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Many Voices

“SAM BAHADUR”

A Tribute to Field Marshal Sam Hormusji Framji Manekshaw (MC)

Eustace D'Souza



Padma Vibhushan,
Padma Bhushan Field
Marshal S.H.F.J
Manekshaw, MC,
breathed his last at the
Military Hospital,
Wellington, Nilgiris,
Tamil Nadu on 27 June
2008, at the ripe age of
94 when he was the
world's oldest living

Field Marshal. Much has been said and written about 'Sam Bahadur' as he came to be known, in the print and electronic media. Not many know that there is a March Past composed by a Gorkha Rifles Bandmaster entitled the Sam Bahadur March. This tribute is penned by one who first came to know of him in 1947 when boning up on military history - the Burma Campaign.

There can be little doubt that it was destiny that took Sam Bahadur to such heights. His ambition was to follow his father's footsteps in the medical profession but fate deemed otherwise. Dr. Manekshaw served in the IMS during World War 1 in Mesopotamia as RMO, Second Battalion, Royal Ludhiana Sikhs, and his elder brother the late Air Vice Marshal Manekshaw was also a medico in the IAF. Though Sam qualified after his Inter Science from Hindu Sabha College, Amritsar and was keen to join his brothers in England, his father was reluctant to send him to UK as young Sam Manekshaw was a somewhat naughty boy! Though disappointed, he decided to respond to an advertisement and applied for a commission in the Indian Army for the first course at the newly set-up Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun in 1930. He wrote the examination, qualified and was one of the 16 of 1200 applicants to be admitted.

He was commissioned in 1932 into the 4/12 Frontier Force Regiment. During World War II he commanded the Sikh Company in Burma, part of the 17 Indian Infantry Division. In the fierce fighting at the battle of the Sittang Bridge, against the Japanese, he was seriously wounded in the abdomen so much so that his Divisional Commander

Major General Punch Cowan pinned the Military Cross (MC) on him fearing that he would not survive. But survive he did and was awarded an immediate MC for bravery.

There are a number of stories of his personal bravery, man management skills and outstanding leadership qualities.

Personal Bravery

During the war in Burma at a promotion conference he refused to recommend a Sikh Lance Naik. This individual threatened to shoot Major Manekshaw. Later, the Lance Naik was marched up before Major Manekshaw who handed over his loaded pistol to this Non Commissioned Officer (NCO) and said "You want to shoot me? Go ahead, shoot me". Nothing happened. That very night Sam Bahadur ordered this NCO to stand guard outside his *basha* (hut made from local material) and to bring his early morning cup of *chai* and hot water for a shave!

In 1965 the Chinese 'Peoples Liberation Army' (PLA) moved up to the high altitude passes on the East Sikkim Watershed in a daunting posture but our troops stood firm. A single strand of wire separated the two sides. Lt. Gen Manekshaw then Eastern Army Commander, decided to visit Nathu La when this writer was the Brigade Commander. The party went up to the Pass and the Army Commander was tactfully advised not to expose himself. "Nonsense" he replied. "Let the Chinese see me" and he walked right up to the wire to face them.

Man Management

During the same visit to this brigade, at lunch, he discovered that the young officers needed some diversion especially during the long winters. He also discovered when he visited this writer's bunker he noticed a battery operated record player and classical records. Lt.Gen. Manekshaw did not say a word. Lo and behold a fortnight later arrived a large parcel with an LP record of Marian Anderson singing Negro spirituals for the writer, and

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OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

Aarushi Murder and the Media

Those of us who have been habitual readers of newspapers have been witnessing a qualitative change in the quality of the news items that are featured in the newspapers. Time was when politics, by and large, was the core of the newspaper – politics in the broader sense, relating to political institutions, political debates in parliament and in parties. Because of the long-drawn struggle for freedom, newspapers were predominantly political and they continued to be so with developments covered in nation-building. And besides the wireless we had only one source of political education for those were pre-TV days. Today, politics occupies lesser space, and coverage of trivialities partially has edged out hard news.

If a careful reading of a major newspaper took about an hour or so, now it barely takes half an hour. Editorials have become less demanding and feature articles as the editorial page shorter, less serious, less provocative and educative and more titillating. Of course, they still continue to play an important part as tribunes of the demos. The reopening of cases in the Gujarat happenings, of the Jessica Lal case, the exposure of the BJP leader accepting money, the coverage of the shameful and humiliating happenings in Mody's Government, the exposure of farmers' suicides are all the minor glories of the classical role of journalism.

