

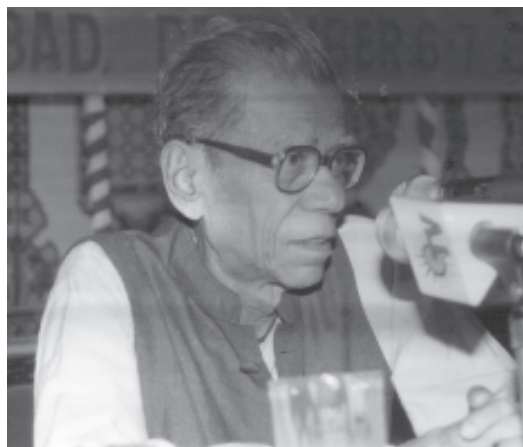
Freedom First

The Liberal Position

Women's Reservation The Liberal Dissent



Amlan Datta, the Gentle Philosopher



Prof. Amlan Datta (1924 - 2010)

Professor Amlan Datta, economist, educationist, humanist and a liberal par excellence passed away, after a heart attack, at his home in Kolkata on 18 February 2010. He was 86.

Amlanda, as he was popularly known to his friends and admirers was the embodiment of humility. High positions sat lightly on him. He was pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Calcutta, Vice Chancellor of the University of North Bengal, Director of the Gandhian Institute of Studies and Vice Chancellor of Viswa Bharati University, Shantiniketan. Recipient of the Vidyasagar Award in 1999, Amlanda was a prolific writer. His many books include 'For Democracy', easily his *piece de resistance* which was published in May 1953 by the Leftist Book Club. He dedicated it to "fellow travellers" a description of those who were sympathisers of communism but not formal members of the communist party. As Bertrand Russell wrote

in a letter to him "I find myself in agreement with your ideas, and I think your arguments against communist dictatorship are such as ought to appeal to those who are hesitating." Philip Spratt, a former communist, observed "Sri Amlan Datta seems exceptionally well equipped to think out in advance the way to a tolerable civilised system in a backward country." Amlanda himself cherished this comment in a letter to him from Dr. Albert Einstein: "I have read the first half of your book with pleasure and agreement...It takes more time than one would expect from its size".

Amlan Datta's preface to the first edition (May 1953), 'exposes' his intellectual modesty- a quality not very common among thinkers of his stature. He wrote *inter alia*: "This book is a collection of articles written over the last few years without much attention to their interconnection. Collected together they exhibit, nonetheless, a reasonable continuity of thought... Though the common subject matter of these articles is democracy, special attention has been given to problems of Soviet Communism. Communism seems to surpass all other brands of dictatorship in its appeal to people who are not wholly lost to democracy. The ideas contained in this book may be made use of without any reference to their source. Few of these ideas can be anything like original; and, if some of them are less commonplace than others, no importance attaches to the author. Ideas are important either in themselves or not at all."

After the then prime minister Narasimha Rao led India in the direction of a market economy, it was Professor Amlan Datta we invited to explain what this change implied. He delivered the Rajaji Birthday Lecture in December 1991 on "The Market Economy and the Contemporary Crisis". When this lecture was published he himself preferred to describe it as "A discussion on the future of public economics, markets, individual freedom, and democratic values"! The next two occasions when we drew on his intellect were when he delivered the inaugural address at the First National Convention of the Indian Liberal Group in December 2002 on "The Liberal Philosophy". The third was a keynote address to a Seminar, also under the auspices of the Indian Liberal Group on "A Roadmap for Indian Democracy" in October 2003. The subject he chose to speak on: "The Practice of Liberalism". In May 2004 we sought his views on the CPI(M) government and how it had managed to be office for so many years. As was his wont he sent me a handwritten reply in an Inland Letter Card. For reasons I am unable to explain satisfactorily even to myself, that letter got filed. We are making amends by publishing that letter on page 17.

We dedicate this issue of *Freedom First* to his memory.

S. V. Raju

Freedom First

A Liberal Monthly – 57th Year of Publication
No.514 April 2010

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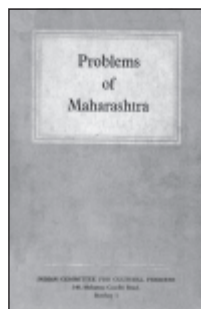
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Between Ourselves...

The 'Road to hell is paved with good intentions' as that old adage goes. This is what two 'Liberal Dissenters' seek to convey in their response to the passing of the Bill in the Rajya Sabha on the Reservation Bill for women. While Mr. Sharad Joshi went on parliament's record as the lone dissenter in the Rajya Sabha, Meera Sanyal did so in the media particularly as a woman member in the many discussion panels on TV.

Both affirmed that women were indeed grossly under-represented in parliament and the various legislative bodies at the state level. But the remedy was not through legal compulsion but by the various political parties taking voluntary affirmative action. We believe that legally-enforced reservations of any kind are counter-productive, injuring rather than improving our country's democratic fabric. As Dr. Usha Thakkar observed in another context at a seminar on the subject reported in the July 2006 edition of *Freedom First*: "If birth identity takes precedence over other identities, the identity of an equal and responsible citizen takes a backseat." Indeed.

Next month on May 1 we celebrate the 50th Foundation Day of the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat. Not many of our readers are likely to recall the fact that one of our earliest publications was a "Report of a Seminar held under the auspices of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, the Asian Office, Congress for Cultural Freedom and *Sadhana Weekly*." The subject of the seminar: "Problems of Maharashtra." The late Professor Gangadhar Gadgil who edited the volume (published in August 1960) wrote, *inter alia*, in his introduction: "The decision to establish a unilingual state of Maharashtra created an atmosphere of unity and responsibility among the Marathi speaking people. It was necessary to direct this enthusiasm into proper channels ...A seminar seemed to offer a most suitable platform from which the intellectuals could make this contribution." More about this in our May edition. Meanwhile a critique of the state of the State of Maharashtra by Sharad Joshi an eminent Indian and a Maharashtrian, occupies pride of place in this issue (see pages 8-12).



We shall endeavour to also carry an assessment of 'Gujarat at Fifty' in the May issue.

A Correction

Incidentally we had enumerated the January 2010 issue as the 58th year of publication. We are actually a year younger! It should have read 57th Year of publication.

Editor

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From Our Readers

Are Intelligence Agencies Accountable?

The two thought provoking articles by Ashok Karnik and V. Balachandran on the recent lecture by our worthy Vice President Shri Hamid Ansari, has not come a day too soon. As one who has been at the receiving end of the stick during the 1971 war against Pakistan in the Kashmir Valley there can be no doubt that what the VP has said is true. What precisely are the three pillars of Intelligence? **Acquisition** from all possible sources. **Collation** by experts. **Dissemination** on the principle of the Need to Know. So where lies the problem? The crux of the problem lies in the reluctance of organizations responsible for intelligence for fear of missing out on the credit or escaping responsibility and or criticism. Once the agencies are made to realize that the security of the country comes first always and everytime, perhaps the use of such intelligence becomes meaningful. When anything goes wrong the blame game commences. My own experience during the 1971 War was precisely that – there was RAW, IB, Military Intelligence and the local police agencies, each zealously guarding the intelligence acquired, as a result of which the information that the Pakistanis had infiltrated 200 Special Forces Troops into a pocket, was not conveyed to the users who wondered at the number of helicopter sorties reported.

As of date, we have the NSA, RAW, IB, Military Intelligence, BSF/CRPF Intelligence and the State Police. Each of these agencies are capable of acquiring valuable intelligence but the problem lies in collection which is the responsibility of every citizen of the country provided that the individual knows where their suspicions/inputs are to be reported, and, more importantly, dissemination on a need to know basis. This problem has assumed prime importance in India confronted as it is with a multiplicity of external and internal threats - China, Pakistan, terrorism from abroad and within, Naxals, Maoists, ULFA, Bodos *et al.* What is equally important is that these anti-national activities impinge on growth and national security. A prime example is the activities of the ISI in cahoots with the Pakistan Armed Forces. The China-Pakistan relationship, both being nuclear powers, so much so that these threats cannot be neatly compartmentalised. The prime need of the hour is a central intelligence authority/agency under a responsible Minister armed with the necessary powers and there is no reason to believe that such a leader cannot be found as stated by the VP, who would have in his team representatives of all agencies involved in national security, internal and external. If a representative of the Defence Ministry is on this team, this does not imply that

serving representatives from the Armed Forces should be excluded because in the final analysis, when all else is lost, it is the Armed Forces that are required to resolve the problem. A classic example of what the VP was implying is that even after 48 years, the Henderson Brooks Report on the 1962 debacle continues to be in wraps when it is critically essential for the main reasons for that debacle to be made known to the security forces involved when a similar threat is looming large in NEFA, and we do not make the same errors at the cost of our country's security. The Kargil report has been mentioned but what lessons have been learnt? In this context the accountability of agencies involved in Collection, Collation and Dissemination must be a prime consideration - why for instance has the Henderson Brooks Report not yet been made public if not *in toto*, at least relevant parts affecting national security?

Time is of the essence and to cut corners and hasten the process of operational responsibility and accountability, we should not hesitate as stated, to "study the architecture developed by established democracies like the US, USA, Germany *et al.*, as to the whys and hows of their systems, as this would be time saving and would obviate the need for us to reinvent the wheel".

Major General (Retd) E. D'Souza, PVSM, Mumbai.
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On intelligence, opening up information to a Parliamentary Committee might be dangerous. Even the Intelligence committees of the House and Senate in the US do not get full briefings. In fact in some sensitive areas, only selected Senators or House Leaders, such as the Majority Leader, Chairman of the Intelligence Committee, Speaker of the House, etc. are briefed. Keeping all the intelligence, particularly highly sensitive information in a few political hands and not disseminating it widely particularly to Parliament, is a *sine qua non* for national security. The National Security Council should have a representative body of members, properly scrutinized and approved, thus establishing the primacy of the polity over intelligence.

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The articles, "Intelligence Oversight? The Pros and Cons" and "Our Vice-President's Proposals on Intelligence Reforms" by Ashok Karnik and V. Balachandran

respectively are very timely and like a whiff of fresh air, more so to the Intelligence tribe. In fact, the call for Intelligence agencies' accountability by no less than a person than the Vice President of India is itself not a day too soon.

All the more, the "future course" (of action) suggested by Mr. Ashok Karnik to make the intelligence agencies accountable to Parliament is very reasonable and practicable. Like 'power', secrecy too corrupts and absolute secrecy corrupts absolutely. Therefore, it is time for the national exchequer to demand that the intelligence agencies account for the hard earned tax money spent on them.

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The two articles on oversight of the Intelligence organizations were interesting. We have to be careful before we open the gates. Considering the utterances of some of our political leaders on the Delhi shoot out, a line has to be drawn that security operations are not compromised by leakage of plans.

At the same time, we have learnt of the use of IB to settle scores or save criminals. I recommend that to begin with, we open activities including operations for areas not connected with national security. That leaves RAW out.

Brigadier Suresh Chandra Sharma (retd)., Mumbai. brigscs@gmail.com

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Mayawati

Rs.2,500 crores splurged on statues of self and elephants! Rs.200 crores for a rally! And a garland worth five crores! Is this the simple and modest lifestyle of a Dalit Chief Minister (Mayawati), or the vulgar display of power and pelf by a modern day queen, who could not afford to pay compensation to the victims of a stampede? But then, does she not have company in many of our politicians, who lead a life of opulence, at the cost of the public? These are the present-day, self serving autocrats, fascists, and feudal lords, who have reduced democracy to a farce, proving that the public is an ass. Is there any wonder that extreme unrest and discontent is brewing up among the masses?

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Indian Students in Australia

Various reasons given by Sunita in her article

"Indian Students in Australia – What's Brewing" provoking Aussie attacks on Indian students, are unconvincing and irrelevant and certainly do not justify continuous attacks on Indians. She has described the following: mannerism; personal hygiene; Talking loudly on mobiles; not understanding Aussie twang; many students living in one small flat; not appreciating Australian humour; no assimilation.

Not only individually but even collectively, the reasons cannot gloss over and defend dastardly attacks by targetting only Indians. Whether one likes it or not, no other reasons, except the racist mindset of some sections of Australians is behind this. On the basis of experience of Australian players in India and elsewhere, they are not paragons of virtue, mannerism and good behaviour.

It is for the Australian government and their society to introspect and instead of preaching homilies to Indians, Sunita who is an Indian in Australia, should take up the matters with Australians whom she meets.

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The article on treatment of Indians in Australia does not bring out the reason why we are being singled out for such attacks while the immigrants from other nations are not touched. That reminds me that in the '80s, when Australia was making efforts for facilitation of immigration of Chinese, there were hurdles for Indians.

Is it because China takes a tough line on treatment of people of Chinese origin but our government is soft.

Brigadier Suresh Chandra Sharma (retd)., Mumbai. brigscs@gmail.com

Minoo Masani in Hindi

The National Book Trust which published the political biography of Minoo Masani has a Hindi translation of the book. It is available at National Book Trust outlets in the metros. Price: Rs.50/-

Freedom First readers who are unable to secure a copy at their local bookstores may write to the office of Freedom First, 3rd floor, Army and Navy Building, 148 Mahatma Gandhi Road for a copy. Please remit with your request a money order or cheque payable at par in Mumbai For Rs.80/- inclusive of the packing and courier chargers. Cheques should be made payable to ICCF.

Vinda Karandikar – A Personal Tribute

Aroon Tikekar



1918 -2010

The most respected poet and litterateur Vinda Karandikar who died at the ripe age of 92, was recipient of some the most of prestigious literary awards including the Dnyanpith. Respect for him grew with his growing age as he continued, true to his early influences of Marxian thought, to be a friend of the downtrodden

till the very end and depicted their plight in poems he wrote.

Many interesting anecdotes could be told about his ways and methods of saving money. For one who did not know him they could be amusing, but for those who knew him well, the very anecdotes were instructive. He hailed from the Konkan and was proud of his less than modest moorings. He “stroved hard to maintain” his middle class life. It came natural to him. Vinda Karandikar, however, was not at all a joy-killer, he relished good food, good wine, good music, but was reluctant to spend money on himself, a typical trait of the people of Konkan. He was miserly in personal life, but lavish in philanthropy. He quietly donated all his award money to social causes. He practised what he preached and remained a rationalist till the very end. He donated his body after death.

When, more than fifty years ago, Karandikar - Vasant Bapat - Mangesh Padgaonkar, the trio of modern Marathi poets had hit upon the idea of reciting their poems to an audience at a nominal honorarium of Rs 51, the idea of “popularizing poetry by holding public performances” had shocked prudish poets. Not that no poet had read his poems to an audience earlier. But such performances were few and far between. The new idea spread in

Maharashtra like wildfire. Soon the trio endeared themselves to most Marathi poetry lovers, barring a few who dubbed the attempt as “platform” poetry and unnecessary pandering to neo-literati by diluting their poetic talent with a certain amount of dramatic expression. For those, who have watched the “performance” of the trio, however, it became a lifetime literary experience. All three of them, with distinct personality, distinct voice, distinct ideology and therefore equally distinct themes, genre and treatment, regaled audiences by interspersing between readings of poems anecdotes about one another and jokes cut at each other’s cost which used to be an added attraction. I heard their poetry recitation when I was still at school, but the memory of the poems of each of them I vividly remember even today. Each of them had led a rich life, full of experiences and therefore there was no dearth of anecdotes in their kitty. There was, no doubt, a certain drama in the presentation of each of them. The popularity of their ‘performance’ could hardly be achieved by other contemporary or later date poets in the realms of the literary history of Marathi. Needless to say that in an era noted for its conspicuous absence of the electronic media the trio received invitations from every nook and corner of Maharashtra and outside. Karandikar, the oldest of the trio, was undoubtedly the most dramatic of them all and as such always used to emerge as their leader.

