

Freedom First

No.465, April-June 2005. Rs.25/- only

A Liberal Quarterly

Tibet to TAR

(Tibet Autonomous Region)

A Win for Communist China

Had Tenzin protested
in Beijing instead of
Bangalore



Chinese Student
1989, Tiananmen Square, Beijing China



Tenzin Tsundue
2005, IISc, Bangalore, India



**It's a great feeling when men of their stature and integrity
are recognised.**

G. K. Sundaram



We are grateful to *The Hindu* for publishing its interview with Mr. G. K. Sundaram in its issue of April 17, 2005. The occasion: the 75th anniversary of the Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha. The interview throws light on a little known fact in his eventful life, that G. K. Sundaram, a highly respected industrialist of Coimbatore took part in the

Vedaranyam salt *satyagraha* at the age of 16 and spent the next six months in prison. He mentioned his age as 22 to the magistrate fearing that he would be put in the borstal school if he gave his real age.

When the Coimbatore District Congress Committee started enlisting volunteers for the movement, Mr. G. K. Sundaram or GKS, as he is popularly known, enrolled himself in the movement with the blessings of his father, G. Kuppuswamy Naidu.

The most important lesson the *satyagraha* taught him – “no retaliation” and also “to be honest and true, no lies, no excuses.” No wonder, some thirty and odd years later he was among the first to be chosen by Rajaji as his lieutenant when he decided to form a new party to restore *Dharma* in public life. No wonder again that GKS, the Vedaranyam *satyagrahi*, had the courage to stand firm and refuse to be cowed by the then establishment's blandishments that were a hallmark of the permit-licence-quota raj for nearly 40 long years. It is also no wonder that the Swatantra Party he belonged to nominated him to the Rajya Sabha of which he was a member in the sixties

Freedom First has received consistent support from him over the years for as long as we can remember.

Soli Sorabjee

On March 9, 2005, when Mr. Soli Sorabjee turned 75, he was felicitated at a public function in New Delhi. Former President of India Mr. K. R. Narayanan, who released a *Festschrift* honouring Soli Sorabjee, said that when he was the President, Mr. Soli Sorabjee the then Attorney General had enlightened him at critical times and he “found him to be a sensitive human being who gave his advice fearlessly.”

Freedom First joins eminent citizens, jurists and others in felicitating Soli Sorabjee on reaching his 75th year and wishes him many more years of productive life. We hope that he will find the leisure to do the good things that he enjoys doing – listening to music, reading the old classics that he is so fond of and indulging in his delight in horse racing. It has been a life full of richness and he has remained an inspiration to many. His championing of Human Rights and of the Rule of Law and not bending to authority have been a beacon in dark times.

To us in *Freedom First*, his defence of our journal and its right to publish uncensored during the dark days of the Emergency has remained a memorable event. If *Freedom First* continues to be published, it is in no small measure due to his challenging censorship in a court of law.



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A Liberal Quarterly – 53rd Year of Publication
No.465 April-June 2005

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TIBET - The Travail Continues

In 1949 Communist China invaded and occupied Tibet. On March 10, 1959 thousands of Tibetans gathered in the streets of Lhasa to protest the Chinese occupation. The People's Liberation (!) Army fired indiscriminately on the protesters killing thousands. The Dalai Lama fled Lhasa and received sanctuary in India.

That day is observed by the Tibetan refugees in India and in other parts of the world as "Tibetan National Uprising Day." On this day each year, the Dalai Lama issues a statement addressed to his people recalling their sacrifices to regain freedom.

On the 46th anniversary of this Day on 10 March 2005, in his statement the Dalai Lama briefed his people on the 'off and on' negotiations with the Chinese Communists. He said *inter alia*: "I want to reassure the Chinese authorities that as long as I am responsible for the affairs of Tibet we remain fully committed to the Middle Way Approach of not seeking independence for Tibet and are willing to remain within the People's Republic of China." He has been saying this for some years perhaps not in so many words and not so emphatically. As in the past this concession to enable the Tibetans to return to their homeland, would not have raised any hackles within the Tibetan community and among their supporters. But the situation today is different

Sadly, and this is the flip side of globalisation, the combined pressure of world opinion, India of course leading the pack, and supported by the US of A and the European Community, is working on the Dalai Lama to accept autonomy and return to Tibet as demanded by the communist Chinese. Why? For two reasons: The first is the lusting after the huge Chinese market by governments and businessmen the world over; and the second is India's second honeymoon with the communist Chinese. The Indian establishment's promiscuous relationship with the communist Chinese is back. The Indian establishment - the Congress led by UPA as well as the BJP-led NDA - is sending out clear signals to the Dalai Lama that he make his peace with the chinese Communists, perhaps even suggesting, that he and his people have overstayed their welcome - a suggestion certainly not shared by the people of India.

Freedom First has been unequivocal in its support of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan freedom from the time we started publication in June 1952. We are undoubtedly sad but understand the reasons that have compelled the Dalai Lama to accept half a loaf of autonomy as against the full bread of freedom. But being true to our name (Freedom is first above all else) we shall as long as we are in publication, continue to champion Tibetan Freedom.

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*

What is it about rape that the judiciary cannot restrict itself to delivering verdicts about the guilt of the accused but makes observations on the complainant's behaviour, her moral character and her marriage prospects.

Laxmi Murthy, *The Times of India*, May 11

You do not compensate the villages for any neglect by letting the cities go to the dogs now.

Shekhar Gupta, *The Indian Express*, April 30

Many people from various levels were involved in the Enron mess. But the crisis worsened when politicians took over everything.

Ashoke Basak, (former Chairman Maharashtra State Electricity Board, *The Indian Express*, May 3

In the Congress, legitimacy and power flow from the high command. No elected leader, popular in her own right, must forget that. If she does (the reference is to Ms. Sheila Dixit) the high command and its hangers on will educate her in crude ways.

Editorial in *The Indian Express*, April 27

One of the main reasons why corruption has become so endemic and pervasive, especially among public servants, is that it has become a high reward and low risk activity. Very few public servants ultimately get punished.

Sankar Sen (formerly Director, National Police Academy), *The Statesman*, May 3

Marxist mantra: It's the money honey

Headline in *The Statesman*, May 3

I am not saying that prostitution does not happen in five-star hotels, but it is done discreetly.

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister R. R. Patil, *The Indian Express*, May 1

It is no longer feasible for a family to roam in Chowpatty. To see girls dangle a cigarette openly is worrisome. If a man is incited by such clothes who can one blame.

In an article in the Shiv Sena moutpiece *Saamna* quoted in *The Indian Express* April 26

The purists who are 'Talibanising' Mumbai need to understand that Bollywood cannot lock horns with Hollywood without eroticising their products and marketing them provocatively.

Film producer Mahesh Bhatt, *The Indian Express*, April 22

Marriage is a defunct institution. Besides who wants to eat *Bhindi* every night?

Actress Mallika Sherawat, *The Times of India*, April 24

Atheists should welcome the election of Pope Benedict XVI.

Timothy Garton Ash in *The Guardian*, April 21 (from excerpts from his article in *The Indian Express*, April 22)

I don't see why India had to declare three days of national mourning for the Pope when even catholic countries like Ireland, France and others didn't.

K. Vijayan in a letter to *The Times of India*, April 21

If the accused Sankaracharya sincerely believes in the doctrine of *karma*, he would not have appealed to the Supreme Court to get bail.

K. Veeramani, *Atheist*, April 2005

To my eye, women get sexier around 35. They know a thing or two, and knowledge is always alluring.

Actor Pierce Brosnan in *The New York Times Magazine*, quoted in *Reader's Digest*, March 2005

It (the opposition in parliament) appears to be so incapable of debate, so oblivious to matters of national interest and security, that it has spent most of the past year walking out of parliament instead of into it.

Tavleen Singh, *The Indian Express*, May 1

His Holiness the Dalai Lama is pulling the cart of Tibet's cause to the point of autonomy only. We want to pull it all the way till freedom.

Tibetan freedom fighter TenzinTundue, *The Week*, April 24

**Have you visited www.liberalsindia.com
The website of the INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP?**

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

UN Security Council Membership

Considering that we are far, very far, from reducing, if not eliminating, poverty and illiteracy, of providing decent health care and primary education to millions of our countrymen; when we are woefully short of good roads, suffer erratic and poor power supply and lack safe drinking water, this great urge to get into the UN Security Council (and with veto power) is ridiculous and totally unnecessary. Membership of that body is not to going to increase our water supply by one drop or provide one additional health centre, for instance.

Let us first ensure a better quality of life for the large majority of our people before wanting to get involved in the world's security concerns.

Japan Apologising to China

This business of nations apologising to one another is a relatively new phenomenon.

It began with the Germans apologising to the Jews and to Israel for Hitler's crimes against humanity. The Japanese apologising to the South Koreans for the former's misdeeds when they were the occupying power.

And now we see the communist Chinese demanding an apology from the Japanese – why? Because a government approved Japanese text book, 'whitewashes' Japan's past militarism. The Communist Chinese government even organised a so-called spontaneous protest by the people. For good measure the 'protestors also raised slogans against the Japanese bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. They smashed windows of the Japanese mission in Beijing and various business properties of the Japanese. They succeeded in extracting an apology from Japan which has major investments in communist China.

The communist Chinese also protested to the Japanese over a planned visit by Japanese members of parliament to visit a shrine to their war dead in Tokyo! This protest was however rejected by the Japanese.

Perhaps some day, hopefully in the not so distant future, when Tibet regains its independence, the free Tibetan government can demand an apology from the Chinese communists for the millions of Tibetans tortured or killed by the Chinese communists during their occupation of Tibet as an imperialist power.

Perhaps Putin, now the president of Russia and a former KGB officer, can apologise to the former colonies of the Soviet Union for atrocities committed by the Soviet Union on the people of eastern Europe (Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Rumania, Czech and Slovakia, Hungary), for the murder of millions by a monster called Stalin.

During the recent 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, Putin is reported to have observed that

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



the dissolution of the Soviet Union was a mistake. An ominous thought coming from a former Soviet apparatchik.

Well Said, Mr. Gorbachev!

And while we are on Stalin a report published in *The Times of India* of May 9 quotes Mikhail Gorbachev as saying "there can be no forgiveness" for Stalin. He said this in the context of a controversy in Russia over how to view Russia's role in post-World War II history. "This remarkable occasion cannot be used to extol Stalin, Gorbachev said." One should not go so far as to say that we owe our victory to Stalin, or that victory would not have ever been attained without Stalin."

Community Housing

The Supreme Court has upheld the formation of exclusive cooperative societies where membership could be restricted to persons from the same profession, caste or religion.

As a journal wedded to Liberal values, *Freedom First* welcomes this decision which reinforces the right to choose. Citizens have the right to choose their neighbours. It also reinforces the freedom of association. The only condition where any restrictions could perhaps be justifiable is if such cooperative societies have received any kind of financial assistance from the public exchequer or special concessions e.g government land at subsidised prices or funded in any manner.

There are thousands of religion-based, caste-based, even sub-caste based organisations in India, which restrict membership to those of their own religion, caste or sub-caste. The right to admit or not to must rest with the management of the cooperative society concerned. In Mumbai there already are 'colonies exclusively populated by specific communities. One such is the well-maintained Parsi Colony in Dadar.

Managing Temples is not the Government's Business

On the other hand the Supreme Court has, in a recent judgement, ruled that the management of a temple being a secular function, the government is empowered to oversee its administration.

The ruling is in the context of the plea that all the 'Hindu' members of the former leftist government in Kerala should be debarred from being on the managing committee of the temple. Calling this reasoning absurd, the judgement argues: "To insist on such a qualification in the electorate will be as bad as saying that when a law relating to a temple is under consideration only Hindu legislators can vote." Given the nature of the petition it is obvious the petitioners in the Guruvayoor temple case would have had no problem having Hindu ministers in a non-marxist government involved in the management of the temple.

The problem arises from an understanding of the meaning of secularism. The liberal understanding which *Freedom First* accepts is the separation of church and state or religions and state. The two do not mix. Managing places of worship is the business of those who belong to the religions concerned. So long as they do not violate civil laws, the state has no business involving itself in the management of temples, churches, mosques, gurudwaras, synagogues and agaries etc.

Oh! to be a VVIP in India

Mr. Rahul Gandhi MP, and scion of The Family, was travelling to South Africa. On arrival, his bag was missing. Airline and Special Protection Group officials accompanying him went into a tizzy. Superfast search procedures were initiated and the baggage was located in 45 minutes flat. Like the government clerk who had spelt Priyanka Vadra's name incorrectly was suspended, only to be restored on Priyanka Vadra's intervention, the officials at the airport in Mumbai from where Mr. Rahul Gandhi took off must have spent anxious moments worried about their jobs.

This is in sharp contrast to the number of times a VOP (Very Ordinary Person) has to visit the airport before he recovers his missing bag if he is lucky, or simply told sorry your bag has been lost and you can make a claim as per the rules.

Incidentally these are the fringe benefits that VIPS and VVIPs enjoy that go beyond the purview of the present finance minister!

Legislating Morality

What was the desperate hurry for the Maharashtra government to pass an ordinance banning dance bars in Maharashtra. Could it be that a government that has so far been rich on promises and poor on performance wants to prove that it is capable of taking strong action even if it robs thousands of dancing girls of their income? In the process

he has cast a slur on many 'dancing girls' who do nothing more than dance to earn a living. The State government's deputy chief minister and deputy home minister, the principal crusader says that this has nothing to do with safeguarding the morals of the citizens. It has to do with law and order and combating corruption among policemen posted around these bars because gangsters and criminals use these bars to transact their nefarious business and provide profitable pickings for the policemen. The ban is not going to affect gangsters and criminals. They will move or must have already moved to five star hotels, which are not covered by this ordinance.

As *Loksatta* editor Kumar Ketkar points out in his article in *The Indian Express*: "The dancing girls have already begun going 'underground'. There are any number of posh flats which are now being rented for such activity. The government cannot ban private parties. As long as there are girls willing to dance and earn a living this way, there will be customers willing to pay and no power on earth can stop them." And, as for policemen being deprived of an illegal source of income there is no such 'danger'. By making it illegal and driving it underground the ordinance will only raise their ante.

But this does not answer the reason why the Maharashtra government hurried up with an ordinance when there are far more serious issues, the serious shortage of electric power for instance, desperately needing attention – unless it is a game of one-upmanship vis a vis the other parties particularly the Shiv Sena.

While on the subject of morality, an article in *Saamra* the Shiv Sena Marathi daily reacting to the rape of a girl by a policeman in Mumbai's Marine Drive, blames women clad in "mini skirts and low-waist jeans" for exciting men. This, says the article, has given rise to increase in incidents of rape. This is symptomatic says the article of the breakdown of Indian culture and tradition.

Obviously the Khadi Board does not think so, judging by the picture alongside, advertising Khadi!



Believe it or not, this is an offering from the Khadi Board that organised a fashion show in Lucknow recently, to promote young designers and, presumably take the Mahatma's legacy forward in this fashion.

Courtesy: *The Statesman*, 30th April 2005.

SVR

Why I Oppose Communism

Minoo Masani



Alongside the territorial expansion of Soviet Communism which gobbled up the countries of Eastern Europe and engineered conflict elsewhere in the world, masterminded by its boss the monster called Stalin, the Soviet Union unleashed an offensive that sought to capture the minds of men. This conflict that lasted till the collapse of the Berlin Wall was known as the period of the Cold War. The article that you are about to read was written in 1956 when the Cold War was at its height. Among the many publications to emerge during that period, was a series called Background Books published by Phoenix House based in London. One of these was titled "Why I Oppose Communism". Contributors to this booklet of 54 pages included such names as Bertrand Russell, the philosopher; Stephen Spender the writer; Sir John Sargent the educationist; and Sam Watson the trade unionist. Freedom First considers it appropriate to reproduce Minoo Masani's essay in this little volume, not only on the occasion of his birth centenary which exposes communism for what it is, but in the present context when the Communist tail is wagging the UPA dog! – Editor

If I were to be asked which two values I treasure most in life, I guess my answer would be – Freedom and Justice. Liberty for the individual and the nation and fair play for the underdog have been causes which, as far back as I can recall, have moved me beyond all others. Whatever comes in the way of such freedom and denies such justice arouses my opposition.

Soviet Communism has to-day turned its back on every single generous and progressive impulse of the October Revolution and, in place of the 'free and equal society' of which Lenin talked, one finds a new caste system marked by growing inequalities and an industrial feudalism which is based on slave labour.

Behind the Iron Curtain, in China as in Russia, are to be found a new superstition and falsification on a scale without precedent in history. Only in silence and in memories are the values of decency and intellectual integrity preserved. Of all the impediments to human progress, the biggest that I can see at present is that presented by Soviet imperialism and the international Communist movement which is its instrument in the drive to world domination.

My mother complains that as a small boy I had the awkward habit of taking sides against my parents in such situations as those involving the dismissal of a contumacious servant or the fixing of a price with an itinerant fruit or vegetable vendor. Alongside of this exasperating trait went, I am told, a strong tendency towards non-conformism in thought and behaviour. These traits of standing up for the underdog, rebelling against authority and insisting on the right of self-expression have remained ever since somewhat inconvenient elements in my make-up.

Acquaintance with the works of Wells, Shaw, and Upton Sinclair during school and college days made me a socialist. At the London School of Economics I was Chairman of the Labour Party; and the General Strike of 1926 found me at T.U.C. headquarters offering my services as a volunteer. John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook The World* won for the October Revolution my starry-eyed enthusiasm, and in 1927 and again in 1935 I visited the USSR.

In the belief that tyranny must be fought wherever it is found, I spent the year 1933 in prison serving a sentence for Civil Disobedience activities,

and during that term I collaborated with Jayaprakash Narayan in drafting the programme of the Congress Socialist Party which came into existence the following year.

Looking back, I find that my opposition to Communism dates back to the Great Purges of 1936 and the years that followed. By 1938 I was pleading in articles that the sooner the ideals of socialism were disentangled from the practice of Soviet Communism the more likely were those ideals to be preserved.

Close contact with Mahatma Gandhi from 1934 to 1939 resulted in growing appreciation of his social and economic philosophy. Gandhi represents the complete antithesis to the Communist. The Communist swears by dialectical materialism – matter is essence, the mind a by-product; Gandhi preached the supremacy of spirit and mind over matter. To the Communist the end justifies the means; to Gandhi, the means were everything – means and ends were like the seed and the tree; and so Gandhi pronounced Soviet Communism to be 'repugnant to India.' Communism seeks to centralise and collectivise everything; Gandhi preached the need to decentralise and to distribute

power, both political and economic. The Communist glorifies the State; Gandhi, conscious of the distinction drawn by Reinhold Niebuhr between Moral Man and Immoral Society, stressed the individual as an end in himself.

Two fundamentals I accepted from Gandhi's thought - first, that the end does not justify the means and that no decent social order can evolve through the use of force or fraud; the other that, in the second half of the twentieth century, the omnivorous state is in danger of becoming the biggest single threat to human liberty. No school of thought or system of government offends against these two beliefs as violently as does totalitarian Communism.

Since the end of World War II, we in Asia have happily seen India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon, Indonesia, the Philippines and Israel secure independent existence. In Asia 2,539,270 square miles of territory and 545,400,000 people have entered the orbit of freedom. During this same period we have watched with apprehension the rise of Soviet imperialism swallowing up no less than ten countries of Eastern Europe and then bringing under its heel the peoples of Manchuria, North Korea, China, Tibet, and North Indo-China. Since 1939, the total area overrun by Red Imperialism is 5,239,660 square miles, while its additional victims number

582,411,000 human beings.

In no other part of the world can these alarming advances of a new tyranny create the same sense of urgency as they do to the more alert among those who belong to the newly freed countries of Asia. No wonder Jayaprakash Narayan, India's socialist leader, has said: 'Colonialism is dying out and soon it will be a memory. On the other hand, Russian expansionism is a new menace.'

If the journal of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, with which I have the privilege to be associated, bears the title *Freedom First*, it is because consistent democrats in India - struggling against the tide of intellectual neutralism - have through their own experience been driven to appreciate the truth of Lord Acton's axiom that liberty is the supreme good. So we place freedom, even though we hate war, above peace.

For some of us there is something worse than World War III and even the hydrogen bomb. Violence is bad and, if possible, to be avoided; the physical destruction of human beings is tragic; but the pulverisation of the human mind and the degradation of the human spirit which are the very essence of the practice of Communism would - if given the opportunity to be perpetrated on a global scale - be the worst of all possible inflictions on humanity.

The basic issue between democracy and Communism is a moral one which none of us may evade. The fundamental difference is as to the true nature of Man. I am for democracy because, with all its inadequacies and imperfections, it is based on the freedom to choose. It enables wrongs, sooner or later, to be righted. The voice of protest is never totally silenced. Even the Third Force can thrive only in the free world.

I am against Communism because it represents, in the way in which it is practised in Soviet Russia and its empire, extreme Right Wing reaction; because for the freedom of the Asian peoples there is no greater menace; because it turns its back on the moral and spiritual values that represent the progress of man.

I believe that Man is not merely raw material for social experiments but an end in himself; and the free inquiry of the human mind is the basis of all progress. I am opposed to the Communist system because there is no room in it for the intellectual attitude which I was early to learn from H. G. Wells: 'I do not care if I am for a time in a minority of one against all mankind, because in the long run if I have hit off the truth, that will win; and, if I fail to hit it off, I shall have done my best.'



Socialism ultimately aims at creating a casteless society, but it wishes to make the state all-powerful by making the social revolution itself dependent upon state action. Gandhism, too, like, socialism, aims at a stateless society. But on that account it proceeds more consistently by making the social process as little dependent upon the state as possible. The creation of a stateless society begins here and now, and is not relegated to a remote and imaginary period in the future. It is therefore a more truly revolutionary process, which is more likely to reach the goal than the other processes. For these reasons I should like to plead for a closer study and understanding of Gandhism and the Gandhian technique.

