms of the attitudes and mental makeup of the people. A state which set up the first steel plant in the country is, in terms of industrial development, at the bottom of the heap. A state where the public library movement could be said to be highly developed way back in thirties and forties has an abysmally and unconscionably large population of illiterates. Its administration, which was a model of efficiency in the 50's, is groaning under various strains.

And yet it is business as usual for a Bihari. His complete *sang-froid*, his failure to react would be incredible if it were not true. A Bihari would be feign to accept the facts of his exploitation because no one is born a Bihari, he becomes a Bihari.

A Bihari exists only because of a subtle and insidious sense of discrimination. He is designated a loser, he is encouraged to live by the image of himself so that the stark contradiction of his fate does not become apparent to him. Because then he may actually bestir himself and do something about it.

It is true that Bihar has been fairly well represented in the Central Government for quite a long time; but while other states enjoyed the substance of the national resources cake Bihar was forced to make do with the shadow of it. While Bihar remained satisfied with tokens and symbols, the lucre went the other way. A Bihari is supposed to be meek and gentle, therefore he should not clamour and demand his share like those other difficult states.

Bihar was in the forefront of the independence movement; in the shape of the J.P. movement it started yet another innovative political

experiment. But it is the job of a Bihari to be a political activist and ideologue! What is unbecoming of him is to demand a greater share in the resources that have to be diverted elsewhere to stem the appeal of terrorism and secessionism. A Bihari can be taken for granted but not the others. There is lawlessness; there is tardy utilization of resources so how can investments be made? It is a different matter that funds have been sunk in direct proportion to the increase in anarchy and subversion in other places Bihar has such a glorious past of asceticism and other worldliness, therefore for a Bihari to crave for a better standard of life would be a denial of his past.

So he must contemplate his navel. Hark back to the time of the Buddha and Ashoka and Mahavira or Kuar Singh. In any case no further than the 50's. He can keep his past. His present will be taken good care of. He must not raise issues like proportionate investment of the

money mobilized by the national banks in the state or even equitable compensation for its mineral resources. Such issues threaten the integrity of the country; put an intolerable strain on the already bedevilled polity. Such thoughts spawn radicalism, raise doubts and uncomfortable questions.

And above all the assiduously cultivated and cherished image of the Bihari Babu stands to be discredited. A Bihari *qua* Bihari has no option but to submit because these are not his cue lines. The meek, up country character almost apologetic about his existence cannot storm the center stage and demand his rightful place under the sun. In the language of the pulpit it is not in the national interest. And no one could be more eager to pay heed to such sagacious advice than the Bihari himself!

MR. MANOJE NATH is a senior police officer and an occasional writer, based in Bihar.

Why No 'Leaders' in Free India?

N. Dharmeshwaran

During the freedom movement, the entire country was up as one man against a single concrete cause: The ouster of the British; With a bull's eye to aim and the leadership having apprised the common objective with no definite routes, there was more "followership" than even leadership!

For ages we have been under one invader or the other and the native kingdoms were dime a dozen.

Therefore, when the British finally quit, we were left with a populace who did not have any experience in governance, leave alone self-governance! The native rulers were also put on the shelves. Thus there was a vacuum.

In fact, it is said that when riots after Partition turned quite uncontrollable, Prime Minister Pandit Nehru innocently requested the outgoing Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten to stay on and help the government. The

Lord, it appears had a guffaw and retorted that the entire exercise so far was only to send him out!

After Independence, the stark realities of the various religions, castes, linguistic groups, vested interests came centre stage and thus no effective, composite leadership could develop.

Human nature being what it is, with sudden possession of power, pelf, loaves and fishes of office, self-interest asserted itself, edging out public welfare and leadership needed for it.

After all as Tamils, Malayalees, Kannadigas...to Kashmiris, we do not have a competent and confidence-inspiring Indian leader.

The saddest aspect is that often "leadership" is transformed into an heirloom or carried on as a Brand!

Freedom lies in being bold.

– Robert Frost



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Captains Courageous

E. D'Souza, PVSM.

This piece is written to prove that India has produced distinguished leaders, and is based on three case studies of three eminent soldiers, all Captains Courageous: The late Field Marshal Cariappa and General K. S. Thimayya and Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw, who, like the proverbial Johnny Walker, is still going strong at 90.

In the January-March 2003 issue of *Freedom First* (No.456), the editor in "Between Ourselves" has raised, very rightly, a pressing issue, "Why India has not produced a single outstanding leader or statesman". He is on target when he states that "our country abounds in *netas* and politicians. But can you find a single leader or statesman? It is a remarkable coincidence that our nonagenarian Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw of 1971 war fame and our first ever Field Marshal, Sam Bahadur as he is affectionately known, expressed precisely the same views at a talk given by him at the Xavier Institute of Management some years ago and that is that India has a surfeit of every possible thing but has failed to produce good leaders.

The *raison d'être* for this article is not only the views expressed above, albeit briefly but a presentation made by him to 55 handpicked students attending the year long Higher Command Course at the newly designated Army War College, Mhow (MP), an institution every Indian should be proud of. The topic of the presentation: "Leadership in the Indian Context".

There is no gainsaying the fact that in the past, India did produce leaders of the calibre of Mahatma Gandhi, the scholar statesmen Drs. Radhakrishnan and Zakir Hussain, and as many feel, Mother Teresa. Then there was also

Pandit Nehru of impeccable integrity, great love for the country, articulate, but who fell short of the type of leaders this country sorely needs, as exemplified in his handling of the 1962 situation. His daughter Indira Gandhi, our 'iron' lady would have qualified as a great national leader but for the imposition of the emergency and her later tendencies of encouraging dynastic rule. One cannot forget Jayaprakash Narayan and Rajaji.

Field Marshal Cariappa



Field Marshal Cariappa, who died at the ripe old age of 91, had a striking personality and integrity and love for his country that cannot be matched. His soldierly qualities enabled him to jump from Brigadier at the end of World War II to India's first Commander-in-Chief, with an ease that was remarkable during the birth pangs of a horrendous partition, not only of the country but of the Armed Forces. He was neither a

product of the Royal Military College, Sandhurst, nor the newly instituted Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun. He was certainly no great scholar but his *forte* was his unquestioned integrity, impartiality and selflessness and his insistence on the highest standards of these qualities in the officer cadre at this critical juncture.

He insisted that every officer carries in his breast pocket the red booklet "A Code of Conduct For Officers" and he would not hesitate to check accordingly. He insisted on small details knowing full well that attention to minor matters would lead to a good future for the Indian Army. His own eye for detail can best be illustrated by an incident in 1948 during his first ever visit to the Maratha Light Infantry Regimental Centre, Belgaum, then in the old Bombay Presidency, after becoming the Army Chief. The Guard of Honour, commanded by this writer, was selected with utmost care – sizing, presence, dress. Included in the 100 strong contingent were then Naik Namdeo Jadhav, VC, a rare commodity and the only living one in the Regiment. The drill and turnout were immaculate, that is until General 'Kippa' met Namdeo. After complimenting him on his Victoria Cross, he checked his turnout. To this young Captain, there was nothing wrong until the General's gaze fell on the individual's footwear. He turned round to

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me and in his stern voice and piercing light eyes, asked why just this one individual among the 100, was wearing MT pattern boots without a toe cap!

His insistence on the highest standards of integrity is best illustrated by a seemingly small incident in this era of Bofors and Tehelka. An officer submitted a rail travel claim for Rs 10/- more than his entitlement. This came to the notice of the Controller of Defence Accounts who, in accordance with the instructions of the Army Chief, reported the matter. The unfortunate officer was hauled up on the coals and awarded a severe reprimand to be recorded on his dossier.

He was always appropriately clad and shod and no officer would dare call on him casually dressed. Even well after his retirement he never failed to attend the last rites of any senior officer, even if it meant travelling from Coorg/Bangalore to Delhi. The Government appointed him as our High Commissioner in Australia, where he did not hesitate to call a spade a spade, a trait much admired by the "Diggers". It is unfortunate that his sterling services to the Nation were recognized so very late in life when he was made a Field Marshal in his 89th year. His sterling efforts in keeping the Army together at the very crucial post partition juncture continue to be remembered to this day. He may not have been an accomplished speaker but his imposing presence and transparent sincerity ensured the attention of his audience.

General K. S. Thimayya

If any soldier could have taken this country forward after the 1962 debacle, through sheer charisma, positive and martial



leadership, professional skills, statesmanship and scholarship, it would have been 'Timmy', none other than "Thimayya of India" the title of the biography by Geoffrey Evans written many moons ago. General Kodendera Thimayya, like his eminent compatriot Field Marshal Cariappa was also a son of Coorg though a few years his junior. He was from the landed gentry, the legendary coffee planters blessed with martial gifts. Unlike 'Kippa', Timmy was a product of the Royal (now Rashtriya) Military Academy Dehra Dun, a stepping stone for a Commission in the Army. He graduated from Sandhurst and after doing the prescribed year being broken into the art of soldiering he was posted to the then 19 Hyderabad (now Kumaon) Regiment with its Centre in the Kumaon Hills at Ranikhet. He cut his soldiering skills on that famous training ground in the Northwest Frontier, battling recalcitrant Pathan tribals. His merits were soon recognized and just before World War II he was posted as Adjutant, University Training Corps, Madras as a fitting example for young Indian undergraduates interested in joining the Indian Army of what a good soldier should be. His

World War II record as a company commander, battalion commander and officiating brigade commander came to the fore in operations against the tenacious Japanese in Burma. His soldierly skills can best be summed up in the citation reproduced below for the very prestigious Distinguished Service Order (*see box*).

His innate talents of

"IMMEDIATE AWARD"

"51 Indian Infantry Brigade, 25 Indian Division, 15 Indian Corps, 12 Feb 45. Subst. Major/Ty Lt Col. (Regular) KODENDERA SUBAYYA THIMAYYA, COORG-HINDU, "Sunny Side", Mercara, Coorg. ARAKAN

"Lt.Col THIMAYYA commands the 8th Bn 19th Hyderabad Regt. This Bn was involved in much fighting SOUTH of MAUNGDAW in the spring of 1944 and has been engaged in a series of actions since the end of the 1944 monsoon. In Nov 1944 Lt.Col THIMAYYA planned, and executed with skill and determination, the Bn operation which resulted in the capture of POLAND, a strongly bunkered Japanese position, and in thus securing the concentration area known as the HTINDAW BOWL. During Dec 1944 and Jan 1945 he officiated as Bde Comd and conducted Bde operations which opened the road to BUTHIDAUNG and cleared the spine of the MAYU RANGE from the TUNNELS to FOUL POINT.

"On 28 Jan 1945 his Bn launched the attack which culminated in the capture of KANGAW and the cutting of the Japanese escape route. In spite of considerable casualties, repeated enemy counter-attacks and constant heavy enemy fire of all natures, Lt.Col Thimayya handled every situation with cool judgement and cheerful confidence.

"Throughout he has displayed leadership and devotion to duty of a very high order and his indomitable spirit has inspired every officer and man under his command. Recommended D.S.O. Immediate. R.A.HUTTON, Comd, 51 Ind Inf Bde. FIELD 14 Feb 1945".

professional soldiering, and leadership were soon recognized by Field Marshal Auchinleck, the C-in-C. He was specially selected to lead the Indian Brigade as part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force for the Japanese Occupation after World War II attended. He had under his command 5/1st Punjab (Maurice D'Apice), 1/5 Mahrattas (Derek Leeming) and 2/5 Royal Gorkha Rifles (Townsend), all seasoned British Commanding Officers. Both his principal staff officers Major James Heard and Tom Corrigan were also British, as was the BRINDIV GOC Maj.Gen. Punch Cowan. He proved to be an outstanding commander and his diplomatic skills emerged as he had to deal with the Americans (General MacArthur, the Supreme Commander), British, Australian, New Zealanders and the vanquished Japanese. His popularity was to be seen to be believed.

Again, as Indian Independence approached, he was recalled to India by the Auk for greater things.

In 1947, he was promoted to Maj.Gen. and given command of Sri Force, later 19 Division, to drive the raiders and Pakistan Army out of the Kashmir Valley. He succeeded in driving them beyond Uri. It was his brilliant understanding that he moved Stuart Light Tanks of 7 Light Cavalry that had served under him in Japan to the dizzy heights of the Zoji La Pass, to drive out the entrenched Raiders/Pakistanis from the dominating heights and by so doing saved Ladakh. This was the first time ever that light tanks had operated at these heights. He established the best of relations with Shaikh Abdullah and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and even Panditji but his pleas to give him three more months to drive the

raiders back to Muzzarfarabad fell on deaf ears and instead, Panditji went to the UN. The rest is history.

Thereafter, he did a spell as Commandant of the prestigious Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun. The experience gained by him in Japan stood him in good stead when he was specially selected to head the United Nations Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission in Korea. It was a very sensitive and delicate task dealing with recalcitrant Chinese prisoners. Here again, through sheer charisma, impartiality, firmness and diplomacy, he completed this task to the satisfaction of the world body.

He was the Southern Army Commander when, after the Chinese debacle in 1962 and the resignation of General P. N. Thapar, the then Army Chief, who accepted full

Why Only *Netas* and No Leaders in Post-Independence India?

P. K. Sabhlok

Before independence, leaders like Gandhiji, Tilak, Gokhale, Jayaprakash Narayan, Nehru and others had only one main objective relating to *swaraj* i.e. independence of India from the British rule. All of them were practical visionaries and succeeded in coordinating the divergent religious, economic, social, political and even sectarian thoughts. Some of these visionaries when they became rulers of independent India became first rate statesmen like Pandit Nehru, Sardar Patel and many others.

Unfortunately after achieving this objective, suddenly various uncoordinated divergent thoughts started emerging from various corners of India relating to economic divide between rich, poor and those below poverty line. Divergent views also started emerging relating to religious fanaticism, physical, moral and social pollution, fake spiritualism and a mushroom growth of *babas*, *gurus*, *tantriks* and many others of a similar variety.

Since no leader could coordinate all these divergent interests in different sectors of human activities, the visionary leaders started disappearing and *netas* started

emerging in politics, economics, cultural activities like the film industry etc. Thus we have *netas* in all segments of our activities and their views, activities and vested interests badly clash at the national level for maintaining unity, integrity and welfare of the country.

These sectarian *netas* cannot provide solutions to hundreds of problems now plaguing India, Indians are now becoming insensitive to all the major problems like corruption, all kinds of pollution, fanaticism, terrorism and the like. To gain power, money and influence, *netas* in politics, religion, industry, social work are becoming sycophants with ambivalent personalities.

Unless the vast Indian society decides to adopt the golden mean (the middle path) in the pursuit of economic and material activities enlightened liberalism – nothing for self all for society, uplift of people below poverty line, religion as spiritual science and not aimless rituals and blind faith leading to fanaticism, the present drift toward hydra headed corruption and other social and political evils will continue.

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responsibility, that he was appointed Chief of the Army Staff of a demoralized Army, till then the pride of the Nation. It was at this point of time that a military leader could have taken over the country through sheer charisma, professional skills, statesmanship and courage of convictions. When he observed the blatant interference of the politician (Krishna Menon, the Defence Minister) and bureaucrat in purely Army matters, he submitted his resignation in disgust. Had he stood by it, the whole country would have supported 'Thimayya of India' had he decided to take over the Government. But Panditji used all his charms to persuade him to withdraw it. Krishna Menon was tactfully removed from the defence ministry. Those of us of that generation knew full well that the Armed Forces would have stood solidly behind him.

On retirement after a successful tenure as Army Chief, the United Nations sought his services yet once again when he was appointed to head yet another sensitive issue of Cyprus between the Greeks and the Turks. He carried out this ticklish issue with consummate diplomatic skill earning the confidence of both parties. He died in harness in Cyprus with his boots on. His mortal remains were flown to Bangalore for the last rites. Sad to say that the seniormost Government Official present was Lt Gen Moti Sagar, Southern Army Commander, under whose territorial jurisdiction the city lies. But the UN and the Government and people of Cyprus did not forget this great soldier, scholar, and statesman.

'Thimayya of India' was a truly great leader that the country could ill afford to do without. To this

day there is a special room, one would go so far as to describe it as a place of pilgrimage, dedicated to 'Timmy' at the Kumaon Regimental Centre, Raniket where memorabilia associated with him are displayed.

Field Marshal Manekshaw



The third great leader the military has produced is Field Marshal Sam Hormusji Framjee Jamsetjee Manekshaw, MC, popularly known as Sam Bahadur. He was the son of the late Dr Hormusji Manekshaw, ex Indian Medical Service of World War I vintage, a resident of Amritsar. Admittedly, Sam Bahadur was no great shakes in Sherwood School Naini Tal or for that matter Hindu College Amritsar, as he himself admits. He was a good student, played a little football and was a good hiker in the Kumaon Hills. He was hoping to follow in the footsteps of his father and brother in the field of medicine. It was when his father was not too keen to send him to London to join his brothers because of his relative youth, that fate intervened. Having completed his inter science exam, he happened to see an advertisement in a local paper inviting young Indian gentlemen to

apply for admission into the newly established Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun in 1930, for an Indian Commission (ICO) in the Army as opposed to a KCIO ex Sandhurst. He applied, qualified in the entrance examination and interview and without any difficulty, prepared to enter a career in the Army.

On commissioning he was allotted to the 12th Frontier Force Regiment and did his year's attachment with a Scots Regiment. When war broke out he saw action in the early days of the campaign in Burma against the Japanese and was wounded during the battle of the Sittang Bridge where he was awarded the Military Cross for bravery.