News today centres around trivialities of famous people particularly of the tinsel world and world of fashion, around divas and they monopolise dominant space and duller political news have been put in the penumbra. The TV has further contributed to the trivialisation of news and happenings. The tragic happenings leading to the murder of Aarushi well illustrate this development. "Six channels beamed news and special programmes on the double murder of 39.30 hours out of a total of 92 hours of prime time – from 1900 hrs. to 2300 hrs. between May 14 and June 7that's 42 percent of prime time over 23 days..."

Are the TV channels forcing these on an unwilling public or are the viewers like Dracula athirst for blood? Traditionally we know that tabloids flourished on the purveying of news relating to sex, crime and murder. The newly recruited readership for newspapers, it is said, generally tends to feast upon these and a significant percentage of today's newspaper readers are first



generation consumers of the news medium. People in charge of running newspapers in the small towns assert that "crime news they want of the whole state, political news they do not want. Crime is on top of everybody's concern. Crime has to be there." This is true of the TV viewers too. It has been argued that the novice watching TV is less sophisticated in his approach and understanding of social and political matters and crime in the neighbourhood attracts him. For one thing, it is very real. He or his neighbours could have been the victim.

The most telling analysis from the Centre for Media Studies in Delhi has been that on TV channels for the year 2007, the time allotted to political news has come down by 50%. In the Hindi news channels, political news plummeted from 23.1% in 2005 to 10.09% in 2007. Simultaneously, coverage of sports, entertainment, crime and human interest news almost doubled from 27.9% in 2005 to 53.1% in 2007. News relating to agriculture, education, health and environment remained not only insignificant, but where they were in earlier days.

Certain larger questions need to be raised. Should the media be led by the preferences of the consumers all the time? Do they also not have a responsibility to the public? Should they not educate and guide the public? This might seem like a non-populist stand and one that recalls the earlier patrician position that the leaders know what is good for the public in the long run. Unfortunately they often do. Public education is their prime responsibility. Are we abdicating this and are in the grip of the siren like tinkling of the cash registers?

*

Germaine Tillion (1907-2008)

Germaine Tillion, the grand old lady of the German concentration camps passed away recently at the age of 100. She studied anthropology at the University of Paris. She studied the people of north-eastern Algeria, conducted four research exercises and remained committed to the cause and well-being of the Algerians. She was positively involved in the social regeneration of the people. Along with Raymond Aron and Jean-Paul Sartre, she entered into the national debate on the colony and advocated the elevation of the people from poverty into which they had sunk.

She was the most distinguished of French voices protesting against the use of torture of Algerian prisoners by the government. By then, she was famous throughout France as one of the most distinguished of citizens having been actively involved in the resistance against the occupation and the only one of four leaders of the underground to have survived.

By 1942, she was arrested by the Germans and was confined at Ravensbruck which had a concentration camp for women and spent three years. She was to have disappeared without a trace if the SS could have had its way. Many survivors of concentration camps have immortalised themselves by their books partly recapitulating their experiences. Primo Levi's book is a classic without another of its kind. Victor Frankl was to develop a new school of psychoanalysis based on his experiences in the camps and was to win acclamation. Bruno Bettelheim again was not only to write on his experiences, but was to inaugurate an experiment in rehabilitating autistic children.

Germaine was unique in championing the cause of the people of Algeria and be the public conscience of France. Described as a major witness of our century, she was to write books both on the Algerian problem and on experience in concentration camps. She was perhaps the last of the most distinguished inmates of the concentration camps and there may not be anymore like her. - RS

A Separate Policy for FDI in Sensitive Sectors?

When in 1991 we turned our backs on state capitalism, it meant that we had jettisoned our obsessive, establishment-generated fears of the "foreign hand"; given up the ghost of the East India Company and no longer scared that everyone everywhere outside our borders was waiting to pounce on us and loot us. We would have thought that this state of mind was now history – or is it ?

A report in the *Financial Express* of July 18 informs us that we are soon likely to have a policy on foreign direct investment (FDI) exclusively for "sensitive areas and sectors". Defining a "sensitive area" is not going to be easy. The department of heavy industry has already suggested that sensitive areas should include an area 150 km from international borders. This would mean the states of J&K, Himachal Pradesh,, Uttarkhand and the Northeastern states which in turn means these state governments need to be 'consulted'. Just imagine the number of 'clearances' that need to be obtained from the numerous agencies of the government ranging from environment, human resources, defence, national security etc.