Jayaprakash Narayan,

Towards Total Revolution, Volume 2, Published by Popular Prakashan,
35-C Tardeo Road, Mumbai 400034

From Tibet to TAR

The Annexation of Tibet India's Shameful Role

Ajay B. Agrawal*

Tibet was a free country up to 1950. Indians who had any dealings with Tibet could go there at the pleasure of the Tibetan government. The Indian government dealt directly with the Government of Tibet. China was nowhere in the picture in any way. In 1950 India had a political officer in Tibet.

He was there at the pleasure of the Tibetan government. At the same time China had no such representative in Tibet as it had not allowed China to have one.

In 1949-50, Peking Radio spoke again and again of liberating Tibet. In a most threatening voice it announced, "Liberate we will, come what may". Just a year earlier (1948), a free Tibet had forced all the Chinese out of Tibet. A year after that the Chinese were a threat to the very existence of Tibet as a free state! The new communist government of China had developed a new terminology wherein liberation meant subjugation. By the end of 1950, the Chinese attacked Tibet and within a year they achieved what they called the "liberation of Tibet", Tibet lost its independence. As things stood only India could have helped it. The then Indian government developed cold feet and not only did they not help Tibet, but behaved like an agent of the Chinese.

Tibet : A Sovereign Nation

Tibet was a free country up to 1950. Indians who had any dealings with Tibet could go there at the pleasure of the Tibetan government. The Indian government dealt directly with the Government of Tibet. China was nowhere in the picture in any way. In 1950 India had a political officer in Tibet. He was there at the pleasure of the Tibetan government. At the same time China had no such representative in Tibet as it had not allowed China to have one.

At the time of the formation of the Interim Government¹ in Delhi in 1946, the Government of Tibet sent a telegram to congratulate Nehru, the then head of the Government. Nehru replied, "My colleagues and I are most grateful for your kind message. We look forward with confidence to the continuance and strengthening of the close and cordial relation which had existed between our two countries since ancient times". An independent Tibetan government had congratulated Nehru and he had replied to the message. China had nothing to do with it. In his book, 'Glimpses of World History', Nehru referred to Tibet as a free country.

* Excerpted from Chapter I of Mr. Agrawal's book "India, Tibet & China - The Role Nehru Played", N. A. Books International, Mumbai, email: nabooks_international@hotmail.com, published 2003, Price Rs.295/-.

India had organized an Asian Relations Conference in Delhi. Both China and Tibet attended that conference as independent countries. China did protest the presence of Tibet as a free country but as China had absolutely no control over Tibet, it could not prevent the latter from attending the conference.

This factual position of Tibet has been very clearly brought out in the book by the well-known journalist Frank Moraes in his book *Revolt in Tibet*: "From 1911 to 1950 there was no Chinese law, no Chinese judge, no Chinese policeman on the street corner, there was no Chinese newspaper, no Chinese soldier, and even no representative of the Chinese Government". To this can be added that there was no Chinese postal or monetary system either or the Chinese language in Tibet. This was the case even before 1911 except for the fact that for 200 years preceding 1911 the Chinese had their representative in Tibet. The present Dalai Lama has pointed out that in Tibetan literature there is no reference to the rivers of China, while Indian rivers are referred to time and again. China had no regular links with Tibet. So much so that when Chinese soldiers who had participated in an attack on Tibet in 1910 had to be sent back to China in 1911-12, they had to go via Kolkata. Even after the Chinese attacked Tibet in 1950, the first Chinese Governor General of Tibet went to Lhasa via Calcutta and Kalimpong!

The independent status of Tibet was accepted by B.N.Mullick, former Director General of India's Intelligence Bureau. In his book, *My Years with Nehru* he wrote: "... that Tibet was effectively independent was proved by another important development that took place in 1942-45, during World War II. The Japanese had sealed off all the Chinese seaports and so it was essential for China to have an overland route to get the much needed military supplies from Britain and America and this was possibly only through Tibet. In spite of repeated persuasions by the British, the Tibetan government declared its neutrality in the war between China and Japan and refused to allow any military supplies to pass through its territory ... This is a clear indication of the sovereign rights which Tibet exercised at the time. If Tibet was politically a part of China, its declaration of neutrality

in the life and death struggle of the Chinese with the Japanese ... could not have taken place". Mullick also quotes Chiang Kai Shek's adviser Shen "since 1911, Lhasa has enjoyed full independence for all practical purposes" and, hence adds Mullick "There is no basis whatsoever in history for the Chinese to claim that Tibet is a part of China".

A thousand five hundred years ago, about two hundred Chinese pilgrims visited India within a period of two hundred years. They came from north-west China. The shortest route to India was through Tibet. But so poor were the relations between Tibet and China that not a single pilgrim took that route. All of them took the long, difficult and dangerous route of Takla Makan, the desert north of Tibet. All this conclusively proves the independent status of Tibet.

1950 and Thereafter

From the beginning of the twentieth century, Britain played a prominent role in shaping the foreign policy of Tibet. British interests lay in the independence of Tibet. In a fast changing world they had kept China and Russia away from interfering in the affairs of Tibet. This policy served the best interests of British India and Tibet. Independent India also treated Tibet as a free country. "Tibet was plainly in India's interest, and therefore the new Government, like the old, directed its policy to that end," observed Mullick in his book. India had always dealt with a free Tibet for thousands of years. But all this was to change soon.

Many factors were acting against the interests of Tibet in the beginning of 1950. The present Dalai Lama was only fifteen years old then. In India, Nehru was Prime Minister. Civil war had been raging between the Nationalists (also known as the Kuomintang) and the Communists for many years. Finally, in October 1949, the Communists decisively defeated the Nationalists and took power in China. On 1st January 1950, the Chinese declared that one of the basic tasks of the People's Liberation Army during 1950 was the 'Liberation of Tibet'.

No sooner did China make this statement, than Nehru dropped Tibet like a hot potato. His act should be seen in the light of the fact that twelve years later in 1962 he proved that he was not capable of defending even India's borders from the Chinese.

The Suzainty/Sovereignty Obfuscation

On 1st December 1949, Nehru wrote "Our policy had been rather vague about Tibet. It has been an inheritance from the British days. We have recognized the autonomy of Tibet under some kind of vague suzerainty of China. Strictly speaking, in law, we cannot deny that suzerainty. We would like Tibet to be autonomous and have direct dealings with us and we shall press for this."²

India's Prime Minister turned the fiction of suzerainty

into a real monster. He needed this fiction of suzerainty as an alibi that he could not interfere in the matter as China had suzerainty over Tibet. Having committed himself to a position that was patently wrong, Nehru was at pains to justify his stand and was evasive when it came to accepting facts.

China was determined to 'liberate' Tibet. And Nehru, instead of contesting China's claims over what he had once considered as a sovereign state, he merely suggested more than once that China should liberate Tibet peacefully! "Nehru did not object to China's claim asserting sovereignty over Tibet but only asked Peking to do it peacefully. This was tantamount to asking a tiger to deal with the lamb mercifully."³

Indian strategy was wrong from the very beginning. By the middle of 1950, China had started building up its forces in the provinces bordering Tibet. Instead of challenging the Chinese or supporting the Tibetans, India took the course of least resistance. At the same time, it unsuccessfully tried to please China in other matters. "India's prompt recognition of Communist China and withdrawal of recognition of the Chiang Kai-Shek regime in Taiwan did not evoke any favourable response from China. Both these actions of the Government of India were taken for granted and derogatory criticism continued to appear in the Chinese press ... Even the recognition of Communist China was depicted as a hypocritical act on the part of Pandit Nehru ... thus putting India on the defensive from the very beginning"⁴. In fact India was the first to recognise the Communist Government in China!

When Nehru was trying to be as conciliatory as was humanly possible, the Chinese were proving to be the embodiment of arrogance. The Chinese ambassador in Delhi drew attention to the presence of the Indian mission in Lhasa and the trade agencies at Yatung and Gyantse and also the existence of Indian military escorts in Tibet. According to China, these violated Chinese sovereignty in Tibet. The ambassador had mentioned this in response to India's desire to maintain these facilities in Tibet, which it had enjoyed for many years. Up to now India had every justification to have these facilities in Tibet. India had received these facilities from a free Tibet. By accepting Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and by not challenging the Chinese move to liberate it India had created a situation where it could not stop China from claiming sovereignty over Tibet. Not long thereafter, India quietly renounced these facilities without a murmur.

Sardar Patel's Letter to Nehru



Sardar Patel, India's Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister had expected this to happen long back. It was apparent to him that Nehru was moving in the wrong direction and his moves were most detrimental to Tibetan and Indian interests.

Realising the gravity of the situation he wrote a long letter to Nehru on 7th November, 1950 in which he wrote *inter alia*: "I have carefully gone through the correspondence between the External Affairs Ministry and our ambassador in Peking and through him the Chinese Government. The Chinese Government have tried to delude us about their professions of peaceful intentions ... There is no doubt that during the period covered by this correspondence the Chinese must have been concentrating for an onslaught on Tibet. The final action of the Chinese, in my judgement, is little short of perfidy..."

"The tragedy of it is that the Tibetans put faith in us; they chose to be guided by us; and we have been unable to get them out of the meshes of Chinese diplomacy or Chinese influence. It is impossible to imagine any sensible person believing in the so-called threat to China from Anglo-American machinations in Tibet. If the Chinese put faith in this, they must have distrusted us so completely as to have taken us as tools or stooges of Anglo-American diplomacy. This feeling, if genuinely entertained by the Chinese in spite of your direct approaches to them, indicates that even though we regard ourselves as friends of China, the Chinese do not regard us as their friends.

"We had a friendly Tibet which gave us no trouble ... We seem to have regarded Tibetan autonomy as extending

to independent treaty relationship ... The Chinese interpretation of suzerainty seems to be different. We can, therefore, safely assume that very soon they will disown all the stipulations which Tibet has entered into with us in the past.

"The undefined state of the frontier and the existence on our side of a population with affinities to Tibetans or Chinese, have all the elements of potential trouble between China and ourselves."

For the first time after centuries, India's defense has to concentrate itself on two fronts simultaneously ... In our calculation now we have to reckon (apart from Pakistan) with Communist China in the north and the north-east."

¹ In 1946 preparatory to the handing over of power, the British colonial rulers installed an interim government in Delhi headed by Mr. J. Nehru and which included ministers from the Muslim League and other parties as well.

² Volume I of Nehru's "Letters to Chief Ministers" Vol.1

³ Frank Moraes, 'Revolt in Tibet'

⁴ B. N. Mullick, *My Years with Nehru*

MR. AJAY AGRAWAL is a businessman by profession. He was born in Kalimpong a town frequented by Tibetan traders. His family did business with Tibet. In fact they had an office establishment at Yatung – a Tibetan trading post.

The Irony of the Bandung Conference

Claude Arpi

Speeches in 1947, 1955 or 2005 have remained the same, but the sad irony of Bandung remains that Tibet which had been independent for the past 2000 years began to lose its autonomy soon after the great leaders of Asia and Africa swore by 'Live and let live'.

A Conference was held in Bandung, Indonesia, between April 18 and 24, 1955. It was attended by 29 leaders of African and Asian nations. This was the first attempt to launch a closer co-operation between decolonized countries 'on the basis of mutual interest and respect for national sovereignty'.

The Conference was aimed at condemning colonialism and establishing Asia-Africa solidarity while remaining 'non-aligned' in the cold war between the Soviet Union and the United States.

President Soekarno of Indonesia while opening the conference gave two mottos: "Live and let live" and "Unity in diversity." In his welcome speech he said that Asians and Africans should not be deceived or even soothed by the oft-heard phrase that colonialism is dead. "I say to you, colonialism is not yet dead. Vast areas of Asia and Africa are not free. Colonialism is a skilful and determined enemy and appears in many guises. It must be eradicated from the earth."

Very few references have been made in the world press about the Bandung Conference, though this historical event is considered to be the beginning of the non-aligned movement and the first step of Communist China into world affairs.

The reason is perhaps that fifty years later, many things have changed: China is on the centre stage of world affairs and the non-aligned movement is obsolete.

The Conference happened a few months after Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Beijing (October 1954) which was the culmination of the Hindi-Chini (Indo-Chinese) honeymoon. A few months earlier, Tibet, a nation 'verging on independence' (to quote Nehru) had been sacrificed by an idealist Indian Prime Minister on the altar of the famous Five Principles of peaceful coexistence and non-interference in each other's affairs.

At the beginning of 1955, the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa after having spent several months in China to discuss his country's fate with Mao and his comrades. He had

received definite assurances from the Great Helmsman that 'Communist reforms' would not be immediately forced on the Tibetan people and that Tibet would be granted a real autonomy.

For Nehru, the Conference was the culmination of his personal ambition. He had always wanted to be at the center of the newly decolonized nations.

On his return to India, he immediately conveyed his excitement to his good friend Edwina Mountbatten. He was deeply emotional about the 'historic event': "Bandung has been so full of impressions that I have to write at great length about it..."

The Indian Prime Minister had nevertheless to admit that everything had not been rosy at the Indonesian resort: "Then, there was the political interplay and backstage intrigues. Quite a number of people there were permanent performers of the UN and they functioned with all due pomposity. A tightly knit group represented, if I may say so, the United States policy. This consisted chiefly of Turkey, Pakistan, Iraq and Lebanon. Also, of course, the Philippines and Thailand. These two were at least somewhat moderate in their expression. The other four were quite aggressive and sometimes even offensive. A threat was made out that the Conference would be broken up if their viewpoint was not adopted."

The Indian Prime Minister was thrilled to be able to introduce his 'friend' Zhou Enlai to the other Asian and African leaders. Later he declared with false modesty: "At the Bandung Conference, it was not India's purpose... to seek the limelight... The fact, however, remained that the two most important countries present at the Bandung Conference were China and India."

For Nehru, Zhou Enlai was the star performer: "He was the mysterious figure representing a country which was playing an important and perhaps dangerous part in the

world, and both, those who were favourably inclined to him and those who were bitterly opposed, were anxious to see him and measure him."

Nehru found him 'quiet and restrained' but determined: "Altogether he created a very good impression. Even his opponents melted somewhat and agreed that he was an attractive person. Only once, in a subcommittee, did he speak rather curtly and said that China was not going to be bullied." (Ironically he had got irritated with Pakistan which since then has become China's all-weather friend!)

Though the purpose of the Conference was not to discuss 'small matters', Tibet was mentioned a couple of times by the Chinese Premier. Once during a conversation with the Prime Ministers of Ceylon, Pakistan, Indonesia and Burma, Zhou was asked if it was his intention to push Communism into Tibet. Zhou laughed and explained: "there could be no such question as Tibet was very far indeed from communism. It would be thoroughly impracticable to try to establish a communist regime in Tibet and the Chinese Government had no such wish." He added: "Tibet is an autonomous region of China and they [Beijing] have no desire whatever to interfere with its customs or ways of life. They have gone to Tibet because it was an integral part of the Chinese state and because it had been used for imperialist intrigues!"

Nehru commented in his notes that this was meant for "the British recently and previously Czarist Russia".

On another occasion, Zhou told his interlocutors: "Either you do not know the nature of what Tibet is today, or the nature of socialism, when you put that question to me. You cannot introduce socialism or communism into Tibet, you just cannot do it; maybe 50 years, 100 years later they may do it, I do not know."

The years following the Conference, the Chinese Liberation Army remained busy consolidating its strategic occupation of Tibet, building several roads (one of them is the Aksai Chin road) and airstrips. Obviously, 'reforms' could be postponed for a few years!

Fifty years later, while the Dalai Lama is ready to settle for 'genuine autonomy' within China, 'socialism with Chinese characteristics' (or in other words 'capitalism') is forced on the Tibetans.

Where has the Spirit of Bandung vanished? Zhou's promises and Nehru's ideals today seem dead and gone. 'The Wretched of the Earth' are no longer at the center stage, business is!

On April 10, 2005, in Bangalore, when a Tibetan youngster tried to attract the Chinese Premier's attention and tell him in a non-violent way that Tibetan 'customs and way of life' were not always respected in Tibet, he was termed as a 'miscreant' by the spokesman of the MEA. The mantra "Live and let live" and "Unity in diversity" have been replaced by 'business is business'.

Fifty years after Bandung, old colonialism has

"Born in Sin"

"Born in sin." These were the words used by Acharya Kripalani to describe the famous Panchsheel Agreement when it was presented to the Indian Parliament by India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in May 1954. Although the preamble was couched in highly idealistic terms such as "mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs" or "peaceful co-existence", in actual fact the Agreement was the death warrant of a peaceful and independent nation: Tibet.

The Prime Minister could only answer the Sindhi leader with a joke: "Born in Sind?" But history shows, indeed, that it resulted in the death of more than one million Tibetans and in India losing a friendly neighbour, a peaceful frontier, and an important buffer. The consequence was the Sino-Indian border war of 1962."

Claude Arpi in *The Pioneer*

disappeared (except in Tibet), but the disparities remain. In many cases, new tyrants or dictators have replaced the old colonial powers. For millions of people, the hope for a better world still has to materialise, particularly in Africa. In a recent article on the Conference, *Le Monde* wrote: "Everybody is satisfied with this situation: the local despots who are left alone with their 'deals' and the ex-colonizers happy to take revenge on Bandung and preserve their influence on Africa."

In the meantime the drifting apart of the Asian and African continents accelerates. The 80's saw the beginning of Asia's resurgence, while Africa continued to sink deeper and deeper into poverty and corruption. Where is the Afro-asiatic solidarity today? A tsunami seems to have washed away the Spirit of Bandung.

For Tibet, the situation worsened after the Conference. From 'a de facto independent nation' (as described in the British Parliament in 1949), the Land of Snows became a full-fledged Chinese colony.

At the end of 1956, the Dalai Lama received an invitation to visit India for the celebration of the 2,500th birth anniversary of the Buddha. It was for him the occasion to make a pilgrimage to the sacred Land of the Buddha and discuss the distressing situation in Tibet with the Indian leaders.

During the few months of his stay, the young Lama (who was accompanied by the Panchen Lama) had many occasions to discuss the Tibetan issue with Nehru who ultimately advised him to return to Tibet.

Zhou Enlai, probably anxious that the Dalai Lama might strike a deal with the Indian Prime Minister, was often seen in Delhi during these months. He had several meetings with the Dalai Lama who recalled one in the Chinese embassy in Delhi: "I was having a frank discussion with Zhou. He told me that the situation in Tibet had deteriorated, indicating that the Chinese authorities were ready to use force to crush any popular uprising."

The Dalai Lama 'bluntly' replied that the Chinese were "forcing unwanted reforms, despite explicit reassurances that they would do no such thing". The Dalai Lama said that the clever Foreign Minister used his charm and continued to promise that the words of Chairman Mao: "no reform should be introduced in Tibet for at least the next six years" would be implemented. Like in Bandung, Zhou generously asserted that it could be postponed for "fifty years, if necessary".

Unfortunately after the Dalai Lama's return to Lhasa the situation did not improve. On the contrary the pressure increased, especially after the revolt of the Khampas in Eastern Tibet, the problems of 'co-habitation' became more acute.

The sad end of the story came when the Dalai Lama had to flee Tibet after an uprising of the population of Lhasa in March 1959.

Fifty years later, in April this year, leaders from the States of Africa and Asia which had participated in the

Bandung Conference met again in Jakarta. At the end of the meet, they endorsed a strategic, economic and political partnership and called for cooperation to fight terrorism, poverty and corruption. They agreed to promote human rights and democracy.

The glamour, excitement and idealism of the first Bandung Conference was missing. However on the last day, 40 heads of state and representatives of 100 African and Asian nations gathered at the resort of Bandung to re-enact the march taken in 1955 by the leaders of 29 newly independent countries. On the occasion of the re-enactment, the Conference's host, Indonesian President Yudhoyono, declared: "We also reaffirmed that the spirit of Bandung, which is the spirit of solidarity, friendship, and cooperation, continues to be a solid, relevant and effective foundation for fostering better relations among us, as well as for resolving global issues of common concern."

Was he really convinced?

The niceties of the celebrations do not hide the rift between countries: to give a few examples, are the tensions between India and Pakistan less than in 1955 (despite the recent thaw)? And what about the bitter dispute between China and Japan, North Korea's nuclear ambitions, Burma's human rights record, the situation in Sudan or the stressed relations between Nepal and India? All this does not augur well for the future.

During this nostalgic meet, everyone had probably forgotten the first Asian Conference held in Delhi in March 1947 in which Tibet was represented. The plenary session of the Conference was held in Purana Qila or the Red Fort. The leaders of each of the thirty-two delegations sat on the dais with the name and flag of their country before them. Tibet had its own flag with the snow-covered mountains and the two snow lions representing the dual powers of the Dalai Lama. There was a huge map of Asia behind the delegates on which Tibet was shown as a separate country.

Mahatma Gandhi met the Tibetan leaders and told them that a brochure on the proceedings of the Conference would be published which was the best way for the Tibetan delegates to demonstrate their independence.

Nehru gave a Nehruvian speech: "Peace can only come when nations are free and also when human beings everywhere have freedom and security and opportunity. Peace and freedom, therefore, have to be considered both in their political and economic aspects".

Speeches in 1947, 1955 or 2005 have remained the same, but the sad irony of Bandung remains that Tibet which had been independent for the past 2000 years began to lose its autonomy soon after the great leaders of Asia and Africa swore by 'Live and let live'.

CLAUDE ARPI is the author of "The Fate of Tibet: When Big Insects Eat Small Insects" and "Born in Sin: The Panchsheel Agreement". This article is an extensive excerpt of the original posted on www.pahyul.com.

The Dalai Lama's Statement of March 10, 2005

On the 46th Anniversary, of the Tibetan National Uprising Day

On the occasion of the 46th anniversary of the Tibetan People's Uprising, I convey my warm greetings to my fellow Tibetans in Tibet and in exile and to our friends around the world.