The poet Karandikar was extremely loyal to his Muse. When he felt that the Muse turned her back on him, he preferred to stop writing poetry rather than allowing poetic creativity degenerate into mere craftsmanship. Transparency in whatever he did remained his hallmark till the end. He taught English, though he wrote poems in Marathi. In fact he was bilingual and therefore painstakingly translated his own poems into English. His thoughts on the problems of translating poems from a modern Indian language like Marathi into a “western” language like English could prove an object lesson to any newcomer in the field. His Marathi translation of Shakespeare’s *King Lear* and Aristotle’s *Poetics* bear a distinct mark of serious scholarship. To mention just one instance, the temperamental King Lear is prone to using vituperative and scurrilous language at the slightest provocation. To translate invectives and four letter-words

Cont’d. on p.12

Reservation For Women

The Liberal Dissent

Reporting on the adoption of the Women's Reservation Bill in the Rajya Sabha on March 9, the English language press reported that the Bill was passed with one dissenting vote, without identifying the voter. The lone dissenter was none other than Rajya Sabha member Mr. Sharad Joshi, president of the Swatantra Bharat Party. His vote typified the Liberal Position.

In a statement on March 8. On the occasion of the 100th International Women's Day Mr. Joshi spelt out the reasons why he does not support the Women's Reservation Bill:

"The concept of political empowerment of women did not start in 1991 with Rajiv Gandhi or with Deve Gowda in 1993.

"It was my organizations, the Shetkari Sanghatana and the Shetkari Mahila Aghadi which proposed 100% women panels in the panchayat raj elections in Maharashtra as early as 1986.

"This frightened the then ruling Congress government in Maharashtra under the leadership of Shankarrao Chavan to such an extent that they did not dare hold panchayat raj elections for three years until 1989.

"It was at that time that the concept of 33% reservation for women in panchayat raj institutions was introduced in Maharashtra. It is this concept which is now being applied at the national level.

"Unfortunately, the drafters of the Bill have been carried away by their enthusiasm and not done the necessary analysis of the long-term consequences of this piece of legislation.

"Nobody will object to the concept of having a fair proportion of women in our legislative bodies.



Sharad Joshi

"The question is: Is reservation the best way of getting them in?

"My party, the Swatantra Bharat Paksha and I hold the view that it would have been a much better idea to hand over the entire panchayat raj to women before partial reservations are introduced

at the Centre and the State levels.

"I honestly feel:

- that the selection of the reserved constituencies by lottery-cum-rotation is highly dangerous for democracy in this country and,
- that the government as also the members of this House should agree to have one more look at this Bill.

"Let us have a close look at this Lottery-cum-rotation contraption:

1. At the very outset, if we draw the reserved constituencies we might face a situation where there is no particularly enthusiastic woman candidate in a particular area.
2. On the other hand, there might have been a male aspirant nursing that constituency for some time. This could cause unnecessary bitterness about the women's movement and provide an opportunity for the established leaders to push candidates of their family who might not have shown any interest, till then, in political activities.
3. In the lottery computation system, a large proportion of voters may not get a chance to vote for any woman candidate at all in their whole lifetime.
4. Women who get elected to legislative bodies may have very little interest left in nursing their constituency as they know that they will not have a second chance to contest from the same constituency.
5. Even the male candidates who get elected from the

On this hundredth International Women's Day I wish to congratulate the management of Air India for confiding a trans-Atlantic flight to an all-women crew. This confidence expressed in women will do more for women's empowerment than the Women's Reservation Bill.

Sharad Joshi

non-reserved constituencies would not work knowing full well that the chances that they would get to contest from the same constituencies again are only 50-50.

Conclusion: The level of nursing of all the constituencies will go down.

6. Further, simple arithmetic will show that a legislature with Women's Reservation (as per this Bill) will not have more than 33% experienced repeaters coming for a second term.

This kind of drafting arises out of a lack of imagination and absence of real concern for women's interests.

That is the reason why the Women's Reservation Bill has remained pending for 13 long years.

This could have been avoided and the Women's Reservation Bill could have been passed much earlier if only the drafters had followed an alternative system to the lottery-cum-rotation system.

The alternative solution can be provided by the constitution of new multiple-seat constituencies where each constituency will club together three of the existing constituencies. This constituency will become a multiple-seat constituency where every voter would have three votes out of which one has to be exercised in favour of a woman candidate.

If a woman candidate gets the highest number of votes amongst all the candidates contesting, she should be considered as getting elected on the general seat and the women's reservation seat will go to the woman candidate who gets the highest number of votes from among the remaining women candidates.

This system would ensure that every voter gets the possibility of voting for women in each of the election that will be held. Further, it will not affect adversely the quality of deliberations in the legislature or the quality of servicing the constituencies.

MR. SHARAD JOSHI, Rajya Sabha MP, is president of the Swatantra Bharat Party and leader of the Shetkari Sanghatana.

Reservation is Not the Answer

The Shetkari Mahila Aghadi (SMA) closely allied to the Shetkari Sanghatana and the Swatantra Bharat Party (SBP) has done pioneering work to get political representation for women. Its credentials are irrefutable.

We have, nevertheless, serious doubts about any system of reservation being an instrument of ensuring social justice to any community. It is our conviction that reservation is particularly inappropriate to correct gender injustice. The actual experience in most states has confirmed our apprehensions. Reservation of seats for women has resulted in the womenfolk of the established leaders parading as representatives of women with no change in the position of the common woman and no improvement in performance and no reduction in corruption. India has already experienced rule by women from the creamy layer of this society dominating the political scene even without any system of reservation.

In fact, this reservation has given rise to resentment amongst those who normally sympathize with the women's cause. Reservations for women are being pushed by women in the creamy layer consisting of professional politicians and activists of state-funded non-government organizations. Men who have hazy ideas about the women's question and are afraid of being branded as 'male chauvinist pigs' tow the line taken by self-professed and self-serving champions of women.

The Swatantra Bharat Party (SBP) favours a proportional representation system of election in preference to the present system of 'First past the post.'

Under the proportional representation system, reservation for all special interest groups including women, can easily be introduced by requiring the registered political parties to prepare the lists of their nominees on the lines of reservation rosters. For example: If it is decided that women should have 33% reservation, every third nominee in the list of every registered party will be required to be a woman.

(Excepted from the SBP Manifesto 2009)

Reservation is not the Right way

Meera Sanyal

The desired outcome of the Women's Reservation Bill, namely to have more women MP's in Parliament and more women MLA's in our State Assemblies is commendable. While I fully support the objectives of the bill, I do not believe Reservations is the right way to bring about this outcome.

Reservations in our country have been more divisive than inclusive. They have created great resentment, particularly amongst our youth, who feel that merit plays a smaller and smaller role in our society and who view the growing trend towards reservations in every field, with dismay.

In a democratic merit based system, where we wish to be represented by the most able candidates, reservations of any type are undesirable. What we should aim for is *Equality of Opportunity* and not *Equity of outcomes*.

During the Rajya Sabha debate it was therefore heartening that at least one MP, Swatantra Bharat Party's Sharad Joshi, opposed the bill, not because he was against women, but because he was against Reservations. To the cynics who ask what a single independent voice can achieve in Parliament, Sharad Joshi's 'nay' (articulated through his vote and without any unseemly behavior) clearly echoed the feelings of countless young Indians.

For anyone watching TV as the Bill was passed in the Rajya Sabha, it was clear that the emotion and joy on the faces of senior women MP's was genuine and heartfelt. I believe that the drive by these senior women parliamentarians, to induct more women into Parliament will be more effective than the Bill itself.

The aim should now be to ensure that over the next 15 years we have not just more but better representation by women.



Meera Sanyal

Recent studies show that the Banking sector in India stands out for the significant number of women at senior levels. I believe this has happened because of sustained efforts to create an equal opportunity environment for women. If one were to draw parallels to the

banking world three things stand out that could be interesting to adopt from a political perspective.

It is a simple fact that in a merit based system, you cannot have senior women at the top unless you have a large talent pipeline of younger women to choose from.

In our bank we believe that gender diversity is important, and so we focus on inducting an equal number of men and women. Given the large number of talented young women in our country this is not difficult. There are no quotas or reservations – but everyone accepts and welcomes the principle that gender diversity leads to a more balanced and representative working environment and therefore works towards this goal.

A similar focus by each of our political parties would ensure the creation of a talent pipeline within their respective parties, from which potential candidates could be selected and elected. The outcome of such a process is similar to that of a Voluntary Political Quota, which as can be seen from the experience of Scandinavian and other countries has had very positive results.

Recent press reports have highlighted that the participation of women MP's in parliamentary debates and proceedings has been very low. While many attribute this to the fact that they are proxies and not empowered to speak in their own voice, it could also be that they lack the confidence and training to participate in the parliamentary process. If political parties can create an environment where potential women candidates are trained to think about and debate important legislative matters, then representation by women would be much more meaningful.

In conclusion I believe every political party will need to take the right kind of Affirmative actions to ensure the objectives of the Women's Reservation Bill are achieved in the next 15 years.

MRS. MEERA H. SANYAL is the National Convenor of the INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP.

Maharashtra at Fifty

Sharad Joshi

If Gujarat had not started an Andolan for Mahagujarat, Nehru would not have handed the Maharashtra 'Kalash' to Y. B. Chavan.

50 years ago on May 1 1960, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru handed over the *Mangal Kalash* of Maharashtra to the people of Maharashtra. A *sinhalokan* (retrospective) conference is being organized in May this year to review the State's journey during this half century - the Marathi language, the Marathi people and the state of Maharashtra. The organizers of this conference include eminent political leaders, educationists, agro-experts and administrators and hence it is expected that the proposed review will be thorough.

However in my view it is unlikely that this review will result in any significant changes in state policy or in any other sector as state policy is ultimately decided by the ruling parties. Nevertheless the State may find it difficult to completely ignore the observations made at the conference.

It is my view that this review ought to be based on two parameters:

The first parameter would be to recall the proceedings and resolutions of the various conferences held in the context of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement and to what extent have their dreams and expectations fulfilled; to what extent have the aspirations of the people who gave their lives for the creation of the state been fulfilled.

The second parameter ought to be: How far has the state of Maharashtra, its language, and the welfare of the Marathi people progressed and how does it compare with other states since the formation of linguistic states?

In this connection it might be relevant to recall that a similar review was attempted by the Government of India



The Mangal Kalash is a fundamental part of worship of Hindus and is highly visible on all auspicious occasions like traditional house warming and weddings. The Kalash is made of copper, silver or gold depending on the needs of the occasion and the capacity of the worshipper.

Pandit Nehru handed over the Mangal Kalash to Mr. Yeshwantrao Chavan at a ceremonial function at Mumbai's Shivaji Park on the occasion of the birth of the new state of Maharashtra. Hence "Mangal" or good happening. Explanation courtesy *Freedom First* reader B. H. Patankar.

in 2007 the golden jubilee year of independent India. Sadly the discussions in the Lok Sabha on that occasion produced neither a review, nor an analysis, nor a plan for the future of the nation. Every Member of Parliament argued from his party's position. Yes, of course there were references in their speeches to prevalence of rampant unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, and disease in the country; much eloquence was devoted by the speakers to the 'glorious' Gandhian struggle for independence notwithstanding the fact that the struggle led to the partition of India. It was described by many as the most shining struggle in world history. In short, anyone who heard those speeches would have come away with the impression that the freedom movement was flawless, no mistakes were made and whatever decisions were taken were inevitable given the then prevailing situation – and this, notwithstanding the miserable state we are in today! The opportunity provided by the forthcoming golden jubilee review of the state of Maharashtra will similarly be squandered away if there is no real soul-searching, and all that is likely to happen is on the pattern of what happened in the Lok Sabha, just described, all gas and steam and empty rhetoric.

The Samyukta Maharashtra Agitation

I was a student then. My college was not far from Flora Fountain (later renamed 'Hutatma Chowk' to honour the dead who were killed during the Samyukta Maharashtra Agitation). I participated in the Goa satyagrahis morcha in which 10 men were killed in police firing. The then Chief Minister of the composite Bombay Province, Mr. Morarji Desai refused the Morcha's demand to lower the national flag on the Sachivalaya to honour the dead. Here too there was police firing and, if I remember correctly, five more people were killed. This caused a huge wave of anger in Maharashtra against Morarji Desai. The fuel for the Samyukta Maharashtra Andolan was provided by this groundswell of anger of the Marathi people against Morarji Desai.

The Samyukta Maharashtra Andolan received so much massive public support that my economics professor who was a well known teacher and who also participated in this morcha was so shaken to see the carnage at Flora fountain, quipped "If this is the case, you must demand a separate nation and not just a state"! Popular anger made

lakhs of people walk behind S. M. Joshi to Girgaum Chowpatti. It was at this meeting that Mr. S. A. Dange delivered his famous speech: '*Krantikari shista and krantikari beshista*'¹.

I attended all the events organised by the Samyukta Maharashtra Andolan. Stalwarts like Acharya P. K. Atre, S. M. Joshi. Comrades Dange and Sardesai made stirring speeches greatly inspiring the Marathi people. Such speeches were never heard again in Maharashtra – not even during the Indira Emergency

The Samyukta Maharashtra agitation spread to every home reverberating with the poems of the great *shahirs* of the day (poets). When the SMA morcha went to Delhi, Shahir Amar Shaikh sang his famous lines:

*Jaga Maratha, Aam Jamana badlega
Uthata hai tufan vo akhir Bambai lekar tham Lega.*

(Now that the maratha has awakened, he will rest only after he takes mumbai)

Or take the Shahir Annabhau Sathe's lines:

*Samyukta Maharashtra surya Uogavatoy, sarkara
Khushal Kombade zakun Dhara.*

(The Maharashtra sun is rising, Yes sarkar, whatever you may do to hold the cock to prevent it from calling².)

Another *Shahir* moved the hearts of millions with his folk-play called *Samyukta Maharashtra Gondhal*. All these speeches and poems conveyed in an explosive manner the anger of the people and their determination to achieve their goal. I am fortunate to have belonged to the generation that witnessed and participated in this movement.

After the Flora Fountain carnage, Acharya Atre carried the famous lines of Marathi poet B. R. Tambe's poem "*Awahan to Rudra*" in the daily *Maratha* editorial. It reads somewhat like this:

"The waters in the lakes are restless and the trivial and sundry are talking peace.

The fearsome Rudra is advancing everywhere and will topple the thrones. Come Oh Rudra, drag the king from the elephant Ambari and throw the crown to the people and give people that which belongs to them."

This literary brilliance was rarely to be seen in later days in Maharashtra. The people of Maharashtra have become subservient to the State. Thanks to the State's largesse and grants, literary movements dried up. The state has converted our poets and writers into a timid and slavish

people. Morarji Desai provided the fodder for the Andolan; Y. B. Chavan killed the virility of the state and made them accept 'pragmatism' that was against the soul of Maharashtra.

The *shahirs* of the Andolan sang aloud songs of a *Bruhanmaharashtra*, a larger Maharashtra that included Belgaum, Nippani, Karwar, Bhalki along with Mumbai, Nagpur Varhad, and Marathwada. They sang songs of peasants and workers owning the wealth of the state and prayed for unity among the people. But the martyrs' dream of a larger Maharashtra never came into being. Belgaum, Nippani, Karwar, Bhalki were left out and Goa too remained cut off from Maharashtra. Like India suffered partition, Maharashtra also was hacked into pieces.