In the first place why do we need a separate regimen for sensitive areas? The fear of foreigners in such areas? Is it because we are afraid that their presence jeopardises our security? One has only to visit Google to get whatever one wants including high definition maps which identify structures however small.

Or, are our babus afraid that foreigners may make use of the industry as a base for illegal, even anti-national, activities? This can be monitored and regulated with the assistance of our intelligence network and defence forces in the border areas.

By throwing open the economy to FDIs we have recorded remarkable growth gained enormous economic strength (current inflation problems, which are but a passing phase, notwithstanding). Our freedom and independence have not been compromised in any manner. Why then do we need a separate FDI policy for border areas and certain sectors. It is time we have greater confidence in ourselves and stop being paranoid.

To accommodate the demands of each state government and the various agencies, the proposed separate FDI policy would have become so complicated and cumbersome that any sensible Foreign Direct Investor could well decide to turn to Vietnam, or Cambodia or may be to post-Fidel Castro Cuba!

The ridiculous exercise that the babus have embarked on is best abandoned. Leave it to the entrepreneur in India and the overseas FD Investor to decide where they wish to invest their resources and for the government to play the role of a regulator. Only an idiotic foreign investor would want to invest in areas which expose his investment to avoidable risks! **SVR**

(This was published in the *Economic Times* of July 23)

The Nuclear Deal

Super-Patriots and the Horse Market

Sharad Bailur

Not a word about National Interest Anywhere.

The BJP knows that had it been in power, it would have grabbed the deal with both hands.

The entire nuclear controversy started with Jawaharlal Nehru. He wanted us to eventually go in for nuclear power generation and simultaneously refine enough uranium to have a few bombs in the basement, just in case. His successor, Lal Bahadur Shastri, not being privy to the discussions between Homi Bhabha and Nehru, went by the publicly announced policy that India would never go in for nuclear weapons. When Indira Gandhi came to power she had a fight on her hands with the “Syndicate” and she could only take up the nuclear matter after the war in East Pakistan was over. Meanwhile Bhabha died in an air crash.

That brings us to Pokhran I. Indira Gandhi, who had been privy to the discussions between her father and Bhabha decided to go ahead with the bomb. The United States immediately put an embargo on fuel supplies and research and cooperation. When he finally became Prime Minister, Morarji Desai wanted to decimate the entire nuclear establishment and roll back our bomb making capacity because he thought it was immoral. Apparently his salvation with his own God was more important to him than the security of the nation. And he was hailed as a patriot by all the anti-Indiraites, including the BJP or whatever it was then called,

It was Rajiv Gandhi and later P. V. Narasimha Rao (incidentally one of India’s best and most underestimated Prime Ministers), who decided to go ahead with some necessary nuclear testing. The attempt on both occasions was stopped when the US warned against it. So when Vajpayee became the Prime Minister the only advice that Narasimha Rao gave him was to test, to weaponise our nuclear capability. Vajpayee went ahead with Pokhran II.

A whole mountain of international opprobrium collapsed on to Vajpayee’s inexperienced head. To wriggle out of it all this super-patriot publicly promised in the United Nations that India would sign the CTBT and follow a strategically useless doctrine: “No first use”. We can be jointly overwhelmed by a Chinese-Pakistani non-nuclear attack. At what point shall we go back on our “No first

use” doctrine? This was also the result of the Strobe Talbot-Jaswant Singh “negotiations”. Apparently when views are expressed ponderously with a generous dose of spurious *gravitas*, they sound profound, and therefore correct, even if they are just plain silly, or worse, dangerous for the security of the nation.

The first thing Dr. Manmohan Singh did when he got the deal with the US finalised was to come back and take the BJP into confidence. The first thing the BJP did was to decide not to back the UPA. *They* hadn’t done the deal with Bush and the US. *They* would not get the credit for it.

Now they say the deal prohibits us from holding nuclear tests in future. The BJP is deliberately muddying the issue between domestic legislation like the Hyde Act and the Indo-US Nuclear deal which is an international treaty. There is no reference in the treaty to testing. The US is a sovereign nation. So is India. If we wish we also can enact a domestic law, like the Hyde Act that says that if the US backs out we shall get furious.