After his recovery he served again in Burma, was nominated for the Staff College, Quetta where he returned later as an instructor in the rank of Lt.Col.. At the end of the war he caught the attention of FM Auk who sent him off to Australia for three months to tell the 'ignorant' Aussies about the Indian Army, as the day of Indian Independence approached. He did not command a battalion but soon after independence he was transferred to the 8 Gorkha Rifles and appointed to the Military Operations Directorate at Army HQ. By now his talents had bloomed and he found himself accompanying Sardar Patel and V. P. Menon when the accession of Kashmir was being negotiated. He was thus exposed to the working of the government and politicians. He was with V. P. Menon when the instrument of accession was signed in Srinagar. He commanded an infantry brigade on the Indo-Pak border in the Punjab, 26 Infantry Division in Jammu, 4 Corps in the

East, and both Western (the first ICO to do so) and Eastern Commands. He was the first ICO to command the then main institution in the Army, the Infantry School, and today the Army War College. He was nominated for the Imperial Defence College in London and on his return he was appointed Commandant of our Defence Services Staff College, Wellington.

This was where he experienced a major hiccup that might well have ended disastrously. But fate deigned otherwise. The choice for Army Chief was between him and Lt.Gen. Harbaksh Singh. He was in the chair when the problems of East Pakistani refugees erupted. He successfully led the Armed Forces against Pakistan both in the East and West and within 14 days won the war, created Bangladesh and captured 96000 thousand Pakistani

Regular Army prisoners. Compare this victory with that of Tommy Franks in Iraq. He stood his ground when asked to launch the offensive into East Pakistan in April 1971 and stood up to Mrs. Indira Gandhi. He even threatened to resign. Better sense prevailed. He was made India's first ever Field Marshal in service. It was in one of his *tete a tetes* with Indira Gandhi, she asked him whether he was planning to take over the country. Sam Bahadur's classic reply was pointing to his long nose and telling the Iron Lady that he did not use it to poke into other's affairs. He could well have taken over when riding the crest of the wave in 1971. The dice was loaded on his side though he might have lost a few brownie points on the diplomatic front for some of his witticisms. He did not angle for any posts like Governor though he would have made a very successful one. It

is a pity his knowledge was not used by inducting him into the National Security Council. Perhaps he was too outspoken and strong for the 'Babus'.

When a poll was taken among the 55 Higher Command Students at the Army War College, among those who figured in the merit list were Gandhiji, Sam Manekshaw, and Thimayya of India. Why was FM Cariappa missed out? Because he was relatively unknown to these officers when he was in service. Today, in Madikeri, Coorg are the Statues of Cariappa and Thimayya, its two worthy sons.

So who says we lack leadership material?

MAJOR GENERAL (RETD) E D'SOUZA, PVSM, an octogenarian defence analyst, has had the privilege of serving directly under all the three Captains Courageous mentioned in this article)

Why Only Netas After Freedom?

V. N. Torgal

It was somewhere just a year or two before Independence, when I heard a Congress leader (*netal*) ridiculing the Sargent Plan which envisaged universal primary education in India in a period of forty years. The leader (*netal*) boasted that free India would achieve the target in fifteen years. We see where we are today. The nation may be lucky if it achieves universal primary education by the year 2050. This story is symptomatic of the lack of vision and perspective in our leaders (*netal*) in any field of nation building. Our politicians lack the art and craft of dreaming into the future. The one man who had the vision has been turned into an icon sans his dreams, visions and perspectives.

The late Dr. Lohia used to say that in politics, people should have the "will" to power and not thirst for power. But unfortunately, from day one of our freedom, naked thirst for power, naked lust for underserving pomp have ruled the political mind of the country. The result has been "only *netas* and politicians, and not leaders, let alone statesmen." The likes of Mahatma Gandhi, Maulana Azad, Jayaprakash Narayan, Minoo Masani, Rajaji, Kamaladevi Chatopadhyaya are merely names to remember today. Their visions have vapoured away. Today mercy petitioners find place amid the doyens of courage and even occupy the prime ministerial position. Brazen liars (to wit the Babri Masjid case) arrogate

themselves to be the carriers of Rama's legacy. Political life in the country is a nightmare for any liberal mind today.

The Election Commission and the Supreme Court are our one hope for reversing this trend. The recent upholding by the Supreme Court of the Election Commission's requirement that the candidates for elective posts should furnish their career details (*kulagotra*) will go a long way in turning away *netas* from crowding public life. There is an urgent need to turn our legislative councils and the Rajya Sabha into genuine houses of experience, scholarship and culture as they were envisaged to be by the founding fathers of our Constitution. They should cease to be shelters for the rejects from the people at the elections or for sycophants or fools. Our governors and the President should refuse to yield to pressure in the matter of nominations and use their privilege to nominate persons of distinction.

But these are all only measures to prevent the crowding of our public life by *netas* and politicians. Promoting measures to invite men and women of the calibre of statesmen/women can only flow from the building up of the character of the nation. And that is the work for educators and sages (not *swamis*) of the country.

Iraq War – A Liberal View

Arvind Deshpande

Our political parties have reacted in the usual predictable way to the war in Iraq, generating more heat than light.

Now that the U.S.A. has not waited for the U.N.'s sanction, we must try and grasp the reality to avoid future conflicts.

The twentieth century was known as a century of wars and violence and of course democracy. More people died in the two World Wars and several smaller wars in that century than the total number of people who died in the previous 5,000 years. Now, we have entered the twenty-first century, which might well go down in history as a century of terror.

The greatest threat now may be, a coming together of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. If the United Nations cannot deal with this threat, then it might continue to become irrelevant, but we should not let this happen, because the alternatives are: (a) The proposition put forward by U.S. Secretary of Defence,

Mr. Rumsfeld, that the U.S. is the only super power and it is capable of dealing with this threat, irrespective of whether others support it or not. (b) The stand taken by France, Germany, etc. that the U.S.A. cannot be allowed to have all the power and there must be a countervailing power to check it. But if this countervailing power has as its members countries like Russia, China, etc. which have a record of killing their own people or thousands from erstwhile Yugoslavia or Tibet, then this countervailing power might not serve the purpose.

It is, therefore, necessary for some wise leaders in the world to take the initiative and bring moral pressure on the U.S.A., to make them partners in any future decision-making in this fight against the deadly combination of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

MR. ARVIND A. DESHPANDE is the Hon. Secretary of the Leslie Sawhny Programme for Training in Democracy, and a regular contributor to *Freedom First*.



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General Sir Arthur 'Maharishi' Cotton

– Father of Indian Irrigation

Prem Vaidya



In May 1821, during the raj of the British East India Company, Arthur Cotton, a young man of eighteen opted for service in India. He joined the Royal Engineers of the Company's Army and did a remarkable job in the nineteenth century, of providing water to the thirsty land and people in the Tanjore and Godavari districts of the then Madras Presidency, now in Tamilnadu and Andhra Pradesh respectively. He lived in India for the next 45 years and gathered more information on India's water requirements than any other engineer, barring Sir M. Vishweshawaraya and Dr. K. L. Rao. Before returning to his native England, he prepared an excellent blueprint of a plan for the utilisation of India's water resources. A plan which holds good to this day. If his plans are dug out from the dusty storerooms of the Central Water Commission and given constructive shape, there would be plenty of water for what Cotton called "the national bank of the country".

This is his story and how he came to be called 'Maharishi Cotton' by a grateful people in the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh.

It was a rare sight. A young Indian couple from South India, holding a big wreath entered a cemetery at Dorking in England. They walked towards a headstone, placed the wreath in front of it and bent down respectfully with folded hands. I happened to be in the vicinity. When they left, I moved close to read the tag attached to the wreath. It read:

SIR ARTHUR COTTON,
R.E., K.C.S.I.
(May 15, 1803 to July 14, 1899)

From: Smt. & Shri Durga Prasad,
Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India.

My curiosity aroused I quickly turned and caught up with them near Dorking railway station. I asked them what prompted them, coming all the way from India, to visit the Dorking Cemetery and pay their respects to a person who had died over 70 years earlier. This is what Mr. Durga Prasad had to say: "We, in the southern part India, owe a great deal to this noble soul, Sir Arthur Cotton. My forefathers were

grateful to him and my great-grandsons will be grateful as well. It was he, and he alone, who brought prosperity to our region with his hard work and devoted zeal. And, if the present Indian leaders have the will and determination to follow his plans, there will be no dearth of water in our country." I was intrigued and decided to find out more about Sir Arthur Cotton and why he is so revered in south India, particularly in Andhra Pradesh.

In May 1821, as a young Lieutenant in the Royal Engineers, 18-year old, Arthur Cotton opted for service in India and was attached to the Office of the Chief Engineer, Madras Presidency. Within a short period he was promoted to the rank of Captain. Though he came to India to serve the Empire, he came to love every inch of the Indian soil he walked on. India took hold of him as if he belonged to this land. His Indian staff worshiped him. They called him 'Maharishi Cotton' for his vision and devoted hard work for the benefit of poor farmers.

Captain Cotton's career in India, in 1822, coincided with the period in Europe when science was being applied to increase productivity for the benefit of mankind. His first major assignment was in Tanjore district where famine, poverty and disease were common. The plight of the people deeply affected Captain Cotton.

He saw the precious waters of the Cauvery river gushing towards the sea unutilized on land. In 1827, Capt. Cotton was sent to inspect the area. "What a noble river" were his first words at the sight of the river Cauvery. In spite of opposition from his colleagues, he accepted the task of diverting the river saying, "How can hungry, poverty stricken people progress if we don't provide them this basic human need?" He surveyed the area, prepared the plan and constructed the Upper and Lower Coleroon Dam under the most difficult conditions and with restricted means. Though an employee of the East India Company, he never considered

irrigation work as a revenue-yielding source for the Company's coffers. The government then was the East India Company. His sole aim was the benefit of the people and the fertility of the land.

Capt. Cotton's 'Tanjore Irrigation Work' was highly praised by Col. Duncen Sim, the Chief Engineer of the Madras Presidency:

"Simple and natural as the (Coleroon) Project may now seem, no one before Capt. Cotton thought it possible and it was attended by a degree of responsibility and risk which few would have voluntarily undertaken. For the talent and judgment displayed by Capt. Cotton in his patient investigation of the causes which were affecting the rivers in Tanjore, and for the boldness with which he proposed and carried into effect, what appeared to be the only remedy, I consider that officer is entitled to the highest praise."

Within six years of completion of the Coleroon dam, the standard of living of the people of Tanjore district improved and never again did the district see the face of famine. In fact thereafter, Tanjore district supplied large quantities of food grains to the surrounding areas during times of scarcity.

Capt. Cotton's next assignment was in the north-eastern part of the then Madras Presidency at Vishakapatnam (now in Andhra Pradesh) to protect the sea beach. This he executed with lightning speed. Thanks to Capt. Cotton Vishakapatnam can boast of a beautiful beach. Writing about Vishakapatnam, at that time a small

town in the Rajamundry district of the then Madras Presidency, Capt. Cotton predicted with considerable accuracy:

"It has the point at the eastern coast where incomparably the harbour can be made." (*It proved to be so in the course of time*). "The adjoining territory provides an exceptional site for a first class city." (*Today it is the second biggest city in Andhra Pradesh.*). "It is a natural point of outlet for all of northern India by direct railway to Allahabad." (*It is today, via Raipur.*) "Water communication can be completed with Punjab by the valley of the Ganges and the coast, to Vishakapatnam; the same to the great navigations of the delta of the Godavary and Krishna; also to Madras; by the Godavari to Berar, uniting the Punjab, the Upper Brahmaputra, Nagpur and Madras in the first class navigation of at least then thousand miles, providing all north and east India with transit at one-tenth the cost of railways."¹ (*This is yet to be achieved*)

During Cotton's stay at Vishakapatnam, his room displayed a large map of India prominently showing all the rivers. He often looked at the map and studied the river Godavari and its delta. The river fascinated him. Rising from the Western Ghats, hardly fifty miles from the Arabian sea the river empties itself into the Bay of Bengal in eastern India. It receives drainage from one hundred and fifty thousand square miles, an area greater than that of England and Scotland! Its maximum discharge is calculated to be one and half million cubic feet per second, more than two hundred times that of the Thames at Staines, and about three times that of the Nile at Cairo.

Yet, with such a God-gifted river around, for years the whole of



Rajamundry district was in disgraceful condition! For instance in 1831, there was excessive rainfall and the whole area was flooded. In 1832, a cyclone caused serious damage to standing crops. In 1833, there was no rain and the drought that followed came to be known as 'The Great Famine'. No one thought of preserving rainwater when it rained heavily. In adjoining Guntur district two out of five died during the famine. Guntur town with a population of five hundred thousand in 1831 was reduced to three hundred thousand by 1834! Such was the intensity of the famine. Many poor people sold their babies to those who could afford to keep them alive. It was often difficult to differentiate between the dying and the dead. The disaster surpassed all previous record over the past sixty years. People referred to it as an accursed land. The revenue to the government treasury declined to its lowest.

It was in this context that Sir Henry Montgomery of the Board of Revenue, Madras Presidency, asked Capt. Cotton to survey the entire area and furnish a detailed report on the

The United Nations has declared
2003 the International Year
of Freshwater

state of irrigation and his recommendation for improvements connected with the river Godavari and the other rivers in the area.

For the survey work, Capt. Cotton asked for six officers and six sappers from the Corps of Engineers. He got one young officer and two apprentice surveyors! During the course of his inspection tour, Capt. Cotton wrote a letter to his brother on January 18, 1845 in which he said *inter alia*:

"On taking charge of the Division, I made a run through Rajamundry and could not help seeing what it wanted, which was simply everything. So magnificent a country in such a state of ruin is the greatest disgrace to a civilized Government."

Working in the tropical heat for days together with only milk and bananas, Capt. Cotton completed the survey work. He examined every line of level made by his surveyors. He examined the river flow from the hills to the plains and then to the sea. He then marked the site for the construction of the great Godavari Anicut at the head of the delta and four miles from Rajamundry town. In selecting the spot for construction, he was conscious of costs. The site was hardly eight hundred yards from a sandstone quarry. This brought down the expenditure considerably.

In the midst of the project work, Capt. Cotton was promoted to a Major's rank. On April 17, 1845, Major Cotton submitted the 'Investigation Report' to the Governor of Madras who in turn recommended it to the East India

"Water is the National Bank of India. Water is India's greatest treasure"

Sir Arthur Cotton

Company's Directors in London, for their final approval.

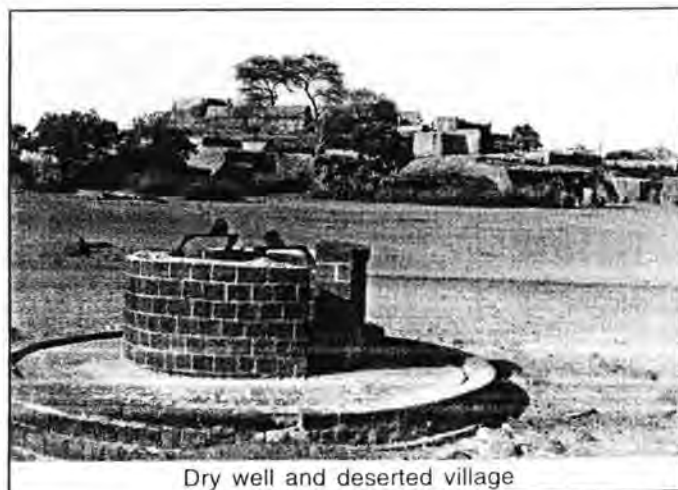
Soon the construction work started on the noble river. At one time, there were ten thousand workers working round the clock. As Major Cotton took up residence at the work site, Lady Elizabeth Cotton and a baby daughter settled down in a small shady place on the riverbank. The hut-house was erected on palm poles and the roof was thatched with palm leaves. It was a 'happy little home'. But at times, blasting in the quarry caused the little house to vibrate with pieces of stone falling on the rooftop. It was here at this work site, that a second daughter was born to the Cotton couple. Unfortunately, the baby passed away after 12 months. The Cotton couple buried her at Rajamundry in a little graveyard looking down upon the Godavari river.

In November 1848, the thousand-yard anicut was completed over the mighty river. A monument to Arthur Cotton's dedicated hard work for the suffering people of this region. Beside the anicut, an aquaduct of 49 arches, each with a forty feet span was built across an arm of the river with great speed so that the project could be completed before the next rainy season.

Construction work on the canal started in full swing. On the north-east of the left bank of the Godavari, a 24-mile long canal was built supplying water. As a result, 45 thousand acres of dry land turned fertile. The canal also

served as a mode of navigation connecting the town and port of Coringa on the one side and Elluru and Masulipatnam on the other.

Irrigation and navigation were always emphasized by Maj. Cotton in most of his projects. In the Godavari system alone five hundred miles of canal served water for irrigation and also used as a line of communication. Further, the Godavari canal at three places passes into the Krishna system providing an additional 300 miles of communication. And again through it from Kakinada to Madras and down south into the Buckingham canal covering a distance of 440 miles that proved to be the cheapest line of transportation for agricultural products. With adequate water available all around the year, the face of Rajamundry district changed with evergreen fields producing rice, tobacco, sugarcane, oilseeds etc. The land, which was available at throwaway prices before 1831 was now valued ten times more! The unscrupulous business of hoarding foodgrains stopped. Inflated living costs, exploitation of honest labour, exodus of working people to adjoining districts all disappeared. People realized now that the land was not accursed any more because the land



Dry well and deserted village

and water that was provided by Nature was being rightly used thanks to Arthur Cotton.

After completing the Godavary Anicut, Maj. Cotton was promoted to the rank of Colonel and was appointed Chief Engineer of the Madras Presidency. In recognition of his work in this area, the district was no longer named after Rajamundry town but was baptized in the name of the river - the Godavari district. The Company Sarkar promoted Col. Cotton to the post of Commandant of Engineers and he was considered the 'Greatest Authority on Indian Irrigation.'

The Farakka Barrage in east India constructed over a hundred years later in 1974, by the Government of India, was the brainchild of Arthur Cotton who had suggested it 130 years earlier in his paper "Work urgently required: Construction of canal from the Hooghly to the Ganges."