The important reason for this fractured statehood is the fact the state was not rewarded because of the Andolan, but because Y. B. Chavan challenged the Andolan Samiti by openly declaring that Pandit Nehru was greater than Maharashtra, and subsequent intrigues in the Delhi darbar. If Gujarat had not started an Andolan for Mahagujarat, Nehru would not have handed the Maharashtra '*Kalash*' to Y. B. Chavan. It is true that 105 martyrs shed their blood for the state, but the statehood was awarded according to the Congress darbar's prescriptions.

Workers Movement

The entire trade union movement gathered under the flag of the Andolan with all its leaders and all the freedom fighters in the state. Even then the Andolan failed. The 'success' went to those who knelt before the Delhi Durbar. This bitter fact is the root cause of Maharashtra's downfall in these fifty years.

The new State fully supported and fed upon the opponents of the leftist trade unions in Mumbai and Sholapur. Mumbai province had a historic, enlightened and reputed trade union movement in the country. After the statehood, the then governments systematically destroyed the genuine trade union movement by promoting with money and protection communal lumpen elements, linguistic chauvinists and parochial forces. Things went so far as murdering trade union leaders and putting Congress stooges as union leaders using administrative tactics. The likes of Samant and R. J. Mehta destroyed the movements led by stalwarts like N. M. Joshi and brought in US type trade union models. Since then a genuine trade union movement has vanished from the state. Finally the entire Girangaon (Textile Mills area in central Mumbai) in Mumbai was devastated thanks to the aggressive leadership of a thickheaded leader.

Peasant Movement

In the hinterland, the socialists led the farmers' movements. But the Congress was trying hard to attract farmers to its fold. The Cooperative movement had failed and was on the wane. Dr. D. R. Gadgil however asserted that 'Cooperative movement has failed, but it must succeed' and thanks to his recommendations, Delhi unleashed crores of funds for this cause. This came in handy for Mr. Chavan who went from village to village telling upper caste Marathas to start cooperatives and take over the political and financial reins of the region and even used Brahmin-hatred for this. The Andolan was an obstacle for this dream-scheme of Mr. Chavan but he went on with his strategy no matter if people threw 'chappals' at the leadership .

Unlike the successful decimation of Maharashtra's trade union movement, the ruling Congress in the state was not able to break the 1980 farmer's movement despite use of force and repression and even NSA. Finally, they could do this only after feigning acceptance of the agenda of the Shetkari Sanghatana. The power-starved opposition parties in the state also usurped this agenda without realizing the political-economy of the demands and in the process helped the ruling Congress sabotage the cause of the Sanghatana.

The Cooperative movement created an opportunity for concentrating all the state power in the hands of a single caste, and this was conveniently paraded as something that would fulfill the dreams of great reformers like Mahatma Phule, Shahu Maharaj and Babasaheb Ambedkar and with this the Congress could stand against the larger objectives of the Andolan Samiti that was led by opposition parties.

The Smothering of Vidarbha

The Vidarbha leaders became acutely aware of this Congress plot and they were skeptical about Vidarbha's inclusion in Maharashtra. But finally this leadership was also brought under the Congress fold. After separating Gujarat from Mumbai, Nehru's scheme for keeping the reins of Mumbai in the hands of the Congress party were too obvious to Vidarbhans. Even Goa was acutely aware of this and the referendum for inclusion of Goa in Maharashtra was rejected by Marathi Goans as well. This put paid to the idea of bringing all Marathi-speaking people into the fold of one state.

The one language one state idea was most vehemently opposed by the farmers in Marathwada and Vidarbha. That the state belongs to farmers was an idea shattered soon. After appointing a Vidarbha CM, the

channels were thrown open for exploiting the Vidarbha region. After the cooperative sugar industry model, Vidarbha leaders also aspired for similar Cotton initiatives³. Yashwantrao Mohite came forward to exploit this plan and hammer out a scheme for cotton monopoly procurement. This created a wicked mechanism of procuring and storing cotton in the Vidarbha-Marathwada region and ship it to Western Maharashtra and Mumbai whenever necessary for industry, and this, at dirt-cheap exploitative rates. The socialist camouflage of the monopoly scheme kept out interstate trade in cotton so that it became impossible for the cotton growers to get any competitive market advantage. The cotton monopoly scheme itself caused losses worth thousands of crores every year. Vidarbha was producing most of the raw farm produce for industry and also was home to minerals like iron, manganese, coal, bauxite and enormous forest wealth. Western Maharashtra annexed and harvested this wealth of Vidarbha to Mumbai and to themselves.

Till 1950, Vidarbha was considered wealthier than the rest of Maharashtra and the Vidarbhans were rightly proud of this. It was a matter of great dignity, even for western Maharashtra families to marry one's daughter to a Vidarbha boy. This gold mine of Vidarbha has been looted and devastated in the scheme of things of Maharashtra state. In the last decade itself, an average of ten farmers committed suicide everyday. From 1997, over 40,000 farmers have committed suicides, and this is proof enough that the idea of Maharashtra has failed miserably.

The State of the Marathi Language

Mahatma Phule insisted on the use of Marathi language in law courts so that the litigants understand the process. Shahu Maharaj went further to bring oppressed castes in positions of power. After the award of linguistic states in the rest of the country, it was natural to have similar voices in Maharashtra. But for this, the mindset of the Marathi state has been nationalistic rather than provincial, due largely to the nature of Maharashtra's history and tradition of saints. The insistence on the use of Marathi in administrative matters is logical indeed, but that cannot be the sole basis for creating a state, and this can lead to unforeseen contradictions and internal struggles, something many of the great leaders of the Andolan also forgot for the moment. How did Marathi fare as a language in the independent state? Marathi has no recognized encyclopedia or even a standard dictionary, so we cannot use this parameter for measuring its progress. We will need different parameters for this assessment. It is difficult to assert that the rate of enrichment of Marathi words is better post 1960 than before, though there is some addition of words because of English-based Marathi usage

from administrative and technical vocations. But we rarely hear a common man use genuine Marathi, leave alone the purist Savarkari Marathi. It has become a matter of dignity to use 2-3 English words in every Marathi sentence. Those who speak genuine Marathi surely become a laughing stock.

Marathi *shuddhalekhan* (correct writing) has become a thing of the past. Marathi speaking people are increasingly disconnected from the Sanskrit language as the new rules of Marathi writing more or less ignore the epistemology of Marathi words. The language has nearly stopped growing. The Marathi language was alive through the great efforts of men like Chiplunkar, Tilak, Agarkar and Khandekar, even during the British Raj. The local dialects like Ahirani and Kokani are in deep peril.

Marathi Literature and Newspapers.

The enormous growth of newspapers and magazines is largely due to extra-journalistic forces rather than journalism itself. The circulation of Marathi newspapers and magazines are utterly deplorable as compared to most other Indian languages. Dalit and rural literary movements flourished to some extent, and helped expand the scope of Marathi language. However the advance of printing technology made the word much cheaper and ubiquitous and hence reduced its impact. Leave alone the greats like Hari Narayan Apte, we cannot find a match for the earlier Khandekars and Phadkes. Recently due to aggressive expression of Marathi language there is some discussion of Marathi *asmita* in the media. Notwithstanding this there is a big question mark on the progress of Marathi language after the formation of Maharashtra state. Marathi people should introspect among themselves about the state of their language. No doubt many writers, leaders, and administrators will ferret out statistics about the progress of Marathi but the final answer should come from such an introspection.

Economic Progress

Did the Marathi people make economic progress after the state's formation? We cannot say that every region and part of Maharashtra has made equal economic progress. To deal with this imbalance various regional development boards were enacted through constitutional amendments. In other words only one region flourished in the state. But even in this dominant western Maharashtra there is great deprivation among various castes and tribes. As we have seen earlier the Maratha samaj has conclusively defeated the Brahmins politically but have they at least bettered the lot of other castes such as dalits, tribals, nomadics, paradhis, etc? There are routine reports of violence against these segments. A party which insists on entitlement of the Muslim community to national wealth

despite partition has on the other hand completely ignored other castes in their power politics.

Administration and Justice

Marathi has now become the language of administration and high caste amaldars were replaced by bahun amaldars and bahun sabhapatis. There is no evidence that this has improved even marginally the administration or justice. Its no one's case that all was well with the B. G. Kher ministry in the erstwhile Bombay province. But it was not then a matter of dignity to be linked with corruption, exploitation of women and land-grabbing in the Bombay province and this was surely not their *Rajdharma*.

The Marathi Mindset

There is a significant deterioration in the Marathi psyche over the last 50 years. Every community is forcefully and shamelessly arguing for inclusion of their caste/tribe in the reserved category so that they can beg for grants and jobs; no matter even if they are called poor and/or downtrodden.

As the state was established, Marathis were displaced from Mumbai to the suburbs and it is difficult for them to survive even in the state. The great heirs of Shivaji Maharaj have also turned into beggars. Politics is captive to some bigger caste. Corruption, harassment of women, and *goonda raj* are ubiquitous. The historic tradition of uprightness, self respect and enterprise in Maharashtra has withered even as socialism, grants and vote-purchase politics rule the roost.

Law and Order

The law and order situation in Maharashtra is also much below par. In the days of Bombay province, the then Chief Minister B. G. Kher advised people to keep one hand on their chest and the other on the back to save themselves from possible stabbing attacks in communal riots. His political heir Morarji brought in liquor-ban and thereafter the Mumbai Police then often referred to as the 'Scotland Yard' of India plummeted and came to mingle with the underworld and virtually helped start the rule of *Bhais* in cities and *goondas* in villages. The fact that after 26/11 the then Chief Minister and Home minister had to vacate their jobs is proof enough of this all round deterioration.

Women' Movement

Maharashtra has a tradition of accomplished women leaders like Jijabai, Tarabai, Rani Laxmibai and Ahalyabai Holkar. Their lives are full of brave deeds in difficult times

much like the *panchakanyas* of Bharat. The freedom struggle saw great women like Ahilya Rangnekar, Godutai Parulekar, Mrinal Gore and many others face imprisonment and endure untold hardships and create a brilliant page in our history. After the state's formation, there were systematic efforts to suppress the women's movement and harness it through various doles.

The Chandvad convention of women led by the Shetkari Sanghatana in 1986 declared that since all the agenda-items of panchayats were concerned with women's lives, women will hereinafter contest all seats of panchayats in the state. This terrified the Congress top brass and they did not hold elections to panchayats for three years after its due date. Further they circulated a baseless pamphlet called '*Maharashtra Shasanache Mahila Dhoran*' and proposed 33% reservation of seats for women in panchayats much like the SC/ST reservation. Around the same time, under the garb of the Beijing conference, statisation of women's movements was completed. The newly awakened women were given various enticements like membership to Women's Commissions, professional posts, etc. and the government finally destroyed a brilliant movement and a great tradition.

Education

Even before and after the British era, Pune was known as the seat of learning. After the state's formation, several strange decisions were taken in the education sector. Right from Tilak's times, a teacher's job was viewed as a service to the nation and as a sacrifice. Many great men of learning undertook this as a *tapasya* despite hardships. After the formation of Maharashtra state, several irrational decisions about length of syllabus and medium of schooling were taken and withdrawn with periodic backtracking and changes. Education was subjugated and annexed to the state resulting in corruption, decline of quality, politicking in the matters of text-books; as a result we are now faced with a situation that most students who pass the SSC exam can't properly write even a few

sentences or make a few simple calculations. This fact is now accepted by all educationists and even education ministers.

The License Permit system has overnight made education-tycoons of those who were earlier running loss making sugar factories. The degree certificate from Mumbai University was once a prestigious matter; not any more. The *netas* have pocketed not only colleges but also own deemed universities. Today an esteemed educational institute is difficult to come by in the state of Maharashtra.

Conclusion

Recently some representatives from the long disputed Belgaum area came to meet me. I asked them what they thought of the Maharashtra experiment. Is it a success? If not, why not ask for inclusion of the region in another Marathi speaking state like Goa? I advised them to think ten times before asking for their inclusion in our great state that has caused great suffering to all poor and honest men. Their silence was answer enough.

After the formation of Maharashtra state, the five decades have seen all round decay in all sectors. The economy is on the decline, the language has lost its place, and the Marathis are disheartened. The Marathi community is trying to stymie one another rather than raise themselves to new heights. Our enterprise is gone and what is left is the beggary and loss of self esteem about being educated.

MR. SHARAD JOSHI M.P. Founder of the Shetkarai Sanghatana and President of the Swatantra Bharat Party
Translated by Dr. Shyam Ashtekar from the Marathi original in the *Shetkari Sanghatak* of 6th February 2010

Footnotes:

- ¹ Revolutionary discipline and revolutionary indiscipline.
- ² A popular saying that you can't stop the sun from rising by petty tricks.
- ³ The popular saying was: *Uswala tupashi and kastkar u pashi* which means 'sugarcanewala gets ghee and the cotton kastkar is famished'

Vinda Karandikar (Cont'd. from page 4)

could be a real challenging task for any translator. One has only to read the ingenuity and hyper-creativity shown by Karandikar in translating those opprobrious expressions. He could achieve this, perhaps, due his roots in the Konkan whose people were known for originality of such expressions. He spent some years in rendering *Amrutanubhav*, a philosophic treatise on human existence, written by the 13th century Marathi saint-poet Dnyaneshwar into modern Marathi.

No one could miss the dramatic element in

everything he did or said. Whether he was teaching in a class room, or reciting his poems to a large or small audience or discussing a certain non-literary point with his colleague or friend, his high tone and clear diction went well with him. The Marathi literary world is left the poorer with the passing away of Vinda Karandikar.

DR. AROON TIKEKAR is a well-known journalist and an author of books in Marathi and English. He was editor of the Marathi daily *Loksatta*, for over a decade and advisor to two other Marathi dailies.

Hind Swaraj and Common Sense

Sethu Das

Even after so many years, two political pamphlets continue to inspire people all over the world. Sethu Das of Design & People looks at Mahatma Gandhi's 'Hind Swaraj' and Thomas Paine's 'Common Sense' – two historic Pamphlets that changed the fate of two colonies forever.



IF history writing is an art of methodologically narrating and documenting events of the past related to the human race, forgetting is another art which enables us to forget the very same history, martyrs and their heroic deeds.

One of the biggest challenges for a modern-day reader is to choose the right literature to read from the millions of books and journals available. And in the process of choosing the right ones, we usually miss or even forget some of the most relevant ones. It has been said that even if all books on earth are lost, and one book — *The Bhagavad Gita* — survives, the world can still survive. And if there is one more book to be added in such a world, it could possibly be '*Hind Swaraj*' or 'The Indian Home Rule', written by Mohandas K Gandhi in the year 1909. Because *Hind Swaraj* answers almost all our questions. Not many of us remember or read this sacred text today as it falls into the category of forgotten books. Probably what we are forgetting is also the fact that *Hind Swaraj*, one of the most important works Gandhi had written hundred years ago while returning to South Africa from London is more relevant in today's conflict situation than ever before.

Prof. Samdhong Rinpoche, Kalon Tripa (*de facto*, the Prime Minister) of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile has been studying *Hind Swaraj* for the last 21 years and carrying it with him wherever he goes. He finds that whenever questions arise in his mind in the context of the Tibet issue, he has been able to find an appropriate answer in '*Hind Swaraj*'. During a *Hind Swaraj* reading organised by Friends of Tibet in 2002, Prof. Rinpoche said:

"For me '*Hind Swaraj*' is equally important as that of *Dhammapada* and in many ways more important than *Dhammapada*, because my understanding of *Dhammapada* is through '*Hind Swaraj*'. When I did not have any exposure to Gandhi's teachings, my understanding of Buddhism was general and the importance of *Dhammapada* was very limited." The comparison of a sacred Buddhist text with a British Raj-banned book took many Buddhists by surprise.