During these more than four decades great changes have taken place in Tibet. There has been a great deal of economic progress along with development in infrastructure. The Golmud-Lhasa railway link that is being built is a case in point. However, during the same period much has been written by independent journalists and travellers to Tibet about the real situation in Tibet and not what they have been shown. Most of them portray a very different picture than what the Chinese government claims, clearly criticizing China about the lack of human rights, religious freedom and self-rule in Tibet. What has actually happened and is still happening is that since the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region the real authority has been solely held by Chinese leaders. As for the Tibetan people, they have been facing suspicions and growing restrictions. The lack of true ethnic equality and harmony based on trust, and the absence of genuine stability in Tibet clearly shows that things are not well in Tibet and that basically there is a problem.

Prominent and respected Tibetan leaders in Tibet have spoken out on this from time to time and even suffered because of their courageous acts. In the early 1960s, the late Panchen Lama outlined the sufferings and aspirations of the Tibetan people in his petition to the Chinese leaders. Baba Phuntsok Wangyal, one of the foremost Tibetan communist leaders, in his recent biography published in English dwells at length on the need to meet the interests of the Tibetan people. In fact, it is clear that most senior Tibetan officials in Tibet deep in their hearts are extremely dissatisfied.

This year the Chinese government will mark the 40th anniversary of the establishment of the Tibet Autonomous Region. There will be much fanfare and many commemorative events to celebrate the occasion but these will be meaningless when they do not reflect the ground realities. For example, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution were celebrated with great pomp as real achievements at the time they took place.

China has made tremendous economic progress during the past more than two decades. China today is not what it was twenty or thirty years ago. Much has changed in China. As a result she has become a major player in the world and China rightly deserves this position. It is a big

nation with a huge population and a rich and ancient civilization. However, China's image is tarnished by her human rights records, undemocratic actions, the lack of the rule of law and the unequal implementation of autonomy rights regarding minorities, including the Tibetans. All these are a cause for more suspicion and distrust from the outside world.

Internally, they are an obstacle to unity and stability that are of utmost importance to the leaders of the People's Republic of China. In my view, it is important that as China becomes a powerful and respectable nation she should be able to adopt a reasonable policy with confidence.



My involvement in the affairs of Tibet is not for the purpose of claiming certain personal rights or political position for myself nor attempting to stake claims for the Tibetan administration in exile. In 1992 in a formal announcement I stated clearly that when we return to Tibet with a certain degree of freedom I will not hold any office in the Tibetan government or any other political position and that the present Tibetan administration in exile will be dissolved. Moreover, the Tibetans working in Tibet should carry on the main responsibility of administering Tibet.

I once again want to reassure the Chinese authorities that as long as I am responsible for the affairs of Tibet we remain fully committed to the Middle Way Approach of not seeking independence for Tibet and are willing to remain within the People's Republic of China. I am convinced that in the long run such an approach is of benefit to the Tibetan people for their material progress. It is encouraging that there is support from various parts of the world for this approach as being reasonable, realistic and of mutual benefit to the Chinese and Tibetans. I am particularly encouraged by the recognition and support that has come from certain quarters of the intellectual circle from within China.

This is an extract and does not purport to be the full Statement

Misunderstanding the Dalai Lama

Aspi Mistry

In reality, the Dalai Lama has never endorsed the annexation of Tibet to China.

On March 10th this year, a day which is commemorated world-wide as the Tibetan National Uprising Day, the Dalai Lama, as he does every year, issued a statement briefly repeating his stand on the Tibet issue, and the efforts and the progress made by his representatives in their negotiations with the Chinese government.

So it was with a sense of disbelief, amazement and disappointment, that I read and re-read the reactions to his statement this year, both in the mainstream media and in numerous email lists and discussion forums on the internet.

The Times of India led the pack with its lead headline reading, "Dalai gives up demand for free Tibet" on its front page the very next day. It continued to say, "The Dalai Lama on Thursday asked Tibetans to give up their dream of an independent Tibet, saying he believed 'China is best for Tibetans progress and future'".

In reality, the Dalai Lama has never endorsed the annexation of Tibet to China. At an audience given to members of the Friends of Tibet (April 2003), I asked him to comment on this issue. His Holiness clearly said, "As a Buddhist, I cannot lie. Historically, Tibet was an independent country." But as he has said in his March 10 statement of 1995, "It is my belief that it is more important to look forward to the future than to dwell on the past." In that statement made ten years ago, he also said, "The true nature of the historical relationship of Tibet and China is best left for Tibetan and Chinese historians to study objectively" and "(for)...international jurists and their institutions to study the history of Tibet and draw their unbiased conclusions."

So should the statement of this year come as a "shocker" to anybody? "In 1979, soon after receiving a proposal from the then Chinese leaders to resolve the issue of Tibet through negotiations, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, without any hesitation, agreed to negotiate with the Chinese Government based on his Middle Way approach." (Statement of the Kashag, the Cabinet of the Tibetan-Government-in-Exile, on March 10, 2005). These positions have been reiterated every year since 1988.

In 1995 His Holiness said, "Many Tibetans have voiced unprecedented criticism of my suggestion that we should compromise on the issue of total independence...Therefore I proposed last year that this issue be submitted to a referendum....The referendum should seek to clarify the

political course of our struggle." In 1998, referring to this exercise, he said, "Last year we conducted an opinion poll of the Tibetans in exile and collected suggestions from Tibet wherever possible on the proposed referendum, by which the Tibetan people were to determine the future course of our freedom struggle to their full satisfaction. Based on the outcome of this poll and suggestions from Tibet, the Assembly of People's Deputies, our parliament in exile passed a resolution empowering me to continue to use my discretion on the matter without recourse to a referendum. I wish to thank the people of Tibet for the tremendous trust, confidence and hope they place in me."

MR. ASPI MISTRY, is an activist in the Tibetan freedom movement.

"Secret Tibet"



For the past two months I have been simultaneously working with seven writers and poets in Dharamsala translating a long poem "Secret Tibet", originally written by a Tibetan woman poet Woese in Chinese, into Tibetan and English.

Woese's book "Notes on Tibet" has been banned in Tibet by the Chinese authorities for "serious political mistakes". Since the ban, her life has been a trauma, stripped of all political and civil rights, thrown out of her job as the editor of *Tibetan Literature*. Today she lives in self exile in Beijing.

I look at her act of writing the poem under such suppression and danger to her personal life as a bold effort to speak the truth. To see the poem and a brief about the poem, its significance and also about the poet Woese herself please visit <http://www.TibetWrites.org>. This website is edited by Buchung. D. Sonam: bdsonam@rediffmail.com and Tenam: tenams@gmail.com.

Tenzin Tsundue

Now is *Not* the Time for Negotiated Settlement

Pema Thinley

With everyone scrambling to try to get the most out of an over one billion-strong market, there is actually a competition to assure and reassure the regime in Beijing that the civilized world loves it and is willing to dance to its tunes.

The European Union is determined to beat all odds, including strong and seemingly desperate US objections, to lift its 15-year arms embargo on China by next year, if not sooner. The sanction, perhaps one remembers, was imposed as much to punish China for its utterly shameful June 3-4, 1989 Tiananmen bloodshed as to secure credible rights-sensitivity from it in future. The US is no longer interested to pursue a resolution against China at the ongoing UN Commission on Human Rights meeting in Geneva. And the Commission, the last hope for moral support and sustenance for the community of nations' political pariahs like us, is dominated by members, including China, that should actually be facing it from the dock to answer charges of serious, deliberate and persistent violations of their citizens' rights. Nations, mostly of the Third World kind, have rallied to support dictatorial China's anti-secession legislation of March 14, 2005, which is designed to unleash a cataclysmic bloodbath to "take back" at a time and in a circumstance of its choosing a piece of territory called Taiwan, a liberal democracy that has been a *de facto* independent country for at least the last half century. They "agree" that this war legislation is a peace formula! It is painfully obvious that these are the worst possible times, by far, for anyone to be victims, actual or potential, of human rights and other violations at the hands of the Chinese government.

First Direct China-Nepal Bus Service

Communist China has launched its first direct bus service from Tibet to neighbouring Nepal.

The bus, which will link Tibet's capital, Lhasa and Nepal's capital, Kathmandu began its journey April 30, 2005) according to a PTI report.

According to a Sino-Nepal agreement, the bus will be allowed to complete eight trips every month. Passengers can carry five kilograms of personal luggage and check fifteen kilograms for free. The one-way fare for the two-day trans-Himalayan journey is 70 US dollars.

Nepal launched its bus service to Lhasa on May 1, 2005. Currently, Lhasa is linked by direct flights from Kathmandu. However, due to inclement weather in winter, the flights remain suspended during the period.

Of course the issue of human rights never has been any much of a leverage for any government or intergovernmental agency like the UN Commission on Human rights against China. But in the case of an issue of high idealism like this, which lies at the core of our civilized values, it is the show of commitment and strength of purpose that matters more than any immediate outcome. As the Chinese say of their dogged pursuit of the lifting of the EU arms embargo, it is simply a question of the principle of the thing. Pursuing a commission resolution against China may be futile, and even seem Quixotic, in terms of fellow-members' cooperation and outcome. But that need not be an obstacle if one's motivation and sense of purpose are genuine and patent.

This is not a criticism of the liberal West for abandoning the basic human values upon which its modern democratic states have been founded. To do so would be to ignore the complexities underlying the growth and development of the human society, of which human rights and democracy-shy China is today increasingly the leading player. That means China, the world's fastest growing economy and a super-power-in-waiting raring to assert itself, dictates the terms and the rest of the world must either follow it or adapt to it. Most of the third world countries simply follow it, while the developed liberal West has adapted to it to varying degrees and in numerous ways. Of course it would be another matter if there is a consensus in the developed West on dealing with a dictatorial regime that is too big and too powerful for any single country or grouping of countries to put in place. But with everyone scrambling to try to get the most out of an over one billion-strong market, there is actually a competition to assure and reassure the regime in Beijing that the civilized world loves it and is willing to dance to its tunes.

Nevertheless, it is not impossible to visualize a scenario where the world community might put pressure on China to democratize and respect human rights. China's spectacular economic growth comes more from its exports and from foreign direct investment than much else. That means the world community together pumps the breathing apparatus that sustains the legitimacy of the otherwise ideologically dead communist regime in power. Remove or control that apparatus and the communists will very likely not be the

kind of arrogant power and authority it now is. The reality, unfortunately, is that a unity of action required to do this cannot be achieved without the recurrence of something like the Tiananmen Square massacre of Jun 1989 to stir the collective conscience of mankind. The fact that there is now economic freedom in China and sporadic tolerances of free speech – so long as it is not organized and does not originate from the so-called “public intellectuals” – make the case for global-level sanctions almost impossible to achieve. The fashionable thing to say these days – on the basis of some prisoner releases, public relations-oriented human rights actions, policies and laws; bilateral rights talks ending in cosmetic achievements, and the growing population of rich and middle-class Chinese – is that China has improved and is improving, although much still remains to be done. We are thereby given to understand that the basic principles are no longer the issue; the inconsequential details that hardly touch the basic issues are. After all, nations not only want to grab whatever opportunities they can gain from the billion-strong China market but also remain fearful of losing this out to their competitors.

The truth as it now stands, therefore, is that to all countries of the world today, humouring China is so important that it trumps almost all other international issues and considerations wherever and whenever Beijing asserts its interests. Often they are willing to look ridiculous and even debase themselves by what amounts to falling at the feet of China's communist dictators. Nepal was willing to close down the over 45-year-old exile Tibetan offices in its capital and deport Tibetan refugees back into Chinese hands, thereby throwing to the wind all pretensions of its being righteous and humanitarian in dealing with plights of refugees. Other countries, one after another, are willing to kowtow to China with ritualistic obeisance remarks that declare that there is only one China, and Taiwan and Tibet are part of it. Add to this the current new obligatory declarations of support for the anti-secession law. Those who still swear by human rights issues deal with the subject more as a public relations ploy to please human rights constituencies back home than with any real design to get China to act and make tangible progress on them. Underlying all this is the mutual realization that real progress on human rights will be the death knell of the communist regime and the great global economic promises it represents.

It is by viewing the whole situation in these cruel and twisted background circumstances that we can deduce some warped sense of sanity in the exile Tibetan government's persistent

and seemingly futile attempts to reach out to the Chinese leadership in Beijing. Now is certainly not the best time to achieve the best possible negotiated solution for Tibet. But the game apparently must go on even in the worst possible circumstances. After all, non-violence and Middle Way simply cannot be discarded as of no use against China, for then the very nature and character of the Tibetan issue and the embodiment of its struggle may have to undergo a sea change. In our view the struggle certainly must still go on, as should the attempts to reach out to achieve a negotiated solution. But we must at all times keep in mind that the price of achieving a breakthrough at such a time as now is that our concessions will be maximum and the achievements minimal. The legitimacy China claims over Tibet do not stand the tests of history, or democratic fairness and representativeness, or law. No one makes this clearer than the Chinese government itself, with its constant outpouring of propaganda materials that supposedly prove that Tibet is historically a part of China. Why the urgent and perennial need to do this if the facts are so obvious? A negotiated settlement will give China a real semblance of legitimacy for the very first time in history. We certainly believe that there will be a better time in not so distant a future when circumstances will be more congenial to strike a more democratic settlement with a more stable and mature China. The portends for this are becoming ever more discernible these days.

(This is the text of the Editorial in the *Tibetan Review* of April 2005).

MR. PEMA THINLEY is its Editor.

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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.

Dated: 1st April, 2005

J. R. Patel
Publisher.

Tibetan Independence is not Negotiable

Tenzin Tsundue

The Dalai Lama, however, doesn't go unopposed within the Tibetan community, especially among the youngsters who are not afraid to say: "We beg to differ, your Holiness".

Like the USSR, the People's Republic of China is a conglomeration of nationalities: Mongolia, the Islamic country, East Turkestan now called Xinjiang, Manchuria and Tibet. With great tension the communist government is struggling to keep things under control as "One China". The last thing they would want is the entry of the Dalai Lama into Tibet, knowing his simple presence could unite the people and reinvigorate their desire for freedom.

This March during the 46th anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day, the Dalai Lama once again announced that he does not seek independence and is willing to settle for "genuine autonomy" within the framework of the People's Republic of China. Though this doesn't come as a shock to Tibetans as it does to non-Tibetans, it further disappoints many of us who continue to stand for an independent Tibet.

The Dalai Lama's 'Middle Way Policy' seeking 'Genuine Autonomy' is an effort to find a compromise between two extremes: China's claim that Tibet is and always has been a part of China, and Tibet's demand for Independence. The Dalai Lama now asks for the traditional three provinces of Tibet to be one political entity wherein Tibetans can have self-rule without having to separate from China, while China retains foreign policy on the lines of 'One Country, Two Systems' granted to Hong Kong.

The idea originated way back in 1979 when Premier Deng Xiaoping offered to discuss anything other than Independence with the Dalai Lama. Twenty five years later, with Deng dead, diplomacy with China has reached nowhere. Three delegations have visited China and Tibet since the reopening of the diplomacy exercise in September 2002, yet Beijing is not even willing to give official Recognition to the delegations sent by the Dalai Lama.

China too wants to solve the Tibet Issue, preferably before the 2008 Beijing Olympics to have the Dalai Lama seated alongside Beijing leaders at the opening show. But for this, the Dalai Lama has to declare to the world that Tibet and Taiwan are historically a part of China. In fact, this has been the precondition for negotiations, which Beijing repeated again recently while refuting the Dalai Lama's March 10 message. From the Tibetan side, this is something no one can agree to – no, not even the 14th Dalai Lama – even if China is promising autonomy in exchange.

The Dalai Lama always maintains that history is history; let's talk of the future, he says. The way the exile government is practicing the policy of appeasement – banning all protest expressions to create a "conducive atmosphere" for negotiations – it doesn't look too implausible for the delegations to strike a deal for a lesser autonomy. If this happens the Dalai Lama and the exile Tibetans could return home, wrapping up the exile government. It would be difficult for us to accept Chinese citizenship, but that would be the beginning of the true freedom struggle while being inside Tibet.

Since 1959, the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan refugees have been living in India. Today there are more than 1,30,000 of us surviving here in 30 refugee camps. Tibetan youngsters study in about 100 Tibetan schools, and more than 400 monasteries and cultural centres have been built in India. There is even a contingent of about 5,000 Tibetan soldiers serving in the Indian army, manning the Siachen Glacier frontiers.

For the Tibetan community, the Dalai Lama is not only their leader but also the Buddha who knows the past, present and future. Even when you reason and prove that "genuine autonomy" isn't a viable solution as we negotiate with Beijing, the majority of Tibetans would say, "There must be something His Holiness has in mind which is beyond our understanding". This leap of faith is what makes the Tibetan leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

The Dalai Lama, however, doesn't go unopposed within the Tibetan community, especially among the youngsters who are not afraid to say: "We beg to differ, your Holiness". On the stand for independence, for example, the biggest Tibetan NGO – the Tibetan Youth Congress with 20,000 members in 77 different chapters all over the world – makes its goal of independence clear to the Dalai Lama. There is, however, pressure from the older generation to conform to his directives.

I am a second generation Tibetan, born and brought up in India on stories of our freedom struggle and the wonderful dream of a free Tibet. We were anxious to grow up fast to take part in the freedom movement. Today, when we are ready to shoulder responsibility, the goal posts are being shifted.

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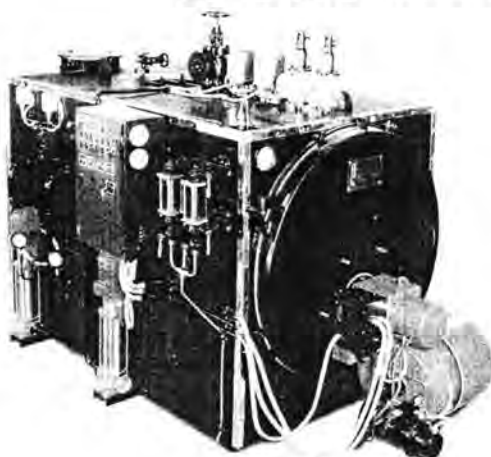


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I can never think of being party to the corrupted Communist China, which has brutally massacred her own children on Tiananmen Square when they demanded freedom and democracy.

The Tibetans who emerged from isolation behind the Himalayas in 1959 – marvelling at the sight of even a bicycle – have made a fast forward journey into modernity. It was a youthful Dalai Lama who introduced democracy into the exiled Tibetan community in 1960 and slowly passed most of his temporal powers into the hands of the prime minister of the exile government.

Today we have a functioning democracy, which can change the whole tradition of leadership. The process of finding a negotiated solution to our impasse with Beijing was passed as a resolution by the Tibetan Parliament in 1999, making it the official stand of the Tibetan government-in-exile.

Behind the Himalayas, six million Tibetans are living under repressive Chinese rule, resisting, waiting for their leader to return from exile. For the younger generation of Tibetans is the promise of a New Tibet. The youngsters educated in India and abroad are emerging with new skills and professionalism. Beyond their trendy looks in jeans and

sneakers, this new tribe still respects the Dalai Lama, but their faith is not blind to political reality.

Beyond the mountains Beijing created the Tibet Autonomous Region in 1965 and therein the real Tibet is preserved. 'Overseas Tibetans', including the Dalai Lama, are welcome to return to The Motherland. Inside Tibet the majority six millions are the final voice of our nation. They have resisted the occupation for 50 years. Today they still risk their lives for Independence. Can we in exile make such historic decisions compromising on Independence on their behalf? Can we take their faith in His Holiness granted?

China's Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, visited India recently with a huge business team. For me he is the head of Communist China, which invaded my country and continues to rule it with tyranny. Why else do more than 3,000 Tibetans escape to India every year, running from Chinese persecution? We decided that it was the time to protest China's occupation of Tibet. And protest we did. This has involved jail and the prospect of long drawn-out court cases. I am ready to face everything, but I will not keep silent.

TENZIN TSUNDUE is a poet and activist for Free Tibet. He won the first Outlook-Picador prize for non-fiction writing. He can be contacted at tentsudue@hotmail.com

A Protest That Captured World Attention

Even as the police kept more than a hundred Tibetan students in the city of Bangalore under house arrest, on the occasion of the visit of communist Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao, on April 10, 2005, one protester managed to make his point with a flourish, turning the combined glare of the national and international media off the Chinese Premier if only for a few moments.

While Wen was interacting with top scientists at the ground floor of the imposing main building of the Indian Institute of Science, Tenzin Tsundue, Mumbai-based national general secretary of the Friends of Tibet, poet and freelance scribe, surfaced on the sixth storey, waving a flag and dangling a huge red banner with the legend 'Free Tibet'. A clutch of red-faced Chinese officials and local policemen with sniffer dogs stood watching as Tenzin, perched precariously on the ramparts, shouted slogans asking China to quit Tibet. Within minutes, security men dashed up and hauled him off.

"This is an unfortunate incident. The miscreant has been promptly apprehended and the Karnataka government is conducting an investigation," a Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson said.

The demonstration was Tenzin's second – he had pulled off a similar routine in Mumbai when Wen's predecessor Zhu Rongji was at a city hotel.

Police sources said access to the area had been barred, the entire building and the surrounding huge campus

thoroughly scanned and cops posted round the clock three days ago. "He must have sneaked in and hid himself in the cramped space of the steeple at least three days ago. We didn't find any food there, and he must have been starving," they said.

Additional Commissioner of Police K. V. R. Tagore said Tenzin would be charged for criminal trespass, violating prohibitory orders and attempted suicide, to start with. Senior police sources said a probe would be ordered and "heads would roll" for the security mess-up.

(From a report in the *The Indian Express* of April 11, 2005)



Police detain Tenzin Tsundue as he sits atop a tower of the main building of the IISc, Bangalore.

Why the Protest?

In a press release on April 8, Friends of Tibet India, drew attention to the fact that the police in Bangalore were trying to gag the Tibetans and Indian protests on the eve of the Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao's visit to Bangalore.