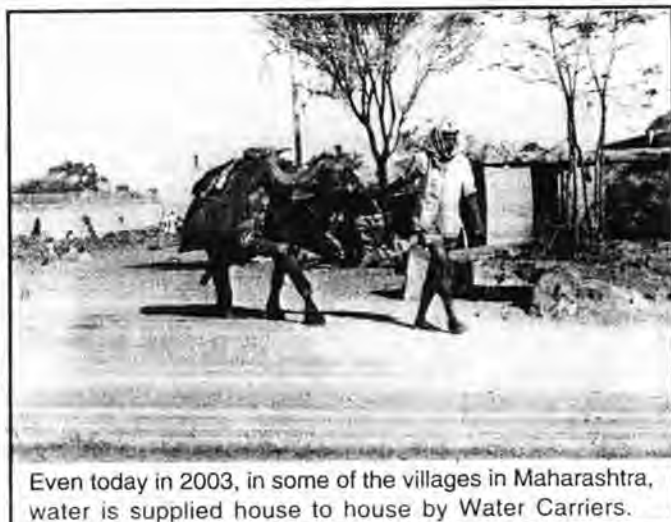
In 1869, on his retirement at the age of 57, this 'Karmayogi' sailed for England. He was Knighted and was given a Public Banquet. According to his daughter, Lady Hope, "My father's first act on entering the house was to remove all the ornaments, and cover the tables

with maps, papers, compasses and measuring rules, as well as sundry other implements of his own particular craft, saying 'I like to be reminded of India wherever I go.' So, nothing would induce him to allow the maps and papers to be removed." He remained in close contact with the land and the people of this country with two words all the time on his lips, 'India' and 'Irrigation.'

During a debate in the British Parliament on January 22, 1872 Lord George Hamilton referred to "Sir A. Cotton's scheme - to construct navigation canals throughout India at a cost of thirty million pounds. Sir Arthur Cotton appeared twice before a Select Committee of the House of Commons on Indian affairs, in 1872 and in 1878. The Chairman, the Rt. Hon. A.S. Ayrton asked Sir Cotton, whether he considered that there was water enough in India to feed all the canals of which he spoke. Sir Arthur Cotton with strong conviction, said: "There is water enough in India for every conceivable purpose ten times over; *there is no want of water.*"². Unfortunately the debate remained on paper.

Had General Sir Arthur Cotton's project been taken on by the British Government which had by then taken over British rule in India

from the British East India Company, we would have had a network of waterways as we have the network of railways. Sir Arthur Cotton's estimate of thirty million pounds at current rates) will now cost India Rs.50,000 crores



Even today in 2003, in some of the villages in Maharashtra, water is supplied house to house by Water Carriers.

River Water Disputes

Water being a state subject, any 'inter-linking' of rivers of India depends on cooperation from various states for the overall good of the country. The present position on river-water disputes between states is as follows:

- On the river Godavari, settlement was reached in July 1980 between Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.
- On the river Krishna, settlement was reached in May 1976 between Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka.
- On the river Narmada, settlement was reached in December 1979 between Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- On the river Ravi and Beas, the sharing of waters is still under dispute between Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.
- On the river Cauvery, an Interim order was issued in June 1991. The states involved are Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Pondicherry. The dispute continues.

(35,00,00,00,00,000 pounds) benefitting 250 lakh hectares of irrigation by surface water, 100 lakh hectares by increased use of ground water and the generation of 400 lakh kilowatts of hydro power apart from benefits of flood control, navigation and other facilities. His plans were down-to-earth on what our water-wealth could offer.

His paramount concern was to quench the thirst of the people and feed a growing nation. He wanted to interlink all the rivers of India to erase the words 'flood and drought' forever from this land.

"When the well is dry, we know the worth of water"

Benjamin Franklin

Till the age of 96, Sir Arthur Cotton continued to receive letters from inhabitants of southern India, expressing their gratitude. One such letter to him is worth mentioning here:

"Allow me Sir, to assure you, and I hereby convey to you, very feebly, the voice of the people of the Godavari district, that there is not one man in the whole of the district who fails to remember your name on looking at the magnificent anicut that your providential genius has been able to devise and construct for him, and the network of the canals that you gave him. He sows the seed

in his acres with your Godavari water, raises corn with your Godavari water, cooks it with your Godavari water, eats it with your Godavari water, and drinks your Godavari water. Your long and arduous labours in connection with these water works have justly placed you on the high and proud pedestal of the Godavari people's grateful memory!"¹. In the words of Durga Prasad, "the legacy left by Sir Arthur Cotton as an Englishman in India will always be remembered by the Indians as the best and noblest. These sentiments are shared by

generation after generations over the last two centuries among the people in southern India and it will continue to do so all over India. His concept of the linking the rivers of India has now been taken up to meet the crying needs of our nation for water, water and water."

¹ General Sir Arthur Cotton, His Life And Work, p.85-86).

² Ibid p.185.

³ Ibid p.408.

MR. PREM VAIDYA, a documentary film maker, was with the Films Division, Government of India. He is a regular contributor to *Freedom First*. He can be contacted on abhayv60@hotmail.com.

Postscript

"Water, Water Everywhere but Not a Drop to Drink ..."

Every monsoon we curse the downpour and the floods that follow and every summer we cry for water. This has been a yearly occurrence since independence 54 years ago. Covering Prime Minister Nehru's visits to Assam during the floods each year was a regular but important feature for 'Indian Newsreel'. On his return, plans would be drawn for taming the rivers of India on a 'war footing'. The situation continues to remain grim despite tall claims by successive governments. The picture in the year 2002 reached a climax where drought and floods occurred simultaneously all over the country in the monsoon months of July and August.

In the marriage bazaar of drought-prone western Rajasthan the first question most parents of marriageable girls ask is, "How far does the groom live from the nearest source of water?" Drinking water is beyond the reach of many Rajasthan villages. Magsaysay award winner Rajendra Singh of Rajasthan told *Sakal*, a Marathi newspaper of Pune that today, water is dearer than milk and in the years to come, it will be costlier than ghee!

According to a claim made by the Food Corpo-

"One who neglects or disregards the existence of earth, air, fire, water and vegetation disregards his own existence"

Jain cosmology

ration of India, there is a stockpile of 73 million tones of foodgrains in government godowns. Evidence that we can't blame nature. The cyclical pattern of nature has been kind to us and our farmers have taken full advantage of it. In spite of that, if each year there are floods during monsoon and scarcity of water in summer, it shows that there is something wrong with our planning. We have to learn to manage our water resources and its proper distribution throughout the country.

General Sir Arthur Cotton, who came to India in 1822 demonstrated what could be done to conserved and harvest highly valued water. There were also some visionaries like Sir M. Visveswaraya (1861-1962) and Dr. K. L. Rao an eminent engineer and a former Union minister who were willing to take up the challenge of water harvesting but their voices went unheard. The result is death, in the guise of floods alongside thirst which continues to stalk our land year after year.

As a nation, we had pledged to supply drinking water to our entire population by 1990 - a target date agreed upon during the United

Nations Water Conference on March 16, 1977, at Mar del Plata in Argentina. 1990 has long since passed and we are left with the same old gloomy scenario. Water has become our chronic problem. According to the Central Water Commission, one out of every six city dweller in our country is without water. Fourteen out of every fifteen villages do not know what tap water is! There are about 1,16,000 villages in the country, which are without any satisfactory source of drinking water. Yet no manifesto of any political party emphasizes this vital need of our people. Water created civilisations and where man did not care for it, there stands deserted land. Chera-punji in Meghalaya had entered the Guinness Book of World Records as the wettest place in the world. Today one can see women and children in Cherapunji trekking long distances for a bucket of water in the dry season. The root cause is severe deforestation.

In Maharashtra, the Rural Development minister R. R. Patil said more than Rs.16,500 crores had been spent on providing drinking water, "but still 27,000 villages in the state

remain dry." Social worker Anna Hazare said, schemes in Maharashtra did not show the desired results as there was no training, evaluation and a monitoring of the work being done. Water; like religion and ideology, has the power to move millions. Since the very birth of human civilization, people have moved to settle close to it. People move away when there is too little of it.

According to the Water and Land Management Institute (WALMI), India is among the few countries of the world with immense water potential. It ranks number four, if judged according to the quantum of water available. The first is Brazil, which has the biggest water potential, 13.4 per cent. The second is China, with 6.7 per cent followed by Canada with 5.8 per cent and India is fourth with 4.9 per cent.

The irony however is that we are able to utilize only 10 per cent of the total quantum of available water! This is principally due to non-availability of suitable sites for impounding water, the unreliable volume of flow due to the vagaries of the monsoon, and negligence on the part of the authorities concerned.

Schemes for Harnessing India's Rivers

According to Dr. K. L. Rao, an eminent water resources Engineer and former Union Minister for Irrigation & Power, Sir Arthur Cotton pleaded strongly for the interlinking of the rivers. He had drawn up and published a Master Plan for irrigating many parts of India by river and channel systems and providing inland water transport for the entire country.

Dr. Rao was delivering the Cotton Memorial Lecture during the Cotton Memorial Day Celebrations on May 15, 1978 (the 175th birth anniversary of Sir Arthur Cotton). He was almost in tears when referring to Sir Cotton's hard work towards India's prosperity. The topic before Mr. Rao: "The Inter-linking of Rivers is Essential for Building an Integrated India".

In 1983, Dr. K.L. Rao presented a plan on the lines of Sir Cotton's, to link the Ganga with the Cauvery. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi said that she was in favour of the "Ganga-Cauvery" link but the Centre had problems in finding resources for the 'costly project'. (*The Indian Express*, Madras, July 25, 1983). Sir Arthur Cotton's Master Plan can still be rescued from the archives of the ministry of water resources.

Another plan for an inter-basin transfer, known as the 'Garland Canal Scheme' was proposed, by the internationally renowned expert, Captain D.J. Dastur. This scheme envisages collection of the monsoon flows of the Himalayan rivers through a 1500 km canal running along the foothills and drawing water, for use in the Central and Southern parts of the country. Unfortunately, the Planning Commission on the grounds of prohibitive cost turned this down!

On August 14, 2002 in his first address to the nation on the eve of India's 55th Independence Day, President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam talked of a "Water Mission" as a permanent solution to drought, and making water available round the year by networking of rivers and water harvesting.

According Shri Suresh Prabhu, MP and Chairman of the Task Force on the inter-linking of the country's major rivers; it is expected to cost Rs. 5,600 billion. For this private participation may be sought for funding the ambitious project.

Prem Vaidya



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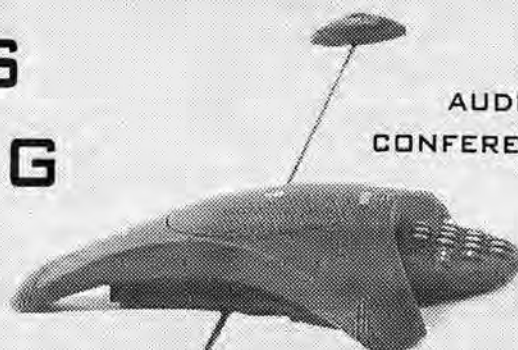
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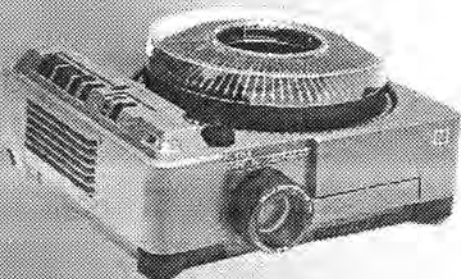
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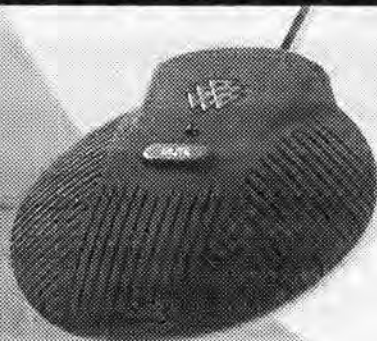
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Editor: Dr. Aparna Bagwe

NEWSLETTER - MARCH 2003

Whose Life Is It Anyway?

They say life reflects nature. Over the past millennia, human society has developed in a way that bears an uncanny resemblance to the human organism. Just like the human body is made up of millions of different types of cells that together make up the tissues, organs and ultimately the organism, so also human society comprises of millions of different individuals and groups of individuals co-existing to gain certain advantages that come from that togetherness.

Individual cells of our body perform functions that support and enhance the functions of the cells around them, and all the cellular functions in concert make the organism function. Individual cells grow and when the time is ripe, they divide to form new cells. Life being finite, there are a finite number of cell divisions that can occur before the cell ages and ultimately dies ... to be replaced by new cells. A widespread phenomenon involved in almost all life processes involves the graceful death each day of millions of cells of the human body, simply to make room for new cells, by a process termed programmed cell death or *apoptosis* (derived from an ancient Greek word, meaning the 'dropping of leaves from trees').

- The hands and feet of human fetuses look like paddles. During embryonic development, the cells that make up the tissue between the 'future' fingers and toes die, leading to 'digitation' and the formation of fingers and toes.
- A woman is born with all the eggs she will ever have. Though she starts with millions, she usually runs out by her forties, and the death of her last egg sets off menopause.
- The sun's UV light can damage cellular DNA. A cell with damaged DNA after division is likely to turn cancerous. If the cell is unable to fix the damage, it just decides to die.
- The overt signs of ageing - wrinkling and hair loss, also involve large-scale apoptosis.

It is the finely tuned balance between the withdrawal of positive signals (needed for continued survival) and the receipt of negative signals that make a cell decide to kill itself or apoptose. Cells usually

undergo apoptosis in response to the developmental program or to protect the rest the body from harm - in effect, the individual cell decides to apoptose for the betterment of the body or organism.

In human society too '*the old order changeth, yielding place to new*'. Individual humans grow, learn specialized skills and use these to their advantage and for the benefit of their peers, making society prosper. They also procreate and produce the next generation that ultimately takes their place in society. With the passage of time, their bodily functions invariably slow down and they retire from active life - willingly yielding their place to the youth. Unfortunately, ageing is associated with debilitating illnesses that lower the quality of life, cause pain and suffering. Some chronic illnesses cannot be cured, but need to be stoically endured. Talk about 'end of life' issues and the desire expressed by an individual human being (who has full control over his life) to voluntarily withdraw from life, and society suddenly clamps down tightly on the individual's right of self-determination with the clear message that an individual's right to end his life is totally out of the scope of his control. He is told that just as he had no hand in choosing when he was born, so also he has no right to choose when or how he may die.

Over this cacophony one point needs to be made - society must never lose track of the fact that we are ultimately individuals who have 'willingly' offered our skills to society. Several written and unwritten rules guard individual freedom of choice ... be it the freedom to be a part of society or the freedom to stay away from organized groups and become a recluse, the freedom to believe in a supreme being called *God*, or the choice to be an atheist or agnostic. One individual may be happy to skim over life's surface without creating any ripples, while another - a philosopher and thinker - may wish to reason out the minutiae that make up life. One individual may prefer to await death as he sips on *amrut*, while another might seek a quick exit from life by swallowing *hemlock*. If he has chosen to live life his way, shouldn't the route of his death be his choice too?

Aparna Bagwe

Dying With Dignity

Why cannot people have the right to die with dignity?

Dr. Goldwin J. Emerson

Professor Emeritus, University of Western Ontario.

About twenty years ago when I heard the expression, "dying with dignity", I wasn't sure what that meant. At first it seemed that it might be a self-contradictory statement... a sort of oxymoron. Sometimes it helps to understand things better if we can look at them from another point of view, so I decided to take a look at what "living with dignity" might mean.

I imagined that living with dignity would probably apply to someone who was in good physical and mental health. I thought of a person who was able to make plans and to carry them out and someone who was able to live with hope and optimism. I imagined a person who would reach out to others and who would contribute to society. Perhaps such a person might be a young woman who had given birth to a child, but in any case, she would be in control of directing the events of her own life.

Then I imagined that, by virtue of some genetic quirk, this young woman discovered in her late thirties that she had the onset of Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's Disease). For convenience, let's give her a name. We'll call her Sue. Sue first noticed a lack of coordination and some deterioration in both muscle control and in strength. She had difficulty in speaking and in swallowing and six months later she had practically no appetite. Then in the next six months Sue lost a lot of weight, she lost control of some of her normal bodily functions, breathing became difficult and her speech was slurred to the point that only her closest friends could understand her.

Next, I imagined that in another six months, Sue came to the full realization that there would be no medical hope for improvement and that, in time, death would come about from suffocation as it does with dozens of ALS patients each year. But this realization was even more frightening for her because her mind was still clear and she understood that while over 70% of Canadians would support her desire for assistance in suiciding, none-

theless, there are no legal provisions for such help in Canada.

I imagined further, that Sue was still able to remember her earlier days when she was living with dignity and that she recalled the various stages of her loss of control over the decisions of her life. But now she had no power to make decisions and to implement them as she used to do. Only one decision remained that she could make better than anyone else. Only she could decide when the thought of death was less painful than the thought of staying alive and Sue decided that it was now time to die.

At this point, Sue made a very difficult and courageous move. She summoned up what little remaining strength she had and she traveled to Ottawa to meet with the highest officials of our land. With clearness of mind and in whispering voice she told her story to Supreme Court judges and to politicians. They listened with apparent interest and even with some sympathy. But in the end, they said that they were sorry but that they were not able to deal with such difficult legal and ethical questions. They went on to explain that, had she made this difficult decision five years earlier when she was still living with dignity, that the politicians and the judges would not have stood in her way. But, now that she had waited until her present state of hopelessness and desperation, that they were not able to help and that they were sorry but her case was just too complex because it raised too many ethical and legal questions that they could not deal with.