Not many Tibetans seem to be enthusiastic about understanding the relevance of Gandhi's text and in their current context. Some of them even believe that the non-violence preached by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his close associates in exile has nothing to do with Gandhi's active non-violence but pure inaction. But for people like the Dalai Lama and Prof Rinpoche, their commitment to non-violence is not simply a tactic or a method to win over the adversary, but a creed that motivates them to continue their non-violent struggle against the occupying Chinese forces. Rajiv Vora of the Gandhi Peace Foundation who considers Prof Samdhong Rinpoche his 'guru' further clarifies: "I have witnessed the Venerable Prof Rinpoche trying consistently and patiently to wash this charge of inactivity off non-violence. In our dialogues with Tibetan activists we have faced such questions too, and it is here that '*Hind Swaraj*' comes to our aid. Non-violence comes out as a higher level of activity demanding fire and militancy. There is no swaraj without satyagraha." He continues: "It is through teachings in non-violence for freedom as explained in '*Hind Swaraj*' that the declining support for non-violence could be revived, for it is only in Swaraj that justice and freedom – the two innate human quests – are harmonised. All other ideologies and systems of governance create incompatibility between these two."

Prof. Rinpoche who is completing his second term this year as the Prime Minister-in-exile feels that after reading Gandhi's '*Hind Swaraj*', his understanding of Buddhism and non-violence has immensely widened and became practical in every word. "It may be social, political and economic. Each one of the questions of life is dealt with correct answers. So this is the philosophy of life

and this is the philosophy of spirituality in full time. Buddha had said at many times particularly in his *Mahayana* and *Vajrayana* teachings that worldly and spiritual appearance can be combined in one's individual life. Probably Gandhi is the only person in modern history who clearly demonstrated that these two appearances can be combined in real life," Prof. Rinpoche says.

Common Sense



On this site was buried Thomas Paine 1737-1809. Author of *Common Sense*, The Pamphlet that stirred the American Colonies to Independence. John Adams said: "Without the pen of Paine the sword of Washington would have been wielded in vain."

Whenever I read '*Hind Swaraj*', there is one name that comes to my mind quite often – Thomas Paine, a poor emigrant to America, whose 48-page 1776 pamphlet inspired a nation to lead a revolution to overthrow a colonial power. Thomas Paine's introductory statement "The cause of America is in a great measure the cause of mankind" is enough to understand that like Gandhi, he too understood the root cause of the problem. Both '*Hind Swaraj*' by Mahatma Gandhi and '*Common Sense*' by Thomas Paine had a common adversary – the British. Authors of both the revolutionary booklets believed in the cause of the oppressed section of the society and taught the population about the "natural disease of monarchy." When Gandhi illegally sold hundreds of thousands of *Hind Swaraj* copies on the streets of Bombay on a *hartal* day, '*Common Sense*' had already broken all records in sales in the British colony. Both authors donated profits from their books to the struggle they believed. And both *Hind Swaraj* and *Common Sense* were banned by the British as these political literature criticised the wars that cost lives and resources and challenged the monarchy.

When Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were immersed recently in the Indian Ocean after 62 years of his assassination, I once again remembered Thomas Paine, but this time for a different reason –his 'missing bones'.

Paine died on June 8, 1809 and his funeral was attended by few in a land which he refused to accept as

a 'British nation', but a nation composed of peoples from all over Europe. Paine inspired millions with his powerful argument for American Independence from the British. He was the only one of the founding fathers of the United States to die in poverty and be denied a burial at the Quaker Cemetery. His funeral was attended by just six people that included a few African-Americans who came to pay tribute to the 'Englishman' who awakened a population. Ten years after his funeral, William Cobbett, an admirer of Paine's political philosophies made a plan to take his bones back to England to build a new resting place for Paine. Apparently, the remains never reached the destination as William Cobbett lost the bones, in a shameful incident. "That was the gratitude of England and America," the editor of *Common Sense* concludes.

Not many of us remember those who liberated us from the colonial powers. We continue to worship our founding fathers while ignoring and forgetting the very teachings and principles they had left behind for us to be inspired.

"Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one."

Thomas Paine

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Exploiting Solar Power

Germany has put in place policies that encourage home owners to set up solar panel roofs, by assuring them a feed in tariff for solar power generated by them and supplied to the grid, which is twice the tariff they pay for drawing power. This policy has resulted in the creation of an army of solar roof investors looking for empty roofs and investing in them after making an arrangement with the home owners; the number of people now employed in the solar industry in Germany now exceeds those employed in the auto industry! In Australia, the Government supplies free solar panels to home owners willing to junk their existing system and to pay the price of new plumbing.

In India, too, the Ministry of Power is trying to work out ways to make solar power industry viable and has worked out a scheme to bundle the more expensive solar power with the cheaper thermal power it has on tap, in the ratio of 1:4 units, respectively, in order to bring down the cost of the 5 units. We could, however, also look at the Brightsource concentrated solar power experiment and do the same in our deserts. We could easily replicate what Germany has done, given the bounty of sunshine God has blessed us with.

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Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

Every issue has at least two sides. A wise man examines all sides before coming to a conclusion. This is an attempt to present various sides of an issue so that a considered opinion can be formed.

Talks With Pakistan

1) After 15 months of refusal to talk with Pakistan in the wake of 26/11 in Mumbai, India decided to hold Foreign Secretary level talks with Pakistan on Feb 25. Both sides went through the motions without believing that any good would accrue. Even before the talks, Pakistan's PM and Foreign Minister went to town crowing that it was India which had backed down from its position of 'no talks' while Pakistan had refused to make any concessions. It is then that the Pune blast occurred (Feb 13) vitiating the atmosphere further. India ended with handing over three more dossiers about 26/11, including the role played by serving Pak army officers. Pakistan went beyond terrorism and raised the Kashmir and Balochistan issues. There were caustic comments from both sides later. Pakistani spokesman stressed that there was no need for lectures from India and that India had to get out of the time warp of 26/11 if any progress was to be made. It treated the dossiers provided by India as 'literature' and not evidence. It rubbed it in by declaring that Pakistan was not desperate for talks. To add to the injury, Hafiz Saeed, founder of L-e-T/Jamaat-ud Dawa, has been giving speeches, calling for jihad against India and Pakistan claims that it can do nothing to stop him. On the contrary, Pakistan gave an outrageous excuse that India had never asked for the arrest of Hafiz Saeed.

1) Pakistan's undiplomatic comments and arrogance raised doubts about the whole dialogue process. Government's critics wanted to know what India planned to achieve through talks; it was not enough to impress on Pakistan that it had to stop helping terrorism as it had been done innumerable times without avail. The Government's argument was that nothing could be gained by not talking. The PM went out on a limb and declared that the 'no talk' strategy was yielding diminishing returns and India was prepared to go an extra mile if Pakistan showed signs of acting against terrorism. Thus, India appeared to have entered the talks amidst confusion about its aims and a lot of wishful thinking. The explanation for all this fruitless exercise was that India was acting under US pressure to prove to the world that it was not being unreasonable. It is also clear that the London conference (Jan 28) on Afghanistan did not pay heed to India's concerns about the concept of 'good Taliban' and Pakistan emerged as potential face saver for the US in Afghanistan. Nothing else explains Pakistan's new found aggressiveness; Pakistan realises that the US needs it now more than ever. It is also claimed that the talks would strengthen the civilian government in Pakistan vis a vis its army; it as if the onus of saving democracy in Pakistan is on India while Pakistan goes about its self-destruct programme. No doubt, talking is preferable to war but Pakistan's attitude would make Dr. Manmohan Singh's peace moves more and more unacceptable in this country.

Naxalite Violence

2) Naxalite violence has spread to 180 districts i.e. almost 1/3 rd of the country, while the rest of the country has ignored it as something happening to somebody far away. The pain is not felt in towns and cities but nevertheless it is a challenge to the legitimacy of the Indian state. Finally, the Centre chalked out a plan to deal with violence with its might; it had to rope in 6 states affected by the violence for concerted action. Given our 'chalta hai' culture, this was an enormous task. Even after agreeing to a joint strategy, some states like West Bengal and Jharkhand had their own agendas to follow. To add to the confusion, debates were started by the media whether it was right for the Government to declare a war on its own people. There is nothing handier than an intellectual debate to

2) This was a great time for the critics of the Government to pontificate how the Government was responsible for the sorry plight of the poor and the adivasis; the Government was in collusion with corporate houses to fleece the adivasis, seize their lands and drive them away from their homes. The pet grievances surfaced promptly and the Government had little defence. It is a sitting duck when such accusations fly. The question is whether, in spite of the Government's failure on various fronts, anybody has the right to indulge in violence and seek to overthrow a democratically elected government. Police brutalities against the poor are often cited as an excuse to explain away the naxalite violence. It must be remembered that police atrocities are an aberration of the

kill any action. Talk is cheap and kills no one nor does it solve any problem. Amidst such intellectual doubletalk, it is not surprising that naxalites have threatened to attack cities and towns if talks were not started with them.

A Congress municipal councillor (in Raipur) who runs a bus service among other things, says private business is prospering in all the Maoist-affected districts. What about the Maoists, the class enemies of big business? He laughs "If the government wants, the Maoists can be finished off very quickly. But no one wants that - neither the BJP nor the Congress. Go and see for yourself. And the traders and businessmen who live there are so happily ensconced there that they don't want to leave."... Most businessmen in the state, they say, pay their "taxes" to the Maoists and, in return, are permitted to function unmolested."

Excerpted from the cover story on Bastar in *Outlook*, February 22, 2010

state policy. The state does not plan to commit atrocities whereas the naxalites plan to overturn the social order through violence. One is a planned brutality fully rationalised ideologically whereas Government's action is an attempt to restore order; the attempt may lead to brutality but there are ways to deal with such aberrations. Let us not equate the two and help destroy what we are trying to build so long. Secondly, it is known that insurgents agree to talks whenever they are weak. The Government then is faced with Hobson's choice, whether to give up its offensive and allow the insurgents to regroup or continue its offensive and be blamed for needless bloodshed. The Government has to opt for talks as the root problem can be solved only through negotiations and not destruction. It may give a reprieve to the embattled insurgents and make future fighting more difficult but that is the price of being a humane state; not that naxalite sympathisers will accept this description of the Indian state!

Pedder Road Flyover

3) The Peddar road flyover controversy refuses to die. The flyover project is expected to unclog the arterial road connecting south and north Mumbai. Peddar road residents have been raising objections to the proposed flyover for the last several years and the project has been held up for ever. Meanwhile, the Worli Sea Link Project, which was linked to the flyover project, has been completed after years of delay and mounting expenditure. Still the flyover has to come off the drawing board. The residents' objections may be partly true and partly self-serving but the people of Mumbai suffer while the debate rages. The residents had suggested alternatives which were unworkable. The Government being susceptible (?) to public pressure dithers. What is the solution?

3) Flyovers have been built all over Mumbai despite objections from those in the vicinity of the flyovers. Peddar road residents being more influential than most have succeeded in making their voice heard. Is it not time to accommodate the opposite view point in the interest of the city even if one does not fully agree with it? That is what civility and social give and take is all about. If we are prepared to settle disputes with China and Pakistan, why not accommodate our fellow citizens? We praise China for building roads, bridges and towering buildings in no time by not entertaining any opposition to the construction projects and here we are, endlessly objecting to every little scheme because it does not suit us!

Readers are invited to send in their points of view on serious issues of the day to ashokkarnik2001@yahoo.co.in

Pakistani 'Catch 22' on Terror

This refers to a news item entitled "Pakistan may adopt a tough stance over India talks offer" in The *Daily Times* of Pakistan. The scenario from India's standpoint appears to be a kind of 'Catch 22 situation': particularly with reference to the passage "Pakistan would also seek India's assurance that New Delhi would not unilaterally suspend the peace process in case of a terrorist attack by 'non-state actors'".

This stipulation is a 'Catch 22' to this observer, as I am sure it appears to a lot of people in India and elsewhere, as it follows the following reasoning: These so called 'non state actors' that operate with training camps openly in Pakistani territory, are the people that Pakistan claims to be 'non state actors' They act and train with impunity in Pakistan. If India agrees to this premise, that the discussions will go on at one end, while attacks at the other end will take place by non state actors (*sic*), with their training camps untouched and their leaders free to purvey their hate in Pakistan and significantly, beyond its borders. There is the further suspicion that these non state actors receive material and moral support from rogue pockets of the establishment.

Even if the current Indian administration accepts the strange conditions of this dilemma, the Indian democratic polity will not and the administration's longevity will be in serious question.

P. Girdhar Gopal, Westchester, NY

This month in April 1953

Suppressed Tremors

Truth, like murder, will out even if it happens to be a communist country wherein it is sought to be suppressed. A PTI-Reuter report from Hong Kong of an earthquake that occurred six months ago in Tibet is an instance in point. It happened in September last year in the Pongdo and Tanpu districts some hundred miles north of Lhasa, the capital of Tibet. It was not, however, until the New China News Agency recently announced the relief measures taken by the Central Government of China that the outside world came to know of it. We did not suspect that the blackout on the news of the underground movements in communist States also applied to subterranean disturbances. After this who can discount the occasional news of troop movements and military installations that leaks out from behind the Iron Curtain of the Himalayas?

*

Shabash!

The authorities of Osmania University in Hyderabad deserve to be congratulated on their acquiring a visiting professor in the person of Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon. We are not told on what subjects Mr. Menon would lecture, but we presume the University would naturally like to avail itself of Mr. Menon's unequalled experience of international affairs, diplomacy and modern history.

The students of Osmania will have reason to be grateful for the dispassionate analyses with which they will be provided, with that objectivity so vital to academic life and so natural to Mr. Menon. He will teach his students that Poland and Czechoslovakia are today the freest of free countries, that it was the U.N. advance to the Yalu river that started the war in Korea, that every single Chinese prisoner of war in U.N. hands is just dying (choice term) to get back to Mao's protection. Going a little further back in history, the visiting Professor, in between jaunts to U.N. headquarters in New York, will explain to his listeners how right it was for the India League in London to dissociate itself from Mahatma Gandhi's ill-timed Quit India campaign of 1942, what time his beloved Britain and still more beloved Russia were allies. His listeners, who were in middle school during the days of the "People's War", will undoubtedly see the point.

Meanwhile, what could be more consoling for the veterans of the Telengana "War of Liberation", now licking their wounds, than to have the moral support of a visiting Professor in their midst till the time comes round for raising the banner of "Liberation" again?

*

Many Voices

When at a meeting after he (Mr. Bevan) had referred to Mahatma Gandhi, Lenin and Stalin, someone asked him about Mr. Churchill, he burst out: "I was talking only of respectable people".

- Bombay Newsletter in *The Hindustan Times*, March 1, 1953

The Secret of the Staying Power of the Left Front in West Bengal

Amlan Datta

The Left Front in West Bengal has set up some kind of a record. The Marxists have been in power this State for twenty seven years continuously under a bourgeois democratic Constitution. I do not know if this does more credit to our Marxists, who have long professed to be Stalinists, or to our Constitution, which has been so hospitable to the Marxists. The question is, what has made this possible?

The Left Front would have lost power long ago had the non-Communist forces in West Bengal stood united. So the question is, what keeps the non-Communist forces so persistently divided? The division between the Congress and the BJP is not something special to West Bengal. What then is special about the alignment of political forces in this State?