The Deputy Commissioner of Police, Mr. G. B. Chebbi, Bangalore city not only cancelled the permission to do a 24-hour hunger strike, which he had allowed earlier, but verbally warned the Tibetans and Indian supporters of dire consequences if they did any expression of protest during the Chinese Premier's visit.

Repeated attempts to seek permission to do a protest legally by both Tibetan and Indian supporters were rejected.

This led to the protest by Tenzin Tsodue which drew international attention.

You must be wondering why a group of Tibetans and their supporters are protesting when the Chinese Prime Minister is visiting the country – that too at a time when India is in the process of improving its ties with China. Communist China which propagates the doctrine 'Religion is Poison' has a Prime Minister who quotes the *Upanishad*. On March 14, 2005, when asked about the prospects of the 55th anniversary of the establishment of Indo-China diplomatic relationship, Wen Jiabao, the Chinese Prime Minister quoted the *Upanishad* and said: "May He protect us both together. May He nourish us both together. May we work conjointly with great energy. May our study be

vigorous and effective. May we not hate anyone. Let there be peace, let there be peace, let there be peace!"

It is difficult to believe that these words are coming from the mouth of a Politburo member, who was party to ordering the Tiananmen Square Massacre killing thousands of student demonstrators in 1989, and still witnessing and ordering the massacre of Tibetans protesting the occupation of their country. After the destruction of more than 6,000 Buddhist monasteries and universities in Tibet, the massacre of more than a million Tibetans and the prosecution of crores of worshippers and democracy activists across the country, China now is using *Upanishad* for a face change.

The Chinese want the whole world to believe that China is a nation of 2.5 billion and consists of more than 40 per cent of the world population. In reality, 60 per cent of what they claim to be China is occupied land, which includes Tibet, Mongolia, East Turkistan and Manchuria.

China became India's neighbour only in 1949, after the illegal occupation Tibet, which led to the escape of the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and political head of more than sixty lakh Tibetans. Soon China attacked India in 1962 at a time when India was building friendship saying 'Hindi-Chini-Bhai-Bhai'. Today India is spending Rupees sixty three crores a day to protect her people from a friendly neighbour!

We want to tell Wen Jiabao that there will be NO peace in Tibet unless the Chinese leave and start living as a neighbour, as they used to be for thousands of years. So, let there be peace in Tibet.

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Economics

THE LIBERAL BUDGET 2005-06

The Way forward

SUGGESTS TOTAL BAN ON NEW PUBLIC SECTOR ENTERPRISES AND MAJOR PROCEDURAL REFORMS IN TAX LAWS

Released at a press conference on February 14th, 2005, the Liberal Budget 2005-06, issued by the INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP, suggests that there should be a total ban on the setting up of new public sector enterprises and a reform of tax laws to eliminate complexity and harshness for those who comply with them.

The Liberal Budget criticises the UPA policy on disinvestment. The Liberal criterion for disinvestment is not whether a PSU is making profits or losses. It is whether any socially useful purpose is served in keeping the PSU in the public sector.

The Liberal Budget has suggested that social sector initiatives should have priority to ensure: (1) Reduction of the poverty ratio by 5 per cent by 2007 and by 15 per cent by 2015. (2) All children in school by 2005. All children to complete five years of schooling by 2009. (3) Increase in the literacy rate to 75 percent by 2007. (4) Reduction of the infant mortality rate to 45 per 1000 live births by 2007 and 28 by 2012. (5) Reduction in maternal mortality rates to 2 per 1000 live births by 2007 and 1 by 2012 (6) Improve child feeding and caring practices to bring down the prevalence of underweight children under the age of three from 47 per cent to 40 per cent. (7) Reduce the prevalence of severe under-nutrition among children in the age group of 0-6 by 50 per cent. (8) Provide 100 per cent coverage of rural and urban population with safe drinking water.

On taxes and revenue, the Liberal Budget states: "Bearing in mind the long term interest of the country and its objective of increasing tax revenue by voluntary compliance, as a policy, no retrospective amendment should be made in the tax laws which will have an adverse effect on tax payers".

Reduction in governmental manpower:

The Liberal Budget has recommended that in view

of the on-going liberalisation several ministries must be wound up and a number of existing fragmented ministries should be brought together. It has also suggested a thorough overhaul of various Acts and regulations which are relics of the old colonial legacy.

There needs to be a reduction of the total employees under the Central Government from a total of 24.49 lakhs to less than 50,000. Those who it will dispense with can be given generous VRS at all levels from IAS to peons.

While Defence stands apart, there still is a case for improving the Teeth to Tail ratio by reducing non-combatant staff in positions.

The budget released by the INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP is recommendatory in nature and is a means to inculcate liberal values in the governance of the country.

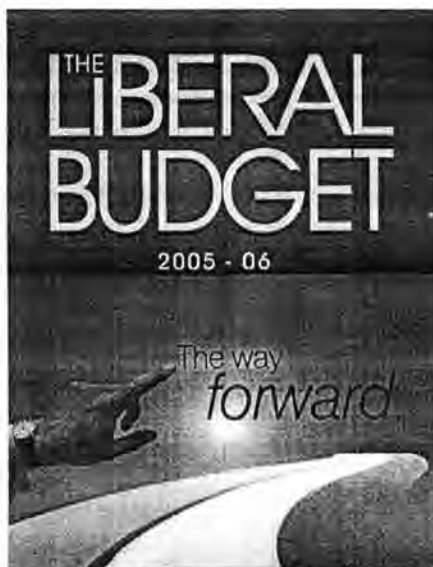
INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP

The Indian Liberal Group started by Mr. Minoo Masani, a free association of voluntarily dedicated intellectuals, stands for being a non-political pressure group to further the cause of liberalism in Parliament and in the running of the country with respect for the law and the Constitution. The Group believes in free enterprise, in secular values and in the elimination of corruption from public life.

The 48-page publication in an attractive brochure format has the following Chapters:

- 2004-05 Fiscal Policy – A Critique
- Social Sector Initiatives
- Administrative and Expenditure Reforms
- Tax Reforms and Tax Administration

Appendices include: 6 'Liberal Budgets' in terms of Rs.Crores and percentage of GDP - At a Glance, Revenue Receipts and Expenditure pattern.



The authors of the Liberal Budget are:

- Mr. S. S. Bhandare, former Economic Adviser, Tata Services Ltd.
- Dr. C. S. Deshpande, Executive Director, Maharashtra Economic Development Council
- Mr. K. P. Geethakrishnan, Retired Civil Servant & Former Chairman, Expenditure Commission, Chennai
- Mr. Kishor Karia, Chartered Accountant
- Dr. Ajit Karnik, Director & Professor, Department of Economics, University of Mumbai
- Prof. S. Radhakrishnan, Professor of Economics & President, Indian Liberal Group, Chennai Chapter
- Mr. Jayraj Sheth, Chartered Accountant
- Dr. R. Swaminathan, Retired civil servant & Former Secretary, Asian Development Bank
- Dr. A. M. Swaminathan, Retired civil servant & former Chairman, Staff & Expenditure Commission, Government of Tamil Nadu
- Mr. Narayan K. Varma, Chartered Accountant
- Mr. K. Venkataraman, Retired civil servant and Formerly Managing Director, Technical Promotion, UNIDO, Austria; Currently Chairman, PERT (Public Expenditure Round Table)
- Mr. S. Viswanathan, Editor & Publisher, *Industrial Economist*.

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Corruption, Construction, "Infrastructure" & Inflationary Financing

Subroto Roy

It is surprising that the Congress Government has made not even a noise towards attacking India's all-pervasive corruption. Any such assault would start with taking a very hard-line on the accounts and audit processes of all Government institutions and agencies. The *Statesman* of March 8 2005 has some slight good news on the front page.

The new Army Chief General JJ Singh has apparently comprehended that constructing buildings with public funds is a prime source of corrupt practices – as inferior design and materials get used and the difference gets pocketed by the vested interests and nefarious gangs (often dressed as gentlemen of course) which have taken over so many public institutions in India. General JJ Singh has apparently ordered that new Army buildings will have the responsible officer's name permanently inscribed on them – so as the corruption implicit in the building comes to be revealed over the years, the name can also sink with it.

I suppose that is one way of going about it. However, if that rule was applied all over the Government of India and the States, there are going to be a lot of names placed on buildings – as the Government and its official economists and media and business friends are always going hoarse saying the word "infrastructure" and whatever that word means, it certainly implies construction, and construction implies corruption. I have to say the root cause

of all this irresponsible behaviour is probably the inflationary deficit financing processes of the last fifty years in India. When recourse is had so easily to the printing press to pay for public expenditure, all accounting and auditing tends to lose meaning, and corrupt people try to make as much paper money as they can any way they can (whether stealing from the government or from the private companies in which they work), and then try to change these into consumption or assets if possible, like trips abroad or buying educations for their children.

It is all rather sordid, and would have disgusted generations of nationalists and freedom fighters. Our national motto "*Satyameva jayathe*" from the Upanishads is insulted by all those participating in one way or another in such activities while being employees of the public exchequer. An independent press might have taken on a watchdog mission for itself in India but there is no real hope of that as long as mediemen remain so close to the government and so consumed by their vapid personal interests. At a time when its rival newspaper front pages are more likely to carry stories about some trivial sex scandal rather than nefarious corruption, *The Statesman* deserves praise for carrying the story about the Army Chief trying in his own way to reduce corruption in the Army.

[From IndiaSeminar (a Yahoo Group), March 8, 2005]

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APRIL 2005

On the occasion is the birth centenary year of its founder Mr. Minoo Masani and in memory of the late Dr. Colabawalla, its Chairman, who passed away in September 2003, the Society for the Right to Die with Dignity organised an essay competition for college students. The subject of the essay was "Willed Death".

The purpose of this competition was to understand how the students viewed the concept of voluntary euthanasia and to inform them of the society's campaign to give the terminally ill the legal right to choose a dignified death executing a 'Living Will' (*Ichha Maran*) when in full possession of their mental faculties.

Thirty entries were received. A three-man panel of judges comprising Mr. J. B. D'Souza, IAS (Retd.), formerly Municipal Commissioner of Mumbai; Mr. B. K. Karanjia, journalist and author; and Professor R. Srinivasan, Retired Professor of Political Science, University of Mumbai, assessed the entries and the following were declared winners:

First Prize	:	Mr. Amaey Ashok Parekh, Mumbai
Second Prize	:	Ms. Vaidehi S. Deo, Nagpur
Third Prize	:	Mr. Satyanshu Singh, Pune

The prizes were awarded by Justice H. Suresh (Retd.) at an Award-giving function held on February 25, 2005. We publish the first and second prize-winning essays.

Willed Death

Amaey A. Parekh

This essay won the First Prize of Rs.5,000/-

I looked at that old woman and I could see her suffering....yet there was nothing that anyone could do. Everything that the doctors could possibly carry out, they had tried. One complication had led to another. Her relatives were around her ... one, I presume, her daughter was in tears. I had been seeing that old woman for 3 days now. She had been shifted from the I.C.U since the doctors felt that there was not much chance of her surviving. But what made me feel worse was the fact that the woman herself said only one thing "*Main jald se jald upar jana chahti hun*" ("I want to go up as early as possible.") It was at that time I actually wondered that was it worth surviving those wretched days in pain? Would it not be better if someone just painlessly took away all those miserable moments and end it all? Isn't it more sensible to shorten that excruciating period ... rather than try and prolong it without any success?

This had happened quite a few years back. I had gone to visit my grandmother in the hospital. In the process, I learnt about this old lady. And to this day I wonder why the doctors around her had simply not ceased her trauma. But then I thought would that have been right? Even though the woman wanted to end her life, was that the correct thing to do? Is that how things are supposed to work? If the doctors would have eased her pain by ending her life, wouldn't that have been as good as a murder committed by the doctor?

It is indeed startling to imagine a doctor committing such a "so called heinous deed". After all a doctor's duty is

to save lives ... not purposefully end them! But what if the patient wants the doctor to do so? Should the doctor forget all his ethics and think only about the patient's feeling? What would that be called? And it was this curiosity that made me find this one word in the dictionary - Euthanasia - "bringing about a gentle death in the case of incurable and painful disease."

In layman's language it is simply 'mercy-killing'. Now, the term "euthanasia" encompasses acts from lethal injection to "assisting" in suicide; to withholding basic levels of care from non-terminal patients. In all cases of euthanasia, the action or omission is expressly intended to cause the death of a person. It has been in practice for many ages. But it has been criticized since times unknown. It has been a part and parcel of society though it cannot be officially admitted as so. And it has simply had one reason - to rid the pain of the patient for once and for all ... when all other possible means have failed.

Life is essentially from the time one is born to one's death. So what is death actually? It is clinically defined as the time when the brain stops functioning. This occurs after the stoppage of the heart. But when a person thinks about death from the psychological point of view, it is simply the passing away of a person at the end of his life. It is simply the cessation of all activities of the person. From the religious point of view, death is considered as the drifting away of

the 'soul of the body' from one world to another. So it is indeed very complicated to define death. No one really knows what happens after one dies ... so death is mainly a mystery in itself.

But it is the termination to all worldly pleasures ... and pains. The right 'to die' has never been granted ... in fact ending one's life conscientiously is considered a crime ... that is, suicide is a big 'no-no' by the constitution in almost all countries. It is simply because no government wants its citizens to die. But what the government doesn't seem to see or maybe doesn't want to see is that no person on this planet would want to end his or her life without a very strong motive behind it. And pain is usually the main culprit.

There have been plenty of cases where a lot of people have demanded the right to 'die with dignity' ... in simple words they have requested for permission to let someone put an end to their never ending and incurable suffering. There have hardly been cases when the grant has actually been given. Only countries like Netherlands and certain parts of Australia and the United States of America actually legalized euthanasia.

It has usually been that the doctor, unable to do anything more to improve the condition of the patients has assisted in eliminating the suffering from the patient's life out of mercy for the patient. The medical profession holds that the life of a patient has to be saved. However, in cases of terminal illness, medical professionals do not prolong the life of a person. Instead they prolong the death of that person.

Euthanasia is like an opportunity for people with terminal illness to get a permanent cure. It involves a major role for both the doctor and the patient. It is the will of the patient and the mercy of the doctor. It gives the patient a chance to choose the time of his death. It gives a chance to the patient to die without having any regrets for doing so. It is like attaining freedom from a cruel and punishing ruler ...

So why is it considered as an offence? It is because the constitution says that any form of homicide – whether culpable or non-culpable is an offence and if culpable it is regarded simply as manslaughter. The person who is responsible for causing the death is regarded guilty of murder and should that person try to prove that he or she is innocent, it is simply ruled out as the Court says that no one has the right to practically choose if death can be inflicted on him or her. Thus the doctor may be held responsible. Due to some reason the doctor is not found guilty, the patient is considered a criminal for attempted suicide. Thus, it is a conventional concept that death cannot be brought to a person other than by natural reasons.

Euthanasia has been discussed and contemplated upon from time to time but to no avail. It has been discussed in churches, courts, classrooms and many such places ... but its argument continues. The main reasons that question the

morality of euthanasia are:

1. Whether there can be a misuse of the practice – wherein property matters and inheritance come to light. This can be a hindrance to the spirit of euthanasia.
2. Life is precious and here the ethical principles of life are involved.

Life is considered as a fundamental right. To many people it seems that euthanasia is simply a means of deriving sadistic pleasure at the expense of the patient's life. It is like taking the right away from the person. But what people do not see is that no human in this world would give up his life unless subdued by extreme tribulations. It is only the pain that drives the individual to the cause of unnatural death.

Euthanasia can actually be considered as a measure for a patient to 'die with self-respect and honour'. It should be looked upon as prevention against the hard ordeal of anguish without any solution, if the patient willingly chooses to die only because he knows that there are absolutely no chances of his condition improving, the act of killing him will decrease his predicament. In that manner, it is a selfless act on the part of the doctor.

So what exactly might be in the mind of a patient? I read this in a magazine and thought it deserves a mention: **Ramon Sanpedro** was one such patient. He demanded the assistance of a doctor to help him die with dignity. He was paralyzed in Spain as a result of a swimming accident during his youth. He described himself as "a head attached to a corpse." He wrote:

"Why die? Because every journey has its departure time and only the traveller has the privilege and the right to choose the last day to get out. Why to die? Because at times, the journey of no return is the best path that reason can show us out of love and respect for life, so that life may have a dignified death." These words from a suffering patient emphasize the strong desire to end the catastrophe that seems to besiege him.

Thus the concept of Euthanasia, however controversial it may be, is meant only for a good cause. If not misused, it is a blessing to the people who know that they are on the verge of death and yet very far from it. It may seem incorrect ethically, but ethics say that one should have values of humanity instilled in him or her, and helping others in times of such agonizing pain shows humanity. It should be accepted constitutionally as well ... if one is given the right to live, one must also be given the right to die ... and that too die with dignity. Thus although death is the means used in euthanasia, the only reason of doing so can be expressed in the following one sentence:

"The actual motive is to kill the pain, not the person."

MR. AMAEY A. PAREKH is a first year B.D.S. student at the Nair Hospital Dental College, Mumbai.

Willed Death

Vaidehi Sanjeev Deo

This essay won the Second Prize of Rs.3,000/-

Hamlet articulated this in his soliloquy:

'Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take up arms against a sea of troubles And by
opposing, end them?
- To die to sleep ... 'Tis a consummation Devoutly to
be wished. '

The word Euthanasia has its roots in the Greek language: eu means "good" and thanatos means "death". One meaning given to the word is "the intentional termination of life by another at the explicit request of the person who dies" and the other is "the act must be initiated by the person who wishes to commit suicide". However, some people define euthanasia to include both voluntary and involuntary termination of life.

There are various types of euthanasia:

Passive Euthanasia: Hastening the death of a person by altering some form of support and letting nature take its course. For example: Removing life support equipment (e.g. turning off a respirator) or stopping medical procedures, medications etc. Administering lethal medication to hasten death is regarded as ethical in most political jurisdictions and by most medical societies.

Active Euthanasia: This involves causing the death of a person through a direct action, in response to a request from that person. A well known example was the mercy killing in 1998 of a patient with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease) by Dr. Jack Kevorkian, a Michigan physician. His patient was frightened that the advancing disease would cause him to die a horrible death in the near future; he wanted a quick, painless exit from life. Dr. Kevorkian injected controlled substances into the patient, thus causing his death. Charged with 1st degree murder, the jury found him guilty of 2nd degree murder in March 1939.

Involuntary Euthanasia: This term is used by some to describe the killing of a person who has not explicitly requested aid in dying. This is most often done to patients who are in a Persistent Vegetative State and will probably never recover consciousness.

Euthanasia can be traced as far back as to the ancient Greek and Roman civilizations. It was sometimes allowed in these civilizations to help others die. Voluntary euthanasia was approved in these ancient societies. As time passed, religion increased, and life was viewed to be sacred. Euthanasia in any form was seen as wrong.

In this century there have been many groups formed that are for and against euthanasia. In 1935 the first group

that was for the legalization of euthanasia was formed. It was called the Voluntary Euthanasia Society and was started by a group of doctors in London (The Voluntary Euthanasia Society). The first society established in the United States came shortly after in 1938. It was called the Hemlock Society.

A number of legal considerations are involved in the issue of euthanasia. But why is it so? I honestly believe that the people making the laws to block death with dignity have never sat at the bedsides of terminally ill people or sat in the homes, holding hands with the family members while their loved ones scream in agony in the other room.

The opponents say that the law can get slippery towards euthanasia. But the fact is that the law can be specifically written to ensure that the terminally ill patients remain in control of their dying process. The law can definitely work if it is based on the following conditions:

1. It should operate within the confines of the doctor patient relationship
2. The patient should be the driving force in the process.

Some opponents might say that many people were told they had a few months to live but then were still alive years later; the law can encourage people to act too soon. But the fact is nobody wants to die. Many examples have demonstrated that the terminally ill people, who sought help from a physician to hasten their deaths, did so while fighting to make the most of every day. If an extended recovery were possible, that individual would not even think of using the law, as they would want to make the most of the time they've been given. People in extreme situations for whom recovery is no longer possible use the law as a last resort when each day becomes more and more unbearable. These people think outlawing physician-aid-in-dying will prevent it from happening. But the fact is Physician-hastened dying happens in every state, every day. Laws will not prevent terminally ill patients from seeking an end to their suffering, nor will they prevent some doctors from quietly helping. Laws can only be used to protect patients and physicians by regulating the practice – ensuring no abuse occurs. Families can coerce terminally ill loved ones into using the law. The law can be made to ensure that if there is any evidence of coercion the process must be stopped. Physicians, working closely with terminally ill patients and their families can ensure that this will not happen. Some people say proper pain management makes death with dignity unnecessary. But the truth is proper pain management can alleviate a patient's desire for a hastened death. Even the most ardent opponents admit that for 5% of terminally ill people even the best pain care will not alleviate their suffering. In addition, pain is only one element in this complex problem.

For many terminally ill people, it is the loss of dignity and autonomy – the suffering beyond pain – that becomes intolerable. People can hasten their deaths through terminal sedation and dehydration. In this scenario, the patient stops eating and drinking. The doctor provides sedation so that the patient does not feel the effects of starvation and dehydration. The process can take up to two weeks and there is no consciousness due to the excessive sedation. The prescriptions used usually render the patient asleep within a few minutes and death usually comes within a few hours, if not sooner. It is up to us to decide which is more humane. Some people say the laws can undermine important health care and medical services. But the fact is hospice utilization will decrease as patients choose assisted dying. People might say that patients will no longer be able to trust their physicians to do everything possible to cure them. Doctors usually do everything their patients want to prolong life, and should be allowed to fulfill some patients' final wishes when suffering becomes unbearable. Many people want to know their doctors will not abandon them if their suffering becomes intolerable and will work with them should they decide to choose death with dignity.