Sue asked the politicians and the judges what she should do and they recommended that she should return home and let nature take its course. And after Sue left for home the politicians and the judges were relieved for they understood that soon after her death the media would turn their attention to other stories, the public would soon forget about Sue, and their own lives could return to normal.

Courtesy: *The Humanist in Canada*, Autumn 2002.

Net News ... and Views!

THE WORLD FEDERATION OF RIGHT TO DIE SOCIETIES

In 1976, upon the formation of the Japan Euthanasia Society (now the Japan Society for Dying with Dignity), Dr Tenrei Ota convened an international meeting of existing national right-to-die societies. Japan, Australia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States were all represented. This first meeting enabled those in attendance to learn from the experience of each other and to obtain a more international perspective on right to die issues. Two years later a second international conference was hosted in San Francisco by the US-based Society for the Right to Die.

The World Federation of Right to Die Societies was founded at the third international conference, held in 1980 at Oxford in the UK, which was hosted by Exit Ñ The Society for the Right to Die with Dignity. At this conference the following resolution was unanimously adopted.

1. That the World Federation of Right to Die Societies be set up:
 - i) To promote
 - a) co-operation and liaison between voluntary euthanasia and right to die societies
 - b) the dissemination, possibly by means of an international newsletter, of information and educational material about: voluntary euthanasia and right to die issues and guidance as to the meaning of terms used, legislation and court judgements and other matters likely to be of interest to societies.
 - c) international conferences on dying and death.
 - ii) To give assistance where requested in the foundation of similar societies in countries which do not have them.
2. That all voluntary euthanasia and right to die societies be invited to affiliate with the Federation.

Since its founding, the World Federation has come to include 38 right to die organisations from around the world, and has held nine additional international conferences, each hosted by one of our member organisations.

The Society for the Right to Die with Dignity (SRDD), India is a member of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies.

Past World Federation Conferences: Tokyo 1976, San Francisco 1978, Oxford 1980, Melbourne 1982, Nice 1984, Bombay 1986, San Francisco 1988, Maastricht 1990, Kyoto 1992, Bath 1994, Melbourne 1996, Zurich 1998, Boston 2000, Brussels 2002.

14th World Conference 2002 of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies "EUTHANASIA AND THE LAW"

The World Federation of Right to Die Societies (WFRtDS) organizes, once every two years, a 4-day World Conference in one of the member states. The World Conferences provide a forum where (A) delegates from the member societies convene with the aim to meet and discuss internal affairs and exchange experiences and developments, and (B) an international congress, which is open to delegates, professionals and the public interested in end of life and free choice issues. The 2002 World Conference, which focused on "Euthanasia and the law", was held in Brussels, Belgium, from 5-8 September, 2002.

The Brussels Declaration on Assisted Dying, arising from the 2002 Conference, states the following:

"We are healthcare professionals attending the 14th World Conference of the World Federation of Right to Die Societies being held in Brussels from 5 - 8 September 2002.

We note that the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that no one shall be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment, and that it stresses the importance of personal autonomy. The European Convention on Human Rights reinforces the same principles.

Keeping in mind these Human Rights Declarations, we believe that all competent adults, who are suffering unbearably with incurable illness, should have the choice to obtain medical help to die if this is their rational, persistent and voluntary request after all other options, including those offered by palliative medicine, have been fully considered.

We note that such medical assistance, with strict safeguards, is already possible in Belgium, The Netherlands, Switzerland and Oregon (USA). We strongly believe that this fundamental choice should be extended, as soon as possible, to other areas of the world, especially where the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is much respected."

<http://www.euthanasiaandlaw.info/>

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE SRDD, WRITE TO:

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Society for the Right to Die with Dignity
Sassoon Building, 1st floor,
143 M. G. Road, Mumbai - 400 023.

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Suggestions and contributions to this Newsletter are welcome. Please write to the editor Dr. Apama Bagwe, Scientist, ACTREC, Navi Mumbai at anbagwe@vsnl.com or at the address of the SRDD.

Hemlock the Weed

Based on research compiled by Nancy Bale



Poison hemlock, also known as muskrat weed and poison parsley, is known in scientific terms as *Conium maculatum*. It is a member of the order Umbelliferae, to which parsley, fennel, parsnip and carrot also belong. Of European origin, it is a graceful, ornamental, biennial / sometimes

perennial plant. It is 3-8 feet tall, has a smooth, purple-spotted, bright green, hollow stem and finely divided, smooth, shiny green, large, triangular leaves tipped with a minute, sharp white point. Reproduction is solely by seeds, which are tiny flattened ridged, and resemble caraway. It flowers from early summer to September and has attractive white flowers. It is found along roadsides, railroad tracks, ditches and waste areas in Eastern US and on the Pacific coast.

The word hemlock originates from the Latin meaning

spotted, referring to the stem markings. According to an old English legend, the purple streaks on the stem represent the brand put on Cain's brow after he had committed murder. The plant has a disagreeable, mousy odor and a bitter taste; its stems, leaves, roots and seeds contain an alkaloid - 2-5 drops of which can be lethal. The juice of hemlock was frequently administered to political prisoners, and it is infamous as the poison drunk by Socrates in 329 BC. It is believed that hemlock was given to Christ along with vinegar and myrrh when he was crucified. Native Americans used hemlock toxins on their arrow tips.

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Excerpted from an article in the Fall 2001 issue of *TimesLines*, the quarterly newsletter of the Hemlock Society (Published 11/4/01).

European Council – the Rights of the Dying The Debate Continues

The Belgian law on euthanasia must be seen in the wider context of the efforts by right-to-die organizations at the European level. On 25 June 1999, in the absence of a substantial number of its members, the Parliamentary Assembly of the European Council adopted Recommendation 1418, entitled "Protection of the human rights and dignity of the terminally ill and the dying". To a number of honorable proposals about living wills and the recognition of the right to refuse treatment, was added an explicit condemnation of euthanasia which upheld the absolute prohibition of intentionally putting an end to the life of incurable or dying patients by referring to Article 2 of the European Convention of Human Rights (which states that "no one shall be deprived of his life intentionally"; "recognizing that a terminally ill or dying person's wish to die never constitutes any legal claim to die at the hand of another person"; and "recognizing that a terminally ill or dying person's wish to die cannot of itself constitute a legal justification to carry out actions intended to bring about death". While one need not give this recommendation more importance than it deserved (since it had no constraining power), nonetheless opponents to the decriminalization of euthanasia repeatedly referred to it, embellished as it was by the aura of reference to the European Convention on Human Rights. Furthermore the European Court of Human Rights alluded to it in the recent case of Diane Pretty, whose request to die with dignity was rejected.

Has recommendation 1418 been superseded? It

Jacqueline Herremans

would certainly be premature to bury it. Nevertheless, it has been subjected to serious criticism and will in all likelihood turn out to be but a temporary stage, indeed a mistake, in the European Council's debate around end-of-life questions. Euthanasia, and in particular the new Dutch and Belgian legislation on the issue, was on the agenda of a hearing held in Paris in October 2002 by the Committee on Social Questions, Health, and Family. Mrs. Gatterer, of the Austrian Parliament, whose report had initiated Recommendation 1418, presided. But the tone of the debate had changed since 1999. In contrast to the discussions that led to Recommendation 1418, the voices of those defending the right to die were heard: I was invited to speak, as was Dr. Michael Irwin, President of the World Federation of Right-to-Die Societies. Traditional voices, too, were heard of course. An observer representing the Holy See asserted that there was but one single morality – that derived from the Decalogue – and indulged in the shortcut between euthanasia and Nazism (to wide criticism). Dick Marty, the Swiss Parliament member entrusted with preparing the report, concluded the session thus: "the Belgian and Dutch legislators in no way stand accused. Whatever our judgment on their position, we should respect it – these are countries with a great humanist tradition, where life is clearly valued very highly... The 1999 decision of the Council of Europe against euthanasia does not stop there. The debate goes on."

Excerpted from the *International Humanist News*, February 2003.

Re-Writing History

The Supreme Court was once seen, as the last organ of the State, to have survived the attacks of the Executive. Its sentences generally added up to a high level defence of civil liberties. Thus, its recent judgement has come as a surprise. It held that the new syllabus, now put together by the NDA government, does not constitute a violation of the Fundamental Rights. With all humility, I think it would not have been possible, for the learned Judges physically to read through all the books, and pronounce such a judgement. Scholars did read carefully, and found that the books did seem to falsify history, giving credit only to ancient India, in terms of the world. There are many unflattering references to Muslims and Christians, not dwelling on the fact,

that the Mughals, created a pluralistic State, of various threads, brought together in a beautiful tapestry. Communists, and fascist dictators, similarly bend the minds of children and young minds, by fostering a jingoistic attitude, for handing over, to the next generation. This is evil-propagated. This has been a bugbear to Liberals after the NDA took over, for the main component of the NDA is the BJP. The Congress, in modern times, has made history a tedious paen to the Nehru-Gandhi family. However, the Congress did not attack the minorities, but even set them in positions of high office. (Another example of "Minorityism"), which is detested, by the very Hindu, Hindus of "*Hindutva*" - unchained.

What to do with Bad Judges?

A law can be full of unexpected situations, and the nicest legal novels, we can read, are by Henry Cecil. There is one episode which goes thus: it refers to Justice Darling. A young lady asked him whether she should call him "Darling Justice" or "Justice Darling". He answered "Just, darling".

Considerably more than this went on when three of their Lordships sat on a Commission to recruit candidates for the minor judiciary. They picked on three ladies to be future munsiffs. Later, that night, the watchman outside the lodge where they were staying, heard the sounds of laughter and revelry, not of one, but of both the sexes. On bursting in, they found their Lordships, metaphorically, with their pants down. The

companions of their Lordships were three female candidates they had selected. After that, a veil of secrecy was thrown over the developing story. *The Week* was the first to publish the names. Meanwhile, the sole punishment the erring trio has received, is transfer to distant Courts, one being J&K. The other Guwahati. The legal bar in the places to which they have been posted, have protested against their being made the sanctuary of the corrupt. A judge will not cease to be corrupt, because you transfer him. The fate of the selected ladies munsiffs seems to have escaped exposure. These days, their Lordships are free to use the weapon "Contempt of Court". Perhaps it is time to try the provisions of Impeachment?

After Tehelka

The BJP promised to be a party with a difference. But no less than the Congress, it is advertising the spoils system. Having given away gas stations to party workers, it is now invading the Boards of Public Sector Companies (PSUs) with a vengeance. Its latest beneficiary is 29 year old Ms. Monika (surname not in the *Express* report) has been put on the Board of MTNL with three loyal *pracharaks*, who have no technical qualifications for joining the Board. Pramod Mahajan fobbed off queries about her appointment. He said she was a "bright girl". Indeed, this is probably true, as Ms.

Monika was the elected president of Delhi University Students Union. The PSU units are generally dysfunctional, and it is unlikely, that they will be benefitted by the presence of these political directors.

Unfortunately, the spoils system is prevalent everywhere, even in those countries, which are listed as the home of democracy. In Britain, a change of government or the change of Prime Minister, in the same party, also takes place - with heads rolling, and faces changing. In the US, the spoils system is written into

the Establishment itself. However, these persons have at least some qualifications for the office they hold. In India, with the likes of Pramod Mahajan, it is enough to be a "bright young thing". Here's hoping that Ms. Monika will be a useful addition, to the institution -

MTNL - whose Board she now graces. A Board meeting was called on her birthday, with no expense spared, in the five star hotel, where the Board meeting/birthday bash were celebrated.

The Power of Wealth

Azim Premji has been hailed as the tenth most powerful man in the world. This is highly gratifying to Indians in general. However, the rankings of "power" are more difficult to judge, than the cold financial record of a balance sheet. The report vaguely said it was the ability of the assessee to influence the political or cultural fields. Strangely, the Ambanis were not in the list of ten, though they have moved the levers of power, quite significantly, since their comparatively late entry into the playing field. The Tata's never seemed to carry much clout with the government, though they put India on the industrial map of the world. They were the first to disburse charity. In recent times, Computer King, Narayan of Infosys, has begun expending a sizeable portion of his income on social work. There are few institutions which have not been on his list of charities

and endowments. One wonders whether he has any political end in view? Vijay Mallya wanted it - enough to be humiliated in the first attempt, before he succeeded in the second. He, Kamal Nath, and Amar Singh are among those who have openly entered politics, without manipulating it from the sidelines. The Hinduja's are now in the dog house, but move in the highest echelons of the British government or governments. It is good that a highly successful entrepreneur, should enter politics, as he can bring the techniques of the Board Room, to parliamentary committees. However, it is difficult to electioneer for a Lok Sabha seat, and in its place, to buy one's way into the Rajya Sabha. It seems that industrialists contesting an election will continue to be few, though they may carp at the hallowed halls of government. Money, after all, *is power*.

Lack of Concern for Pensioners and Senior Citizens

The RBI cut interest rates by the highest ever figure, for 39 years, bringing it down by several percentage points, plummeting to 6%. This, we are told, is to help stimulate industry. It is amazing that the media, the morning after, forgot to mention the one class that this measure vitally affects: the salaried and retired classes whose income has fallen from 14% to 6%. Many of them have lost heavily in the private sector. Can they be let down by government too? Did they not merit even a thought from Bimal Jalan and the media?

The Plan document is also out. Under the

authorship of K. C. Pant, it runs up to 1800 pages, with more fog than light. One omission is surprising. Denationalisation which has often been projected at Rs.78,000/- crores.

It is amazing how much this country depends on the rain gods, which failed last year. I wonder why all the emphasis is on industry, while agricultural and other incomes merit such step-motherly treatment. Step fatherly treatment, in fact, since both the Finance Minister and the Reserve Bank Governor are males.

Reversion to Cold War Positions

Vladimir Putin was in Delhi last December. No State visit has passed with a more complete meshing of minds and hearts. There were no long, tortuous discussions to evolve fragile agreements as brittle as bone china. India and the Soviet Union perceive themselves as natural allies, the way they did before. This is long after the power blocks broke up, and countries were free to choose their principal strategic partners. For a while, the ties between India and the U.S. appeared to be growing stronger and warmer. It lapsed into the stance that both power are equal - but

Pakistan is more equal. The steady interlocking of the U.S.-Pakistan embrace is not strengthened by the fact that Pakistan is now a democracy, albeit a shackled one. Thus, even with free choice predilections, countries have moved back to their old cold war stances. There is some danger, as in the past. India has a vast shopping basket for weaponry of all kinds from the USSR for all branches of the Services. Price, quality and the availability of spares, should be checked out, as mere political harmony does not lubricate the wheels of a tank or a jet liner.

Censorship : What the hell?

Abhisek

What is obscenity? What is it that makes a film, an artistic expression, obscene? Who decides what is obscene? Who is to judge whether pornography in a film is obscene? What are the parameters by which this judgment is to be made?

While he was Chairman of the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), Vijay Anand suggested that exhibition of pornographic films be permitted in certain exclusive X-rated cinema halls. Even as the economic soundness of the suggestion may be questionable, what really causes concern is the apologetic nature of the suggestion. Why only a select few cinema halls? Why should the cinema halls which show pornographic films be branded as X-rated? Why can they not be normal cinema halls which occasionally screen pornographic films? What is this, some kind of pseudo-liberalism?

Vijay Anand's resignation from the CBFC clearly shows that even this suggestion of his was radical enough to make the Information & Broadcasting (I&B) ministry recoil in Victorian horror and try to reign in its arbitrarily constituted CBFC. Anand was replaced by a Gujarati film actor and a member of the BJP who is opposed even to kissing scenes in films. Are we back in the Victorian era? May be we are and are likely to be prisoners of this age-old mind-set as long as opposing immorality (read pornography) is seen to be politically correct.

In Defense of Freedom of Expression

Most arguments against censorship have been based, wholly or largely, on the contention that censorship infringes an individual's freedom of expression. While granting Freedom of Expression as a fundamental right, the Constitution

of India provides for certain restraints to an individual's freedom of expression. Obscenity is not covered under the right to freedom of expression. Understandably freedom of expression cannot be extended beyond the scope of decency. So far, so good. But, surely all pornography is not obscene and everything that is obscene is not pornographic. Pornography is not the same thing as obscenity, although people often use the terms interchangeably. Obscenity is a legal concept that applies to those forms of pornography that society considers the most harmful to sexual morality, and that, it punishes under criminal law. In the United States, for example, the Supreme Court limits the definition of obscenity to "hard-core" pornographic depictions, meaning extremely explicit portrayals of sex. Thus, pornography is illegal only if judged to be obscene.

What is obscenity? What is it that makes a film, an artistic expression, obscene? Who decides what is obscene? Who is to judge whether pornography in a film is obscene? What are the parameters by which this judgment is to be made? Do these parameters represent how the majority of a country's citizens view the pornography in a film? In the answers to these questions would lie an ideal system of maintaining acceptable standards of artistic expressions in films.

The System: What it is and What it ought to be

The current system as laid

down by the Cinematograph Act, 1952 is based around the Central Board of Film Censors (renamed Central Board of Film Certification). The members of the Board are appointed by the Information and Broadcasting ministry and hold office "during the pleasure of the central government(?)" When asked how this arbitrarily constituted board can be empowered to restrict the freedom of expression of the citizens, the proponents of this system argue that the CBFC is constituted of members from different walks of life so as to represent the tastes of the people. If it is a question of representing the public taste, parliament would be better placed to sit in judgment rather than the CBFC. Why not screen films in the central hall of parliament and have the members vote on certification of the film! If nothing, it would give a democratic sanction to the most undemocratic acts of all – Censorship.