What is special is that the Congress itself has two mutually incompatible attitudes towards the CP(M). It depends on whether one is trying to assess the situation from the point of view of the provincial Congress or the all India Congress. From the point of local Congressmen, the CP(M) represents an oppressive regime. Like all good Stalinists, the Communists here are strongly critical of violence when violence is perpetrated by any bourgeois party; they condone violence when their own Party indulges in it. Since local Congressmen are the direct victims of this duplicity they want to get rid of the Left Front government in West Bengal.

The Congress as an all India party with ambitions to hold power at the centre has a very different view. There are two reasons to go soft with the CP(M): The support of the Left, in one form or another, is advantageous to the Congress in the power game at Delhi. West Bengal is a border State. For the Central government, the CP(M) in opposition may be a much greater nuisance than the same Party running the government in West Bengal. This strongly divided attitude within the Congress helps keep the Communists in power in this State. Added to that is the organisational weakness of the Congress outfit in West Bengal. An uneasy coexistence with the CP(M) running the government in West Bengal and the Congress hopefully holding power at the Union level (how long?) appears to be the preferred scenario for the Congress.

Kolkata June 8, 2004

Self-reliance : the keynote of our independence

Long before we won our freedom, self-reliance was the goal of those of our people who could think for themselves and shed the shackles of dependence: men of foresight and determination, like Ardeshir and Pirojsha Godrej, who had confidence in the country's capabilities and shared the same ideals with Tilak, Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru who practised self-reliance.

In Godrej, self-reliance has been considered indispensable to progress, the aim being not just self-sufficiency for the or-

ganisation but for the whole country. Progress can only be achieved in a milieu of progress.

Based on our country's needs, and exploiting the country's own resources, Godrej have diversified.

Made to international standards and backed by continuous technical innovation, their products range from locks and security equipment, machine tools, forklift trucks, architecture and furniture, typewriters, refrigerators, computers and electronic business

systems as well as soaps, detergents, toiletries, chemicals, animal feeds, agro-products and edible oils.

The Godrej industrial garden township at Vikhroli-Pirojshanagar is an example of self-reliance and progress. For their workers Godrej have provided—in a unique environment—many social benefits: extensive housing, schools and adult education, recreation, medical and family-planning benefits...

Self-reliance is both a means and an end.

For Godrej it is the essence of independence.





Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjickaka

Parsipanu – Sena Style

It is an incomprehensible mindset that seeks to restrict the teachings of a great saint and philosopher whose mission on earth was the direct opposite.

And so it has happened. The Parsi *janta* has demonstrated the depths to which their much touted *Parsipanu* has sunk. On Friday, a group of Bombay Parsis, led by no less august a personage than the Chairman of the Bombay Parsi Panchayat, stormed the premises of Meher Master Moos's Zoroastrian College near Sanjan. The "crusaders" threw chairs, vandalized furniture and assaulted staff members. I never thought I'd live to see the day when we Parsis would draw our inspiration from the Shiv Sena and the MNS. Kudos.

The object of their violent fury was a Russian graduate of the Zoroastrian College – who undoubtedly is far more knowledgeable about the ancient religion than the self styled defenders of the faith who unquestioningly follow the diktats of a few uncompromising theocrats and their lay supporters. These "saviours" have arbitrarily appointed themselves as the sole guardians and arbiters of the religion – in a style more reminiscent of ayatollahs than the keepers of a faith once acclaimed for its defence of personal freedoms and its tolerance of all other faiths. The Russian gentleman was already spreading the teachings of Zarathustra in St. Petersburg to those who expressed a genuine admiration of the Prophet's philosophy. He now, quite logically, expressed a desire to be formally inducted into the religion he found so spiritually fulfilling.

For the marauding zealots from Bombay, this was sufficient justification to unleash acts of uncivilized hooliganism. I do not propose to get into the debate about conversion, which seems to defy resolution. All I will comment is that, in my personal opinion, the yawning divide between the pro and anti-conversion groups stems from,

perhaps, willful misunderstanding. There may be merit in the argument that all Parsis should preferably adhere to the Zoroastrian faith, but it does not necessarily follow that all Zoroastrians must be Parsis. The Westerners and others who have embraced the Zoroastrian faith are not demanding to be called Parsis, but they are perfectly entitled to be co-religionists of the Prophet who has inspired them.

The above, however, is not the real issue here. It is the unyielding intolerance and violent reaction to an act that does not in any way denigrate or compromise the religion. It is an incomprehensible mindset that seeks to restrict the teachings of a great saint and philosopher whose mission on earth was the direct opposite.

This shameful incident is also an illustration of the declining standards of broadmindedness, propriety and sophistication in a community that was once praised as the *crème de la crème* of Indian society. The first glimpses of this became visible during the Panchayat elections in 2008, when scurrilous anonymous emails and blatant pandering to traditional Parsi indulgences became the order of the day. Perhaps the herding of the bulk of Bombay Parsis into exclusive colonies has fostered a sort of ghetto mentality – a belief that their preservation as a race is dependant on insulating themselves from outside influences and adopting a sense of uniqueness and superiority that goes under the rather presumptuous nomenclature of *Parsipanu*. There is justifiable anxiety among the Parsi community over their rapidly declining numbers. I, for one, am more concerned about the deterioration in quality – civility, tolerance and just plain class.

'Tons' Of Absurdity

We Indians have always been emotional, but sometimes we lose all sense of proportion.

So Sachin Tendulkar scored 200 runs in an ODI; and our print and electronic media predictably went into rapturous overdrive. A foreigner could be forgiven for believing they were heralding the Second Coming of Christ. A certain amount of adulation may be appropriate, but sometimes this is carried to ridiculous extremes. And now, there is a concerted campaign for Tendulkar to be awarded

the Bharat Ratna. We Indians have always been emotional, but sometimes we lose all sense of proportion.

This was not only an exercise in absurdity, but a direct slap in the face of past recipients. No one minds if 'Padma Shris' and 'Padma Bhushans' are handed out liberally; but the 'Bharat Ratna' is the nation's highest

civilian honour. It should be reserved exclusively for those who have made an outstanding contribution to their country. Past recipients include giants like C.Rajagopalchari and J.R.D Tata. To equate Tendulkar with these towering personalities is not only an insult to their memory, it is patently ludicrous. What is even more ludicrous is that a majority of our citizens believes he deserves it.

There is no denying that Tendulkar is an excellent batsman. However, I would hesitate to place him in the same category as true greats like Donald Bradman. Bradman made consistently high scores in most of the test matches he played in. Tendulkar's flashes of brilliance have been sporadic, at best. Before his recent spurt in good form, it took him a very long time to make 38 centuries. Even if one accepts the premise that Tendulkar is the greatest cricketer of all time, what outstanding contribution has he made to the country, apart from providing great entertainment to the masses? Yes, he has made his country proud, but so have a number of exceptional entertainers.

You do not hear any clamour for them to be awarded 'Bharat Ratnas'.

And what about Tendulkar's activities off the playing field? One does not grudge him the tens of crores he has made from television commercials that have little to do with cricket (like biscuits, for example). However, the incident of the imported Ferrari does leave a bitter taste in the mouth. Even if we concede that he did not actively seek exemption of custom's duty, he had no qualms in accepting it either – despite the fact that he could afford to pay it many times over – thus depriving the national exchequer out of what was rightfully due to it. Tendulkar may have given a lot to cricket, but the game has repaid him many times over.

I am aware that India is a nation of cricket fanatics; but let us not lose all sense of perspective. If Tendulkar is the highest icon our countrymen can aspire to, they need to do some serious soul searching.

Public Reaction to German Bakery Bombing

Their patriotism is commendable, but relations between sovereign nations cannot be dictated by passion alone.

Gauging the reactions of the general public - expressed in comments to the media - to the bomb blast at the German Bakery, I can only express relief that these worthy gentlemen are not in charge of India's diplomacy and foreign policy. Very predictably, the overwhelming sentiment is to break off all contact with Pakistan and somehow inflict retribution on our neighbour. Their patriotism is commendable, but relations between sovereign nations cannot be dictated by passion alone. It often entails compromise and the best possible deal we can get in the prevailing circumstances.

For example, there is a clamour to bomb terrorist training camps in Pakistan. This may invoke a feel good factor, but it is hardly practical. We cannot send attack planes across an international border without a declaration of war and without inviting severe retaliation, especially if the neighbour has a stockpile of nuclear weapons. I suspect the gentlemen who express these fiery sentiments have never experienced war. I haven't either, but I did happen to live in the Iran at the time of the Islamic

revolution. Just the sound of regular gunfire was enough to instill a sense of terror, Augment that with bombs being dropped and the fear factor increases tenfold.

Then again cutting off all contact with Pakistan is counter productive. It cannot have escaped the public's notice that terror attacks in India inevitably take place just before or after a diplomatic initiative is announced. This clearly implies that any normalization of relations between India and her neighbour is anathema to the terrorists. By isolating our country from all contacts, we would be merely augmenting their game plan. Moreover, we have to respect the reality that Pakistan is not fully under the control of its civilian government. Their public utterances are often governed by *diktats* from the military and should not always be taken at face value.

Theodore Roosevelt put it best when he said, "Speak softly, but carry a big stick".

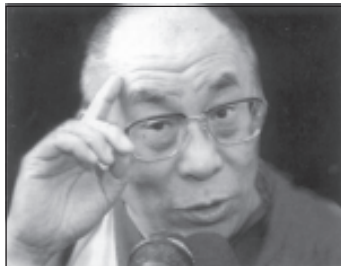
MR. FIROZE HIRJIKAKA can be contacted at leonardo8_99@yahoo.com

Needed - A PPP to Fight Terror

Merely posting policemen will not do. We should study how other countries have managed. The US which is the only country not to have had a terror attack on its soil in the last eight years has tried out a successful public-private partnership. In India the private sector and the general public are mere spectators...Had this been done in Pune the manager of the German Bakery would have segregated the bag and evacuated the restaurant by the time the Bomb Disposal Squad had arrived.

Excerpted from the article "United Against Terror" by V. Balachandran, *The Indian Express*, February 16, 2010

Excerpts from the Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the 51st Anniversary of the Tibetan National Uprising Day



Today (March 10 2010) marks the 51st anniversary of the Tibetan people's peaceful uprising in 1959 against Communist China's repression in Tibet, as well as the second anniversary of the peaceful protests that erupted across Tibet in March 2008. On this occasion, I pay homage to those heroic Tibetan men and women, who sacrificed their lives for the cause of Tibet, and pray for an early end to the sufferings of those still oppressed in Tibet.

*

Let me reiterate that once the issue of Tibet is resolved, I will not take any political position nor will members of the Tibetan Administration in exile hold any positions in the government in Tibet. I have repeatedly made this clear in the past. To understand the situation of the Tibetans in exile and their aspirations, I invite Tibetan officials serving in various Tibetan autonomous areas to visit Tibetan communities living in the free world, either officially or in a private capacity, to observe the situation for themselves.

Wherever Tibetans in exile have settled, we have been able to preserve and promote our distinct cultural and spiritual traditions, while generating awareness of the Tibetan cause. Unlike other refugees, we have been relatively successful because we have also been able to give our children a sound modern education, while bringing them up according to our traditional values. And because the heads of all four major schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the Bon religion are in exile we have been able to re-establish various institutions for religious training and practice. In these institutions over ten thousand monks and nuns are free to pursue their vocations. We have been readily able to provide educational opportunities for those monks, nuns and students who continue to come from Tibet. At the same time the unprecedented spread of Tibetan Buddhism in both East and West and the prospect of continuing to flourish in the future gives us hope that it may yet survive. This is some solace to us during this most critical period in Tibet's history.

*

It is important that Tibetans maintain friendly relations not only with people of all nationalities, but also amongst themselves. Tibetans should not engage in petty

disputes with each other. I earnestly appeal to them instead to resolve any differences with patience and understanding.

Whether the Chinese government acknowledges it or not, there is a serious problem in Tibet. As the world knows, this is evidenced by the fact that there is a huge military presence and restrictions on travel in Tibet. It is good for neither party. We have to take every opportunity to solve it. For more than 30 years, I have tried my best to enter into talks with the People's Republic of China to resolve the issue of Tibet through the Middle-Way Approach that is of benefit to us both. Although I have clearly articulated Tibetan aspirations, which are in accordance with the constitution of the People's Republic of China and the law on national regional autonomy, we have not obtained any concrete result. Judging by the attitude of the present Chinese leadership, there is little hope that a result will be achieved soon. Nevertheless, our stand to continue with the dialogue remains unchanged.

*

Since the demonstrations in Tibet in 2008, Chinese intellectuals inside and outside China have written more than 800 unbiased articles on the Tibetan issue. During my visits abroad, wherever I go, when I meet Chinese in general, particularly the intellectuals and students, they offer their genuine sympathy and support. Since the Sino-Tibetan problem ultimately has to be resolved by the two peoples themselves, I try to reach out to the Chinese people whenever I can to create a mutual understanding between us. Therefore, it is important for Tibetans everywhere to build closer relations with the Chinese people and try to make them aware of the truth of the Tibetan cause and the present situation in Tibet.

Let us also remember the people of East Turkestan who have experienced great difficulties and increased oppression and the Chinese intellectuals campaigning for greater freedom who have received severe sentences. I would like to express my solidarity and stand firmly with them.

It is also essential that the 1.3 billion Chinese people have free access to information about their own country and elsewhere, as well as freedom of expression and the rule of law. If there were greater transparency inside China, there would be greater trust, which would be the proper basis for promoting harmony, stability and progress. This

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Iron, Fe	6.68	mg
Magnesium, Mg	292	mg
Phosphorus, P	593	mg
Potassium, K	660	mg
Sodium, Na	12	mg
Zinc, Zn	5.78	mg
Copper, Cu	2.195	mg
Manganese, Mn	1.655	mg
Selenium, Se	19.9	mcg

Vitamins

Vitamin C,	0.5	mg
Thiamin	0.423	mg
Riboflavin	0.058	mg
Niacin	1.062	mg
Pantothenic acid	0.864	mg
Vitamin B-6	0.417	mg
Folate, total	25	mcg
Vitamin E	1.458	mg_ATE

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Methionine	0.362	g
Cystine	0.393	g
Phenylalanine	0.951	g
Tyrosine	0.508	g
Valine	1.094	g
Arginine	2.123	g
Histidine	0.456	g
Alanine	0.837	g
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Ajit Narde



The demand for coarse cereals like jowar, maize, and bajra is declining. The supply is far in excess of demand. To correct this, the Maharashtra Government decided to encourage the production of liquor from these coarse cereals. Accordingly, a government regulation was passed on 8 June .2007 and a few liquor factory licenses were issued. Some of these licensees even set up factories. However as sugarcane molasses are normally priced lower than grain molasses, to support the young grain-based alcohol industry, the state government declared a refund of excise duty @ Rs.10/- per litre on liquor produced from grain. From June 2007 production went on normally; however, after November 2009 certain social activist groups and some well-known public figures suddenly started raising e their voices against this regulation and the factories.

Some well known personalities, among them Dr. Abhay Bang, Dr. Narendra Dabholkar and Justice Chandrashekhhar Dharmadhikari protested the decision of the Maharashtra government. Their protest is based on archaic concepts of morality and their appeal is emotional and not rational.

These are the issues they have raised and my response:

Bread or Alcohol?

In the seventies Mr.George Fernandes observed that Coca Cola was selling in water scarce areas. He had then famously asked “water or coke?” This led to the banning of Coca Cola. Coke was then banished out of the country. As was to be expected this did not solve the problem of water scarcity.