Let us call it the Tiruvannamalai Chamrajendra Venkatabalasubramaniam Act. (As usual we shall convert it into a series of initials – TCV Act.). Suppose we hold a test, or ten tests. The US withdraws support under its domestic Hyde Act. Our TCV (!) Act comes into force and we withdraw cooperation as a reciprocal measure. At worst we shall be where we are today with the additional advantage that we continue to get uranium, and more importantly from countries like France, for our long term needs, nuclear expertise in third generation nuclear power which will come in useful when our Thorium reserves come into play, But that is still 20 years away. Meanwhile we need the uranium, because all our power-generating plants are running at less than 50% capacity because there is no fuel.

Why is the deal with the US necessary? We can have the treaty with the IAEA and the NSG only if we have the treaty with the US. We need nuclear fuel either

as uranium ore or as yellowcake. This can be made available to us by the Nuclear Suppliers Group provided they *all* agree, not by majority vote but, unanimously, that it should be made available to us. A large number of countries like France and Russia are amenable. Australia, the US and China were not. The Chinese have now agreed to back us. If we come to an agreement with the US, the others will fall in line automatically. That is why the agreement with the US is necessary. The treaties with the IAEA and the NSG continue even if we have a disagreement with the US, since these are multilateral treaties with a range of countries. So other nuclear suppliers like Russia and France will continue their supplies of uranium to us.

President Abdul Kalam, whom the BJP installed in office, and Mr. Brajesh Mishra, the National Security Adviser, that it depended upon for expert advice on this matter during the tenure of the NDA, both support the nuclear deal. It knows that, had it been in power, it would have grabbed the deal with both hands. Brajesh Mishra says, "This is the best deal any government could have got. Renegotiating the deal is not an option. We might end up losing the deal altogether."

The deal is much better than that which even China managed to get with the US. We do have a major rival for international power across our northern borders. And we can get the better of it only if we have international support especially from the US and its allies. It is imperative that India gets into a good strategic agreement if only so that we need not dirty our pants each time China raises an eyebrow.

The National Security Adviser, M. K. Narayanan said that the Left has been talking to some "rejectionist" scientists who have their own agendas. The Left knows nothing about the technicalities of nuclear deal and what it thinks it does know, is rubbish. The entire draft of the IAEA agreement has been up on the website of the IAEA since March 5, 2008. The Left which was an "Outside supporter", is neither computer-illiterate nor blind.

Brajesh Mishra said, quite rightly, "The Safeguards agreement with the IAEA flows from the 123 agreement made with the US. The 123 agreement was made public immediately. So should the draft Safeguards agreement with the IAEA have been. There was no need to say that it contained "privileged information". It amounts to saying that there is something that needs to be hidden. After the agreement came out for public scrutiny it turned out there was nothing to hide. Pramab Mukherjee had been taken for a ride either by his political colleagues or by some idiot babu in the foreign office. Hamhandedness

perhaps, not deceit.

Fishing in a Horse Trough

A horse trough is not the cleanest of places for fish to abound in. A Communist Party member suggested that the deal was anti-Muslim! Mayawati thought that was a good stick to beat Mulayam Singh with, since he claims to be a messiah of the Muslims. So Mulayam Singh goes to former President Abdul Kalam and gets a certificate from him – not because of his scientific credentials (which aren't in the nuclear field; he is a rocket scientist), but because he has a Muslim name. The Muslims in their turn do exactly what their Quran tells them to do. Do what the Quran says. They were not interested in the details of the nuclear deal. The deal is with the US. It amounts to supping with the Devil. The Muslim Ummah is anti-US. Therefore the deal is anti-Muslim. Is Muslim anger with the US more important or is the future energy security of India as a whole more important? Here is a direct quote: Mr Mujtaba Farooq, Secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind condemning the deal said, "it is anti-India and anti-human and it seeks to establish a strategic alliance between India and the US, a relation which would pose a serious threat to India's sovereignty and independent foreign policy." The Indian Union Muslim League, understanding, all too well, the complete implications of opposing the deal, have prudently decided to back it.

And, believe it or not, on this matter the BJP, these super-patriots are on the side of the Muslims – neither wanted the deal to go through. The BJP accuses the Congress of appeasing the minorities, (read Muslims). The BJP is also avowedly anti-communist. When the nuclear deal goes to Parliament whom will these super-patriots be voting with? The Communists (who should be tried for treason). And who will be appeasing the Muslims? The BJP which claims that they have "extra-territorial loyalties". The BJP's antics would be laughable, if the issue was not so serious.

Not a word about national interest anywhere.