The Cinematograph Act, 1952 provides for assessment of public reaction to films: "...the Board may hold symposia or seminars of film critics, film writers, community leaders and persons engaged in the film industry, or such other persons and also undertake local or national surveys to study the impact of various kinds of films on the public mind." There are hardly any objective guidelines on how the Board is to evaluate and certify films. It is left to the opinion of the members to certify a film. However there is a set of ratings under which a film is classified. The members of the CBFC are

to view the film and give their opinion in writing. The film will be rated according to the majority opinion. Therefore, if a member on the board, say a film-critic, finds the film suitable for public exhibition but the majority of the Board does not, then the film-critic's opinion does not count. The tastes and opinion of the people whom that members of the Board represents also do not count.

While the CBFC is supposed to represent the tastes and sensibilities of the population, it hardly does so. It is definitely a difficult task to take into account the sensibilities of a billion individuals. Is the CBFC really representative of the whole society and the whole spectrum of sensibilities? For some orthodox sections of the population, women showing their faces in public is also considered indecent. So will the CBFC ban heroines showing their faces in films, let alone their arms and legs? The very notion that the

CBFC must take into account the sensibilities of all sections of the population and have an exclusionary system based on them, is inherently faulty. Instead, the content which is obscene by any standards and may be offensive to most of the people must be banned outright and all other content must be rated for different sections of viewers.

As it stands today, film-makers are at the mercy of the CBFC to approve their film for public exhibition. Even non-pornographic films like Anand Patwardhan's "War & Peace" which has been awarded numerous awards world-wide has been blocked by the censors because of Patwardhan's refusal to cut large and important portions of the film. To sum up the current system it would be fair to say that 'the arbitrarily constituted CBFC arbitrarily certifies and censors films'

It is quite clear that the current system has some serious flaws which lend themselves to making the whole process undemocratic. But, even as we vigorously argue the case for Freedom of Expression and the dismantling of the censorship mechanism it would only be realistic to realize that a clean society cannot be sustained without some mechanism to ensure that young and vulnerable minds are not exposed to or influenced by content meant for adults. It is imperative that the screening of content made for a select audience be restricted to that select audience only.

An objective mechanism based on scientific studies should be evolved so as to view and rate the content, based on objective guidelines. An ideal system should be based, not around an arbitrarily constituted Board but around a panel of experts from various fields related to films and human

Much 'Gadar' About Nothing

Sharad Bailur

According to a report in *The Times of India* (June 28, 2001) a Shia cleric and President of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board Maulana Kalbe Sadiq of Lucknow, in a letter to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, demanded the deletion of certain 'objectionable' scenes and dialogues from the film 'Gadar' now being screened all over the country. He demanded deletion of scenes in the film where Amrish Puri asks Sunny Deol to say 'Hindustan Murdabad' after he has embraced Islam as well as a scene, which shows Muslims as the initiators of communal clashes in 1947. He has also demanded the removal of a scene in the film where the heroine Amisha is shown offering *Namaz* wearing vermillion on her forehead.

I decided to produce a movie which had a character called Seeta who was a woman of loose character. The Bajrang Dal protested and I had to give up on the name Seeta. Then I had another character called Paul. He turned out to be a drug smuggler. The Bishop of Delhi protested and I had to give up on Paul. Then there was Hussain, a thief. Maulana Kalbe Sadiq protested. I even had a character called Sarah and the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem protested because she was a shrew of a mother-in-law.

I therefore decided that the next best thing was to give my characters numbers instead of names. So my hero became One. My heroine was called Two. I decided that the farther away from the main action, the higher the number of my character should be. Now, my movie has a large number of characters going into the hundreds. I am told that if I number my character 786 I will again be faced with the wrath of Maulana Kalbe of Lucknow!

Then the clothes: If the women characters wear saris and do nasty roles, Mr. Ashok Singhal protests. If they wear Salwar and Khameez, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandhak Committee protests. If they wear western dresses they incur the wrath of the Cardinal of Bombay. If the men wear beards and turbans the Sikhs go wild. If they wear suits the Cardinal gets a fit. If they wear dhotis, Murlī Manohar Joshi goes into a rage. And if they wear *Mundus*, fur caps and dark glasses at night, Mr. Karunanidhi threatens to send the LTTE after me. I cannot have my characters not wearing any clothes. It is indecent and the Censors will finish me off.

In spite of all this I still want to produce a movie. Will readers kindly suggest how?

behaviour. It is necessary for the content to be rated according to the audience it is best suited for. Instead of the general certification of whether a film is suitable for public exhibition or not, the film must be rated by the age-group of viewers it is suitable for. A set of guidelines must be devised so as to aid the members of this panel to rate the film. For example if there is frontal nudity in the film it could be rated as suitable for a certain age group. Likewise, these guidelines should also consider whether to the average person, applying contemporary community standards, the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to the prurient interest.

Some More Freedom, Some Responsibility.

The Constitution of India guarantees an individual's freedom of expression, but what about an individual's Freedom of Entertainment? Would it be morally correct if my entertainment is restricted to what is entertaining to my fellow Indians? What may be entertaining to one may offend another person. Making or viewing pornography is a legitimate expression of individual preference and any mature society must accept it at that.

With freedom comes responsibility. All the above arguments in favour of freedom must be considered in the context of a certain responsibility that comes with freedom. With the freedom of expression and entertainment comes the responsibility of making a film available only to those for whom it is meant. The responsibility on the part of the filmmaker not to cross the line between entertainment and grossness. The responsibility on the part of the cinema halls to enforce the age-restrictions. And most of all the responsibility on the part of the

citizens not to abuse the freedom.

Is India Better Off with Censorship?

Some woman rights activist may rubbish all these arguments as mere moral and idealistic talk without any practical value. There is this vocal section of skeptics who believe that sexual expression on screen has a direct bearing on sexual abuse and violence against women. They cite various statistics to make their point. There is a very distressing statistic that 1 woman is raped every 54 minutes. This is the situation when there is almost complete censorship. What is the state of affairs in the so-called liberal western countries? Obviously sexual violence is not related to or influenced in any way by films.

There was widespread sexual violence against Muslim women in Gujarat most of which wasn't reported in the mass media. Is it to be understood that the people behind this violence had access to pornography and that their exposure to pornography is the reason behind their sexual crimes? It is most unlikely because a majority of these sexual crimes were committed by the

self-appointed cultural-police of India. How can they be so corrupt and depraved who otherwise profess porn-free cinema and even disrupt fashion-shows which they consider to be obscene?

It is not so much a question of censorship or no-censorship that will make Indian society clean and incorruptible. It would do good to recognize the freedom of an individual and respect it. Freedom of expression is the birth right of every human being and has to be respected as long as it does not harm others. No law can contain or censor this freedom. It would also do good to stop blaming films for corrupting the minds of the youth. If at all the minds of a section of the youth are corrupted and lead them to commit crimes, it is a law and order question and needs to be dealt as such.

In a modern and forward-looking democracy like India, censorship in the current form is a shameful aberration and needs to be done away with if India is to honestly claim being the world's largest democracy.

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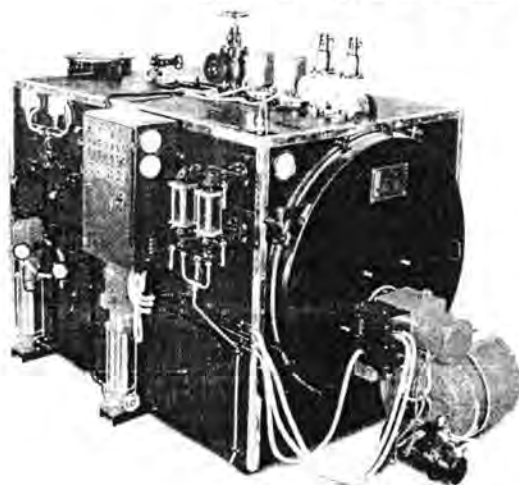
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I, J. R. Patel, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

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PROFILES OF INDIAN LIBERALS

Mama Paramanand

A Political '*Rishi*'

J. V. Naik



(03.07.1838 - 20.09.1893)

Narain Mahadev Paramanand, the gentle Prarthana Samajist, teacher, editor and reformer whose wisdom and virtue made such deep impression on fellow Samajists and other contemporary Liberals that they keenly sought his counsel and called him "Our Political *Rishi*".

He was one of those early Liberals who perceived that India needed all-round reform and that for the achievement of national emancipation all aspects of reform – religious, social, economic, political – should be pursued simultaneously. It was this conviction that made him work with zeal and earnestness with such worthies as R. G. Bhandarkar, M. G. Ranade, B. M. Malabari, K. T. Telang and N. G. Chandavarkar in the cause of national regeneration. Whenever his fellow Samajists and friends had any difficulty they instinctively turned to their "Mama", the term of endearment by which they called him. And that is how he came to be better known to history as "Mama Paramananda".

He was a Liberal, indeed with the capital L,
but of genuine Indian vintage

Mama was born in a poor Vaisya family on 3rd July 1838, at the village Mangaon in Sawantwadi. When barely two years old, he lost his father. His resolute mother and kindly maternal uncle took care of his elementary education. In 1848, he was sent to his sister's place in Mumbai where his brother-in-law Krishnashet Tivrekhar arranged for his education. In 1850 he was admitted to the Central School and four years later to the Elphinstone College where he won a number of scholarships and became a favourite student of Professor Huelings and Sir Alexander Grant. He was one of those who completed their college education before the founding of the University of Bombay but went up for examinations after its establishment. He passed his matriculation and F.A. examinations but did not succeed at the B.A. His poor financial condition compelled him to seek immediate employment which prevented him from making another attempt to complete his graduation.

His professional career began as a teacher at the Elphinstone High School where he made a lasting impression on his students among whom was K. T. Telang who was later to become his close associate in his public welfare activities, and who had the distinction of becoming the first Vice Chancellor of the Bombay University. In 1861 Mama was transferred, on higher pay, to the Government School at Sindh, Karachi, where his talents were much appreciated, but as the climate of the place did not suit his health,

he had to resign and return to Bombay which, in the perspective of history, proved to be a blessing in disguise.

Mama had the distinction of editing two influential Anglo-Marathi newspapers that came to be started in Bombay, following the Queen's Proclamation in 1858: *Indu Prakash* (1862) and *Native Opinion* (1864). He joined *Indu Prakash* as the editor of its English section in 1863 and in the following year, V. N. Mandlik invited him to take charge of his paper *Native Opinion*. Editorship of these papers came to him because he had already acquired a reputation as a good thinker and writer through his presentations on the themes of social utility at the meetings of the Students' Literary and Scientific Society founded by the teachers and students of the Elphinstone College in 1848. This Society served as a training ground for many a social reformer, and it was under the auspices of this Society that a number of Girls' schools was founded in Bombay in the late 1840's some of which continue to function to this day.

Under Mama's editorship, *Native Opinion* became a major instrument to ventilate public grievances. The liberal spirit and extraordinary courage and steadfastness with which he took up the causes of public welfare impressed even Sir Bartle Frere, the then Governor of Bombay, who became a regular subscriber to that paper. He was mainly responsible in bringing

Arthur Crawford to book by exposing through legitimate means his financial irregularities as Municipal Commissioner of Bombay. Some other corrupt officials such as Principal Kirkham and Mr. Russel of Ratnagiri came in for the lash of his bitter attack. His articles on maladministration in the princely states so impressed the ruling Rao of Kutch that he appointed him as *Naib Diwan* of his State in 1868. The atmosphere of petty intrigues and seamy affairs at the princely court, however, did not suit Mama's saintly character, and therefore, he resigned the so-called prestigious position and returned to Bombay.

William Wedderburn, who was then the Registrar of the Bombay High Court, appointed Mama as the Deputy Registrar of the Appellate Side of the Court. And when Wedderburn moved to the Secretariat as Secretary in the Bombay Government, he took Mama with him as Deputy Under Secretary. He was later appointed as Superintendent in the Revenue and General Administration Department, a post which he held till his premature retirement in 1886 due to ill health. During the last ten years of his life he remained totally bed-ridden. Even so, he continued to be a crusader for social justice through his counseling to his reformist friends and his writings in the *Subodha Patrika* and the *Indian Spectator* almost until his death on 13th September 1893.

Mama Paramanand was a founder-member of the Prarthana Samaj, the first major socio-religious reform movement to come up in Western India, established on March 31, 1867. He lived by the six cardinal principles of the Prarthana Samaj which made no invidious distinction between man and man, and man and woman on account of caste, creed or sex. There was never been any dichotomy between his thought and practice, and he did not spare anyone, however high and mighty, who departed from the ac-

cepted Brahmo principles. He did not deter from criticizing Keshav Chandra Sen who violated the norms of the Brahmo Samaj by giving his minor daughter in marriage to the Prince of Cooch-Behar who was an idolator. He also chastised erring Samajists in the columns of the *Subodha Patrika*, organ of the Prarthana Samaj, the English Section of which he edited from 2nd December 1877. He stood for women's rights and amply demonstrated it in the 'Dadaji versus Rakhmabai' case. He denounced untouchability and caste system in no uncertain terms. He championed the cause of widow remarriage and advocated free and compulsory primary education.

He was one of those who was responsible for adopting the motto *Satyameva Jayate* for the Prarthana Samaj, and he always strove to live up to that motto. How his conception of, and quest for truth was very akin to that of Mahatma Gandhi can be seen from the following statement in his first English editorial in the *Subodha Patrika*: "...We shall not be afraid to speak the truth without fear or favour. The *Subodha Patrika* represents a religious body, and as religion means a spirit and not a school, we trust and pray that our utterances on all matters that we may have to take up in these columns will be pervaded by the spirit of truth, righteousness and charity". On another occasion he wrote: "Theology and religion, though distinct can be harmonized in a person who searches after the Infinite Good and illustrates his knowledge in his actions. With an inverted eye he sees clearly that every single element of his nature is adapted to goodness and virtue; and that nothing can be more manly than to have a humble pious soul. His thoughts, word and action are dictates of truth. Truth is all in all to him".

Mama Paramanand was content to live a life of self-effacement dedicated to the cause of social service mainly through his educative

writings. He regularly contributed to the *Indian Spectator* whose editor Behramji Malbari, a kindred soul, had tremendous love and respect for Mama as a reformer and columnist. While paying a tribute to Mama, Malbari wrote:

"As a publicist Mama was a whole man. To him political progress was not the be-all and end-all of our existence. Politics claimed only a part of his homage and yet which of our exclusive politicians surpassed him in sagacity and character? He had a firmer grain than Telang (K.T., 1856-1893), probably a shrewder sense of fitness of things than Nulkar (K.L., 1930-1893) and decidedly more tolerance than that veteran Vishwanath Mandlik (1833-1889).

Mama was so self-effacing, wrote Malbari, that "it was always a struggle to get him disclose his ownership or accept a modest honorarium" for the contributions that he so often made to the *Indian Spectator*.

Mama Paramanand was the Liberal, indeed with the capital L, but of a genuine Indian vintage in the same manner as Justice M. G. Ranade who in his memorial speech on the death anniversary of Justice K. T. Telang paid a just tribute to the revered 'Mama'. He said, "we miss our Political *Rishi*, Mr. N. M. Paramanand ... In matters religious, social or political elevation a purer life and purer soul never lived with us and never worked with us till the last breath of his life".

DR. J. V. NAIK, formerly Professor and Head, Department of History, University of Mumbai.

A Correction

The dates in the boxed item 'India's Independence Day' (page 22 FF. Jan-March 03) should be August 15 and August 14 midnight and not August 15 and August 16. The last paragraph will for instance read: "Thus to keep the day as August 15 but to pacify the orthodox the function was fixed for the midnight of August 14.

"Officially August 15 had started but according to Hindu reckoning Tuesday August 15 would come only with sunrise. Hence freedom at midnight!" The error is regretted. - Ed.

A Philosophy of Globalism: Towards Non-Hegemonic Globalisation

B. Ramesh Babu

"Where all think alike, none thinks much." – Walter Lippmann

Change is the law of life. Most of the time change is gradual and imperceptible. However, we notice change only when it is abrupt and radical. Once in a while the cumulative impact of change becomes acute and leads to a creative break from the past. While change is inexorable in the time bound reality (as distinct from the time free reality) in which we live, all changes do not necessarily lead to or add up to "progress." Yet, we cannot go back, even if we want to. We can only move forward in a linear sense and wisdom lies in channeling this process towards "progress", i.e., a peaceful, and more just world order for the mankind as a whole. Towards this end it is necessary to conceptualise the contemporary flux – the phenomenon of globalisation, understand its dynamics and "manage" it institutionally. To guide humanity in this endeavour we need truly universal norms (standards of right and wrong shared across cultures by all mankind). We must learn to live in harmony with nature, in peace with ourselves and our God, and also at peace with fellow men and the other nations in the world. Humans have no earthly choice!

The phenomenal transformation sweeping the globe since the end of the cold war can be seen as the continuation of the long, uneven and uncertain transition of the world from politics among nations, i.e., from International Politics to Global Politics. This secular phenomenon should be distinguished from the globalisation of markets and marketisation of economics (as well as politics and culture) spearheaded by global capitalism under the US leadership since the end of the cold war. A new

philosophy of globalism is needed to give credence, coherence and direction to legitimise and sustain the ongoing process of globalisation. Without the civilising restraint of truly "universal" norms of right and wrong to guide and redeem it, the contemporary wave of capitalist globalisation has degenerated inevitably into hegemonisation. There is an urgent need for a serious discourse on the philosophical sinews of legitimate global governance. Otherwise planet earth could be consumed in a "clash of civilisations", *a la* Huntington. Thinking minds the world over should embark on a concerted search for a "confluence of cultures", conceptualise a "global mosaic beyond the sovereign state", and envision a new institutional framework for genuine global self-governance. This indeed is a challenge worthy of the best minds on earth.