When Mr. Vasant Sathe, the then Information and Broadcsting Minister, decided to promote colour television he was criticized by the socialists as being anti-poor. The socialists pompously declared that the nation needed bread not TV. Their plea drew much applause then. But what do we see today? Almost every Indian house has a colour TV. Thousands of new artists were discovered by this medium. It did not stop

people from earning or even eating their bread. Instead, through TV manufacturing enterprises, the cable business, the production houses and maintenance engineers, a million jobs were created. Actually TV became the breadwinner earner for millions.

Grain based alcohol production is not going to snatch bread away from the people. On the contrary it will help the cultivator of coarse cereals.

Will there be Food Shortage because of Grain-based Alcohol?

The state government has issued 36 distillery licenses. Even if all these run to full capacity for 300 days a year, they cannot produce more than 469 million litres of alcohol. Theoretically, to produce this much alcohol, they will be consuming approximately 1.2 million tonnes of coarse cereal and this quantum of consumption is not likely to be even 50 % of this estimate. The 36 the licencees are is largely politicians and their kin. They had jumped on this alcohol wagon hoping to strike gold. But when they realized that this was is just another business ruled more by market economics than political sway, their interest started waning.

Even if we take into account the current condition of sugarcane linked distilleries, it is evident that these distilleries are under-utilizing their capacities – at best it is about 60 %, in some cases as low as 30 % . In the market, price wise, grain molasses will have to compete with the sugar cane molasses. That further decreases the estimated grain consumption figure. Thus even a liberal estimate does not give a figure of more than 700,000 tones of grain consumption on this account. By any standard,

this is too small a quantity to create any grain scarcity in India or even in the State.

Is There Enough Grain Available for these Plants?

Today Maharashtra produces about 6 million tonnes of coarse cereals. Every year however, untimely rains in the state affect the crop and render almost 15 % of this produce unusable as human food. In absolute terms, this 15% translates into approximately 900,000 tones of grain. Rejection on such a vast scale hits the farmer badly. He simply cannot afford to produce these grains where the rejection rate is so high. Yet, he cannot stop farming these grains simply because of the fact that these are the very crops which provide him the cheapest and most easily available fodder for his farm animals. Another aspect worth considering is that all these crops need little water supply. In areas where other water hungry cultivations are impossible, the farmer can simply go for these grains. In the vernal harvest they hardly need any watering. In the autumnal harvest a maximum watering twice is enough. If he is not going to cultivate these grains, the farmer simply leaves his land barren. He cannot cultivate any other crop because his land is not irrigated. Naturally rural economies in the water scarce regions depend a lot on these crops. Thus the cultivator of these crops is in a dilemma. He simply cannot forego these crops which feed his cattle and at the same time the low market prices are making their cultivation unaffordable. Urbanization has witnessed a major shift in the eating habits of the masses. One of those is a shift from bhakri [flat bread made from jowar or bajra] to chapatti [a flat wheat-bread]. This has naturally reduced the demand for jowar and bajra. All this will lead to a decrease in the area under cultivation for these crops. If the producer is assured of good price and guaranteed market for his grains, the production of these grains can triple.

According to P. V. Satish, co-coordinator of Millet Network of India, an NGO, around 33 million hectare land in Andhra alone is uncultivated, largely due to the very reason we have discussed here in above. If we can bring all this land under millet cultivation, the current produce of 1.4 million tones can easily go up to 25 million tones a year in that state alone. For this no large scale investments in irrigation etc are needed. This proves that we need not be afraid of any possible scarcity of millets because of the upcoming grain distilleries. On the contrary these distilleries may induce the farmers to cultivate millets in their lands by offering them good prices for the produce. The rise in demand is the solution and the grain distilleries may be the key.

It was the “Shetkari Sanghatana” that earlier opposed

liquor shops.

There is no change in the Shetkari Sanghatana’s stand. The organization never favoured prohibition. We favoured open market economy. A controlled system or license raj was always opposed by us. In that limited context we have stood against the licensed liquor shops. Our contention is that these licensed shops are monopoly shops owned by political leaders and provide shelter to anti-social elements. For this reason the organization had opposed these shops, not the liquor.

Dr. Abhay Bang claims that Maharashtra is going to swig grain based liquor worth Rs.50 billion annually. This kind of guessing is simply bizarre. His contention is ridiculous. It assumes that all the 36 distilleries will run 365 days a year and thereby produce this much liquor. This is impossible. Even if we accept that this much liquor is produced, to accept that all of it will be consumed in Maharashtra, the entire population – including infants and the aged of both sexes – have to drink this liquor daily. This kind of statistical presentation is typical of Dr. Bang. Earlier he had exaggerated the number of child deaths due to malnutrition. Dr. Shyam Ashtekar later proved him wrong.

How to Tackle the Evils of Liquor Consumption?

Dr. Narendra Dabholkar, the Andashraddha Nirmulan activist observes that liquor intoxicates. Its addiction is the root cause of around 80 types of ailments. It may lead to an early death. The inebriation causes rise in accidents, rapes, suicides, incidence of catching viral diseases including HIV etc.

We do concur with him. Liquor addiction is definitely harmful. However we do not believe that prohibition will help in addressing this problem. Curbing liquor addiction is possible through a multipronged strategy including measures like individual counseling, economic and social uplifting and public education. Prohibition as a tool has failed miserably worldwide. It only gives rise to crime, corruption and a society capable of all types of contraband activities. We view this measure as a regressive and oppressive one. It speeds up social degeneration.

We should not get overwhelmed by the names who oppose the proposed distilleries. Time has come to fight for the cultivators’ just rights. In the pretext of morality he should not be denied an opportunity to obtain a market share at a fair price for his millets.

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Come On, Liberals: Let's Change India!

Wanted A Constitution that Delivers Life and Liberty

Sanjeev Sabhlok

Our Constitution speaks about equal status but immediately divides citizens into tribes, castes, religions, and gender.

India's Constitution is in many ways a product of British and American liberalism. We can almost hear the voices of John Locke and Thomas Jefferson in its passages. Nevertheless, the ravages of Nehruvian socialism and confused thinking of 60 years have taken a huge toll on our social contract. The Constitution is now totally irrelevant to the defence of our life and liberty.

The only way out is to re-write it from scratch. The suggestions I have made in my 2008 book *Breaking Free of Nehru* (BFN: <http://bfnsabhlokcity.com/>) are summarised below.

Too long

When we buy an air ticket we read the contractual conditions. But we don't care to read our social contract, the Constitution, which is a far more important document. That's probably because it is too long. Its extraordinary length comes from the inordinate trivial detail which it delves into, in areas best left to routine law-making. It is almost as if members of the Constituent Assembly didn't think that future generations could think for themselves (maybe they were right?).

Prescriptive

This also means the Constitution is too prescriptive, blocking innovation. Thus, our colonial (and totally unaccountable) bureaucracy is fully sheltered by our Constitution. Why should a bureaucracy – a mere agency of our representatives – even find mention in a Constitution?

After it is thus re-written for simplicity and clarity of outcomes sought, it should not exceed 10 pages. That would also help our children understand it and grow up into citizens who can defend their life and liberty. Not like the confused 'educated' citizens of today who have no understanding of citizenship.

Overflowing with jargon

Our Constitution makes use of abstruse jargon that confounds. For instance, why is 'freedom' a 'fundamental

right'? Such language (of 'rights') should be strictly avoided anyway, being highly misleading. All 'rights' originate from the process of justice which is applicable to actions of free peoples. So we can talk about one's freedom to own justly acquired property. Such simple language is enough. Indeed, nothing needs to be mentioned but two things: life and liberty (subject to accountability).

Too many objectives

Our Constitution lists too many objectives that are often irrelevant, redundant, or mutually contradictory. The concept of 'fraternity' comes from the French, but why do we need to add this meaningless word into the Constitution? Whether I fraternise with anyone is purely my personal choice. A social contract can't tell me to do so. And why only restrict ourselves to fraternity? Why not add 1000 things like: Joviality, punctuality, hygiene, perseverance, etc. There is clearly no need to litter the Constitution with idle exhortations. Similarly, 'equality of status and opportunity' are mere corollaries of equal liberty. Give us equal liberty and these follow.

The Preamble talks about 'social justice'. Could anyone tell us what this means, for justice can *never* be social; it is always individual. Finally, even Karl Marx gets a voice in our Constitution. Indira Gandhi's 42nd Amendment introduced the words *socialism* and *secularism*. Socialism, as we all know, is an extremely dangerous anti-liberty political philosophy that has killed millions of people across the world. Why should we be socialists?

And the word 'secularism' is totally confusing. A Constitution can be secular by not referring to 'religion' anywhere in the document. Indeed, this grab-bag of objectives has merely empowered our governments to interfere in our lives. We only need life and liberty. Period.

Unwanted Lecturing

The Directive Principles of State Policy constitute a gratuitous lecture on policy. This gratuitous advice must be rejected outright. We can think for ourselves. Worse,

feeble minds get confused by this lecture. For instance, Nehru thought that 'It is up to Parliament to ... make the Fundamental Rights subserve the Directive Principles of State Policy'. Had he succeeded even remotely in this crazy interpretation, India would have been dismembered by now. Let policies be proposed by political parties and let voters decide what they want. Not the Constitution.

Steep Decline in Liberties

The first Constitutional Amendment (of 1951) started the ceaseless destruction of our freedoms that has been the pattern across all amendments. It destroyed our freedom of occupation. Today not only can a government enter into any business it chooses to, it can entirely exclude citizens from that business.

Similarly, freedom to own property has by now disappeared. Nehru said that socialism would require 'the ending of private property, except in a restricted sense'. Therefore he enacted land ceiling acts (called, very perversely, 'land reforms'), sheltering these from judicial review under the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution. The 25th amendment then removed the concept of compensation when a government acquires land. Finally, in 1978, the Janata Party abolished Constitutional property rights altogether.

Today, property is an ordinary legal right that can be truncated, even destroyed by ordinary majority in ordinary legislatures. No wonder huge amounts of capital have flowed out of India. No one trusts Indian governments.

Unequal Treatment of Citizens

Our Constitution speaks about equal status but immediately divides citizens into tribes, castes, religions, and gender. Sociologists and anthropologists can use these fuzzy terms and write tomes on them. But the state is a legal entity and must only recognise *one* category of citizen, namely, *Indian*. It is crucial that all discriminatory distinctions among people (like reservations) are banished from the social contract as soon as possible. Let social evils be fixed by social reformers, not by the state.

It is true that the state may choose to (as I argue for) provide equal opportunity through high quality school education for all children and the elimination of poverty. (This is a policy matter, not to be included in the social contract!) But the state can't give different 'types' of Indians different privileges. By creating reservations, our Constitution has perpetrated *grave injustice* on innocent people who have been punished for no crime of theirs. Affirmative action has increased, not decreased, caste-

based consciousness. And divided the entire nation.

Mixing the state with religion

The Constitution declares India to be 'secular' but then soaks itself in religion! It not only recognises religions like Hinduism, Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism, and religious 'minorities', castes and 'backward' groups; but talks about prohibition of cow slaughter and Hindu religious institutions. The government is also empowered to operate religious institutions.

(And why does it not recognise 'Sabhlokism' – my religion! – I object to my religion not being included in the Constitution!)

How to Get Ourselves a Decent Social Contract

In *BFN* I have outlined a systematic process to get ourselves a better constitution. I have also proposed a bare-bones new Constitution (for whatever my suggestions are worth). I suggest that this new Constitution be approved by a referendum. And that knowledge of the social contract be made a pre-requisite for registering voters.

Freedom Team of India

Ultimately, no piece of paper will protect our freedoms if we are not passionate about our freedoms and do not remain vigilant. That is why the Freedom Team of India (FTI) exists: to advance freedom in India. A detailed report on FTI's first conference in Mumbai is available at <http://freedomteam.in/>. Please read it in the FTI magazine. I look forward to your support of FTI's work. Become a Freedom Partner.

MR. SANJEEV SABHLOK can be contacted at sabhlok@yahoo.com.

The Medium and the Message

In the marketing of dictatorship, consent is manufactured and controversy snuffed out. Mr Hu promotes "harmony" as a singularly Chinese virtue by stifling the media. In Chinese journalism, an emphasis on party leaders' activities trumps reporting unwelcome facts, which can be suppressed. An example is the large number of children killed by shoddy school buildings in the Sichuan earthquake of 2008. Journalism is also venal, shaped by payments from officials and businessmen. It leads to a stilted public debate at home and, no matter how snazzy the packaging, will mean poor journalism abroad.

The Economist, 4 March 2010

Cancer of Corruption in Russia

R. G. Gidadhubli, Sanjay Deshpande

The Russian judicial system has become so corrupt that a victim of corruption finds it difficult to defend his rights in a court of law if he does not have necessary high level political support.

Russia ranked 146 out of 180 among the most corrupt countries in the world according to the 2009 Report of the Germany based Transparency International. This is on par with Kenya and Ecuador and was corroborated by Price Waterhouse Cooper in its Survey report published in November 2009. Gregory Feifer, a commentator on Russian affairs analysed in detail various aspects of corruption and economic fraud in Russia in a three-article series also in November 2009. Several questions arise. Among these are:

- What is the magnitude of corruption in Russia?
- How serious and pervasive is corruption in Russia?
- What are the main causes for corruption and economic crimes in Russia?
- Which are the main elements indulging in corruption and economic crimes?
- What policy measures are being taken by the Russian government to tackle this problem.

Magnitude and Causes of Corruption

Transparency International has estimated the magnitude corruption at about 300 billion Rubles a year. In economic terms, in 2008 it accounted for about 18 percent of the gross domestic product which was 1.7 trillion Rubles – about one-fifth of the Russia's national economy. What should be a matter of additional concern is that corruption according to some analysts has almost doubled during the last few years. In the military sector alone according to a conservative estimate in 2008 corruption was over \$ 80 million. Moreover, as opined by Viktor Ivanov, Head of the Federal Drug Control Service large scale corruption and illegal money linked to drugs and narcotics account for an annual loss to the country of around \$70 billion. A Russian economist has stated that the number of state bureaucrats has doubled from 1 to 2 million in the last decade and that the culture of corruption is choking any hope of Russian businesses being competitive globally.

Historically, corruption did exist during the Soviet Union but has increased significantly after the Soviet breakup. There are several causes for corruption in today's Russia. One of the main causes has been the manner in which the policy of privatization was implemented under Boris Yeltsin's regime. Yeltsin initiated the shock therapy policy of rapid liberalization and privatization to transform Russia from communism to capitalism. This

resulted in wide income disparities in the country. In the name of privatization, state assets were bought (virtually stolen) by former political *apparatchiks*, heads of industrial enterprises and managerial groups at cheap rates and they became the class of 'New Russians' who became rich overnight. This involved corruption on a huge scale resulting in Russia having a few billionaires and dozens of millionaires in a matter of a few years. For instance, Boris Berezovsky who fled the country but was close to former president Boris Yeltsin, has been charged *in absentia* for corruption and embezzlement of state funds to the tune of 58 billion Rubles equivalent to two million dollars.

Under Vladimir Putin's presidency for eight years, the problem of corruption was not solved even as he asserted that Russia should be free from corruption and be a law based state. According to some critics a decade-long, oil-fueled economic boom between 2000 and 2008 has emboldened the country's bureaucrats to demand even bigger bribes. Under Putin's presidency there are several cases of re-nationalization of enterprises and state assets. This has taken place in the incredibly lucrative Russian gas and oil sectors, which could have been partly done with monetary consideration. Hence this process of re-nationalization appears to have been just as unfair as the original privatizations. While under Putin's regime one of Russia's richest oil barons Khodorkovsky has been punished and put behind the bars for eight years for tax evasion it is alleged that there are several other billionaire and millionaire oil barons including Oleg Deripaska who are close to the Kremlin bosses and are flourishing in the country often getting state support. Reports are that Putin and his family are also millionaires.