People might say Law will result in people taking their lives who are not terminally ill. The law will in fact contribute to a "culture of death." The law will bring peace of mind to many terminally ill patients who more often than not say something like "I don't know if I'll use the law, but knowing it is there as an option gives me the strength to go on." If that's not life affirming, what is? It can be said that disabled people, poor, under-educated, uninsured, racial minorities and other marginalized sections will be encouraged to use the law. But no one will be encouraged to use the law. The law will be in place for terminally ill people whose suffering is intolerable and who wish a humane and dignified death. The law will be rarely used in hospitals but it does supply real comfort to many people who see it as an option - if they need it. There are many disabled people who will support this law. Experience indicates that the people who chose to use the law are well educated, have had excellent health care, good insurance, access to hospice and are well supported financially, emotionally and physically. Opponents can say that the law might not have adequate reporting and safeguards.

Doctors may not report under the law. Therefore we really don't know how many people have used it or how successful it has been. But the fact is doctors won't qualify for the law's "safe harbor" provisions if they do not report use of the law to the Department. A doctor who does not report to the Department would be subject to reprimand. The opponents might say that the law allows people to "play God". But dying is a process and the law will circumvent that process and the potential for closure and healing that might occur between the patient and their family or friends. Experience demonstrates that these processes are not circumvented and that the support of family and friends in the final days is often enhanced.

Goodbyes are said and often, family and friends are gathered with the patient when they slip peacefully into sleep.

The people choosing to use the law had been facing death for years and were asking to use the law only as a last resort; there is no, evidence of anyone "rushing" the process.

People will say the law is tantamount to "playing God," only God should determine when we die. But today modern medicine has become adept at prolonging life and unfortunately, continues to treat death as a failure. With all the technology and treatment options in healthcare today, it is often only the suffering and death that is prolonged – not a superior quality of life. People who might be stuck in the prolonged suffering of a terminal illness and whose belief systems allow them to choose a hastened death, are no more playing God than the people who suggest that one more procedure, one more pill, one more tube might make the difference.

Living wills are also a big part in the legal aspects of euthanasia. A living will can express a patient's thoughts towards his future medical treatment. They allow anyone capable of making decisions to tell the doctor beforehand that they do not wish to be put on life support (Encarta 98)

I oppose the two primary methods of active euthanasia: lethal injection and the withholding of food and fluids. I feel that the life of any person should be appreciated and lived out until he or she needs the use of life-support machines. By administering a lethal injection, one causes the patient to cut his life short. Withholding food and fluids shortens the life.

I support passive methods of euthanasia. The two primary methods are removal of life support and removal of necessary medicines. Employing life support and medicines would lead to an unnatural prolonging of life. Removing them does not shorten life, does not place the patient's family in unnecessary debt, and also does not cause prolonged suffering for the patient or for the patient's family.

Shakespeare once asked, "Is it a sin to rush into the secret house of death ere death dare come upon us?" Based on my research, it is a mistake unless the people involved in the decision have considered all the effects and have decided upon passive euthanasia. Then they are not rushing into "the secret house" but entering it prepared.

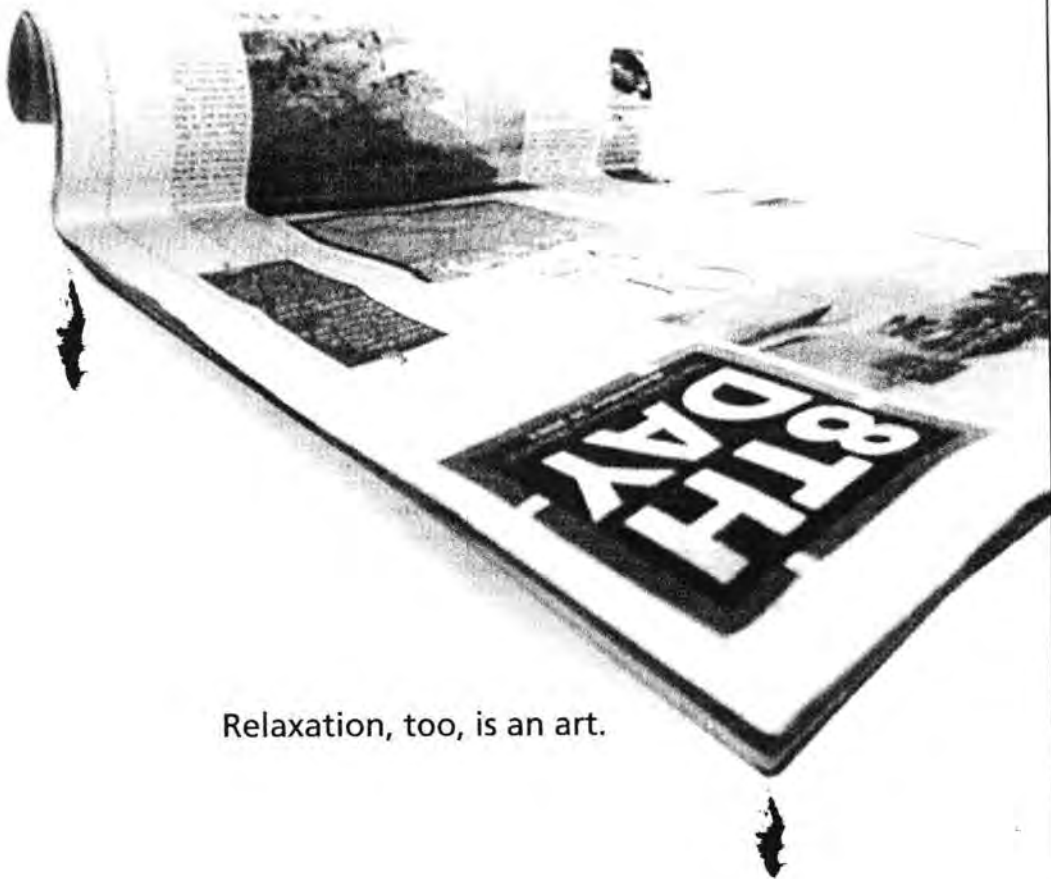
Amen.

MS.VAIDEHI SANJEEV DEO was a second year B.Sc (Biotechnology) student in the L.A.D. & SMT. R.P. College for Women, Nagpur.

When we wrote congratulating her on winning the second prize for her essay, we received a reply from her father with the sad news that his daughter was no more.

The last date for submission of essays for this competition was November 8, 2004. After the deadline had passed we received her essay with an explanatory letter asking us to condone the delay in submitting her article. As she had phoned our office earlier and explained that she had had an accident while travelling in an auto rickshaw there would be a couple of days delay in submitting her entry, we condoned the delay and accepted her entry which won the second prize. Alas, she was not fated to know of her achievement. May her Soul Rest in Peace.

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Gender Issues

Taking on the Challenge

Shilpa Phadke

Our conversations with women suggest that at an everyday level women feel much higher levels of anxiety and fear than men in their negotiations with public space creating a situation where they are compelled to produce safety for themselves.

The recent incident of rape at the police *chowky* at Marine Drive in Mumbai has seen the city and citizens respond with anger and outrage, underlined by the upper class area where the crime took place and the fact that it involved a college girl and the perpetrator was a police constable. The rape and the policeman's attitude are both a matter of grave concern, as is the insistence of the Mumbai police that this is an isolated incident.

It is disturbing to find that senior police officers have repeatedly called the rapist constable a pervert or perverse suggesting that these crimes are not just an aberration but also the product of an abnormal mind. Furthermore, the excessive focus on the drunken state of the policeman suggests that a sober policeman (or indeed any other sober man) would not commit such a crime. While it is important to focus on drunkenness among the police, this is not the real issue in this rape.

During the last one and a half years that the Gender & Space Project at PUKAR has been researching women and public space in the city, we have often walked into police stations across the city and found varying reactions from helpfulness to sneers. One question however, was asked over and again "Why should women be out in public space when they had no work there?"

It is just this attitude that defines women's location in private spaces (where statistics on domestic violence have proved time and again that they are *not* safe) which underlies the article in the *Saamna* suggesting that not only do women invite sexual assault through so called provocative clothing but also

that they have no business being out in public in the first place.

Our conversations with women suggest that at an everyday level women feel much higher levels of anxiety and fear than men in their negotiations with public space creating a situation where they are compelled to produce safety for themselves through various strategies like carrying pepper sprays, clinging to their cell phones, traveling in groups or seeking male escorts. Men too are attacked, even killed in public space but unlike women, they are not blamed for being there in the first place. Women's additional anxieties are linked to the fact that not only do they have to produce safety, but that they also feel compelled to manufacture respectability: that is to demonstrate that they are protection-worthy they have to prove that they are 'virtuous' women.

During an elective course which we taught at an architecture college in the city, in an exercise students were asked to map spaces they perceived to be safe and unsafe. One student mapped an area of marine drive – the space located exactly opposite the police chowky where the rape took place as an unsafe space as it was hidden from the road and was dark and deserted. Our research suggests that the material aspects of city design and planning have an impact of women's sense of safety and comfort in public spaces. It is important to ask at this point if it may be possible to view public spaces in the city and suggest ways in which they might be made safer. In another assignment, a student re-designed the information-kiosk opposite CST station to make it transparent (precisely the move the police is now taking with the

police chowky). Is it possible to examine these spaces and enact preventive changes rather than wait for a crime to happen?

It is a source of comfort to find many voices raised against this crime and the demand that the city be made safer for women. Women's groups have also demanded that the SC ruling which overturned the previous Bombay High Court ruling that a woman could not be arrested after sunset and without the presence of a woman constable be reviewed and changed. They have also asked that a women's desk be instituted at every police station. These are important issues that we unreservedly support.

However, it is also important to take this discussion beyond safety to take head on the challenge issued by the *Saamna* piece to assert that women, all women, sex workers, bar dancers, spaghetti strap clad, sari clad and *burkha* clad have the right to access public space as citizens. This is the time to challenge the ideological assumptions about a woman's proper place that normalize women's anxieties in relation to public space and at the same time to make a strong claim for women's right to experience the varied pleasures of the city as flaneurs who may choose to take risks and as individuals who have not just a conditional right to protection but to a fuller and more meaningful citizenship.

SHILPA PHADKE conceptualised and now co-ordinates the Gender and Space Project at PUKAR (Partners for Urban Knowledge Action & Research), Mumbai. She is an Associate of PUKAR and a Ph.D. student at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

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Personalities

Rajaji : The Last Phase

Innovating Traditions in Party Politics - 2

S. V. Raju

It was not so much the defeat of the 'Grand Alliance' in the 1971 elections that broke Rajaji's spirit.

What added to his cup of misery was when two of trusted lieutenants deserted him. Prof. N. G. Ranga defected to the Congress, and Mr. Masani announced his retirement from active party politics.

The first part of this essay appeared in Freedom First No.464 - Ed.

Within weeks of its founding in 1959, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was quick to denounce the Swatantra Party as a feudal party, a party of princes, a party of capitalists etc. And the label stuck. Rajaji's riposte was characteristic of him. He pointed out to the large number of the rich and former princes and maharajas in Nehru's Congress. With cold logic Rajaji pointed out that the rich and the princes who had joined the Swatantra Party had shown much courage to dare incur Nehru's displeasure! Moreover, men and women of means who had chosen to throw their lot with Rajaji would not be tempted to be corrupt as they had money of their own. He rammed the point home when, on the eve of the general elections of 1967, he got the Swatantra Party to advertise in the press, his appeal to those with means to come forward and contest the elections to the Lok Sabha as self-supporting candidates of the Swatantra Party!

Quite a few businessmen with courage decided to buck the permit-quota raj and responded to Rajaji's appeal. The Swatantra Party emerged as the single largest party in the opposition in the Fourth Lok Sabha with 44 members comprising 19 agriculturists; 12 professionals, 9 industrialists and 4 princes. Though publicly Rajaji expressed disappointment that his party was unable to get at least a hundred of its candidates elected, the success in getting as many as 44 elected within eight years of its formation was astonishing. The 1967 elections had dented the Congress monolith. With his weekly *Swarajya* in one hand, and the Swatantra Party in the other, Rajaji took on Nehru and his establishment and

severely dented the Congress monopoly on power. One has only to read the columns of *Swarajya* in the run-up to the General Elections of 1967 to get an idea of the ideological ammunition he marshalled to make this happen - not to mention his extensive electioneering, travelling the length and breadth of the country. He was 88. His criticism was severe but never personal. As Gandhiji's secretary Pyarelal wrote a year before he died:

"Rajaji has a sharp tongue but like a polished razor's keen edge it causes the ritual wound with a touch 'that is scarcely felt or seen.' The wound is meant to heal, not hurt. Like a surgeon's knife it removes the scab without leaving a scar. Rajaji is unsparing but never heartless or cruel. He can be angry but never vindictive."

The Swatantra Party's performance in elections to various

state legislatures was equally creditable. A total of 259 MLAs were returned. The party led a coalition government in Orissa, was the official opposition in the state assemblies of Rajasthan and Gujarat and had sizeable representation in the Andhra and Tamil Nadu assemblies.

Speaking of Rajasthan and Gujarat the Party had come within reach of power. The temptation to encourage defections from other parties to make a bid for power was great. Both the central and state leadership of the Swatantra Party were wooed by power-brokers and big business with offers to buy some legislators mostly independents and a few from other parties. With strong support from Rajaji, Minoo Masani then General Secretary of the Swatantra Party, took the principled position that as the electorate in these two states had not voted the party to power, the Swatantra



The author with Rajaji in Madras, June 1972

Party would respect the verdict of the electorate and play its role from the opposition benches. Here was a trend-setter far more effective than any anti-defection law.

A principal reason for the Swatantra Party's early successes was the tremendous rapport between Rajaji and Minoo Masani. Nine times out of ten their interpretation of events coincided and the policies and strategies they fashioned generally found support in the highest organs of the party viz., the National Executive and the Central Parliamentary Board.

The Congress split in 1969. The split was engineered by Mrs. Indira Gandhi for one reason – only Mrs. Indira Gandhi's determination to be in control of the Indian National Congress. There were now two Congress factions: the Congress (I) better known as the Indira Congress and the Congress (O) or Organisation Congress led by Kamaraj the strongman of the Congress in Tamil Nadu. Following the split in the Congress, and to consolidate her hold on the party Mrs. Gandhi had parliament dissolved and called for elections a year ahead of schedule. The General Elections to the Fifth Lok Sabha were held in 1971.

The Congress split changed power equations not only within the Congress but in many other parties including the Swatantra Party. Rajaji and Kamaraj were political opponents. After having invited Rajaji to be the Chief Minister of the then composite state of Madras to deal with a communist threat to capture power in the State, Kamaraj manoeuvred to have Rajaji removed once the purpose was served. The Congress split, suddenly found Rajaji and Kamaraj on the same side of the fence. The Congress (O) also led by Kamaraj, was determined to regain its lost power. Rajaji who had started his crusade to destroy the Congress monopoly on power now found an ally in his old opponent Kamaraj. Rajaji easily accepted Kamaraj's assurance that one final assault on the Indira Congress would mark the eclipse of the Congress. What

was needed was an alliance of all parties in the opposition. This united front of parties came to be known as the infamous "Grand Alliance". A coalition of opposition parties across the political spectrum, excepting the communists who declined to join.

The Swatantra Party's National Executive shared Rajaji's optimism that with Kamaraj at the helm the defeat of the Indira Congress was certain. It decided to support the move for a national alliance provided it was based on an agreed common minimum programme. Masani and Dandekar were asked to represent the party at the discussions to arrive at an agreed common programme and in the negotiations for allocation of parliamentary constituencies between the parties.

The negotiations got under way, and though it was tough going – hammering out a common programme – progress was being made. All of a sudden some leaders from the other negotiating parties including Atal Behari Vajpayee (Jan Sangh), Ram Subhag Singh (Congress O), George Fernandes, Madhu Limaye (Samyukta Socialist Party better known as the Lohia Socialists) to name a few demanded that the agreed common minimum programme that had been drafted be abandoned in favour of a one-point programme 'Indira Hatao' (Throw out Indira). Both Masani and Dandekar were taken by surprise. They insisted that the only way to convince the people to vote Mrs. Gandhi out of power was to offer a credible alternative with a common manifesto. Unable to convince the Congress (O) not to give in to this new demand, Masani took the next flight to Madras to report to Rajaji and to get him to reiterate the stand that the alliance should be based on a common minimum programme.

Unfortunately for Masani, by the time he could reach Madras, Kamaraj had already got to Rajaji and had persuaded him not to insist on a common minimum programme but to support the one-point formula of "Indira Hatao," Masani found that Rajaji had already made up his mind. He rejected

Masani's suggestion that if the alliance did not agree to contest the elections on a common minimum programme, the Swatantra Party should go it alone and do its best. He asked Masani to go back to Delhi and announce that the Swatantra Party agreed to the 'Indira Hatao' slogan without a common programme. Masani said this he would not do and asked to be excused. Rajaji was not deterred. He asked Narayan Dandekar to convey the party's acceptance. This, he did with great reluctance.

The rest is history. Mrs. Indira Gandhi swept the polls even if the votes the Indira Congress polled were less than 35%. She secured over 70% of the seats. The Grand Alliance suffered an ignominious defeat and the Swatantra Party's strength went down from 44 to 4.

Rajaji put up a brave front. Soon after the results were announced Masani resigned from the presidentship of the Swatantra Party taking responsibility for the Party's defeat. More than the defeat, Masani felt let down by Rajaji and what he considered as Rajaji abandoning the party's mission to be a 'party with a difference'. The deep bond between the two men which enabled the Swatantra Party to become an important player on the national political scene in less than a decade after its formation, had broken. Publicly and privately, Rajaji sought to persuade Masani to withdraw his resignation. Masani refused to oblige. In a desperate bid to persuade Masani to carry on as Party president Rajaji even wrote to me: "Dear Raju, nothing would please me more than if Masani could change his mind and agree to be President again at least for one year."¹ I took the letter to Masani and, on behalf of Rajaji, tried to persuade him to heed Rajaji's request and continue as president for one more year. What I got was a typical Masani riposte "what's going to happen after one year? Nothing."

It was not the 1971 election alone that broke Rajaji's spirit. What added to his cup of misery was that two of his trusted lieutenants had deserted him. Prof. N. G. Ranga defected to the

Congress, and Mr. Masani announced his retirement from active party politics. The Swatantra Party did not survive Rajaji too long. Small men who took charge of the Party lacked the vision of the party's mission. The Swatantra Party *had to be* 'a party with a difference' or not at all.

All through the Swatantra years – from June 1959 to 26 June 1972² Rajaji nurtured the Swatantra Party by trying to imbibe it with values (some liberal, some conservative) constantly reminding its leadership that power was not the end but only a means to the end – the welfare and wellbeing of the Indian people. The means had to be good if the goal was to be worthwhile. Sadly, and ironically, he ignored this just once when he allowed Kamaraj to persuade him to take a stand that was expedient and not in accordance with principles he had set for himself. It was a gamble that he was prepared to take at his age. A momentary lapse which ultimately let to the collapse of the Swatantra Party.

Nevertheless what Rajaji achieved in the last decade of his life was without parallel. At the age of 80 when most men retire, he embarked on the Himalayan task of building a political movement to revolutionize Indian politics and put it on the path of *Dharma*.

Dr. Lalitha Venkataraman a Chennai based political scientist³ remarked that if one were to visit the Connemara Library or any other library in Chennai and ask for books

on or by Rajaji, the only books you will find on offer are his *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* or perhaps his speeches on nuclear disarmament! All India Radio and pronouncements by those in the establishment gave one the impression that Rajaji's public career came to an end with the award of the Bharat Ratna in 1955. This was evident when members of the party he founded were refused permission to display the Swatantra Party flag (which, incidentally Rajaji had designed) at his funeral, when his body lay in state for the citizens of Chennai to pay their respects.⁴

In an article in the Rajaji 93 Souvenir published by *Swarajya*, Mr. N. A. Palkhivala wrote *inter alia*:

"In the crowded story of freedom and democracy there is no parallel to what Rajaji has attempted during the last thirteen years. Perhaps no other figure in world history, has, at Rajaji's age and against such overwhelming odds, tried so much, dared so much, toiled so much and given so much to his people. This man, cast in a heroic mould, has sought to bring back to India the Spirit of Liberty, to whose defence he summoned every resource of oratory and dialectic, character and action. His message is simple, freedom cannot be inherited in the bloodstream but has to be cherished, defended and preserved by eternal vigilance and struggle.

"The Measure of Rajaji's stupendous contribution in the last

decade is not the number of the members of his Party or the number of votes polled by them. His great work lies in the quickening of the seminal forces of basic freedom, and in the momentum which he imparted to the living principles of the rule of law so that democracy and civil liberty may survive beyond our own days when our place will know us no more."

(Concluded)

¹ Rajaji's letter dated September 16, 1971 to the author.

² Rajaji's last public appearance was at a meeting of the Swatantra Party General Council in Madras on June 26, 1972 when he took on the unpleasant task of accepting Mr. H. M. Patel's resignation as party president and 'blessing' Mr. Piloo Mody's take over as president. Thereafter his already failing health deteriorated rapidly thereafter and he was to die, six months later on December 25, 1972.

³ Dr. Lalitha Venkataraman's doctoral dissertation is "The Rightist Political Parties in India – Jan Sangh and Swatantra".

⁴ "During the last few hours, it was interesting to see ministers of the Union Government appear at his bedside. As soon as Rajaji died, the Government took over all arrangements for a state funeral. It was obvious that Rajaji's own colleagues and followers of the Swatantra Party would be brushed aside ... permission was refused for the display of the Swatantra Party flag and the funeral arrangements were taken over by those who had no use for Rajaji when he was alive. Now, evidently, he belonged to them." Minoo Masani, *Against the Tide*, pages 336-337, Vikas Publishing House 1981.