A paradigmatic shift is taking place in the international system. A new web of identities and loyalties (parallel and hierarchical) is in the making (in India, Canada, Europe and much of Asia & Africa). Over time a new architecture of jurisdictions structuring power and authority in line with the altered framework of loyalties (and identities) will have to emerge. This will happen sooner than we think. Whether such a new equation (dispensation/engagement) between loyalties and jurisdictions at all levels of governance (stretching from local to global) will be arrived at relatively peacefully (or not) is the fundamental issue of our times. It is important that we build on this emerging global web of governance and keep it in step with the role and reach of globalisation taking place in commerce, communications,

culture and most other spheres of our lives. If the disjunction between the emerging loyalties and jurisdictions strays beyond the (retractable range of the) elasticity of the extant institutions of governance (at the national and international levels), there would be violence, disorder and chaos.

In this context it is pertinent to recall that today's mighty and "solid" nations were forged in the crucible of humiliations suffered in common and/or victories celebrated together. The shared feeling of "we" and "they" among a people is mercurial and has a dynamism and chemistry of its own. Time and context can and do undermine the solidarity of a people. They may and do unite in different configurations at different times and come together in different contexts under the banner of hitherto dormant national identities. For example, East Pakistan of 1947 emerged as Bangladesh in 1971. An attack from the Mars or Moon could possibly bring all of "us", the earthlings, together against "them"! In such an eventuality even the hegemonic leadership of the USA could become acceptable across the planet!

The most crucial change needed, however, is in the attitude of man towards change. Man's greatest challenge does not lie in coming up with new ideas. It lies in escaping from the old ones! The scientific-rational-western-liberal-capitalist-male-mindset, which insists on individual rights and entitlements against society without giving equal importance to his concomitant obligations and duties, is the very basis of the ills afflicting the modern society worldwide.

The self-centred and

essentially selfish (bordering on the greedy) atomistic conceptions of society with the fundamentally flawed notion that we can and should get (nay, grab) what all we want (whether we need it or not) from the society/community without contributing anything to its betterment is the overarching flaw, the fundamental evil of the western legacy.

The whole rational choice heritage of scientism, modernity, and progress as championed by the West is the foundation of man's phenomenal achievements during the last four centuries. However, this legacy like so many others in history, is overreaching itself and is threatening the very humanity of man. "Progress" itself is being questioned and is becoming questionable as a desired destination of man. Mere material advancement without the redeeming spirituality does not and cannot lead to real progress. It is time to curb the excesses of logic and rationality and return to sanity, common sense and above all to moderation. "To shun too much" of everything (even logic and goodness) should become the guiding principle for mankind at this juncture. An ancient Sanskrit axiom enjoins man to eschew excess in everything and everywhere, *ahiti sarvatra varjayet!*

Furthermore, in international relations, the western legacy of the last four to five centuries has mainly emphasised conflict and clash of interests and justified the sovereign nation state's right (not merely its power) to unilaterally pursue its narrow "national interests" at the expense of peace, justice and the common good of mankind. National aggrandisement, i.e., the exploitation and domination of the weak by the powerful states, became the norm and even legitimate. The rationale and the mindset underlying such policies inevitably led to a *clash of civilizations*. Instead nations as well as non-nation states should seek a *confluence of cultures*, it is argued here. We must learn from the Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim, Jewish, Confucian, Sumerian, Incan and other

ancient civilisations of man, their visions of the cosmos and man's place in it. We can, then, rescue planet earth from the current trajectory of "progress" towards commercialization, vulgarisation, inequality, injustice, violence, chaos, exhaustion, environmental degradation and annihilation.

A return to Gandhi, Gramodaya, Green, God, and Green Peace* and above all to common sense is the need of the post cold war world. We must advance (or is it return?) to conceptions of authority as trust, i.e., power with a redeeming (social and moral) purpose. In short we must return to idealism. Rampant consumerism of here and now has to be given up. Similarly, the "presentism" of modern times must yield place to a healthy balance between the present and the past, and also between the present and the future. Parochialisms of the whites, browns, blacks, and yellows; the rich and poor; the feminists and champions of children's rights etc., even at their best, offer only a narrow and partial vision of what mankind and planet earth require. Moderation has to become the hallmark of human civilisation in the new millennium. Need, not greed, should be the basis of all human endeavour on earth! Mother earth has enough for everyone's need, but not for his greed, as Mahatma Gandhi observed wisely.

"This is mine, that is another's, Such reckonings are for the narrow minded.

For the noble hearted,

The whole world is one family."

- *The Mahabharata*

* Mahatma Gandhi, Village Development, Thomas Hill Green, Faith in the Supreme Being, and the ecological balance of planet earth respectively.

PROFESSOR RAMESH BABU is the President of the Hyderabad Chapter of the Indian Liberal Group. Formerly he was the Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Professor of Politics, University of Bombay; Senior Academic Fellow in International Relations, American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad.

Professor S. Swaminathan A Perceptive Writer, A Fine Teacher

In the death of Professor S. Swaminathan, the world of economic journalism has lost a perceptive writer who had a deep understanding of the functioning of the economy. Readers looked forward to reading his column week after week. His columns were models of wit and wisdom. They spoke directly to the readers. He never minced his words. Whenever he felt that something was wrong, he said so bluntly. All the same, he was not dogmatic.

He strongly believed that liberalisation and economic reforms were essential for accelerating growth. This did not, however, prevent him from pointing out the shortfalls in the pursuit of specific policies. With a sure grasp, he dealt with almost every aspect of the Indian economy. Though cynical at times, he was in general optimistic of the future of the country. He saw not only the dark cloud but also the silver lining. He edited for several years the "Survey of Indian Industry" of *The Hindu*. To be successful, one must write in a way the people who have not studied economics as a discipline, can understand. At the same time, the writings must be based on a good understanding of economic theory combined with a feel for data and what works on the ground. Swaminathan excelled in this art. He wrote without a display of economists' arsenal of jargons. For this sake, he did not sacrifice the rigour of the discipline. No wonder, he was called 'Professor Swaminathan' long after he ceased to be a Professor.

Swaminathan's columns were not confined to economics alone, even though it was his primary concern. He wrote on politics, religion, music and education. He was truly a "renaissance man" with a deep interest and knowledge of a wide spectrum of disciplines.

Swaminathan belonged to the category of great teachers. He experimented with new ideas for carrying quality education to a larger audience through non-conventional channels. As a person, Swaminathan was gentle and compassionate, and eager always to help others. Swaminathan was in the first batch of Commerce Honours students whom I taught. Normally, it is given to students to write about teachers who pass away. Here I am the teacher writing about a student who had excelled in his chosen field. Such is the way of life. The cause of economic literacy has lost a good guide and a fine teacher.

DR. C. RANGARAJAN, Chairman, 12th Finance Commission.

COURTESY: *The Hindu*, December 14, 2002.

After Iraq What Next?

U.S. Policy in the Middle East

Mohammad Firouzian

It is true that positive developments in Iraq towards democracy under pro-American government would surely push reforms in Iran and draw the Americans closer to the Iranian people.

Today, a real threat to regional and global peace has been removed. In fact, President Bush's warning that Saddam would not hesitate to give weapons of mass destruction to terrorists was justified. Saddam had shown that he was not reluctant to use chemical bombs against innocent people. The international community was witness to Saddam's violation of essential norms of international law several times before. He imposed an eight-year long war on Iran (1980-1988). Thereafter he occupied Kuwait in 1991 and while he was forced to leave that country he attacked Israel with missiles and also set ablaze Kuwait's oil wells, which seriously polluted the regional environment.

Saddam's breach of human rights in Iraq particularly his cruelty against the Kurds and Shias is well known to the world community. President Bush was right when he said that Saddam was a war criminal and should be brought before the International Court of Justice. Unfortunately, diplomatic efforts failed and war broke out due to the equivocal position of some governments that indirectly allowed Saddam to disregard international obligations and ignore the warning. It was revealing when the French representative to the UN called on Saddam not to use weapons of mass destruction! It meant they believed that Saddam possessed such weapons. It may be said that there would not have been war if the

influential states of the UNSC had taken a strong stand on the issue and had realized that an immediate threat did exist. Moreover, it is ironic that the major powers had connived with Saddam's moves to obtain weapons of mass destruction for more than a decade.

At this juncture, the question is whether President Bush's approach towards the regional actors is changing with an opportunistic consideration to achieve short-term aims? Does the United States disregard long-term geo-economic and geo-political realities in this era of globalization? If America unilaterally involves itself in different parts of the globe and pursues the same policy that the erstwhile Soviet Union followed in the 1970s, it would push their rivals to coordinate their foreign policies and make a strategic coalition to weaken America's position. Even if the Soviet empire no longer exists, the developing world is more active than ever before in demanding a just international order. The European Union has moved towards actual unification. Russia is expected to reinforce its place in reshaping new international relations. China is emerging as a world power economically and militarily. In the long run, the people of Asia, particularly the West Asian nations will be deeply sensitive of America's behaviour in the contemporary world.

One can claim that America,

while having military bases in Turkey, Pakistan and also in the Persian Gulf, is now trying to gain a strategically important base in Iraq, so as to complete the confinement of Iran and to control the Arabs especially Syria and Saudi Arabia, whose Prince Abdullah is smartly playing a double hand. It is true that positive developments in Iraq towards democracy under the pro-American government would surely push reforms in Iran and make the Americans closer to the Iranian people. But it would happen only after the consolidation of a secular and stable regime in Iraq. At this moment there is no hope for a reliable and firm coalition to take over the government in that country. This is why President Bush was compelled to get involved militarily in post-Saddam Iraq, hoping to consolidate the situation there within a required term! However, it is happening when the situation in Afghanistan, as was anticipated, has not been stabilised and is likely to be unstable in the immediate future.

It must be considered that America's long term presence in Iraq and possible foreign interference there would cause uncertainty to prevail in the entire region. It should also not be forgotten that President Reagan's deployment of forces in the Persian Gulf during the 1980s actually aggravated tensions. The US naval presence in the Persian Gulf after the liberation of Kuwait led to increasing militarization of the

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region. It should also not be ignored that Iraq is different from Afghanistan due to its strategic location. Iraq is not a landlocked state. It is located in the heart of the Arab world and via Jordan is close to another trouble spot, Israel. Iraq has huge sources of energy and is the neighbour of other major oil-rich countries.

Given America's huge resources of energy and its non-dependence on the oil of the region, it is not obviously logical to say that President Bush is searching for Iraq's oil. However, taking into account that Iraq should play a key role in the oil market in the near future, President Bush probably wants to control the Europeans in their struggle for political and security integration, indirectly by influencing the decisions of OPEC.

The economic development of the Europeans is deeply dependent on the energy of the Persian Gulf and a decade later on the Caspian Basin as well. America's presence from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea region and its military and economic foothold there would compel the Europeans to alienate the United States. It comes at a time when the world cannot forget America's technological and economic supremacy. Moreover, a friendly Iraq for the United States can help reduction of oil trafficking from the Strait of Hormuz by exporting part

of its oil as well as oil of the other coastal states of the southern Persian Gulf via Turkey to the Mediterranean Sea and via Saudi Arabia to the Red Sea. This might lessen Iran's role as an arbiter in the use of Persian Gulf energy.

With respect to Iran the situation is different from Afghanistan, Iraq, North Korea and other so-called insurgent states. The changing trend in Iran is rooted to its society and polity. Precisely for this reason President Bush encouraged the Iranians to struggle for democracy and civil society even though he named Iran as part of the axis of evil. Moreover, the two governments may not discourage the growing proximity and friendly sentiments between people of the two states especially after the September 11 tragedy. This would prompt the American government to resort to constructive political means towards Iran. To be sure, secularism and democracy are not objectives that could be thrust by force. These are the objectives that should be patiently pursued. Thus, President Bush ought to show restraint when objecting to Teheran's humanitarian atomic project and its defence capability. President Bush ought to recognize and promote Iran's role as an influential state in the region. Blackmailing Iran about the peace process of the Middle East always made Teheran suspicious of the

emergence of an anti-Iran axis in the region. This would affect moderation of Iranian foreign policy and would push Teheran towards a hard-line approach. On the other hand, President Bush should firmly criticize the stagnation of the reforms in Iran and the breach of human rights in that country. This will make the Americans closer to the Iranian public. At the same time, the Iranian government must recognize the potential influence of America in the country. Ignoring the role and interests of America would mean losing diplomatic opportunities and Iran's interests. However, it is important to realize that stability and tranquility in the region more or less depend on the implementation of political reforms in Iran. Stalling the socio-political development in Iran either by reactionaries or indirectly through irrational shock from outside would affect Iran's regional strategy.

Regarding North Korea, the Bush administration must realize China's objection and the vulnerability of the Pacific states particularly Japan and South Korea if tension develops. It is quite understandable that Pyongyang's neighbours do not want a war in their volatile region.

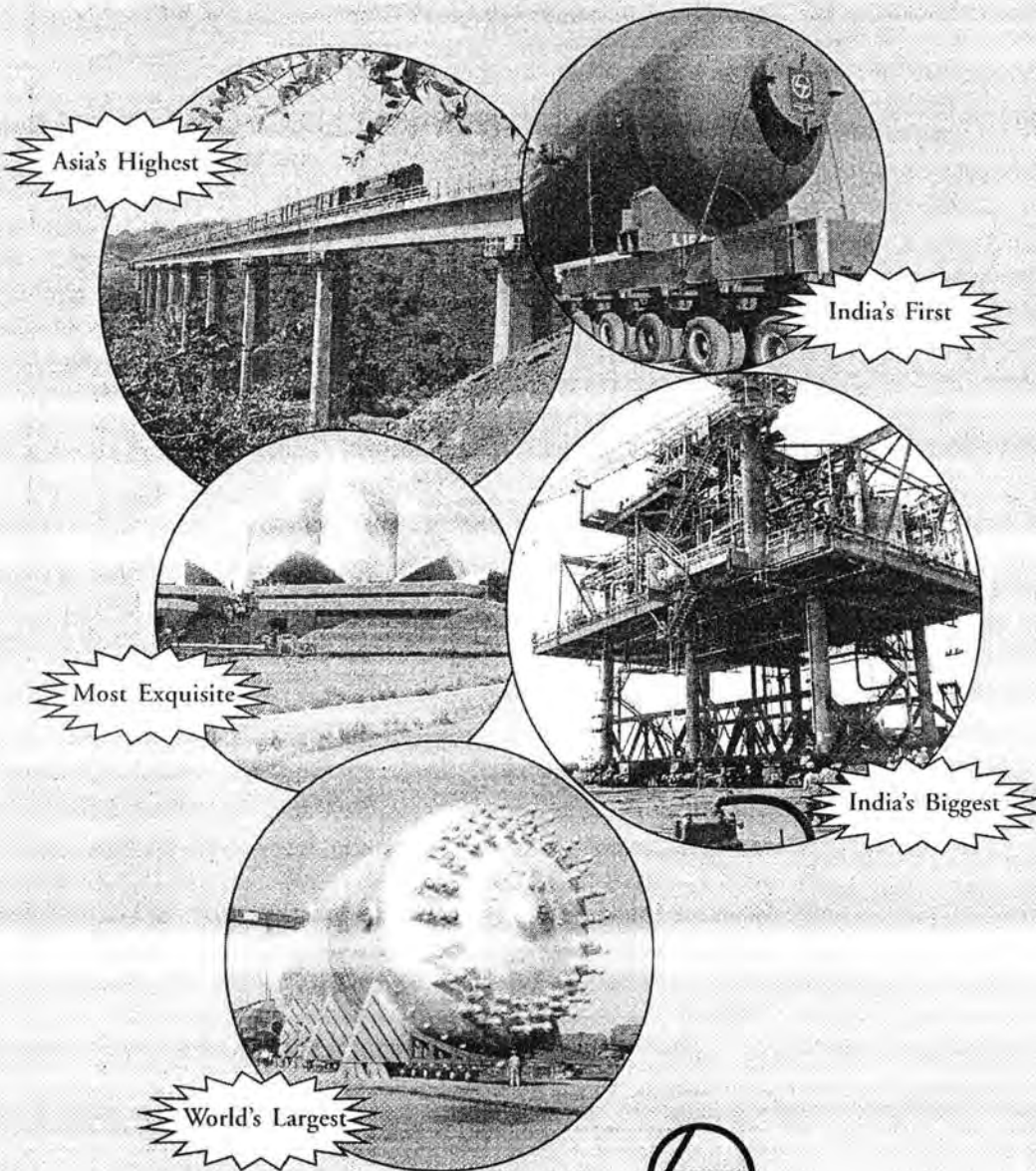
DR. MOHAMMMAD FIROUZIAN is an Iranian scholar. He did his Ph.D. in Central Eurasian Studies from the University of Mumbai.



In fixing the limits of power between the State and the citizens, the citizen should be the primary and the State the secondary concern. If we proceed on the opposite basis we shall have minimum freedom for the citizen and maximum power for the officials and the ministers elected to power.

C. Rajagopalachari
Independence Day Reflections,
Swarajya August 13, 1960

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The Strategic Triangle: A Chinese Trap?

Nitin G. Raut

India ought not to get entrapped in the ST which is nothing but a new incarnation of the defunct NAM.

The Russian Prime Minister, Vladimir Putin's visit to India last December 2002 ought to have focussed on the new paradigms of Indo-Russian bilateral relations in the context of the unipolar world. Instead, it sparked off speculation on the possibility of the formation of a 'Strategic Triangle' (ST) between India, Russia and China, among a section of foreign policy and strategic analysts still chasing the NAM mirage. If big powers like Russia, France and China could not stall U.S. action in Iraq, to involve India in an alternative power alliance antagonistic or rival to the United States, is not only absurd but devoid of foresight and vision. It underscores the servility of this section which has yet to exorcise itself of the ghost of NAM.