Mayawati decides to fish in SP waters. Amar Singh, not to be outdone, decides to fish in BSP waters. He said openly on TV, "I cannot reveal my "machinations" on TV, before they fructify." The Left as a whole goes with Mayawati who goes with the BJP. The TDP, goes with the BJP, as does the Telangana Party on the ground that the Congress has not backed it for a Telangana state. The PMK and the DMK don't like each other. If one backs the UPA, the other may not. Meanwhile Jaswant Singh,

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Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

*Every issue has at least two sides. A wise man studies all sides before coming to a conclusion.
This is an attempt to debate all issues so that a considered opinion can be formed.*

The Nuclear Deal

1) The PM showed, for the first time, courage of his conviction that the nuclear deal is good for the country and placed his position on the line. Thus far, his hesitation on whether the deal was worth putting the government at stake was disappointing and created an image of a dithering non-leader. He was not prepared to go one way or another. The UPA allies were no better, all parroting the line that early elections were not advisable. All sent out the message that they were afraid of facing the electorate and were not sure what was right for the country. At last, the PM has acted like a PM. This is not a judgment on the rights or the wrongs of the nuclear deal; it is about governance. If a leader passionately believes he is right, he should go ahead for the sake of the country. If he cannot act, he should step down. If he does neither, he is sacrificing the country's best interests for the sake of power.

1) As this goes to press, this is only the beginning. Political parties can change positions overnight. What is good for the country today can be jettisoned tomorrow. The UPA is frightened of going to the polls because of the rising prices. The Left which threatened to bring down the Government over the nuclear deal is in a quandary because it too is worried about 'what next'. The BJP, which should have been the natural supporter of the deal, feels slighted because the Government, in its short-sightedness, refused to discuss the matter with them. It also smells power through early elections and has no compunctions about joining the Left in bringing down the Government. It is really a matter of arithmetic, not national interest. SP's turn around has put paid to the Left's blackmail. Elections have to be held by March 2009. A crisis on the nuclear deal would at the most bring them forward by 3-4 months. Can the UPA repair the damage to its reputation in the breathing space obtained?

Religion Misinterpreted

2) For the last decade or more, the concept of "jihad" has played havoc with the world as terrorists have used the idea of "jihad" to hit at their perceived enemies. While some Islamic scholars made it clear that Islam stood for peace, there was no authoritative clarification or interpretation of the concept of "jihad" from a religious Islamic body. Thankfully, though belatedly, the Deoband seminary issued a fatwah (Feb 2008) declaring that Islam does not permit use of violence against the innocent. This was reiterated at a huge rally of the ulema at Delhi on May 31, 2008. At least a beginning has been made to challenge the use of religion to justify violence.

2) This is good as far as it goes but the response of terrorist organisations like Al Qaeda, L-e-T, Jaish-e-Mohammed, to name only a few, to this declaration is not known. They are likely to challenge the authority of the ulema to interpret Islam. They may also find exceptions by citing circumstances when "jihad" is permissible in self-defence. In short, the crisis is not yet over. However, it is a step forward that a debate on the use of violence in the name of religion has started. Other religionists who have started espousing violence to protect their religions had better take note of the incongruity of preaching peace and indulging in violence.

Sonia's Fiefdom

3) Maharashtra witnessed the spectacle of Sonia's rally being disturbed by her own partymen. This was absurd as well as tragic. When the Congress (I) is struggling for its very survival, it was expected that the party leaders would stand united to defend the beleaguered party. Instead, the leaders are still jockeying for power when power seems to be escaping the party's grasp. It is alleged

3) Whether it was Rane's supporters or his opponents who created the ruckus, it should dawn on both the groups that their party suffered in the end. The already non-functioning state government came in for further ridicule and the party's chances of getting re-elected are

cont'd.p.17

Come On, Liberals: Let's Change India!

Sanjeev Sabhlok

Liberal democracies need liberals but Indian liberals are missing from the scene!

Let me begin by acknowledging my gratitude to the editor of *Freedom First* offering me this valuable real estate each month to make my pitch on any subject of my choice.

My message is going to remain extremely simple, though. I want *you*! I want you to change the bad policy and corruption rampant in India. I want you to join politics. But I don't want you to join politics alone. There is no point in doing that. We need a well-orchestrated and well-coordinated strategy.