The Meaning of Freedom

If you go to the booking office and offer money and want a ticket, the clerk must feel, 'I am now serving free India and I must attend to this man promptly.' If you buy a ticket and get into the train, you are getting into free India's train and ought not to occupy more space than you are entitled to. If you spit on the road, you are spitting on free India. If I see municipalities brighter than they used to be before I shall feel that it was right for me to go to prison to make India free.

C. Rajagopalachari

Cited by Rajmohan Gandhi in *The Rajaji Story*



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Personalities

V. D. Savarkar



Uttara Sahasrabuddhe

The latest round of character assassination of Savarkar has once again highlighted a major problem of our society. We cannot understand, explain and analyse history in a rational manner. We are not mature enough to look dispassionately to our past. ...That is why we do not "re-assess" history; but we "rewrite" and "re-rewrite" histories from essentially political perspectives, serving no academic purpose but only political interests.

The Petroleum Minister of India, Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar sparked off an unnecessary controversy, when he ordered the removal of a poem written by Veer Savarkar, from a plaque to be placed at the Andaman Jail. In doing this, the Minister displayed his complete lack of knowledge of, and/or respect for, history. About six months down the line, the action of the Minister remains uncorrected. What the Minister got removed from the plaque, was a stanza from a Marathi poem written by Veer Savarkar, titled "*maaze mrityupatra*", i.e., "my last wish". The meaning of the four lines inscribed on the plaque was something like this: "Fighting (for India's freedom against British rule) is like preparing for one's own cremation; I have chosen to do this, not blindly, but despite knowing very well the consequences, in the clear light of history." Even the strongest critic of Veer Savarkar should be able to appreciate the feelings expressed in these lines. Removing these lines was defiance of all sanity; and replacing it with a quotation of Gandhiji was defiance of all propriety. The Andaman Jail was used by the British rulers especially to imprison the Revolutionary freedom fighters. While there is no doubt that Gandhiji was the most respected leader of the Indian freedom movement, he did not belong to the Revolutionary cult. Andaman is essentially the symbol of the Revolutionaries in the Indian mind.

The latest controversy appears to be the continuation of character assassination of Veer Savarkar, started earlier when the NDA Government decided to place a photograph of Veer Savarkar in Parliament. The Leftists in particular, politicians as well as intellectuals, seem to have picked up

Savarkar as a target of their attack, on the assumption that he is the hero of the Sangh Parivar. In the process, two serious charges are being levelled against Savarkar – that he wrote apology letters to the British Government, pleading for his release from the Andaman Jail; and that he was involved in the assassination of Gandhiji. Both accusations are quite malicious, to say the least.

The so-called apology letters written by Savarkar are being read and quoted completely out of context of historical events. It is important to understand how the British Government treated Savarkar and his letters, in order to understand the complete reality. Well-known historian Dr. Y. D. Phadke (who is not a "Savarkarite", but is in fact very critical of Savarkar's *Hindutva* ideology) has written an excellent book on Savarkar in Marathi.¹ It is based on painstakingly collected original Government documents. Dr. Phadke has devoted an entire chapter in his book, explaining efforts made at various levels by various people to get the Savarkar brothers released from the Andaman Jail. (Veer Savarkar's elder brother Babarao too was in Andaman, on life imprisonment). Here, Dr. Phadke gives the details of all letters written by Savarkar to the Government, requesting his release from Andaman. Dr. Phadke concludes that Savarkar's expression of repentance for past deeds, and assurances of "good" behaviour in future to the Government, are not to be taken seriously. It was no more than a tactical retreat. The British Government knew it very well. Savarkar was, therefore, kept under constant vigil even after his release. Dr. Phadke has reiterated this argument in a recent article.²

Those who accuse Savarkar of apologising to the British Government, conveniently forget the fact that Savarkar was treated in Andaman as an ordinary criminal and not as a political prisoner; that he and his brother continued to suffer in jail while many other Revolutionaries, sent to Andaman for life imprisonment, were being released from time to time; and that he suffered another three years in jails in India after being sent away from Andaman.

Savarkar was in the Andaman Jail from July 1911 till May 1921. From then till January 1924, he was in Indian jails. In January 1924 he was released from jail under two conditions – one, he will not be politically active; and two, he will remain confined to Ratnagiri, then a small, sleepy town on the coast of Maharashtra. These conditions were lifted and Savarkar was finally released in May 1937. Together the period is over twenty-six years; excluding the period between his arrest in London and his trial in India, and the time he spent in Indian jails before being deported to Andaman. To my knowledge, no other leader of the Indian freedom movement has spent so many continuous years under some kind of arrest. All these years, and even after, the British Government watched very carefully all his movements and actions. To talk about Savarkar's apology letters to the British outside this context is, therefore, a classic example of rewriting history – the Leftist way.

The accusation that Savarkar was involved in Gandhiji's assassination is even more wicked. The Court had acquitted Savarkar of all the charges. The then Government had an option of appealing against this decision, but

it chose not to do so. Those who raise doubts against the Court's decision in this case are no different, in my opinion, from those, who claim that they will accept a Court decision on Ayodhya only if it is in their favour! In the recent round of character assassination of Savarkar, some newspapers, magazines and websites published, what they claimed to be, new evidence against Savarkar in this matter. Most of this describes Godse's reverence for Savarkar, or that Savarkar had helped Godse collect money for his newspaper, or that he met Savarkar before the incident, etc. None of these, however, conclusively proves Savarkar's support for or involvement in the Gandhi assassination.

My own contention is, Savarkar cannot be involved in the killing of a fellow Indian leader, however antithetical his ideas and actions have been to his own. In this context, I remember an incident Savarkar has narrated in his autobiography.¹ One evening, the Jailer, Mr. Barry, came to Savarkar and informed him about the death of Gopal Krishna Gokhale. Savarkar was shocked and expressed his grief and paid tribute to the deceased leader. Barry was surprised and asked Savarkar, why he was mourning the death of his "opponent". Savarkar retorted by saying that even if his own *modus operandi* was different from that of Gokhale, he had highest respect for Gokhale's service to the nation. Savarkar did have fundamental ideological differences with Gokhale as well as Gandhiji. But if he was sensitive and sensible enough to mourn Gokhale's untimely death, there is no reason to believe that he would be involved in any way in the assassination of Gandhiji. Further, he did not believe that violence is the *only* means to achieve one's political ends. He had extended support to the movement for the liberation of Hyderabad, which was essentially a non-violent struggle. He had led non-violent resistance in the Andaman, against the inhuman treatment of political prisoners by the jail administration. His lonely agitation against partition, too, was a non-violent struggle, if not a secular one.

It is also interesting to explore whether the *Sangh Parivar* really accepts Savarkar as their ideologue. There are some fundamental differences in the *Hindutva* of Savarkar and the *Sangh*

Parivar.² For example, while Savarkar deplored the caste-system in most unambiguous words, and led a movement for the abolition of the caste-system during his forced stay in Ratnagiri, the RSS has accepted Gurus Golwalkar's justification of *Varnashram*. Savarkar was a Rationalist and has severely criticised traditional Hindu mythology as well as superstitions. It is extremely interesting to read his *Vidnyan nishtha nibandh* in the original, but some examples may be quoted. Savarkar said that only a bull can call a cow his "mother"; or that the Vedas are useful for decorating bookshelves, but not good enough for guiding our lives in modern times. He remarked that the major difference between the Indian and Western temperaments is, while the Indians believe in and follow, whatever is written in the mantra of *shruti-smruti-puranokta* [believe in and follow whatever is written in *Shruties* (i.e. Vedas), *smruties* and *puranas*]; the West believes in being state-of-the-art; and that is what gives them an edge over us. Needless to say, in all these matters, the views of the *Sangh Parivar*, especially organisations like VHP or Bajrang Dal are completely antithetical to those of Savarkar.

A biography of Savarkar's elder brother, Babarao, was published in February 1947. Some RSS *swayamsevak*s made "unauthorised changes" in this, without the permission of the author, D. N. Gokhale.³ Because Godse was accused of having links with the RSS, and because Savarkar was one of the accused in the Gandhi assassination case, the RSS dropped all references to Savarkar for many years. Early in the 1950s, the RSS decided to break away from the All India Hindu Mahasabha led by Savarkar, and formed their own political party, the Jan Sangh. Only when they realised the political worth of *Hindutva*, did they start taking the name of Savarkar once again.

Having said this, it must be added that the ideology and politics of *Hindutva* must be deplored. Our nation will have no future if we fail to imbibe the secular culture. Savarkar was the father of *Hindutva* ideology, and was perhaps the first to have put forward the two-nation theory (i.e., Hindus and Muslims are two nations). It is perfectly legitimate to criticise him for this. But that does not give us any right to call him a villain or a traitor. One may not

agree with Gandhiji's almost fanatic insistence on non-violence, or so many of his actions; but can still accept his immense contribution to the freedom movement.

The latest round of character assassination of Savarkar has once again highlighted a major problem of our society. We cannot understand, explain and analyse history in a rational manner. We are not mature enough to look dispassionately to our past. We always paint the events and personalities in either black or white; and refuse to understand that the reality is always in shades of grey. Thus, we always indulge in either hero-worship or character assassination of historical figures. That is why we do not "re-assess" history; but we "rewrite" and "re-rewrite" histories from essentially political perspectives, serving no academic purpose but only political interests.

DR. UTTARA SAHASRABUDDHE is Reader in the Department of Civics & Politics, University of Mumbai. With a doctorate in Indo-Soviet Relations her special interests include Indian foreign policy and International Relations; and current Indian politics. She is the grand daughter of Veer Savarkar.

¹ Y. D. Phadke - *Shodh Savarkarancha*, (1984, Shrividya Prakashan, Pune). Chapter 3 explains the events that led to the release of the Savarkar brothers from Andaman. Chapters 4 to 9 explain the period Veer Savarkar spent in different jails in India after being released from Andaman, and the years of confinement in Ratnagiri.

² Y.D. Phadke - "Forgotten Fact about Savarkar and Gandhiji", *Radical Humanist*, November 2004.

³ V. D. Savarkar - *Maazhi Janmathep*, (7th edition, 1989, Parchure Prakashan Mandir, Mumbai), pp161-162. Savarkar writes that, Jailer Barry had duly noted down this incident in his jail diary.

⁴ S.H. Deshpande has made an excellent analysis of the evolution of the *Hindutva* ideology from Savarkar to BJP in his *Savarkar te Bhajapa: Hindutva vicharanacha chikitsak aalekh*, (1992, Rajhans Prakashan, Pune).

⁵ These *swayamsevak*s from Pune changed the original matter regarding the RSS, by sticking papers on that matter on many copies! I remember having seen one such copy with this patchwork. The author, D.N. Gokhale, narrates this incident in his preface to the second edition of Babarao's biography. See D.N. Gokhale - *Krantiveer Babarao Savarkar*, (2nd edition, 1979, Shrividya Prakashan, Pune).

Personalities

Narayan Singh Thapa

A True *Karmayogi*

Prem Vaidya



On April 2, 1983 high-ranking Indians and foreign dignitaries including the diplomatic corps gathered in the glittering Durbar Hall of Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. The occasion was the presentation of national awards by the President of India, Gyani Zail Singh, to men of distinction in their respective fields. Among them was Narayan Singh Thapa, who was honoured with the 'Padmashri' for meritorious work behind the Camera. Narayan Singh Thapa passed away on January 29, 2005. This article is a tribute to an outstanding individual from a friend and colleague.

Thapa as he was known to his friends, was born in a remote village in the Himalayan district of Pithoragarh. So remote was his village that his school was at a walking distance of seven kms., the nearest post office, 12 kms; nearest hospital 22 kms; and the railway station 120 kms.

As a young man in 1944, during the Second World War, he was posted on the Burma-front as a combat cameraman with bomb-spot Eyemo camera, filming the Allied Forces in combat. In 1949, this workaholic linked his life with the Films Division (FD) of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of India. The FD at that time was the second biggest documentary and newsreel producing organization in the world – next only to the National Film Board of Canada. Thapa, who began his career as a Newsreel Cameraman retired as the chief of the FD.

Those were the days when there were no round the clock TV channels. The only source for addicted audio-visual viewers was the weekly 'Indian News Review' and documentary films screened in cinema houses. The concept of news coverage then was mostly restricted to ministers cutting ribbons at inaugural functions, laying foundation stones, and covering the

arrival and departure of Indian and foreign dignitaries.

In September 1954, a path-breaking Thapa came out with his first masterpiece coverage, "Ordeal of Dibrugarh". Dibrugarh, an important tea-garden town in Assam, was flooded by a raging Brahmaputra River that broke its banks brought the town under water destroying lives, land and property. Risking his life, Thapa filmed this ordeal all alone! A big tree standing erect majestically, refusing to be vanquished by the gushing waters of the Brahmaputra, attracted Thapa's attention who saw a great photo opportunity. Patiently he filmed the contest between the tree and the river. Finally the tree lost its grip on the soil and gradually surrendered to the mighty river. Thapa's camera captured this scene till the tree disappeared leaving no trace of its existence!

People held their breath when these visuals were seen on the big screen. For the first time, millions of theatre-goers saw the havoc wrought by floods, a river in spate engulfing vast tracts of land which simply disappeared under the gushing waters of a Himalayan river. Thapa came to the limelight overnight with this film.

In 1955, Thapa as a one-man film

unit was assigned the task of covering a five-week goodwill tour of Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru to the USSR, Poland, Rome, London and Cairo. The exposed material was so spectacular that the FD decided to make a feature-length documentary film entitled '*Mitrata Ki Yatra*' (A Visit of Friendship). This was the first feature-length film produced by the Films Division that carried the credit title for N. S. Thapa as Director / Cameraman. A magnificent new dimension to his experience and encouragement to his colleagues! The film was released in 14 Indian languages.

The film showed huge cheering crowds greeting Jawaharlal Nehru wherever he went. Prime Minister Nehru was himself stunned when he previewed the film in New Delhi. On August 9, 1955. He recorded his appreciation of the filming of this tour "During my tour in the Soviet Union and other countries, I came in close contact with Cameraman Thapa... I should like to commend the work of Cameraman Thapa who took enormous pains over it." The film earned him a cash reward from the Films Division – the first ever award by a government establishment.

In 1957, Thapa was deputed to the United Nations to cover the

activities of the UN Emergency Force in the Gaza-strip. Thapa's was closely involved in filming visits by President Eisenhower, Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, Mr. Nikita Khrushchev and Marshal Bulganin, and Marshal Tito, to mention a few. Of outstanding quality that had the Thapa touch they have all been preserved on celluloid in the FD Film Library in Mumbai.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower (1953-1961) on his 19-day tour to 11 countries, landed in New Delhi on December 9, 1959. He was the first President of the U.S.A. to visit India. Before his departure, the President personally saw the documentary – "Quest For Peace". His spontaneous reaction was reflected through his letter dated December 13, 1959 addressed to the Controller of the Films Division, N. J. Kamat: "I am grateful to you and to all the members of your staff at the Films Division, for the splendid job done in connection with my visit to your great country. ... I trust that you will be sure to include Mr. Thapa and the tireless and efficient crew that worked with him."

Another Thapa film, "A Visit to Remember" on the tour of Queen Elizabeth and Duke of Edinburgh to India in 1961 caught the attention of *'The Times'* (London) which in a review on March 27, 1961 wrote *inter alia*: "...much more informal and in certain respects more technically ragged than the British film, the Indian film still offers in many ways a more vivid and illuminating picture of the royal tour than they do; it gets away refreshingly from testful newsreel anonymity and the same medium shot to long-held close-ups of the royal party or to vast and impressive vistas of soldiers marching along the triumphal way in New Delhi, against a misty backdrop of Lutyens. Imperial India in all its glory."

Thapa was promoted as Director in 1960. Thus he was the first Director/Cinematographer of his own films. Here too, he steadfastly worked hard to show his mettle.

Thapa – the man from the

Himalayas was credited for his film "Kangra And Kulu." This film was awarded the President's Gold Medal in 1960. His "Himalayan Heritage" in 1962 got him the Silver Medal. "Songs of the Snows" got him the President's Gold Medal again as the best documentary film in 1963.

Though selected as a member of the 'Indian-Everest Expedition Team-1965', the FD could not spare him. The expedition turned out to be the first successful Everest assault – and that too four times – by an Indian mountaineering team! The entire exposed film material was handed over to Director Thapa for compilation. "Everest" received the President's Silver Medal as the Best Information Film in 1968.

In making the "Conquest of Kanchenjunga", Thapa was my Producer. As a Director/Cameraman I received full co-operation from him. The result was a "Golden Trophy Award" as the best sports film at the 36th International Sports Film Festival held in Rome in April 1980.

While making a documentary film "Lahaul And Spiti Valley", this 'mad man of the mountains', as he was affectionately called, was caught in an avalanche and went missing. This valley gets cut-off from the rest of the world for six months in a year. A letter dated September 8, 1962 received from Thapa reported: "We reached here (Keyelong) after walking 47 miles and exposed 16000 feet of film. We still have 250 miles to travel on foot and shoot 14,000 feet more..."

One of the directors of the Films Division, K. K. Kapil was flown to Chandigarh to go to Lahaul and Spiti Valley with detailed information and specific body identification marks, age and height of each unit member. On meeting the then chief minister of Punjab, Pratap Singh Kairon, Kapil was told, "It's a futile attempt but we will surely provide you all the help to trace your people – dead or alive."

At the headquarters of the FD in Mumbai, the entire staff was praying for the safety of Thapa and his men in

the Himalayas. After many days filled with suspense Kapil received a message from Thapa: "Got through a terrible ordeal. By God's grace we are all safe but not yet fit for travel. We suffered a lot but we are happy at the thought that everyone is alive."

Thapa was Producer Newsreel during the war in East Pakistan in 1971. As a Director/Cameraman in FD I had volunteered to go to the front-line for filming the war. On Thapa's personal request to General Arora, GOC-in-Command Eastern Command, I was able to fly with the General to cover the "Fall Of Dacca."

Thapa, now Chief Producer of the Films Division was given charge to cover the Asiad – The Ninth Asian Games in 1982 in Delhi. With meticulous planning the entire job was executed with precision and efficiency. For the first time on Indian soil, more than 100 movie-cameramen were exposing at a time various sport events. Thapa worked continuously for 16 days and nights and completed five films. Professional experts, film critics and cine-goers described these films as spectacular and excellent.

On Saturday, January 29, 2005, I received an e-mail from Thapa's son Mukund which read: "Just wanted to inform you that my Daddy's health has declined and his condition is now critical." Next day a friend called to inform me that Thapa was no more.

It is said that there are two very difficult things in the world. One is to make a name for oneself and the other is to keep it. Thapa managed both till the last day.

MR. PREM VAIDYA, a documentary film maker, was with the Films Division of the Government of India. He can be contacted at premvaidya@hotmail.com

Prohibition is an awful flop
We like it
It can't stop what it's meant to stop
We like it
It's left a trail of graft and slime
It don't prohibit worth a dime
It's filled our land with vice and crime
Nevertheless, we're for it

Franklin P. Adams in *National Review*

PROFILES OF INDIAN LIBERALS

Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi : *Sarvajanik Kaka*

J. V. Naik



(1828-1880)

Ganesh Vasudeo Joshi, is better known to history as *Sarvajanik Kaka* ("People's Uncle"), the sobriquet which he earned for his multifarious public welfare activities mostly conducted under the auspices of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha. Founded on April 2, 1870, the Sabha, under the intellectual guidance of Justice M. G. Ranade and the practical exertions of G. V. Joshi grew into, in the words of A. O. Hume, "the most powerful association" of those times. An earnest activist fully committed to the cause of *Deshkalyan* (national welfare), Joshi was the most visible face of the Sabha during the first decade (1870-1880) of its existence, which also happened to be the last decade of Joshi's own memorable life.

Joshi was born at Satara in April 1828 into a Chitapavan Brahmin family. When he was barely two year's old he lost his father Vasudeo, who was then serving as *Sadr Amin* at Pune under the newly established British regime. This tragic event compelled his mother Savitri to return with her son to their native Satara where Joshi could only get traditional education in the Marathi School. He learnt English late in his life. In 1848, when he was 20, Joshi entered government service as clerk in the *Nazar*

It is difficult to sum up the life-work of Sarvajanik Kaka who died on July 25, 1880. But it can be safely said that guided and groomed by Justice Ranade, he anticipated Lokamanya Tilak on the one hand and Mahatma Gandhi on the other.

Kacheri. A few years later, he was falsely implicated in a corruption case and was kept under suspension. When the case was finally decided, he was found innocent and the authorities asked him to resume his duties, which he refused to do. In the meantime, he qualified himself as *Mukhtiyar Vakil* (Pleader), which was, in those days, a relatively easy exercise, and set up legal practice in Pune. His successful handling of some complex legal cases earned him a reputation as a competent pleader which paved the way for a momentous public career which was closely linked to the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha.

To R. G. Boravankar belongs the credit of rescuing the memory of *Sarvajanik Kaka* from falling into oblivion by writing a short biography in Marathi in 1924, the same year in which N. R. Phatak wrote the first authoritative biography of Justice Ranade in which *Kaka* figures in a big way. However the most authentic historical account of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha which provided Joshi with a powerful forum to carry on his public welfare activities is to be found in (i) S. R. Mehrotra, "Poona Sarvajanik Sabha: The Early Phase (1870-1880)", *Indian Economic and Social History Review* (Vol.6, No.3, Sept.1969 pp.293-321) and (ii) B. B. Majumdar, *The Sarvajanik Sabha in Indian Political Association and Reform of Legislature, 1818-1917* (Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay, Calcutta, 1965).

That Joshi was the prime mover in the founding of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha is evident from the fact that a

copy of the rules and regulations of the Sabha presented to Vishwanath Narain Mandlik, an ardent nationalist and the founder-editor of the influential weekly *Native Opinion* (1862), bears his signature. He was one of its founding-secretaries, and also the most active member of the Managing Committee of the Sabha. The aims and objectives of the Sabha are stated in the Preamble of its Constitution: "Whereas it has been deemed expedient that there should exist, between government and the people something in the shape of a mediating body which may afford to the latter facilities for knowing the real intentions and objects of the Government as well as adequate means of securing their rights, by making a true representation of the real circumstances in which they are placed, for these objects an association has been found and organised under the appellation of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha".