The concept of the ST is not conceived for a stable and peaceful Asia. It will be used by China to advance its hegemonistic designs in Asia and later in the world. China is already in conflict with Vietnam over the domain of the Spratly Islands in the oil rich South China Sea. It has a naval base on the Coco Island, off the Myanmar mainland, and connected by an all-weather road from China to the Bay of Bengal. The electronic eavesdropping facilities in Coco Island is already a threat to the Indian Naval base in Fortress Andamans that commands the strategic sea routes through the Straits of Malacca.

China can never be expected to play a neutral role in the incendiary Indo-Pak conflict. For China, the Kashmir issue thwarts India from realizing its potentialities as a major Asian power which can effectively counter China, more so,

given India's crucial geo-political location. It therefore suits China to back Pakistan to keep India embroiled in a conflict with Pakistan. India's unresolved border dispute with China and the latter's claim to Arunachal Pradesh as also its occupation of Tibet are among the many differences that will spike the ST balloon. In fact, in the September 2002 New York meeting, External Affairs Minister Yeshwant Sinha had with his Russian and Chinese counterparts, China raised the issue of Indo-Pakistan tension and suggested immediate revival of dialogue without referring to the issue of cross-border terrorism supported by Pakistan!

India's growing relations with the U.S. may get adversely affected. After the 9/11 WTC bombing, the U.S. has exercised some, if not effective, pressure on Pakistan's support to jihadi terrorism against India. Faint contours of an Indo-U.S. strategic relationship seems to be appearing on the horizon. The series of Indo-U.S. joint military exercises last year is an indication. The U.S. has also dismantled its post-Pokhran II sanctions against India. Although the U.S. investment in India may not be as large as in South East Asia, China or Taiwan, it is nevertheless important for India's development.

The prospect of the ST has barely created a ripple in Washington. The U.S. perhaps realizes it as an inherently flawed concept. In the present war against terrorism, Pakistan is its "stalwart ally". The U.S. perceives relations with India from a long term strategy. In the immediate future and given the U.S. war against the Taliban and Al Quaida terrorists and the possible

attack on Iraq, Pakistan is the key ally. However in Gulf War II, Pakistan has overtly opposed the U.S. liberation of Iraqi people from the clutches of Saddam's tyrannical regime. India at best can be a good democratic ally and not an immediate strategic partner. Much will depend on how India emerges as an Asian economic and military power and to what extent China will be ready to challenge the U.S. as the world's only super power. The ST is only meant to test the waters of the possibility of China's ability to challenge the U.S. U.S. proximity to Pakistan should hardly be a reason for India to be enticed by the concept of ST. In fact, India's response should be strategic, which is not adversarial or confrontationist with either the U.S. or Russia. And the ST is certainly not the answer.

India ought not to get entrapped in the ST which is nothing but a new incarnation of the defunct NAM. It is still not economically or militarily strong to ensure parity in relations with the U.S. or Russia. Something which China has acquired given the U.S.\$70 billion investment. This has given the U.S.-China economies a degree of inter-dependency. It ensures political and policy maneuvering for both, even if it means diluting their proclaimed political objectives while pursuing their cat and mouse strategic game plans. It is significant to note that China neither opposed nor abstained on the crucial U.N. Security Council resolutions on Iraq. It has not even publicly criticized the U.S. on Iraq. The U.S. on its part continues to ignore human rights violations and absence of political democracy in China. China has

thereby ensured its slice and economic interest in the Iraqi oil pie, now that the U.S. has ousted Saddam Hussein and has occupied Iraq.

Given the complexities and dynamics of international relations, India should continue to consolidate its relations with both the U.S. and Russia within the parameters of mutually beneficial bilateral relationships which are non conflicting.

It is also doubtful that Russia will bite the ST bait so naively. The fact that Russia has allowed the eastward expansion of NATO and agreed to the US scrapping the Anti Ballistic Missiles Treaty 1972 in favour of US's Ballistic Missile Defence System shows Moscow's pragmatic flexibility to tolerate the hard reality of the US as the only super power. President Bush on his part has assured Moscow that Russian economic interests in Iraq would be protected in the lucrative oil and gas projects that will follow. Of crucial importance for both is the gas pipeline from Central Asian states passing through Iraq and Pakistan.

India's aim should be to continue to strengthen economic and military ties with Russia. Russia, given its past imperiousness, is also skeptical of US policies. But at the same time, it is pragmatic enough to cooperate with the US, while retaining its independent policy. It is mending fences with China. Likewise, India should not expect

Russia's unqualified support in its conflict with Pakistan. Yet Russian support is crucial in terms of requirements of military hardware and diplomatic support, however limited. In the unipolar world, Russia is bound to be beholden to the US for economic reasons. Therefore, India's policy should be for parallel interaction with the US and Russia, by expanding and diversifying its trade and economic relations and also by sharing of intelligence on terrorism.

India, while formulating its policies with the US and Russia has to keep in mind areas of common concern. Today the threat of Islamic separatism and jihadi terrorism is common to India, the US and Russia. While India is confronted with Pakistan inspired Islamic separatism in Jammu & Kashmir, Russia is facing similar Muslim separatism in Chechnya and Dagestan. Indo-Russian focus on Muslim separatism whose inevitable spinoff is jihadi terrorism can activate fruitful partnership between India, the US and Russia. The Muttahida Majlis Amal leaders who have formed governments in Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province in Pakistan are supporters of Chechnya and Dagestan Muslim separatists as much of Taliban and Al Quaida and jihadis in Jammu & Kashmir. These forces also pose a direct threat to the US. It is here that Indian diplomacy will be put on its mettle in terms of effective coordination of the Joint Working Group on terrorism with both the US and Russia.

India however should not lose sight of the fact that it has to ultimately carve out its own role in Asia. For that, Indian economic reforms have to be put on fast track and acquisition of aircraft carriers, modern strike aircraft and the manufacture of combat aircraft should be speeded up. If the Indian economy shows signs of rapid growth, India can exercise effective political influence over Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives and Myanmar. This will also enhance India's equation with the ASEAN as a full fledged dialogue partner. India should aim for economic integration with the ASEAN and APEC. The futility of SAARC is obvious and should be allowed to die a natural death. The Indian Navy has shown its flag in the South China Sea and South East Asia. Its exercise with the US Navy and escorting it through the Straits of Malacca will remain symbolic if effective modernization of the Indian Navy is not undertaken as the Navy has a crucial role to play in protecting India's economic interests and also in the event of hostilities.

In this light, formalizing or institutionalizing ST even as a dialogue arrangement will be conceding to the strategic objectives of China. By trying to pitch India and Russia, they will become unwitting pawns in the game of Chinese checkers.

MR. NITIN G. RAUT is a lawyer by profession and member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*.

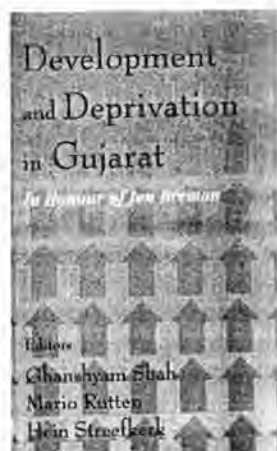


I believe that development work should be placed outside the purview of ministerial control in order to insulate it against political instabilities.

Jayaprakash Narayan

Towards Total Revolution Volume 4, page 160
Published by Popular Prakashan

BOOK REVIEWS



DEVELOPMENT AND DEPRIVATION IN GUJARAT

Edited by

Ghanshyam Shah, Mario Rutten, Hein Streefkerk

Published by

Sage Publications India Private Limited, M-32, Market,
Greater Kailash, Part I, New Delhi 110 048.

Year of Publication: 2002. Pages: 345. Price: Rs.580

Reviewed by

Dr. Rudolf Heredia SJ, well known sociologist and commentator.
He is the Rector of St. Xavier's College.

Most predictions of a setback for the Hindutva forces in the Gujarat assembly elections of December 2002 in retrospect now seem to have been a projection for hopes rather than a reflection of the real situation. How did the Hindutva forces succeeding in co-opting Dalits and tribals together with the middle class and upper castes? Is this a sustainable pattern for Gujarat and possibly repeatable elsewhere, as indeed the Sangh Parivar has predicted?

Most of us are familiar with Gujarat as "an open multi-ethnic society based on a long history of in- and out-migration. Tolerance and pragmatism have for long constituted the core of civic culture in Gujarat. It is the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi who not only advocated ahimsa, i.e. non-violence, but also mobilised the masses for passive resistance against the foreign rule." (p.10) And yet "since the 1980s and 1990s, this region has been the scene of frequent, grisly communal holocausts. Domestic violence against women and atrocities against the Dalits continue unabated in various parts of Gujarat." (*ibid.*)

Such a contradiction between Gandhi's committed ahimsa and Modi's "Gujarati asmita" needs a historical and contextual perspec-

tive, if we are to understand and respond effectively to the "Hindu Rashtra" that is now taking root in Gujarat. This kind of critical reflection is not something that is available on instant order. It is a long and arduous intellectual process, that must engage our attention. It is precisely here that Jan Breman has made his contribution with his enlightening studies on Gujarat over a period of decades. *Development and Deprivation in Gujarat* has been put together "in honour of Jan Breman". Ghanshyam Shah and Mario Rutten highlight Breman's contribution in their introductory review, (Ch.1) while the volume carries that analysis further to give us valuable insights into how a pluralist society could be so rapidly co-opted by a chauvinist cultural nationalism, that now beyond hegemonic 'Hindutva' has grown into a far more dangerous new monster called "Moditva". The present mass hysteria represents the cooptation of people into an authoritarian, patriarchal, upper caste-class movement that has not and cannot address the underlying contradictions of the burgeoning capitalist development in the state. In a democracy this cannot be sustained indefinitely, but if the contradictions are not resolved within our democratic Constitution, then they will only be contained by state fascism. The writing on the

wall must alert us to this real possibility.

The volume under review is divided into four parts. In the introductory one Indira Hirway and Piet Terhal (Ch.2) underline the contradictions of capitalist growth. Industrial development is skewed and working class protections are being dismantled. Agricultural production and environmental degradation are being neglected. As a result development is both unsustainable and polluting. Such contradictions are contained by a political culture of authoritarianism, whose historical origins Parita Mukta (Ch. 3) traces to the nationalist understanding of Sardar Patel and the revivalist projections of K. M. Munshi. Both have been co-opted by the Hindutvawadis, the Bade Sardar as the model for the chota one, while Munshi's eulogising the Somnath temple legitimises Hindu hurt.

The second section on "Labour Relations" provides an elaborate illustration over five chapters of the casualisation of the labour force. Douglas E. Haynes's historical review from 1600 to 1960, traces how Surat became a craft centre rather than a large industrial city like Ahmedabad. (Ch.4) Sujata Patel explains how corporatist patronage, as initiated by Gandhi in

the Ahmedabad textile industry, finally was co-opted by the capitalist, to the disadvantage of the workers, whose political growth in terms of class based alliances remained stymied. (Ch.5) The experiences of halpati women is described by Uma Kothari. Of special interest is the kind of gender alliances they are beginning to form across class to cope with the changes. (Ch.6) But this does little to change the basic situation of landless labour in south Gujarat. For in the last 30 years the casualisation of labour had actually been accelerated with the new liberal economic policy. As explained by Hein Streefkerk the workers have survived with a social network that allows for survival coping at subsistence levels, but in no way can this substitute for the security and welfare that must be the larger responsibility of the state. (Ch.7) Kiran Desai explains how workers at the fringe search for space in the employment pyramid with what precarious social capital they can muster.

The five chapters of the third section are on "Encroachments and Assertions". In the various missionary encounters with adivasis in the Dangs, David Hardiman shows how several elite groups are in competition to control and subordinate the adivasis. (Ch. 9) The bhagat movement began in the 17th century. It was encountered by the Christian missionaries of the 19th and early 20th century. But these were not successful on any mass scale in their so called "civilising mission", especially as various tribal religious movements were co-opted by the nationalist Gandhian one. Since the 1990s, more radical and fundamentalist evangelical Christians have begun to propagate their "new cosmology" with some success. However, this has produced a Hindu revivalist backlash inspired by the Sangh Parivar, though Hardiman himself is sceptical about how sustainable either of these will

eventually be. Satyakam Joshi's case study of Dangs highlights the contradictions between the adivasis Bhils and the Kokana cultivators, and the difficulty of bringing these various groups together in a united and focused movement. (Ch.10) So too with regard to Bharuch district, whereby Stany Pinto indicates how different levels of incorporation in a market economy make the struggle for land and the assertion for 'adivasi' problematic. (Ch.11)

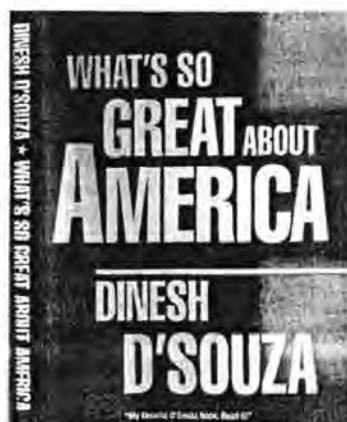
Harshad Desai and Chandu Maheria elaborate a case study of dalit assertion in Sambarda of Banaskanta district. (Ch.12) This was a satyagraha of 131 days that was finally successful in getting its demands. Not unexpectedly globalisation has accentuated all these problems as Shalini Randeria in her contribution on globalising Gujarat underlines. Taking up specific case studies with regard to the Gir forest the Campaign for People's Control over Natural Resources and the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), she shows how the state competes for foreign investment and how in the end international appeal and international law seem to be more effective ways of protecting the rights of the poor, as illustrated by the NBA experience. (Ch.13)

The last section comprises three chapters on "Migration". Amita Shah establishes how the traditional rural-rural migration has now become rural-urban, since the 1980s, with all the consequences of distress and deprivation evidenced in the farm economy and urban slums. (Ch.14) Miranda Engelsen's case study of the Saurashtra Patels shows how they have cooped successfully with migrating from Saurashtra to Surat, establishing themselves in the diamond industry, and mobilising through their Saurashtra Patel Samaj, a caste based association founded in 1992. (Ch.15) Finally, the international dimension of migration in Gujarat is studied by

Mario Rutten and Pravin J. Patel, who survey 313 households in central Gujarat with regard to their relatives in East Africa and in Britain. Interestingly those in East Africa still see some future with their relatives in Gujarat, whereas those in Britain seem to think of Gujarat more as their 'sasra', i.e. the in-laws abode, where traditionally one visits but must not tarry.

Gujarat is one of the most industrialised and prosperous states of the union and yet its development is typical of that of the rest of the country: an increasing social inequality between a wealthy and dominant middle class and the vast labouring masses of the increasingly casualisation of the working class, an unplanned economic development that is polluting and unsustainable, an ever more authoritarian state marginalizing the voiceless masses. The attempt here has been to contain the resulting contradictions under the umbrella of a Hindu Rashtra, which is promising, not Gandhi's Ramrajya, but rather the one projected in Advani's *rathayatra* and its fallout in the 1990s, and now with Modi's pogrom and his *gauravayatra* in 2002 a new threshold seems to have been crossed. Over the years independent citizens commissions, the media and others have given us a chilling narration of the violence and brutality that has implicated the state and its politicians, the government and its police, and now even the middle class and women. Is this our future or will it be a thing of the past?

This important volume provides a basis for interrogating the various claims that are made by those who control and meld the state of Gujarat. This in fact has been the life long effort of Jan Breman, and this volume does well in acknowledging his contribution and carrying it further. It is a must read for anyone concerned with Gujarat.



WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT AMERICA

By Dinesh D'Souza

Published by

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Reviewed by

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In a way, Dinesh D'Souza is unique among Indian immigrants in the United States. Large numbers from the Subcontinent have made names for themselves in medicine, business, consulting, engineering, literature, university teaching, and scholarship in specific disciplines. But D'Souza is the only commentator and critic on general matters of culture and politics, whose varied and controversial writings, have been acclaimed and attacked. Prior to *What's So Great About America* he has written *Illiberal Education* (1991), *The End of Racism* (1995), *Ronald Reagan: How an Ordinary Man Became an Extraordinary Leader* (1997), and *The Virtue of Prosperity: Finding Values in an Age of Techno Affluence* (2000). His articles have appeared in leading magazines and newspapers, including the *Wall Street Journal*, the *New York Times*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, and *Harper's* to name just a few. He has appeared on the best known TV and radio talk shows, including *Nightline*, and *Firing Line*.

A 1983 Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Dartmouth College, he served as a senior domestic policy analyst at the Reagan White House from 1987 to 1988. At the moment, at age 36, he is the Karen Rishwain Fellow at the prestigious Hoover Institution at Stanford University.

What's So Great About America has already made it to the *New York Times* best-seller list. Given the events of September 11, 2001, D'Souza sees

the need to defend the U.S. against the intellectual denunciations of Islamic fundamentalism and the indigenous attacks of both the political Left who claim that the nation is imperialist, exploitive, racist, the oppressor of women and minorities, and the Right which argues that "America is suffering a moral and cultural breakdown." (p.24)

D'Souza evaluates these charges. The strength of the work is enhanced because he does not reject them lightly. Unlike many, including President Bush, he does not dismiss, out of hand, the perpetrators of September 11 simply as "cowards", "murderers and "lunatics." Islamic fundamentalism is certainly part of the Muslim religious tradition. D'Souza quotes the renowned Islamic scholar and historian, Bernard Lewis, now retired from Princeton.

"In the Muslim worldview the basic division of mankind is into the House of Islam (Dar al-Islam) and the House of War (Dar al-Harb). Ideally the House of Islam is conceived as a single community. The logic of Islamic law, however, does not recognize the permanent existence of any other polity outside Islam." (pp.10-11).

So those who proclaim jihad against other peoples are acting within a definite strand of the Islamic tradition. In that tradition

"Virtue" as understood by its followers, is more important than freedom as defined in the "decadent" West. Though millions of Muslims do not accept that vision of Islam, they are viewed by the fundamentalists as apostates and infidels. This is a major challenge that D'Souza takes seriously and seeks to meet, and meet it he does.