India is fast becoming ungovernable as a result of six decades of bad policies and corruption. Corrupt Nehruvian socialists who have ruined India for sixty years are now besieged by rabid communal forces from within and without. The BJP, an offspring of Jan Sangh, which was an offshoot of the Hindu Mahasabha, is determined to impose an intolerant *Hindutva* upon us and take us back 2000 years. We are getting sick and tired of this corruption and hatred. We want peace and prosperity. We want to live as *plain vanilla Indians*, not as Brahmins, Christians, or Maharashtrians.

The full expression of India's potential needs a strong liberal voice at its helm. But liberals have remained in the political wilderness after the Swatantra Party disbanded in 1973. Today, the concept of freedom has no proponent at the national level even as the policies of the erstwhile Swatantra Party are being stolen by both major political groups. But these political groups aren't liberals; they don't understand freedom. Economic liberalization is not going to work without a *suite* of liberal policies. We need law and order, infrastructure, and equality of opportunity. Without these we will only get increased corruption and continuing poverty.

India was lucky to get a liberal Constitution. Subsequently, Nehru's advocacy of democracy – even as he dismantled significant parts of the Constitution – built for us the semblance of a liberal democracy. But we are fast becoming an illiberal democracy. Liberal democracies need liberals but Indian liberals are missing from the scene! We must challenge this drift into chaos. We must gain the people's mandate to govern India.

I appreciate that it has been a hard grind for liberalism in the last sixty years, given Nehru's advocacy of socialism. As a result, liberals today are a disheartened lot and can't seem to summon the will-power even to try to lead. But freedom never came to anyone on a silver platter. It has always had to be fought for and won by *each* generation. Today it is our turn to fight, irrespective of whether we win or lose.

* * *

I'd like to introduce myself at this stage. I was an Indian bureaucrat from 1982 to January 2001. Now I am an Australian bureaucrat. I had a science background before joining public administration which means I had no understanding of economics, political science or political philosophy. I therefore faced a steep learning curve when I started working. Corruption and decadence, inefficiency and waste, sloth and incompetence met me everywhere. I found that governments in India are designed to burn public money and destroy entrepreneurship.

My head started spinning! I asked: Is this what I had signed up to do – to burn your money? Was there a science to government or must we have a free-for-all? Is there a choice between success or failure or must India necessarily go down the gurgler? I sought answers though academic study. During these studies a bulb went off in my head!

It dawned on me that reform had to start from the top; it had to be political. It also dawned on me that I had to stop pointing fingers at my corrupt bosses and start taking responsibility for myself. The shame of living in a totally corrupt India and not doing my best to change things would haunt my ghost for eternity! Therefore, I, a layman of limited ability, had to try to do uncommon things, irrespective of whether I succeeded or not. Leading the nation, it struck me, is actually an *ordinary* duty of *each* citizen in a democracy. We must all become leaders if we are not to become dung beetles, fit only to bury our faces in cow-dung at the end of our lives.

I met many Indians in 1999 and 2000 to advance

this idea but found a lot of cynicism. We are so smart that we give up even before the fight begins! We seem to *know* in advance that nothing will ever change. I had absolutely no use for such useless cowards. I ask you: what good is all our learning if at the end of it we lose our spine? Creeping invertebrates.

But political reform was not a task to be attempted alone. I began looking into medium-term strategies. I moved to Australia in December 2000 and resigned from the IAS a month later. In 2004 I facilitated a week-long workshop of eminent liberals in Delhi. We agreed to support Sharad Joshi's Swatantra Bharat Party. I joined this party but left it in mid-2005 due to strategic differences. And so I started looking at the longer term, not in years but decades. We have to find hundreds of excellent people, else nothing will change. I started writing books. The first of these, *Breaking Free of Nehru*, will reach bookshops in a few months. The other one, *The Discovery of Freedom*, is an early draft. Please go to <http://sanjeev.sabhlokcity.com/>.

I still retain the fond hope that we actually do have sufficient good people in India today and therefore these books are redundant. I suggest that if we stop making useless excuses and start fulfilling our duty to India we will find enough people to change things. Since early 2008 I have started asking high caliber liberals with significant knowledge of good governance and a desire to contest elections to start assembling. At least three committed

leaders per Lok Sabha constituency are needed, around 1500 in all.

To help these leaders assemble, I have started the **Freedom Team of India** at a temporary website: <http://freedom.sabhlokcity.com/>. To join this team you must be a team player and possess infinite patience and regard for others. After the leaders assemble, we will work out a common platform, action plan, and leadership team. We won't organize before that. No point in making half-baked attempts.