What distinguished the Sabha from all such associations in the country was its representative character. Anybody, irrespective of his class, caste or creed, could become a member of the Sabha, provided he was chosen by at least fifty adult inhabitants of his place or locality to be their representative. By way of proof of their support, they were actually required to execute a *mukhtiyarnama* (power of attorney) in his favour. While the Sabha was intended to take up all matters – political, economic, municipal – connected with the public weal, it decided not to take up any religious

subject, nor to consider such cases as affected particular interests. This was proof enough of its both secular and public character.

The Sabha and its chief activist Joshi were fortunate to receive invaluable guidance and direction from M. G. Ranade from the time of his arrival in Pune on a judicial posting in November 1871. A man of Socratic intellect with a comprehensive vision for national emanipation, Ranade became the leading light of the Sabha, and he found in Joshi a trusted lieutenant to pursue the declared objectives of the Sabha with matchless zeal and spirit; together they made the Sabha a force to reckon with.

"What will become of India?", as so rightly pointed out by Sisir Kumar Mitra, was "one consuming passion of Joshi's life" (Mehrotra, *op.cit.*). Consequently, he played a lead role in all nation-building activities of the Sabha. He was on the committee appointed by the Sabha to conduct "an elaborate inquiry regarding the condition of agricultural classes, the pressure of land revenue, the increase of local and central taxation, prices, wages, rural indebtedness and working of forestry etc." The findings of the inquiry, though ignored by the authorities, revealed the pathetic conditions of peasantry, and, in fact, foreshadowed the shape of things to come in the form of the terrible Deccan Riots of 1815. Joshi toured the riot affected areas, and did his best to pacify rioters and to provide protection to those affected by the riots.

Joshi was deeply pained to see that villagers incurred heavy debt, to the point of total ruination, in order to fight endless litigation. He therefore advised them to settle their disputes through the village Panchayats. For this purpose, a number of *lavads* or *Nyaya Sabhas* (Arbitration Courts) were set up under the auspices of the Sarvajanik Sabha.

During the severe famine that struck the Deccan in 1876-1877, Joshi rendered yeoman service to the affected people both in terms of organising relief camps, and making represen-

tations to the authorities to take such measures as would help reduce the sufferings of the victims. The enactment of the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act owes much to the efforts made by Joshi in that direction.

Earlier, in 1872, Joshi had organised protest meetings against the levy of tax on salt. In doing so, he had anticipated the historic Dandi March of Mahatma Gandhi and his Civil Disobedience Movement. Right from the birth of the Sabha, he kept pleading for reforms in various branches of administration and for the Indianization of services.

An ardent nationalist, Joshi espoused the cause of the Indian princes, and took the lead in organising agitation against the deposition of Malharrao Gaikwad, the then ruler of Baroda State. As a representative of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha, he attended the Delhi Durbar of 1877 held by Lord Lytton to proclaim Queen Victoria as the Empress of India, and used the occasion to submit a petition praying Her Majesty to inaugurate reforms which would help improve the condition of her Indian subjects. He also used this occasion to canvass support of his countrymen for holding periodical conferences of leading men from the different parts of the country to discuss important issues concerning national welfare. Earlier, the Sabha had also sent a memorial to the British authorities requesting them to reserve a specific number of seats for Indians in the British Parliament. Joshi twice visited Kolkata with the express purpose of seeking the support of leading Bengali nationalists for bringing about interprovincial co-operation and unity. He also took the lead in condemning the Vernacular Press Act and the Dramatic Performance Act which curtailed the freedom of expression.

A patriot with the courage of his conviction, *Sarvajanik Kaka* readily came forward to provide legal defence of Vasudev Balwant Phadke, when no one else was willing to take up his case for the fear of incurring the wrath of the authorities. Vasudev Balwant Phadke was the first to raise an armed revolt

against British rule in the post-1857 period. He was also one of the earliest promoters of the Swadeshi movement in the country. Kaka was perhaps the very first to take the vow, and to observe it strictly, that he would not use any foreign manufactured goods including clothes. He so took the lead in establishing societies for "the revival of the native arts and industries". Through lectures, songs and such other effective means he sought to popularise the use of indigenous goods. He had a *Charka* and handloom at his place and he made his own khadi dress.

It seems that Justice Ranade, following the example of Joshi, had made an effort to remodel and improve the spinning wheel, and thus introduce an improved *Charka*. From no less person than Mahatma Gandhi we learn that Ranade had published a press note regarding the remodeled *Charka* in the *Quarterly Review of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha*, and in order that it should attract the attention of as many of his countrymen as possible sent it for publication in the Indian press on December 9, 1880.

Brought up in a traditional Brahmin family, Joshi, at first, tended to be a social conservative. He built a temple in the memory of his deeply religious mother. But he soon realised, perhaps learnt from Justice Ranade, Prof. R. G. Bhandarkar and such other reformers that "Custom" should not be confused with religion. He, therefore, in his later years advocated and supported social reform, especially to raise the status of women by giving them education. And he gave a full support to his wife who took the lead in starting an association in 1873 for the spread of education among women.

It is difficult to sum up the life-work of Sarvajanik Kaka who died on July 25, 1880. But it can be safely said that guided and groomed by Justice Ranade, he anticipated Lokmanya Tilak on the one hand and Mahatma Gandhi on the other.

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Media

Attacks on the Press in 2004

From Russian Repression to New Risks in Iraq - A deadly year for Journalists

A CPJ Report

Press conditions are deteriorating badly throughout Russia and most of the other former Soviet republics, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) details in its newly released analysis of press conditions worldwide, *Attacks on the Press in 2004*. CPJ's annual survey also documents the dramatic shift in risk in Iraq toward local journalists; the widespread use of vague "anti-state" laws to imprison dozens of journalists from China to Cuba; the critical battle against criminal defamation laws in Latin America; and the first imprisonment of a U.S. journalist in three years.

Reported and written by CPJ staff, *Attacks on the Press* features a preface by NBC News journalist and CPJ board member Tom Brokaw. "Remember 1989?" Brokaw writes. "The collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of democracy and democratic institutions in the old Communist bloc, including Mother Russia, inspired a new generation of journalists in places where a free press had been a state crime. Now, 15 years later, the glow of the golden age has been tempered by new realities."

Nowhere are new, harsh realities more evident than in Russia, where a purge of independent voices on national television and an alarming suppression of news coverage during the Beslan hostage crisis marked a year in which President Vladimir Putin increasingly exerted Soviet-style control over the media. CPJ's analysis of the 15 former Soviet republics showed that since the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, strong press freedom traditions have been established in only three of the post-Soviet states – the tiny countries of

Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. Developments in Ukraine offer hope, but elsewhere the press operates with less freedom than it did in the closing years of Soviet communism.



Drawing from hundreds of cases of media repression in 90 countries – including murders, assaults, imprisonment, censorship, and legal harassment – *Attacks on the Press* documents several other alarming trends:

A total of 56 journalists were killed worldwide as a direct result of their work last year, making 2004 the deadliest year for journalists in a decade. The toll is the largest since 1994, when 66 journalists were killed, many in Algeria's bloody civil war.

Iraq was the most dangerous place for journalists in 2004, with 23 journalists killed in the line of duty. The toll made the war in Iraq one of the deadliest conflicts for journalists in recent history. And in a striking development, most of the journalists killed in Iraq in 2004 were local Iraqi reporters.

Even in a year of war, murder was the leading cause of work-related deaths among journalists. Thirty-six of the 56 journalists killed on duty in 2004 were targeted for murder, continuing a long-term trend documented by CPJ.

Continuing another trend, the killers of journalists usually go unpunished. In all but nine cases in 2004, CPJ found, the murders were carried out with impunity. The worst of those countries was the Philippines, where the murders of 48 journalists have gone unsolved.

A total of 122 journalists were imprisoned around the world for their work, a figure down slightly from the

year before. Four countries with long records of media repression account for more than three-quarters of the total: China with 42 journalists behind bars, Cuba with 23, Eritrea with 17, and Burma with 11.

In at least 74 cases, CPJ found, journalists were imprisoned on broad "antistate" charges, such as sedition, subversion, divulging state secrets, and working against the interests of the state.

For the first time in three years, CPJ's list of imprisoned journalists includes a U.S. reporter. Jim Taricani, of WJAR-TV in Providence, R.I., is serving six months of home confinement for refusing to divulge a source.

Despite these assaults on the press, CPJ found several important achievements. International advocacy efforts, including those waged by CPJ, helped win the early release of a number of imprisoned journalists, notably six independent writers and reporters in Cuba. Among them was Manuel Vázquez Portal, winner of CPJ's 2003 International Press Freedom Award.

In Latin America, a landmark legal decision could significantly strengthen freedom of expression guarantees. The Inter-American Court of Human Rights overturned the criminal defamation conviction of a Costa Rican reporter in a ruling that should make it far more difficult for Latin American governments to prosecute the press on criminal charges.

With an introduction by CPJ Executive Director Ann Cooper, *Attacks on the Press* is widely recognized as the most authoritative source of information on international press conditions.

The Committee to Protect Journalists is a non-partisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to defending press freedom worldwide. For more information, visit www.cpj.org.

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BOOK REVIEWS



ETHNIC FUTURES: THE STATE AND IDENTITY POLITICS IN ASIA

By

Joanna Pfaff-Czamecka, Darini Rajasingham Senanayake, Ashis Nandy
and Edmund Terence Gomez

Published by

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New Delhi 110 017

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Reviewed by

Ms. Suman Oak, Lecturer in English (retd.) and a freelance writer

The four authors of this book give us a picture of the struggle various ethnic groups in four South Asian countries are waging to establish their identities in the politics of their states that are in the process of nation building. The four countries are: India, Nepal, Srilanka and Malaysia.

Generally, we either tend to trace the roots of growing ethnic separatist movements to the colonial past of these countries or conversely believe that the ethnic differences are age-old and basic racial and cultural differences are very difficult to accommodate under the umbrella of the State. But the authors start from the premise that majority and minority ethnic nationalisms are neither primordial and ancient nor exclusively modern and colonial inventions. The process of post colonial state building has often created ethnic identities, confrontations and violence, which the nations proclaim to be ancient and then proceed to control. Global civil society movements as well as local developmental agencies that stress local participation and communal and collective values aid and abet the ethnicization of politics. They monitor relations between state and societies and sensitive minority issues within and across national borders forcing governments to take notice of the fact that nation-states are not homogenous units.

There are many commonalities and differences in these four South Asian states. Although they differ in size, history, geopolitical conditions and population, among other differences, they all experience difficulties in accom-

modating differences; in all these countries the majority ethno-religious population have an upper hand in governance and political parties and the politics of numbers have acquired immense importance. Their paradoxes too are similar. The numerically dominant ethnic communities that run the state manifest a 'minority complex'. The result is the *Hindutva* movement in India, the strident Sinhala Buddhist nationalism in Srilanka and the Bhumiputraism in Malaysia, while various real minorities in these states mobilize so as to get a share in the state power.

The case studies of these four nations question the settled and bounded notions of ethnic identity. There are mainly three lines of argument. First they identify the nation-states' attempts to create a homogenous society out of diversities as also to accommodate the prevailing cultural differences. Secondly, they explore the effect of the global/international discourses on the local ethnic identities. Thirdly they try to explain the sense of siege that is revealed by both the ethno-religious minorities and the majorities. Lastly they also investigate the factors that render accommodation measures successful.

Creating a Homogenous Society

In India and Malaysia the making of the nation was traumatically marked by arbitrarily created borders. India attempts to bring about national unity and cultural homogeneity in the name of secularism, while others stand for explicitly religious, linguistic and

regional values of the majority, resulting in demands for self determination by ethnic minorities. They also feel marginalized because of centralization, (i.e., domination of a single group,) and are driven to reinvent new collective identities and mobilize along ethnic lines, as in the case of India where the central government is dominated by upper class/caste Hindus. The initially pluralist Srilanka is dominated by Sinhala Buddhism; Malaysia became a Muslim nation and Nepal, the only Hindu nation is dominated by high caste Hindus although their supremacy is being publicly questioned since the '90s. Ironically the Newars in Nepal with a population of 5.6% insist that they are oppressed because their centuries old dominant position as the rulers of the Kathmandu valley is eroded by the high caste Parbatiya Hindus who constitute 29% of the population.

Ethnicization of States

The governments of Srilanka, Nepal and Malaysia in the last few decades have ensured a more than adequate representation of the culturally dominant groups in the governance of the state. Those in power then place special trust in the members of their own group thus building networks on the basis of common social and cultural capital. Party politics too is affected by this tendency. Since political parties form an important nexus between the state and society, programmes promoted by central governments are geared to serve the interests of the majority groups. Members of minority groups who manage to get access to political parties are kept in low po-

sitions and are unable to promote the interests of their groups.

In Nepal, parties with ethnic base are prevented from contesting elections. The dominant communities at the centre are afraid that their power and influence will be diluted leading to the fragmentation of the country. In India, though, the ethnic minorities with a secure basis for participation in the state polity have strengthened national unity. The pluralistic system has helped defuse extreme separatist ethnic claims. In the same way Malaysia has been able to accommodate the Borneo states within its boundaries.

Ethnicization affects distribution of economic resources in all these countries mainly in three areas: where employment is provided by the state, where natural resources are owned by the state and where regional development is affected by state politics. Since employment within the bureaucratic system means much more than salaries and pensions, resentment among the minorities grows. Same is the case with the other two areas, viz., natural resources and regional development. Case studies show that in all the four countries particular cultural groups that dominate state polity secure forest, water and mineral resources at the expense of their former owners causing regional disparities. When regional groups perceive their underdevelopment as being caused by their marginalization at the centre or when the taxes paid by them are not balanced out by the inputs of investment and developmental funds into their region, regional resentment is bound to escalate. Despite this some entrepreneurial minority communities have managed to secure a substantial share of capital and have established powerful informal links with sections of the state elites. These links maintained with lavish rewards help the minorities gain some control over the economy.

Resentment among the majority community occurs when some sections of the majority community are marginalized. In India reservation for backward communities in state employment and educational opportunities has

antagonized sections of the higher castes. As mentioned in the introduction to the book, 'Much of ethnic competition relates, finally, to the struggle over material resources.'

The material success of some minority communities, however, does not translate into cultural presence in public life. The national symbols are coined by the majority culture and minority cultures are either neglected or suppressed. The neglect and oppression of the minority cultures sensitize them to other forms of oppression and marginalization.

Ethnic Reactions

The marginalized ethnic groups seek a sense of collective past and a common identity through history and culture in the local context that differs from the history of the nation state which is taught in schools. All ethnic groups manipulate the past and strive to redefine relationships between different groups. Along with taking recourse to ethnic arithmetic and elaborate statistics to justify their claims of quotas, they fiercely debate historical events. Their grievances refer to how they were treated in the past and how they can express those grievances today. Cunning mobilizers exploit the grievances to foment trouble again and again.

The study shows that equating national culture with the majority (i.e., those who wield the power) culture has failed in all the four countries although their cultural dynamics is not the same. Cultural characteristics of the majority become political symbols and are resented by minorities in all these countries but their reactions differ. For example the Tamils who were in state employment in Srilanka took to arms on being marginalized; whereas the Chinese in Malaysia who were merchants, did not. They accepted the Malay state elites as their patrons and their own important role in commerce and finance. The nationalist measures to bring cultural unity labeled the minorities, at times, as backward and undeveloped. They promoted the language of the majority as the singular national language; folklorized minority cultures; silenced

peoples' histories and so on. Culture and ethnicity then become very precious and zealously guarded. The dissent further gains momentum from a number of extra-local sources.

The Invention of Local Ethnicity

In South Asia, the phenomena of internal migrations, mixed settlements and overseas diasporas are not recent developments. They have a long history. International audiences and the diasporas complicate the conflict as ethnic mobilizers seek support across national borders, some times even inviting intervention from the neighbouring governments. As the Euro-American world get flooded with immigrants, civil and human rights framework encourage debate on the issue – marginal groups vis-à-vis racist/authoritarian states – which, in turn causes regional and ethnic unrest. Many non-governmental or civil society organizations take up their cause. This affects national and international policy making and implementation.

The 'Chipko' and 'the Narmada Bachao' movements in India, for example, have gained sympathizers all over the world and have become synonymous with 'local people's courage, organizational abilities and most important the salience of minority culture, values and way of life'. Various ethnic minorities reclaim their collective right to use and develop resources like forests, etc., that traditionally 'belong' to them and challenge state control, for example the Jharkhand movement. They are, thus, redefining the relation between the state and the people.

Development agencies today strive to enlist the co-operation of the local people. Phrases like 'community based organization, involvement of the community and peoples' partition' have gained regular currency. With structural adjustment programmes, the Indian and Nepali governments are under pressure to reformulate their policies. Local societies organize movements against the central control of natural resources and their exploitation by private entrepreneurs. They also stress the importance of protection and preservation of natural resources and biodiversity. The

newly acquired international currency spurs ethnic communities to display their traditions and culture, which results in their reification and invention of strange traditions. All this hype diverts ethnic movements away from the real issues of economic and social justice. These issues are left to the free play of the market.

Dealing with Inequality

The search for social justice invents new inequalities and ethnic identities. The colonial cultural force was at work in these countries before they attained independence. It benefited some minorities. The effort to achieve national unity against this background including reservation, ironically enough reinforced linguistic, regional and ethnic differences and caste hierarchies. It became clear that a nation is not a culturally homogeneous unit and the search for 'common-ness' provokes dissent from both sides – for and against such a search. Measures like special representation on electoral basis, nomination to the Upper House, proportional representation, etc., have failed to reduce inequality and instead, favour the real politics of minority vote banks. To avoid minority groups being managed by politicians, empowerment and competence building of smaller societal units is necessary. The fact is acknowledged by all concerned without any efforts to put it into practice.

Ashis Nandy, in the chapter, 'Coping with the politics of faiths and cultures', points out that the 'secular centralized model' is the dominant model of nation building. It assumes that a secular space exists outside the reach of religious or ethnic cultures and is unaffected by them. It comprises of the state, politics in general, economy, science and education. This westernized model, understood only by the elites in power, does not make sense to the people. They fear that secularization will prove detrimental to their faith, culture and traditions. Since no one can return to the absolute religious kingdom of the old, in the present context, they relate their religious ideologies to the 'modern state, sanitized history and technocratic rationality.' Secularity is

assailed constantly, by swelling religiosity and ethnicity, spilling all over the developing world. In the South Asian region too, the two notions of uniformity and secular/sacral divide, form the two major lines of attack. The state's predilection towards the Muslim minority and the (strident) Hinduism is revealed in the Shah Bano case and the Ayodhya issue. The Indian state seems unable to draw a line between the state and the religion.

In Malaysia, a proclaimed Islamic country, the family law for non-Muslims too, has been altered to integrate with the national law. The Malaysian leaders claim that their country is a secular one and people are free to practice their beliefs and religions and also maintain their own educational institutions. In Sri Lanka, Sinhala and Tamils in the lower part of the country are governed by 'general law' which is based on Roman-Dutch and British systems, while Tamils in the North are subject to customary laws. Till this day, the state is obliged to protect the 'Buddha Sasana' that enjoys the foremost place in their Constitution. Nepal is a declared Hindu Kingdom and till recently Nepali was the sole officially recognized national language. But ironically, it endorses peoples' sovereignty and forbids discrimination against the untouchable groups. The 1990 constitution grants communities' rights to preserve their own language, script and culture although Nepali remains the national and official language. In all countries, it seems, the language policy is shaped so as to privilege majorities while minority linguistic groups suffer discrimination.

As expected the studies show that the state's interference in the economy creates imbalances that cause tensions. They suggest that indigenous peoples' rights to dwell in their own territories and not be ousted in the course of national projects be granted and quotas that benefit the privileged majority be done away with. Decentralization, federalism, local autonomy, constitutionalism and community rule, the measures taken to accommodate differences all over the world, are recommended.

Whither Asian Values?

A rich heterogeneity and cultural hybridity has existed in this region for centuries accommodating and experimenting with cultural diversity. But lately the self-proclaimed guardians of the nation-state, who consider the nation to be a rigid and exclusive unit, leave little room for cultural categories and communities other than their own. Their attempts to build and conserve nationalist culture and values often prove oppressive to minority groups and women of all groups.

In South Asia all the 'major religions of the world have jostled one another for centuries'. But neither the religious leaders nor the secular ones give enough thought to the problem of bringing their diverse polities under one umbrella of a culturally harmonized nation-state. India adopted a secularist stance to circumvent ethnic jingoistic traditions. But this also meant losing the potential of older, more flexible and decentralized forms of political organizations and governance as in the villages where till recently living with those with different religious experiences was not a problem at all.

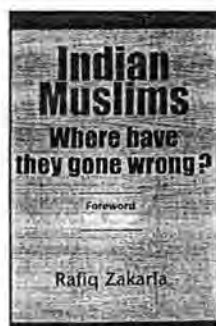
Ashis Nandy points out India has also the world's oldest continuous traditions of urban living. People of various religions, culture and races – from India and abroad – encountered, interacted and traded with each other. Many of these cities were renowned centres of learning that attracted Hindu, Buddhist, Muslim scholars from various parts of the world. Surat, Bangalore, Cochin were centres of commerce and were not only a gateway to just India but to the whole of the Orient. The age old co-operation between the various cultural and religious groups of South Asia, shows that instead of partitions and fences, what we need is political and economic restructuring, radical shifts in value orientation and acknowledging that cultural-religious categories are part of public space and not entirely personal matter. The policies on development need not be blind to ethnicity and culture, of course not at the cost of individual rights. Asian values and policies should support decentralization

and regional devolution and multiculturalism.