D'Souza admits that in a free society, freedom can be abused. He acknowledges the vulgarity, vice and licentiousness of part of American life. But he also points to the millions of decent, hardworking, Americans who have chosen the "straight path." True virtue is the product of choice, he argues. Wherever a group imposes its idea of virtue on society, it becomes "coerced" virtue, which is not virtue at all. "Compulsion cannot produce virtue; it can only produce the outward semblance of virtue." (p.190) And compulsion eventually leads to a totalitarian society based upon the use of ruthless force. D'Souza might have quoted a column of Thomas Friedman's in the *New York Times*, who in turn quotes from the historian Victor Davis Hanson:

"We must cease the apologetic tone we have developed with the Arab world, and make it clear that their ministers who hector us are not legitimate without elections, their spokesmen are not journalists without a free press, and their

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intellectuals are not credible without liberty. The right to admonish Americans on questions of morality is not an entitlement, but something earned through a shared commitment to constitutional government."

Elements of the political Left, whose anti-Americanism, goes back to the Vietnam War, have actually blamed the United States for the September 11 attacks. D'Souza quotes a University of Massachusetts professor, Jennie Traschen, who claimed that America was "a symbol of terrorism and death and fear and destruction and oppression" (p.26) throughout the world. Multiculturalists on academic campuses attack Western civilization and the United States for its historic oppression of African-Americans, Hispanics, women, members of the Third World. After all, they argue, the Founding Fathers who wrote the Constitution were slave owners who established a "model totalitarian society."

D'Souza does not dodge the truth, to the extent that it exists, in these charges. But he counters them effectively through a comparative perspective. He does not use an unreal, utopian standard to judge the United States alone. Slavery existed in the United States, but it also did so in all known civilizations. It is by no means an exclusively Western institution. "The Sumerians and Babylonians practiced slavery, as did the ancient Egyptians. The Chinese, the Indians and the Arabs all had slaves. Slavery was widespread in Greece and Rome, and also in sub-Saharan Africa. American Indians practiced slavery long before Columbus set one foot on this continent." (pp.54-55). What is distinctively Western was the movement to end slavery. D'Souza quotes J. M. Roberts, "No civilization once dependent on slavery has ever been able to eradicate it, except the Western." (p.55)

Similarly, ethnocentrism and colonialism are to be found in the histories of all cultures, the Persian, the Macedonian, the Islamic, the Mongol, the Chinese, the Aztec and the Inca. Yet, the West has also made efforts to transcend ethnocentrism. It has borrowed throughout its history from the ideas of other cultures. Only in recent times have other cultures exhibited this trait. Western colonialism though harsh, says D'Souza, was responsible for transmitting the political ideas of freedom and democracy. He draws heavily on the Indian experience to make his point. What he says is certainly true of British and American colonialism. But is it as true of Belgian, Portuguese and Italian imperialism? Not all colonial traditions were similar or resulted in similar political legacies. They should not be lumped together. In the same vein D'Souza evaluates the results of slavery and racism in the United States and concludes that the descendants of slaves, are full citizens today with all the rights and privileges granted by the U.S. Constitution. Today's African-Americans are much better off than their kin in Africa, but their progress (and there has been a good deal of it), has been hindered by some of their own leadership and the cult of victimization. Having won full citizenship, their leadership should turn its attention to black cultural problems.

"Ironically, it is during the period from 1965 to the present—a period that saw the Great Society, the civil rights laws, affirmative action, welfare, and other attempts to integrate blacks into the mainstream and raise their standard of living that the black family disintegrated. Today that disintegration has reached the point that the typical African-American child is born out of wedlock." (p.127)

The group that should act as

a role model for native African-Americans, the group that clearly recognize the promise of America, are the immigrants. They recognize that America is a new type of society that can produce a new kind of human being.

D'Souza sees the dominance of the West in the modern era, especially the United States, because it invented three institutions: science, democracy and capitalism. It made the United States more egalitarian, individualistic and free than any other country. As he writes. "America is the greatest, freest, and most decent society in existence." (p.193). That is why immigrants flock to its shores from every nook and cranny of the World. Though obviously those born to wealth have some advantage, no one, today, is held back by caste, class, birth, religion or social background. All gates are open, but one has to have the drive, ambition and discipline to take advantage of them. Above all, education is the key to success. That is why immigrants, especially Indians, have done so well. They have the highest per capita income in the country. It is the melting pot and not ethnic isolation, preached by some multiculturalists, that is the key to achievement. This does not mean that one cannot preserve one's cultural habits pertaining to food, dress, religion and social relations. But to be really American means to have accepted its political and economic ideals, to have mastered English, whatever one's original mother tongue, and to believe that merit is rewarded whatever one's social background. As D'Souza rightly concludes:

"In America, the life we are given is not as important as the life we make. Ultimately, America is worthy of our love and sacrifice because, more than any other society, it makes possible the good life, and the life that is good."



Pluralism and Equality

VALUES IN INDIAN SOCIETY AND POLITICS

IMTIAZ AHMED PARTHA S. GHOSH HELMUT REIFELD

PLURALISM AND EQUALITY

Edited By

Imtiaz Ahmed, Partha S. Ghosh, Helmut Reifeld

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New Delhi 110 048.

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Reviewed by

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Searching for an adjective to describe *Pluralism and Equality*, I found it in Sangari's article – 'flabby'. This word well describes a major part of the book and her own contribution in particular. The writers in this volume are very erudite persons, but so fascinated with their own specialisation that they tend to lose themselves in a jungle of detail through which the reader has a tough task to find a clear path. This is made more difficult because of huge, cumbersome, involved, clumsy sentences which have to be read more than once to make sense. Here is one example out of many:

"Under the circumstances, the tendency to counterpoise Islam and Hinduism during the colonial period has to be seen as the unfolding of a distinct historical trajectory of modernity and modern political institutions, informed by the context of colonialism and the discourse of Indological and Islamic Orientalist thought, and the construction and transformation of contesting religious identities greatly facilitated by the onset of new means and modes of communication in a particular socio-historical context (see Chatterjee 1995)."

After this who has the stamina to see Chatterjee!

This book contains 'presentations' at a workshop held at Rajasthan in 1999. Reifeld, in his well-written Introduction, says that

different cultures should identify the limits and assumptions of their traditions to facilitate a meaningful dialogue. In the name of cultural diversity loopholes can be found to exclude universal values such as the autonomy and dignity of the individual and to retain practices like child labour, the persecution of dissenters and *sati*. 'We must propagate the notion of human rights as an overarching value'. We need a 'minimum set of human rights and a state with law-based institutions to protect them'. Reifeld is right in holding that tolerance, as such, is not necessarily a (political) virtue. The 'relativist approach which tolerates ... even the most diverse notions about freedom', for instance, 'is not acceptable'. The toleration of religious fundamentalism would be a 'threat to secularism and democracy'.

What exactly is Badrinath getting at in his "The Place of 'Individual' in Indian Thought and Polity"? He says that, contrary to Western thought, in Indian and Buddhist thought there is no place for 'person', and yet, says Badrinath, 'individuality ... seemed to be the very basis of the *karma* theory and one's station in life 'was determined entirely by oneself'; but, continues Badrinath, 'this is not what the *karma* theory really led to in practical terms', because in 'the Dharma-sastras as well as in the popular mind, *karma* meant only the fixed duties of a *varna*, which soon degenerated into the caste system'. Surprisingly, Badrinath says,

blithely, that 'the contradiction must then be only apparent and not real'. Why so?

There are other, possibly apparent, contradictions that Badrinath details. It puts a great strain on the reader to sort them out.

Confronted with a book of 400 pages of assorted papers, I am forced to make a selection according to my preferences.

In "The State as Value", Saberwal takes up India, China and Europe for comparison ('comparativism!'). Why he selects the period before Columbus is anybody's guess. After some inconsequential remarks, on 'What is Value?', he narrates how "Indian society did value orderliness and sought to secure it through ... the caste order" but that did not make 'the abstract idea of the state into a value', because the caste order prevented that and the 'social control function of the *jati*' resulted in the 'superfluity of a strong state' in favour of 'multiple jurisdictions and fuzzy boundaries'. There was, of course, the 'massive' colonial state, but that was 'good only for being thrown out'. Saberwal saw no other good in it. And, of course, we had 'the firm encapsulation of persons in the *jati*' and we had 'the caste order', which blocked the emergence of a clean state and the 'free-standing individual'. Nine pages of verbiage about China and Europe could well have been omitted.

In 'More Equal but Still Not Equal', Z. Hasan competently

assesses India's efforts in the direction of tolerance and pluralism. He believes that, though the state has done many commendable acts, it has held that the principle of respecting the sensitiveness of religious communities is more important than equal citizenship.

Hasan writes that while the state has tried to remove discrimination perpetuated by the caste system (the 'darkest side' of our culture) by reservations, economic inequality has not been seriously tackled and so references to equality on 'political platforms are largely rhetorical'. Also, he says, not much has been done to improve primary education and health-care or to eliminate illiteracy and child labour.

According to Bhargava ('Is Secularism a Value in Itself?'), secularism is tied to four values: (1) 'the prevention of regression ... into barbarism', (2) 'equality of citizenship', (3) 'religious liberty', and - but, in spite of every effort, I cannot find the 4th. He refers to 'much talk in India that ... Hindus ... have a natural, traditional affinity with secularism', and says that with our 'traditional obsessions' with hierarchies, 'it is impossible to believe this claim'.

Bhargava's piece would have had more punch without two long digressions. Most of our authors have to learn to be more compact and precise.

Mehra's long essay on 'Unity and Diversity in India' is meant to discover whether 'unity in diversity

or diversity of diversities' best represents Indian pluralism. It is so jam-packed with history that it is truly bewildering. After much labour, Mehra finds that the diversity in India 'could become boon or bane ... depending on how it is handled'.

Ahmed's 'Basic Conflict ...' is another tedious journey through history with the added burden of having to decode mammoth, badly constructed sentences. After wading through many irrelevancies and obscurities, Mehra finally tells us that 'unless secularism becomes an ideology and a public policy ... we are likely to have more of communalism, conservatism and religious fundamentalism and less and less of secularism.

Pinto's 'Basic Conflict of "We" and "They" ...' is a powerful indictment of the BJP's agenda to transform 'secular Indians into citizens of "Hindu Rashtra"'. Pinto also asks why, after the British (with their 'divide and rule' policy) have left India ten decades ago, communal tensions have, in fact, spread to other minorities. However, Pinto ends on a note of hope.

Sangari writes a fifty-page essay (the longest in the book) in a style peculiar to feminists. The many sensible things she has to say are, alas! buried in such a mountain of legal and historical detail and delivered in such staggering sentences, that the poor reader is benumbed and the result is counter-productive.

Sangari severely castigates the

Hindu right (BJP & VHP). She convincingly shows that the demand for a unified civil code is a 'hindu majoritarian device'. On the other hand, the 'autonomy' of personal law rests on a 'dangerous' set of assumptions which result in grave gender injustice. She recommends 'laws that can take into account the multiple existing axes of social diversity in India even as it transcends such differences in the realm of rights'.

Sangari also shows that after Independence, the term 'Hindu' has been so defined that, unless a Hindu specifically embraces the Muslim, Christian, Zoroastrian or Jewish religion, he is trapped within the Hindu fold. 'Hindu primordiality is as inescapable as breathing'.

The reader who survives the last 320 pages and turns to Rothermund's 'Individual and Group Rights ...' will feel that he has emerged from a tunnel into fresh air. His largely historical survey, graced with critical comments, traces the development of group rights in India from 1909. For example, he shows how Article 30 of our Constitution (minority rights regarding education) has aroused the jealousy of the majority community and has resulted in the ironical situation of some Hindu groups claiming minority status.

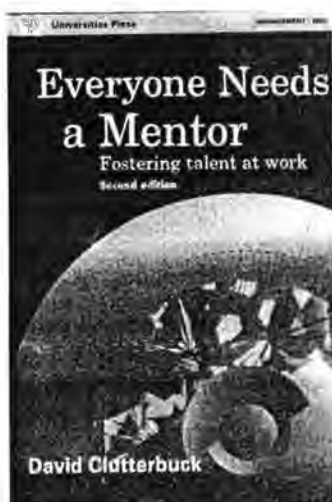
Pluralism and Equality would have been a readable book had it been pruned to half its length, unloaded of much of its unnecessary baggage and written in straightforward, simple modern English.



Can we not give the people yet another choice by showing the way to democracy with discipline but without dictatorship through a clean and limited government which would perform its proper tasks and leave the people to get on with theirs?

Minoo Masani

The Indian Express, 10 August 1979



EVERYONE NEEDS A MENTOR FOSTERING TALENT AT WORK (Second Edition)

By David Clutterbuck

With Research by Marion Devine and Helen Beech

Published by

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Reviewed by

Professor R. V. Chari, retired Professor of Commerce and Management
and a freelance writer.

The corporate scenario during the past three or four decades has undergone a radical metamorphosis. What was once a closed book has now become very transparent due to the fierce competition amongst companies to grab a major pie of the market. Corporates have now woken up and are making frantic attempts to upgrade the quality of the product, update the IT, train the staff to make them more customer-friendly as well as aggressive in the sales campaign. The old personnel department has given place to Human Resources Department.

During the '80s, mentoring surfaced in the U.S. and in the continent, flowering into a fine art within the H.R. Department. Mentoring may be defined as "the grooming/training/coaching of qualified/talented youngsters in the company in the various departments, viz. production, sales, marketing, finance, IT, secretarial etc. so that at a future date the mantle of responsibilities of managing the company is smoothly passed on to them. The Mentor is derived from Greek mythology, where Ulysses before setting out on his voyage requested his friend Mentor to take care and guide his son. India has its counterpart in the Gurukula Vasa, where the disciples or *shishyas* were handed over to the Guru for the purpose of imparting Vedic education. These disciples stayed with

the Guru for a number of years, performing multifarious jobs and assignments, until they reached proficiency, when they were permitted to return home, to start on their own. It is extremely essential to select a person as a mentor, with care and caution, as the proteges who would be under his tutelage will be completely dependent on him for guidance, advice and tutoring. Wrong signals emitted might make potential aspirants shy away from them. Every manager in a corporate office is expected to train a few of the subordinates, but it normally does not take place. However, a few multinational companies like Siemens do pick up promising employees and give them a thorough grounding in the basics of the company's philosophy. All managers are not endowed with the wherewithal to be mentors, as it requires a different set of characteristics. While selecting a mentor, a company should have a very clear idea of the qualities, which will bring forth the talents of the proteges. These qualities may differ from one company to another. Gerald O. Callaghan of BP Chemicals says: "Mentors are not picked for any superhuman qualities – though some may fall into that category. Most are: (1) experienced, (2) well-balanced professionals, and (3) managers, (4) who are interested in developing young people, and (5) broadening their own contribution to the

company. They are among the best staff we have." The word MENTOR has been expanded by the author as follows:

Manage the relationship
Encourage the protege
Nurture the protege
Teach the protege
Offer mutual respect
Respond to the protege's needs.

Let us take up the characteristics required of the protege. Each company has its own criteria for selecting the proteges. So as to bring about a complete restructuring and revamping of the top management, a company may induct employees who would ultimately man the various departments, to bring about a new corporate look. Charlotte Shelton traces eight traits for an effective protege. They are: (1) positive minded, (2) insight, (3) flexibility, (4) self-conscious, (5) non-defensive, (6) conscientious and systematic, (7) laugh at their own mistakes, (8) quick learner.

Mentoring benefits the company by improving the staff morale, offering greater career satisfaction and also increased productivity.

The book, very moderately priced at Rs.100, should prove to be a highly iridescent experience to the discerning reader who has the time and patience to go through the 115 pages.

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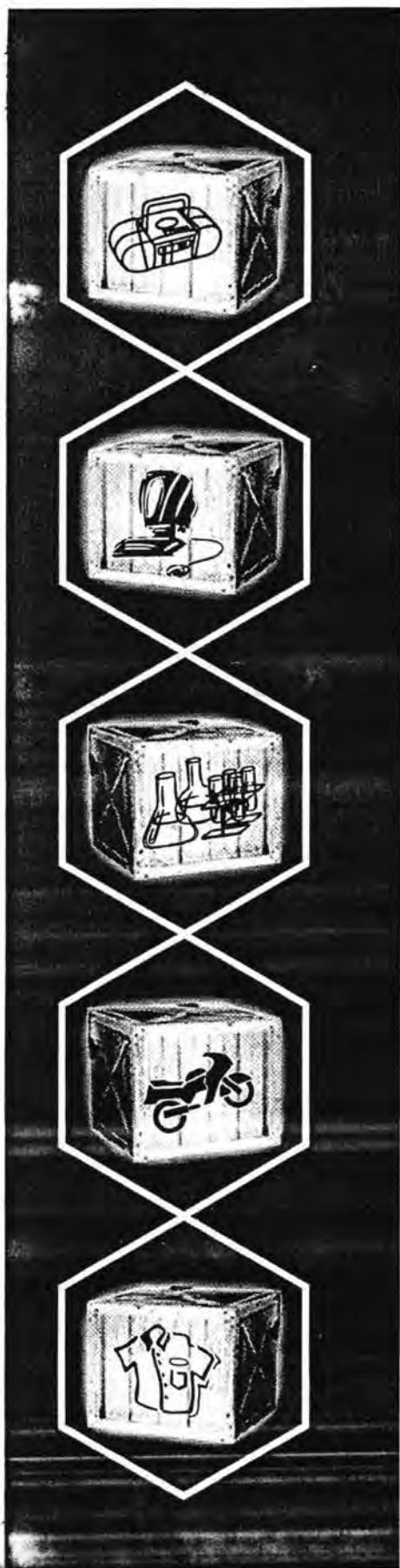
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