A three-year campaign will then follow, spreading the message of freedom countrywide. People will be shown why liberals are good for them. Liberals do not allow power to go to their head and are not afraid to challenge anyone who is corrupt. Further, liberals are tolerant of differences in belief, they are humble and respectful of others, and their policies will banish poverty in three years. These are powerful messages to take to the people. Only after all this homework is done will the Team contest elections. If despite that it fails to form government it will learn from the experience and try again until it succeeds. India's future is too important for anyone to give up.

In the coming months I will discuss a range of issues and respond to questions and comments. I look forward to working with you.

MR. SANJEEV SABHLOK can be contacted on: sabhlok@yahoo.com.

In Tanzania Albinos are hunted and mutilated to trade their “magical” organs

17 year old Vumilia Makoye was having dinner with her family, when two men with long knives forced their entry into the house, overpowering her mother Jeme, who tried to stop them. Then everything happened very fast. Jeme and the rest of the family watched helplessly, how the intruders grabbed Vumila, sawed off her legs above the knee and vanished with them. The legless girl, lying in a pool of blood, died soon.

Vumila was an albino. Albinism is an inherited hypopigmentary disorder, characterized by lack of the pigment melanin in eyes, skin and hair. As a result, the eyes are red and the skin is pinkish white and extremely sensitive to sun. In Africa, only one out of 3000 newborn is an albino. They suffer a lot of medical problems, and most of them die of skin cancer before reaching the age of 30.

It is a common belief in sub-Saharan Africa that albinos carry magical powers. They are shunned and socially stigmatized. But recently in Tanzania, superstition has taken a horrible turn. Witch doctors started claiming that magical potions, using skin, hair, bones, genitals, tongues or limbs of albinos as ingredients, bring wealth to their customers. Since then, albinos are hunted. According to official reports, 19 albino people, including children, have been killed and mutilated for trade of body parts. Other sources speak of more than fifty victims. Police officials believe that the albino killings have been inspired by Nigerian movies about witchcraft.

The superstition does not stop at the borders. In Kenya, an albino woman was found in late May with her eyes, tongue and breasts torn out. Albino skin is reportedly sold in Congo, too.

COURTESY: *Rationalist Bulletin No.176* published by Rationalist International. rationalist_international@hotmail.com



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjikaka

Bal Thackeray Is Truly A Supremo

By exhorting his co-religionists to become Hindu suicide bombers and target what he terms as “mini-Paks”, Bal Thackeray has once again proved that he is one of the most astute politicians in India. He is certainly giving Narendra Modi a run for his money.

On the face of it, Thackeray’s inflammatory editorial in *Saamna* seems foolish and almost suicidal. It is, after all, an open incitement to terrorism and constitutes a clear and present danger to the nation. In most civilized countries in the world, he would have been hauled up and prosecuted for promoting sedition; an offence that carries a very heavy legal penalty. If convicted, a very long prison sentence would be inevitable.

This is India, however, a country where jailing political party leaders is virtually unheard of; and where might is almost always right. If any proof of official impotence was needed, it can be found in the pathetic initial response of Maharashtra’s Home Minister. The Honourable Shri R.R. Patil was apparently blissfully unaware of the *Saamna* editorial, until someone in the media pointed it out to him. And what was his response? His government would take the opinion of the law and judiciary department and, that too, if the Special Branch gave an adverse report. Is his government so intellectually-challenged that it needs a report to determine

if action is warranted? There is nothing in the least bit ambiguous in the *Saamna* editorial. Among other things, it talks of the need for a “Hindu bomb” and, in fact, laments that the bombs used in the recent theatre blasts in Mumbai were not powerful enough. The plain truth is that nothing more than cosmetic action can be expected from the timid government that rules Maharashtra. Thackeray is a law unto himself; and cannot be touched.

And this is where Thackeray’s genius comes into play. Confident that he is immune from prosecution, he has cleverly expounded a theme guaranteed to excite the lumpen and inflame passions. For sure, all conscientious and right thinking citizens of Mumbai will abhor and condemn this naked call to insurrection. But do they matter? The sad reality of the society we live in is that the bad vastly outnumber the good. By appealing to the basest instincts in us humans, Thackeray has struck a willing chord in the millions who welcome any excuse to commit mayhem and destroy property.

And therein lies the dilemma of India’s system of democracy, with its principle of universal franchise. There are far more people ready and willing to opt for violence than for Gandhian non-violence. They are the people who will go out and vote during the next state election. The silent majority will stay silently at home.