According to political activist Panfilova, "A whole section of these bureaucrats believe these billions are their legitimate income". A classic case of corruption at very high levels was reported when a court verdict of jail sentence of nine years was announced in June 2009 in the case of Dmitry Dovgy who, was the prosecutor investigating the case of embezzlement by Sergei Storchak, the former deputy finance minister arrested in November 2007. Dovgy himself was arrested in August 2008 for taking a bribe of one million dollars in another case. Kirill Kabanov, a former security service officer who heads a private group called the National Anti-corruption Committee, stated that state bureaucrats are among the wealthiest people in Russia.

Pervasiveness of Corruption

Corruption is so pervasive in Russia, that according to a recent poll sixty percent of Russians admitted to giving bribes. It has become common for students to bribe teachers for better grades, for parents to bribe draft boards to keep their sons out of military service and patients to bribe doctors even as the health facility is supposed to be free for certain category of Russians. As for as those engaged in economic activities, the conditions for young, honest enterprising Russians doing business is far from healthy. Managers of small and medium size firms have to necessarily bribe inspectors, even if they have not done anything irregular, to avoid unending litigation. Ilya Handrikov who owns a small factory and is an anti-corruption activist reported that his company is regularly visited by fire inspectors and financial regulators who demand bribes to stop them from reporting fabricated violations. Russia analysts and several opposition leaders point out that corruption has increased in Russia during the last decade due to the weakness of civil society and the media. It needs to be stated that under Putin's authoritarian regime the role and effectiveness of both the media and opposition parties were substantially restricted.

Asset misappropriation, corruption, and bribery have been the most common types of economic fraud. For instance, government officials allege that tax evasion and asset misappropriation on the part of firms and even big companies are rampant. Until recently tax rates were as high as 30-40 percent leading to tax evasion. This in turn led to private sector firms big and small, being frequently raided by government officials who often filed false allegations to extract bribes. According to the survey conducted by Transparency International, more than half of Russian respondents said anti-crime measures were inefficient and that no industry in particular had been spared.

Corruption in the Police and Judiciary

The problem of corrupt and abusive cops has been endemic during the supposedly liberal years of Boris Yeltsin's presidency. According to analysts it has persisted under the presidency of Putin. The reputation of the Russian police has taken a beating in recent years, with frequent cases of police brutality. Alexsei Dymovksy a former police official in the city of Novorussisk in south Russia has exposed the prevailing culture of corruption in the police establishment. He has criticized his superiors for ordering him to arrest innocent people or be punished by being required to work overtime without pay. Because he reported cases of corruption, he was suspended and is now under investigation. According to Prof. Mark Galeotti of New York University, the main problem with fighting police corruption in Russia is that the police force is the main prop of Russia's corrupt, unaccountable, and antidemocratic political regime. He wrote: "The police are

still seen as an essentially political tool and everyone from the Kremlin down to municipal authorities seem to prize loyalty over professionalism."

Economic crime and corruption are prevalent in the Russian army. During the immediate aftermath of the Soviet break-up there was large scale retrenchment of army personnel particularly at lower and middle levels. Due to the economic crisis then prevailing there was large scale unemployment and retrenched soldiers were jobless. Mafia groups used these retrenched soldiers for their criminal activities. Another major reason for economic crimes by army personnel is the very low pay and poor living conditions. Several instances reported in the Russian press indicate the poor economic status of armed forces at lower levels. At the same time corruption at high levels in the Russian army is alleged to be rampant particularly when dealing with foreign partners and companies since Russia is a major exporter of arms and defense equipments to many countries including India and China.

An independent and corrupt free judiciary is a prerequisite for Russia to emerge as an open and democratic country. But in reality corruption in the Russian judiciary seems to be rampant and according to critics judges are often forced to obey the dictates of those in political power. Hence it is highly significant that as reported in October 2009 in St. Petersburg judge Vladimir Yaroslavtsev and his colleague judge Anatoly Kononov of the Russian Constitutional Court have resigned from senior posts after speaking out against corruption in the judiciary. Yaroslavtsev was candid in stating that the Russian justice system was "in ruins" and that "under Putin and Medvedev, the courts have become an instrument of the executive of state power". In his interview to *El Pais* on 31st August 2009 he was also highly critical of high officials in security services when he opined that they could do whatever they like and the courts are limited to ratifying their decisions". This contention could be relevant from a recent incident. Construction business in Moscow has become most lucrative and there is a high level of corruption in this business. Opposition leader and former deputy prime minister under Boris Nemtsov recently published a report about Luzhkov, who is the long serving mayor of Moscow and is one of the heavy weights in Russia. Nemtsov alleged that Luzhkov had funneled contracts to his wife Baturina, who is the head of a large construction firm that has made her Russia's richest woman. In his opinion costs on infrastructure projects funded by state funds are deliberately kept high and profit margin is very high. For instance, the price tag of a kilometer of road now under construction in Moscow is about \$570 million. Nemtsov has been charged for defamation and it is important to note that Luzhkhkov has won the legal case. Nemtsov is now asked by the court to pay \$ 9000 to Luzhkhov. It is rightly pointed out by Yevgeny Arkhipov director of Anti-Corruption Committee that the Russian judicial system has become

so corrupt that a victim of corruption finds it difficult to defend his rights in a court of law if he does not have necessary high level political support. As opined by the Russian analyst the low level of reliability of the court system means that business players look for other methods of resolving disputes.

All these developments have raised fresh doubts about the claim by Kremlin bosses in their bid to clean up the legal system. President Dmitry Medvedev, a former lawyer, has made fighting court corruption and nurturing a more liberal political climate his top priorities, but critics say little has changed since he came to power last May 2008.

But this criticism may not be fully valid since according to reports of the Interior Ministry it has investigated 40,000 cases this year, up 11 percent from last year, and Medvedev says more than 500 officials and 700 law-enforcement officers have been jailed in the first six months of this year on charges related to corruption. But this seems to be too inadequate in comparison to the magnitude of corruption and economic fraud in the country. Urging the need to maintain independence of the judiciary in Russia, Aleksander Yakovlev a senior politician has stated that without respecting human rights there is no democracy and without independent courts there are no human rights. Political activist Panfilova has opined that while Russia has created the legal basis for the struggle against corruption but now we need to move for the tough implementation of the legislation. What is lacking is strict implementation free from political interference.

Policy Initiatives

Medvedev has promised a major campaign against corruption. In fact he and other top officials publicly declared their incomes and assets for the first time, in a

widely publicized show of action.

On 15th March 2009 Medvedev said that the government created a new regulatory basis for the struggle against corruption. It is important to note that a newly-adopted package of anti-corruption legislation initiated and promoted by President Medvedev and passed by the Duma in December 2008 has yet to have an effect. These measures seem to be too inadequate in comparison to the magnitude of corruption and economic fraud in the country. Hence Transparency International branded the enforcement of Russia's current laws as inadequate to deal with the problem which is destroying the country's economic potential. The excessive role of government in the economy and business sector, which spurs the supply side of corruption, aggravates the problem

Then there is illegal money and crime linked to drug and narcotics. It is reported in the Russian press that consumption of drugs among the Russian youth and industrial workers has increased after the Soviet break-up. As a result during the last one and half decades, drug related economic crimes have increased. This is evident from the fact that the Russian economy has suffered due to losses in productivity, accidents, job absenteeism and deaths. Viktor Ivanov Head of the Federal Drug Control Service estimates that economic loss due to drug consumption could be around \$ 70 billion per annum.

Russian leaders have to take effective measures urgently to root out corruption and contain economic crimes, ensuring a stable socio-political system in order to attract much needed foreign investment and modern technology for sustained and diversified economic development. .

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Excerpts from the Statement of His Holiness the Dalai Lama ... (Cont'd. from page 21)

is why everyone concerned must exert their efforts in this direction.

As a free spokesperson of the Tibetan people I have repeatedly spelled out their fundamental aspirations to the leaders of the People's Republic of China. Their lack of a positive response is disappointing. Although the present authorities may cling to their hard-line stand, judging by the political changes taking place on the international stage as well as changes in the perspective of the Chinese people, there will be a time when truth will prevail. Therefore, it is important that everyone be patient and not give up.

*

On this occasion, I wish to take the opportunity to offer my sincere thanks to the leaders of various nations, their intellectuals, the general public, Tibet Support Groups and others who cherish truth and justice for continuing to support the Tibetan cause despite the Chinese government's pressure and harassment. Above all I wish to pay my heartfelt gratitude to the Government of India, the various State Governments, and the people of India for their continued generous support.

Half A Wing

C. V. Parker

**'Sorry Air Commodore I cannot produce an Israeli fighter pilot for you
but I will answer all your questions.'**

The Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) London, upon which our own National Defence College was modelled, has representation from Commonwealth, NATO and other countries. These members are generally of one-star rank from all three defence services and a few civil service equivalents. I was deputed to attend the one-year course at the RCDS in 1980.

The seating in the main hall of Seaford House was done alphabetically and my immediate neighbour was a Brigadier General from the Israeli Army. Proximity developed into friendship and, in the course of one of our many social interactions, I mentioned my regret at never having met an Israeli fighter pilot. On our professional air force 'grapevine' many stories circulated about the freedom given to Israeli air force combat pilots to innovate tactics (particularly low level at night) but we never had any details or official confirmation.

It must be remembered that in 1980 we did not recognize Israel and had no diplomatic or other exchanges I was aware of. Soon after my interaction with my Israeli colleague, I found a note in my locker to say that the Air Attache (AA) at the Israeli embassy in London would be delighted if I could join him for a private lunch on the coming Friday. Our own AA in London was a close friend so I confided the circumstances of the invitation to him. Officially of course our AA 'knew nothing' but privately suggested that I make my own decision. As I felt that I might be able to further the interests of my own Service, I had no hesitation in signalling my acceptance of the invitation through my RCDS colleague.

Israeli security procedures are to be experienced to be believed. Aaron Peled and I, though expected, were under TV scan long before we actually entered his embassy through what I thought to be part of a wall! My briefcase was politely incarcerated and it took 15 minutes of various individual checks before we were escorted into the office of a most pleasant mannered Brigadier General of the Israeli Air Force who spoke impeccable English. He welcomed me warmly and explained that, in view of the exhaustive security

procedures which applied even to their own Ambassador, he had ordered lunch to be 'brought in' but meanwhile he had an 'in house' bar in the office. Seeing me glance at the half wing on his uniform (I was of course in civvies) he smiled and said 'Sorry Air Commodore I cannot produce an Israeli fighter pilot for you but I will answer all your questions and incidentally we have the same navigator jokes in our air force too' which brought on peals of laughter.

With such a disarming introduction the next three hours passed in a most productive professional exchange. He answered all my questions, asked me no direct ones, seemed to have a reasonably fair idea of our own air force set up and (I suspect) some data on my own professional background and experience. Though he had tactfully laid a note pad and writing materials in front of me, I pointedly took no written notes. At the end of our one-on-one (Aaron had excused himself after the introduction) I thanked my host and presented him with a pair of our IAF wings which I had brought along for the purpose. In exchange, he immediately removed the half wing from his uniform and presented it to me.

I spent the weekend handwriting a (non-attributory/unsigned) report and handed it over to our AA in person for "further action". (The contents are not germane to this narrative). 26 years later my wife and I went through Israeli security procedures again as we boarded an El Al flight to Israel - the visit being a special wedding anniversary gift from our two children. The date was 14 February 2006 and, as she boarded the aircraft, my wife was presented with a cake and a large bouquet of flowers to mark our 50th wedding anniversary courtesy the airline. We had of course kept in touch with many of our RCDS colleagues over the years and were delighted to meet up again with Chana & Aaron Peled who drove down from Tel Aviv to spend an evening with us in Jerusalem. Among our many reminiscences, he had mentioned our visit to their erstwhile AA in London who remembered his once-only meeting with his Indian friend, sent his regards and apologies for having given him only half a wing!

**Air Vice Marshal C. V. Parker, MVC VM (Retd.).
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BOOK REVIEWS



POST- HINDU INDIA. A DISCOURSE ON DALIT-BAHUJAN IDEA OF SOCIO-SPIRITUAL AND SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION by Professor Kancha Ilaiah ● Published by Sage Publications, B1/1-1, Mohan Co-operative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044 ● Year of Publication : 2009 ● No. of Pages: 302 ● Price: Rs 295.

Reviewed by Dr. L. N. Godbole, a practitioner of Management and a thinking thinker about business and society. Email: tatami@mtnl.net.in

Kancha Ilaiah (KI) is a professor of Political Science at the Osmania University, Hyderabad. He is a passionate thinker, social activist, and author of several books. His bestseller is “Why I am not a Hindu”. He is referring to the present day status of various castes and communities and their social status in India and is suggesting several remedies for nation-building. This book is thus a mixture of history, sociology and personal political manifesto of an activist missionary. KI is ‘thankful to God for having let him be born in this country, in this wonderful family, and for assigning him the job of teaching, reading and writing – and that too in English. (P VIII). In this evocation he sounds almost like a Brahmin with his Sanskrit, though he has great hatred for Brahmins-Banias as a caste.

He is passionately pleading for his Mission of ‘Post Hindu Nationalism’ as an alternate stream of nationalist thought which runs counter to all the nationalist discourses that the upper-caste Hindus working in all kinds of organisations and Institutions – secular, communists and so on have constructed so far (P 300). His Post- Hindu nationalism looks for its roots in Dalit-Bahujan (OBC) classes and tribals and hopes to build the Indian nation on productive, creative and scientific lines of those classes.

In his estimation Islam (Muhammad), Christianity (Jesus), and Marxism (Marx) and Navayan Buddhism (Dr Ambedkar) are egalitarian religions which treat men and women on par because their prophets taught and practised equality unlike Brahmins and Banias who are ‘Other’ and are spiritual fascists and social smugglers.

His main recommendation is to make English a mass language. That was the project started by a Baptist Missionary, William Carey in the 18th Century in India. With the current craze for English medium schools even in the countryside all over India, KI should be happy to note that his own Mission has spread far and wide. His only objection would be that Brahmins are again in the

forefront of this anglicisation. That may be a thesis for another book.

He wants people to adopt meatarian diet as against vegetarianism advocated by Mahatma Gandhi.

KI envisages himself in a role like that of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule in Maharashtra in the 19th century. KI belongs to the Yadav-like caste of AP but he rates himself superior to Mulayam Singh Yadav, Lalu Prasad Yadav and others since he propagates his ideas in English and for English. Ambedkar and his Buddhism are good for Dalits. Muslims and Christians have their own spiritual compass in the Bible and the Quran. KI does not go all the way with Baptist William Carey who and his Christianity are his ideal but accommodates ‘*gods and goddesses*’ (plural) and not only God or Allah. He permits his Dalit-Bahujan followers to worship their gods and goddesses and thus separates himself from Islam, Christianity and Marxism with their only God, Allah or absence of God or Shunya of Buddha. Christians and Muslims today are already classified as OBC (Bahujan is its translation in Hindi) and is therefore a huge catchment area for his Mission.

KI claims the status of Messiah across the country of Dalit- Bahujans, the key demarcating factor in his reckoning is caste which is obviously acquired by an individual by accident of Birth. KI’s manifesto is for Dalit-Bahujans. It is a vast amalgam of thousands of castes and sub-castes spread over the length and breadth of a vast subcontinent. The author simply hates Brahmins and Banias and blames them for whatever is wrong with India today.