Contrary to Huntington's thesis, the studies show that the meeting of cultures and peoples need not constitute a clash of civilizations; exchange across cultural, religious ethnic borders does cause conflict but it also brings

about communication and understanding and engenders a broad, tolerant mind. The search for social justice persists and increases in the midst of the tyranny of the majority. As globalization leads to more privatization and individualization of the 'common good' the question of social justice becomes more pertinent.

The book is very informative and gives the reader an insight into the phenomenon of the fractured societies of South Asia in particular, and of the entire developing world in general.



Dr. Rafiq Zakaria is a prominent member of the Congress Party well known for his championing Hindu-Muslim amity and his strong belief in secular values. He is a lawyer, a former cabinet minister and has represented India at the United Nations. This volume is a collection of his articles written over a period of more than 50 years. These have, however, been revised and updated. Comprising twelve sections, it has a scintillating foreword by Shri M. J. Akbar, editor of *Asian Age*.

In his introduction, Dr. Zakaria pays tribute to Hinduism, to its resilience and adaptability to changing conditions. He quotes from Allama Iqbal:

"There is no trace left of Greek civilization;

Neither that of Egypt nor that of Rome.

But our civilization is intact as ever before.

There is something in it that refuses to die

Though for centuries it has been facing

The conspiracy of the world against it."

That something, I feel, is the bond of broad humanism, which is our eternal heritage. The more it is sought to be suppressed the more it rises and keeps us on the right path.

In Section I of the book, Dr. Zakaria adds the contribution of Urdu scholars to the translation of the Bhagwad Gita entitled Kishan Gita/Arjun Gita. The most notable among others is the one by Khwaja Hasan Nizami whose *Krishna Biti* has run into several editions. More recently, Muhammed Ajmal Khan, principal secretary to the Late Maulana Abul Kalam Azad wrote *Nagma-e-Kundawandi*, which is a very able exposition of the Bhagwad Gita. The Persian rendition of the Gita was undertaken by Faizee. Besides Allama Iqbal many other scholars have written on the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata in Urdu, enriching both the language and culture.

In the political arena the contributions and sacrifices by Muslims is no less impressive. Notable among the luminaries, mention is made of Dr.M.A.Ansari, Hakim Ajmal Khan, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan. After working as Resident Medical Officer at the Charing Cross Hospital in London,

Dr.M.A.Ansari returned to India and had a very lucrative practice in Delhi. His association with Gandhi soon established Dr.Ansari as a leading advocate of secular politics. Dr.Zakaria cites from a letter Dr.Ansari wrote, just before his death, to Turkish intellectual and revolutionary Halide Edibe "I consider the brotherhood of man as the only real tie, and Partitions based on race or religion are to my mind artificial and arbitrary leading to divisions and factional fights."

Far better known was Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, an outstanding scholar and among the top-ranking leaders of the Indian National Congress. In a memorable speech from the Jama Masjid when harassed, agitated Muslims approached him in the aftermath of the Partition he said *inter alia*: "The uneasiness on your faces and the desolation in your hearts that I see today, reminds me of the events of the past few years. Do you remember? I hailed you; you cut off my tongue. I picked up my pen; you severed my hand. I wanted to move forward, you cut off my legs. I tried to turn over, and you injured my back...the same perils surround you today, whose onset diverted you from the righteous path."

One man Mohammed Ali Jinnah

INDIAN MUSLIMS: WHERE HAVE THEY GONE?

By
Rafiq Zakaria

Published by
Popular Prakashan, Tardeo, Mumbai 400034 &
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai 400007
Year of Publication: 2004. Number of Pages: 575. Price: Rs.495

Reviewed by
Professor R. V. Chari retired professor of Commerce and Management
and a freelance writer.

destroyed this fabric of unity between the Hindus and the Muslims that was painstakingly woven over centuries by scholars, statesman, diplomats and Maharajahs. Writes Dr. Zakaria: "...without any attempt at a genuine reconciliation between the two (Gandhi and Jinnah), he (Lord Mountbatten) made them (the Congress and the Muslim League) accept his plan, which supplied the two parties enough to throw at each other. He saw to it that little was left for the British...they came

out clean of the whole exercise ... However the price India had to pay was horrendous. Azad felt apprehensive of the bloody consequences ...but Mountbatten told Azad that once there was Partition he shall see that there is "no bloodshed and no riot..."

The aftermath showed how he deceived the Congress leaders."

Basically Mountbatten was a showman with hardly any touch of

humanism in him, with the result that he just shrugged off when informed of the holocaust after the Partition of India.

Dr. Zakaria deserves to be complimented for bringing out so many articles within the cover of a book. Well printed and quite moderately priced, this book should be made compulsory reading for all those politicians who preach fundamentalism as a solution.



The Indian freedom struggle and the role of the Indian National Congress continues to be an evergreen subject for historians. The latest to join the growing body of literature on this subject is Prof. Visalakshi Menon, a Reader in History at the Jesus and Mary College, New Delhi. Her new book *"From Movement to Government: The Congress in the United Provinces, 1937-42"* covers that fascinating period of India's freedom struggle when the Congress decided to become the government rather than waging fights against the government. The book under review, published by Sage Publications, New Delhi is the fourth in their series on Modern Indian History edited by stalwarts like Prof. Bipin Chandra, Prof. Mrudula Mukherjee and Prof. Aditya Mukherjee. The first three were: 'Independence and Partition' by Sucheta Mahajan; 'A Narrative of Communal Politics: Uttar Pradesh, 1937-39' by Salil Misra and 'Imperialism, Nationalism and the Making of the Indian Capitalist Class, 1920-1947' by Aditya Mukherjee. In her book Prof. Menon studies what happens to an organization when it changes its role.

In a note the series editors explain the purpose behind the series. It is their view that in the fifty years after independence research on modern Indian history has become highly debatable where the Cambridge school hold one dominant view whereas the Subaltern view is the other. The editors feel that there is need to look at these issues keeping away from the colonial stereotypes as well as steering away from romantic nationalism and sectarian radicalism. Hence the importance of this series.

Like a true scholar Prof. Menon has gone through the literature available on the subject before setting herself for the research. She has studied the works of Gyanendra Pandey [The Ascendancy of Congress in Uttar Pradesh], Paul Brass [Factional Politics in an Indian State: The Congress Party in Uttar Pradesh], B. R. Tomlinson [The Indian National Congress and the Raj: 1929-1942] among others. She is clear why she chose to study Congress in Uttar Pradesh. To quote her "the choice of UP was an irresistible one, for, as Gyanendra Pandey puts it," the prov-

ince mirrored in a particularly acute form some of the principal opportunities and problems facing the nationalist movement in the country as a whole". One can hardly quarrel with her choice.

By the mid '30s the failure of the Civil Disobedience movement was clear to everyone, including the Congress which officially withdrew the movement in May 1933. This disappointed the young blood in Congress. Even the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi came into question. Vithalbhai Patel and Subash Bose declared from Vienna 'we are clearly of the opinion that Mr. Gandhi as a leader has failed and ... a new leader is essential' [page 39]. On the other side the Left in the Congress was on the ascendant. The Congress Socialist Party [CSP] was founded in 1934 at Patna. The young generation was quite impressed with the gains of the Russian revolution of 1917. Pandit Nehru returned from his Europe tour in 1936 which reinvigorated the Congress party in the United Provinces as well as the Left forces. The Government of India Act, 1935 offered provincial autonomy and a limited role in power

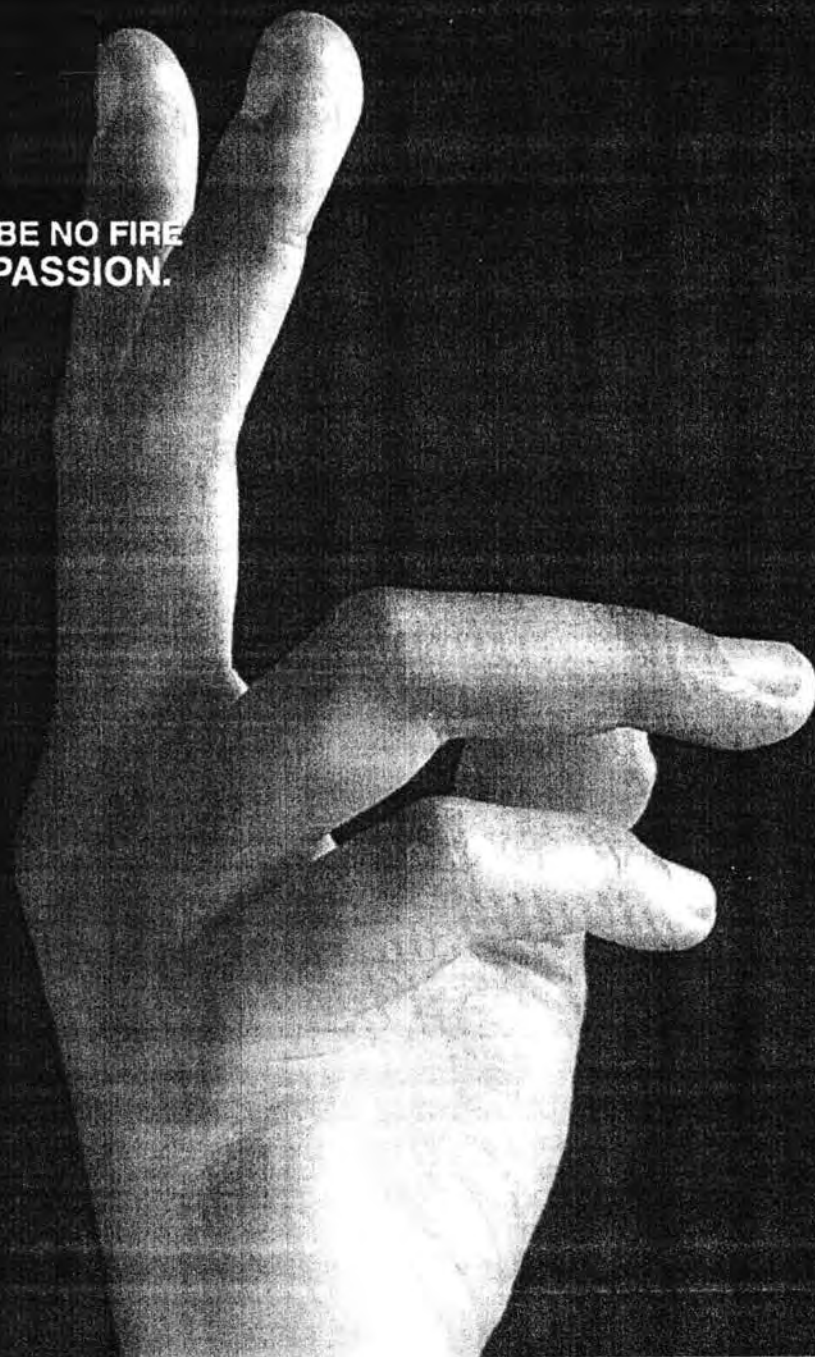
**"FROM MOVEMENT TO GOVERNMENT:
THE CONGRESS IN THE UNITED PROVINCES, 1937-42"**

By
Visalakshi Menon

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Reviewed by
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**THERE CAN BE NO FIRE
WITHOUT PASSION.**



to popularly elected representatives. The Congress was divided on the issue of Constitutionalism. The Socialists were not keen on participating in the provincial elections. Once the decision was taken to participate in the elections, the Congress campaign was flagged off on August 1, 1936. Prof. Menon provides details of the selection of candidates, campaign financing and all that go with it. The Congress was willing to nominate only those candidates who could self-finance their campaign. Consequently the rich who could pump in money got elected. Prof. Menon observes "there is no denying the predominance of members from socially dominant castes" [page 55].

Once in power, the Congress had to face many challenges. Premier Govind Vallabh Pant, an old Congress hand steered the ship with dignity. It must be admitted that Congress was absolutely clear as to why it had assumed power. It wanted to make sure that it could pass some pro-poor measures like the Tenancy act, the arbitrary ejection of tenants from the land etc. Also, the Congress wanted to demonstrate that the assumption of power enhanced the self-confidence of the people.

The Pant ministry started the practice of using the Hindustani language in legislative work. These were calculated to sending out the desired message. However, as Prof. Menon, points out, there was a negative side to this story. As, on the one side, the Britishers were trying to puthurdles in the path of the Pant ministry; on the other, the assumption of power brought to the surface ideological conflicts within the Congress party. The CSP demanding many pro-farmers and pro-workers policies while the landed gentry who dominated the Congress, preferred to move slowly in this direction. This is where Pant's leadership comes in for compliments.

Prof. Menon has not hesitated to expose the negative side of the Congress ministry. She has provided enough evidence to show that during the Congress rule in UP, communal riots increased. For instance in 1936 such riots numbered 1,464, jumping to 2,750 in 1938 [page 124]. The mass contact

programme among the Muslims launched by the Congress not only failed miserably but ended up driving the Muslim masses into the arms of the Muslim League. Despite this, Congress rule was far superior to that of the British bureaucracy. Prof. Menon points out that Sir Maurice Hallett, the new Governor of UP who assumed charge in 1940 was quite impressed with the literacy campaigns. This experiment of taking power created a new mindset among the people. Prof. Menon quotes Sir Harry Haig, the former Governor of UP, who, after returning to, to England, wrote in the *Asiatic Review* in 1940: "Meetings and processions, slogans and flags, the exploitation of grievances, promises which held out the vision of a new heaven and a new earth, stirred the countryside into a ferment such as it had never before experienced. The sense of impending change awakened the villages".

The ruling Congress party in UP had to face challenges from the CSP. Its seniormost leader was Acharya Narendra Dev who was a soft-spoken person not given to rhetoric challenged the Gandhians for the leadership of the Congress in UP. The Presidentship of the UPCC became a hot seat. As Prof. Menon has shown, there were a number of aspirants for this. Finally Nehru had to intervene and settle the issue in favour of Mr. Mohanlal Saksena in 1938. On September 3, 1939, the British government declared war on Germany. India became part of the war effort to

fight the Nazis. The Congress had no qualms about the war but what angered it was in not being consulted by the British. As a result, Congress ministries resigned in October 1939. Next came the individual *satyagraha* of 1940 followed by the Quit India Movement of 1942.

All these details are well known and well researched. Prof. Menon has nothing new to add here. Where she scores is in her analysis of the Congress in power in UP during 1937-1939. She has researched this period in great detail and writes very lucidly in her interesting book. She has convincingly shown that the British strategy of co-opting the Congress did not succeed. When this strategy was adopted the Britishers were aware of the high stakes involved. She has quoted Sir Harry Haig, the then Governor of UP who wrote to the Viceroy, Lord Linlithgow in December 1937 that "we are playing with high stakes and we must take certain risks". This throws light on the British mindset.

Prof. Menon has proved conclusively that the Congress came out of this experiment not only with their honour intact but with enhanced prestige. No wonder the masses jumped into the Quit India movement wholeheartedly knowing well that it was only a matter of time for the end of the Raj. Prof. Menon has, in her book, been able to capture the spirit of that time. The Congress had indeed outsmarted the Raj.

Heavy Chemical Element

A major research institution has recently announced the discovery of the heaviest chemical element yet known to science. The new element has been tentatively named Governmentium. Governmentium has one neutron, 12 assistant neutrons, 75 deputy neutrons and 224 assistant deputy neutrons, giving a n atomic mass of 312.

These 312 particles are held together by forces called morons, which are surrounded by vast quantities of lepton like particles called peons.

Since governmentium has no electrons, it is inert. However, it can be detected as it impedes every reaction with which it comes into contact.

A minute amount of governmentium causes one reaction to take over four days to complete when it would normally have taken less than a second.

Governmentium has a normal half-life of 3 years; it does not decay, but instead undergoes a reorganisation in which a portion of the assistant neutrons and deputy neutrons exchange places. In fact governmentium's mass will actually increase over time, since each reorganisations will cause some morons to become neutrons, forming isodopes.

This characteristic of moron-promotion leads some scientists to speculate that governmentium is formed whenever morons reach a certain quantity in concentration. This hypothetical quantity is referred to as the Critical Morass \ Randou.

Contributed by Mr. Fali Kumana



The USA has initiated a global war on terrorism which can be directed against anyone, anywhere in the world. The media tends to cover only the conflicts where the interests of the West – led by the USA are concerned. There is substantial evidence that media coverage of foreign events closely follows the interpretive frames offered by political elites. When the word 'National Security' can be uttered with some legitimacy, the mainstream press is likely to adopt a patriotic pose. The press displays a measure of autonomy to the extent of differences within the elite. Not all reporters are unbiased and this trend was noticeable during the Gulf War. The book provides an analysis of the interplay between the media and its representation of the conflict.

News has become more savage over the last twenty years and ruthless in pursuit of a story. Newsrooms construct misleading stories – even lies out of verifiable facts. When news only tells us what we want to hear, it displays a contempt for audiences. The media has been harnessed closely to the war effort, usually willingly. It is for this reason that the public in the USA turned more and more to the internet and on-line sources. Bruce A Williams considers this to be a positive development.

Globalization has led to a large cross-over of capital, open markets and increased inter-state trade and a declining propensity for nations to go to war. Out of the 24 conflicts in 2001, only one was inter-state, between India and Pakistan. The role and motivation of the media will be different in this scenario of 'states without enemies' and 'enemies without states'.

Historically, diplomacy has been

a closed activity, limited to a small number of people; but during the last two decades, representation of the conflict by the media has become more important. This can be noticed in the importance given to global communications and international media by the White House, the Pentagon and the Taliban. US actions in Africa, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq were portrayed by CNN as humanitarian efforts. The perceptions of people all over the world have been significantly influenced by the way the various TV channels – CNN, BBC or Al Jazeera, have promoted the news of conflicts in Palestine. It is of interest that both, the entertainment industry and the Pentagon, rely on modeling and simulation. The two players collaborate in developing military training platforms, which d o u b l commercially as video games. War has acquired an entertainment feature. Hollywood is creating possible scenarios for counter-terrorist operations.

NIK Goving narrates the changes that have occurred in conflict reporting. The news is transmitted in real time and the task of separating news from rumours is more difficult. Part of the job is to be a witness and this trend has increased the risk faced by the

WAR AND THE MEDIA Reporting Conflict 24/7

Edited By

Daya Kishan Thussu
Des Freedman

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Lunatic Asylum

A big building on the roadside...
There were lots of spacious rooms, lots of patients in the rooms
They were all lunatics.
One was brushing his white hair; he asked the doctor 'Why not the hair turns black?'
One was acting as a driver and was asking everyone 'where is my car'
One was singing songs and complaining to the ward boy that there was no orchestra.
One was kneeling on the ground and asked where were his feet?
One was playing with the doctor's stethoscope and proclaiming 'I am the doctor-in-charge'
Some others were acting as fools.
One was tickling the nurse and telling I will make all my sisters laugh.
One was seeing through a glass of water And saying 'I fear I will be drowned here'
One was telling 'I will become a teacher and teach all wild animals English so that they will become educated and not harm anyone.
There was a lot of tension and confusion, There was a lot of noise and din!
Roger inquired from the Doctor 'What is this nonsense?' Doctor remarked 'shut up! You are not in your home You are in a lunatic asylum!'

Kamal Kumar Thadani

Freedom First

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Freedom First speaks for the silent majority - the majority that wants to be left in peace to pursue its goal of improving its quality of life, but has been suffering in silence, the indignities heaped on it by insensitive governments who have abrogated to themselves the right to decide what is good for the people. In the process, the whole country has been turned into a cesspool of corruption. Public morality and character have reached an all-time low.

Freedom First affirms that much of the unrest and ferment in our society is a direct result of excessive State intervention in the day-to-day lives of our people. While the people's initiative has been stifled, the economy is in shambles. The Journal believes that while India needs a strong government that ensures the rule of law what India does not need is a meddling government - the system so far that has led to impoverishment, insecurity and instability.

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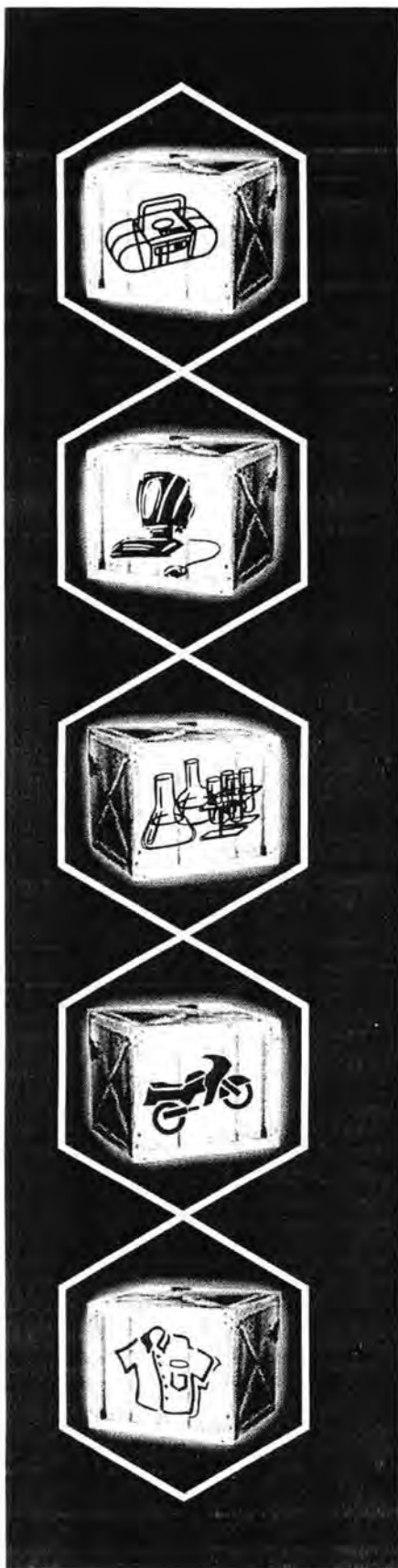
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