The word ‘Hindu’ is a word like ‘Capitalism’. Each one defines it according to his convenience. Anyone can attack or vilify it as he pleases and there will be no fear of counter attack because no one really calls himself a Hindu except ‘Hindutva’ ‘people belonging to the RSS, BJP or Shiv Sena. KI is firmly against their policies and their castes. KI has selected two castes mainly Brahmins and Banias from amongst Hindus as villains and in his inimitable style lambasts them in every other paragraph



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of his book. He has labelled them as spiritual fascists, social smugglers and primarily anti-production and anti-scientific people.

Blaming an amorphous group of people like Hindu is easy but does no credit to an academician. KI's book is not a scholarly tome. It is an amalgam of assertions, anecdotes and his major point is submerged in rhetoric. KI's book is self-contained and self-certifying. There are no references or dates to cross-check his statements and there is no Index to Authors or ideas of anyone else. He is not specific about dates or facts. Nothing wrong about the personal assertions and KI's book under review is no more than a torrential flow of assertions, peppered with several Telugu proverbs which are generally the distillate of collective wisdom of the people. He claims his study is based on the tribals of Andhra Pradesh. It is not history of any variety; subaltern or otherwise. It reads like a personal manifesto and should be read as a fiction.

He calls Sanskrit language the destroyer of justice, Brahmins as villains and anti-progress force. From Shankaracharya, Dr. Radhakrishnan to even E.M.S. Namboodiripad are all Brahminical in his view. He includes upper-class environmentalists also in this list.

In all the torrent of assertions his main idea is to underline the anti-production bias of Indian society. His aim is to produce organic intellectuals. (XXVI). What is an 'organic intellectual', he does not say anything. Even today and even in his beloved group of English educated people one observable end-result is this anti-production attitude. An engineer does not want to build houses, bridges or roads. He wants to be Executive Engineer who will pass bills and tenders. The present craze is to be an MBA who will plan and paint a broad picture for Finance. He will not manufacture, buy or sell anything. He will only talk about Production or Marketing Management. It is the same Brahminical tradition, now in English instead of Sanskrit. He has no time for that.

His major argument is focussed on Spiritual fascism of Brahmin-Banias. Now Fascism is a word used by many in India without understanding its European meaning and experience. Nazis killed 6 million Jews for this idea. A comparable case is that of Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot who killed in very large numbers to establish their idea. In India

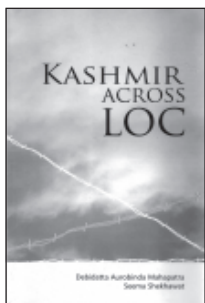
it is never used in relation to leftists and they are not called Fascists or killers. They are gods of leftists and their fellow travellers. It is reserved only for Hindutva people.

Interestingly some of his quotes are revealing: 'Rigveda is the first fascist book in the world used by a Brahmin social group that began to operate in the spiritual realm on this earth.(P.185) The institution of caste in India was born with the word Brahman, which later transformed itself into the name of the caste itself-Brahmins... "I characterize Brahmins of India as spiritual fascists. (P.185). Max Muller was a racist. 'Quran prohibited only three types of food on grounds of hygiene: dead animal flesh, blood and pig-meat (pork), as pigs at the time of Muhammad ate and survived only on human excreta.' (P 109), Gandhi , a Jain-Bania who pretended to be more Hindu than Brahmin led the Brahmins during the freedom movement, constructed vegetarianism as part of nationalism. (P. 109) The Buffalo represents the Negroid-Dravidian black beauty among animals. (It) was condemned because it is black in colour. (P.102) and (it) did not serve white racist purpose of Aryan Brahminism (P 103). 'Because of this Hindu mind-set, the best of our Dalit-Bahujan and Muslim youth do not get any place in the sports arena'(P.53) . And so ...

Form IV

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KASHMIR ACROSS LOC by Debidatta Aurobinda Mahapatra and Seema Shekhawat ● Published by Gyan Publishing House, Delhi 110002, Phone 011 23282060, Email: books@gyanbooks.com
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Reviewed by Dr. Amit Dholakia, Associate Professor of Political Science, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda

Is yet another study with the K-word in its title warranted? Can it be of interest to anyone except the community of academic scholars and strategic experts on South Asian conflicts? Can the convoluted conundrum of Jammu and Kashmir be rendered intellectually less intractable by 328-pages of diligent research?

One can reply to these queries in the affirmative after a reading of the book, *Kashmir Across LOC* co-authored by the young researchers Debidatta Aurobinda Mahapatra and Seema Shekhawat. Their lucid study traverses a major terrain hitherto ignored in the cacophonous debates on whom Kashmir belongs to and how to unravel the tangled webs of this extremely violent inter-state and intra-state conflict.

Recent interest in Kashmir has generally centred round the sources and dynamics of terrorism perpetrated by the several separatist outfits abetted by Pakistan. While a lot has been made of the rifles of the Indian army men poking between sandbags on the streets of Srinagar, and of the violation of human rights of the Kashmiris, including of the Pandits, little knowledge is on hand as to the state of affairs in the 'other' Kashmir across the 778-kms-long Line of Control (LOC) i.e., in the region popularly known as Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). Even the circumstances under which POK's territory was occupied and annexed by Pakistan have not been investigated in detail. One of the reasons for such lack of scholarly attention is the restricted access to POK and its people to international researchers provided by the Pakistani government.

The Kargil intrusions in 1999 brought into focus the situation in POK. The fact that most of the training camps for Kashmiri militants are located there also encouraged media and scholarly interest in the developments on the Pakistani side of the Kashmir border. Nonetheless, two books by Jasjit Singh (*Pakistan Occupied Kashmir* and *POK under Pakistani Jackboot*), a co-edited book by Virendra Gupta and Alok Bansal; (*Pakistan Occupied Kashmir: The Untold Story*) and some articles by Navnita Chadha Behera, Leo Rose and other scholars on Kashmir are only some of the few reliable writings on the subject. Hence, Mahapatra and Shekhawat's book is

a timely and noteworthy effort to offset this apathy and bring in a more balanced perspective on the Kashmir problem.

Based on information collected from authentic sources as well as field work and interviews conducted in the towns close to LOC on the Indian side, this book opens a window to the situation in the POK. It covers a wide ground - historical, constitutional, ethnic, economic, political and religious background of the parts of POK that are designated as Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Northern Areas (NA) by Pakistan. The not so uncommon international perception that Pakistan is a comrade of the Kashmiri people whereas the Indian government has violated its promises and carried out human rights excesses on them is set right by the authors through systematic arguments that establish that the condition in POK is worse than that existing on the Indian side of the LOC.

POK comprises nearly one-third of the area of the pre-independence Jammu and Kashmir state. AJK is inhabited by about 2.4 million people and NA by about 1.5 million people. Both the areas enjoy a strange administrative and political relationship with the Pakistani government which has exploited the formers' resources, territory and people to achieve its national and international objectives. Its advocacy of self-determination for the people of Kashmir on the Indian side is not matched by the grant of a similar right to the people of POK which stands irrevocably acceded to Pakistan according to the latter's Constitution. Besides, POK has little scope of generating its own income. Even for its routine financial requirements, the area is completely dependent on the Pakistani government. In comparison the Indian Kashmir has a far better record of human development.

Pakistan's policy towards AJK is characterized by legal ambiguity, political hypocrisy and denial of democratic rights. Though the area is named "Azad" (free), the state of affairs in AJK resembles internal colonialism. There is a huge gap between its legal status as a self-governing territory and its political reality marked by rigged elections and absolute authority of Islamabad to dismiss even an elected AJK government. Before assuming power, the Prime Minister and other ministers of AJK are constitutionally mandated to take an oath about the region's irrevocable

accession to Pakistan. While India has made special constitutional provision with respect to the age-old Kashmiri practice of restricting the settlement of outsiders in the valley, Pakistan has registered tens of thousands of Punjabi and Baloch voters in POK to keep a check on the rise of ethnic Kashmiri sentiment. During the past few years, several thousand Afghan citizens too have been allowed to settle in AJK and fleece the local populace in the name of *Jihad*.

All this effectively punctures Pakistan's claims of being a caretaker of Kashmir's interests. The exploitation of the water resources of POK illustrates this. The Indus, Jhelum and Chenab rivers flowing through POK are crucial for Pakistan's agricultural and other water needs. The Mangla dam constructed in AJK generates 1000 MW of power and fulfils more than half of Pakistan's energy requirements. However, the AJK government receives no royalty or compensation from the revenues generated from the electricity produced. The dam also serves as the principal water storage reservoir for the canal system in the West Punjab region. Yet, the people living upstream of the dam in AJK have not had significant development benefits accruing from the dam. The AJK region has virtually no industries, leading its youth to migrate outside of POK in search of employment. Similarly, higher education facilities, particularly in professional courses, are virtually non-existent.

While AJK still enjoys some semblance of constitutional protection from Pakistan and cosmetic legal autonomy, the Northern Areas (NA) have been an object of outright exploitation and subjugation by Pakistan. The Gilgit-Baltistan region and the Karakoram mountains that contain it are of vital strategic importance to Pakistan. They are, therefore, under the full control of the Pakistani army. The Karakoram Highway (KKH) connecting Gilgit and Kashgar in China has served as a vital strategic lifeline of Sino-Pakistan relations. The region also borders Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republic of Tajikistan.

The sparsely populated and ethno-linguistically diverse NA region is neither a full-fledged province of Pakistan nor a division of AJK. It was ruled directly by Pakistan through Northern Areas Council headed by a minister in Islamabad, until a phony legal move granted it autonomy in August 2009. Pakistan has cared little for bringing about a substantial change in the condition of the people of Gilgit and Baltistan. Basic facilities like electricity, drinking water, education and elementary health care are non-existent. The religious composition of the Gilgit-Baltistan region is different from that of the rest of Pakistan. It has about 39% Shias, 18% Ismailis, 27% Sunnis and 16% Noorbakshis. The sectarian violence among the

ethnic and religious communities is quite common. Frustrated by the attitude of the Pakistani government, the people in the Gilgit, Astor, Skardu, Hanza, Hazara, Chitral, Nagar, and adjoining areas have launched a 'Free Balwaristan Movement'. The bullets fired by the Pakistan army against the pro-independence demonstrations in Gilgit-Baltistan have claimed scores of lives.

Jammu and Kashmir is home to a medley of races, tribal groups, languages, and religions. Hindus and Muslims have lived there harmoniously since the 13th century when Islam emerged as a major religion in Kashmir. The *Rishi* tradition of the Kashmiri Hindus and the Sufi-Islamic way of life of the Kashmiri Muslims not only co-existed but complemented each other and created a composite culture in which Hindus and Muslims visited the same shrines and revered the same saints. An overdose of religious nationalism by Pakistan in POK during the past six decades has resulted in the alienation of the people from the traditional Kashmiri culture. This book argues for the recognition and restoration of Kashmir as a melting pot of ideas and cultures. It emphasizes the revitalization of Kashmir's composite identity as the only hope of providing a just and viable opportunity for peace.

It would be rash to suggest instant formulae as solutions for the Kashmir problem. The multiple imponderables and variables impinging on the situation in Kashmir make it exceedingly complex and unpredictable. The worst solution is to regard the Kashmir issue merely as a territorial problem and attempt to solve it by force. The problem of Kashmir is basically the problem of the people of the state. The crisscrossing and conflict of political and cultural lines of control have created a great human tragedy for Kashmir and its people.

The authors, therefore, propose a soft border between the Indian and Pakistani sides of Kashmir to facilitate free movement of people and goods across the LOC. Thousands of ordinary Kashmiris have close relatives living on the other side. As a consequence of the continuing hostility between India and Pakistan, people's travel and meetings with relatives take place with great difficulty. If the cross-border journey is further relaxed, it would not only provide a psychological booster for the peace process but also promote trade between the historically and culturally linked areas of POK and the Indian Jammu and Kashmir. Opening up of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad highway, greater trade across LOC, cooperation in tourism and water management and promotion of wider people-to-people contact are other action strategies suggested by the authors. The relief and rehabilitation work in both parts of Kashmir carried out jointly by India and Pakistan following the devastating

earthquake of 2005 is cited as a laudable example of cooperative diplomacy between India and Pakistan.

The book helps set right the usual one-dimensional assessment of the Kashmir dispute. It informs us that the problem of Kashmir is not just about what has been happening in the valley of Kashmir on the Indian side, but also about the worsening situation prevailing in the Pakistan-held areas of Kashmir. Demolishing the myths successfully created and nurtured by Pakistan's propaganda machine, it buttresses the Indian position that Pakistan has no legal, moral or political claim over Jammu and Kashmir and that its possession of POK as well as ceding the part of its territory to China constitute an inexcusable breach of international norms concerned.

Justifiably, the book does not rejoice at the brewing troubles in POK. The alienation of the people of POK from

the Pakistani government does not in any way augment India's capacity to meet the threat of terrorism or resolve the dispute with Pakistan. India can at the most score a few debating points against Pakistan and ask it not to sermonize on the condition of Kashmiris when its own treatment of them is awful. Hence, India and Pakistan ought to move beyond mutual accusations and in the direction of stability and peace in South Asia.

Instead of being carried away by the streak of nationalism so common among Indian and Pakistani scholars, the authors have demonstrated an objective distance from the issue to give a meaningful interpretation of the past and the future of the problem of Kashmir and its problems. Their book is not crushed under theoretical or ideological baggage. It is eminently readable by anyone concerned about understanding the human tragedy of the Kashmir conflict.

Julie Andrews

No one can forget the roles Julie Andrews played in *Mary Poppins* and *Sound of Music*. In my humble opinion, no other actress in Hollywood has the natural talent, grace or the captivating smile that she has. Unfortunately though, a few years ago she underwent a throat surgery which went bad and now I hear she cannot talk much!

To commemorate her 69th birthday, actress/vocalist, Julie Andrews made a special appearance at Manhattan's Radio City Music Hall. One of the musical numbers she performed was 'My Favorite Things' from the legendary movie 'Sound Of Music'. Here are the lyrics she used:

Botox and nose drops and needles for knitting,
Walkers and handrails and new dental fittings,
Bundles of magazines tied up in string,
These are a few of my favorite things.

Cadillacs and cataracts, hearing aids and glasses,
Polident and Fixodent and false teeth in glasses,
Pacemakers, golf carts and porches with swings,
These are a few of my favorite things.

When the pipes leak, when the bones creak,
When the knees go bad,
I simply remember my favorite things,
And then I don't feel so bad.



Hot tea and crumpets and corn pads
for bunions,
No spicy hot food or food cooked with
onions,
Bathrobes and heating pads and hot
meals they bring,
These are a few of my favorite things.

Back pain, confused brains and no
need for sinnin',
Thin bones and fractures and hair that
is thinnin',
And we won't mention our short
shrunk frames,
When we remember our favorite
things.

When the joints achew, when the hips break,
When the eyes grow dim,
Then I remember the great life I've had,
And then I don't feel so bad

Ms. Andrews received a standing ovation from the crowd that lasted over four minutes and repeated encores.

Please share Ms. Andrews' clever wit and humour with others who would appreciate it wrote Ashok Maskeri to other members of the Google Group to which he belonged. One of them happened to be *Freedom First* reader Eknaath Agarkar who decided to share it with readers of *Freedom First*.

Freedom First

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 arrogated 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 meddlesome government – the system so far that has led to impoverishment, insecurity and instability.

Freedom First therefore stands for minimum government and maximum freedom, tempered by a sense of individual responsibility, in which the people's genius has a fair opportunity to develop and grow.

Freedom First rejects any ideology, movement or policy that sets one group of citizens against another, be it based on class, caste, religion or envy.

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