Illegal Schools in Mumbai Suburbs

A newspaper report highlighted the fact that illegal schools, which have not been registered with the education ministry, are springing up with alarming frequency in Mumbai’s sprawling slums. Many of these “schools” are makeshift affairs, set up in small dilapidated rooms with almost zero facilities. The ‘teachers’ too, are mostly unqualified; usually individuals with a smattering of secondary education.

While no one condones these fly-by-night “educational” institutions, the real question to be asked is why they are springing up - and why they are flourishing among the economically backward pockets of Mumbai

society. I am pretty sure the people responsible for these “schools” do not have altruistic motives of imparting education to underprivileged kids. They are doing it to make money. Indeed, there is an unofficial education mafia running this racket. Accordingly, while the fees they charge may be small compared to recognized private schools, they certainly do not qualify as negligible.

It is easy for Maharashtra’s Education Minister, Vasant Purke, to sermonize about being concerned about “those responsible for polluting the education system”. However, the question he should ask himself is why so many people who lead a hand-to-mouth existence, are

prepared to part with some of their scarce financial resources, when there are free options available.

I am talking, of course, about the BMC-run municipal schools. It is apparent that the slum-dwellers regard municipal schools as the avenue of last resort for their children. They have zero confidence that their children will learn anything that will help them with future careers. Their misgivings are justified. Apart from classrooms in pathetic conditions, many of the municipal schools have teachers who are lethargic and indifferent, at best, or criminally negligent, at worst.

An item on the Diary page of the same paper reports how schools that have no teachers, no blackboards, tables, chairs, buildings - or, sometimes, even students -

continue to be listed and receive government grants. The reason is rampant corruption and collusion among bureaucrats and officials. One grassroots solution to improving the quality of education in municipal schools is to attract a better class of teachers. The obvious method of doing this is to improve salaries. The same government that pleads helplessness due to financial constraints has no qualms about squandering crores of rupees in such illegal activities.

I would suggest that the Education Minister and others of his 'honourable' tribe reserve their holier-than-thou public pronouncements and concentrate on putting their own house in order.

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

Amarnath Shrine - The Land Allotment Controversy

Jammu and Kashmir has been one of the regions of the country mired in different types of troubles all through. To add to the painful situation, the issue of land allotment to Amarnath shrine and later reversal of this decision has worsened the harmony, which is eluding the region.

In June 2008 the J&K Government, in contravention of a Supreme Court ruling, decided to divert 39.88 hectares of land to the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB). In the volatile situation of the state this land diversion was presented as if the land has been sold to the Shrine board. This also had the implication of changing the tourism related services in the state. Currently the economic activity generated due to the *yatra* (pilgrimage to the shrine) is one of the major sources of income for Muslims en-route. With the SASB taking over many/all these services, a perception was created that those regularly associated with the *yatra* services would be side-tracked and it would now become an exclusively Hindu affair. Further, this was wrongly perceived in the valley as an attempt to change the demographic profile of J&K by settling more Hindus in the region... These twin factors were in the minds of people when this land diversion was presented as the sale of land and there were huge spontaneous protests in the valley. Separatist extremists sections of Kashmir politics further enhanced the fury. These protests were immediately projected as anti-national by the BJP and huge demonstrations, equally fierce were orchestrated by the BJP in the Jammu region.

The cave where the shrine is located was the discovery of a Muslim Shepherd in the 1850s, when the pilgrimage started. The descendents of the Muslim shepherd and *sadhus* managed the *yatra* till 2001 when the SASB took over. Remarkably the *yatra* went on smoothly even during the peak of militancy in Kashmir, barring of course a few aberrations here and there. In 2006 the Governor ordered that dry ice be placed on the Linga which showed signs of melting due to the rise in temperature caused by increase in the *yatra* traffic and unseasonal warming. This also became a matter for protests. The pilgrimage is the major annual tourist event for the whole state, a means of bread and butter for many of them. Also the syncretism in people's attitude is explicit all through as one sees the deep interconnection of the religious communities in the organization and carrying out of the *yatra* logistics. This again came to the fore when the pilgrims who got trapped due to the breaking out of the demonstrations, were well served by Muslims enroute, who organized food supplies and helped them in other ways.

The spontaneous protest in valley was used by elements, like Syed Ali Shah Gilani, belonging to the extremist faction of Hurriyat Conference to fan the fire of separatism.

The ruling coalition comprising the Congress and the regional PDP viewed the issue more in terms of vote bank politics than basing their response on the ethos of democratic and secular values. The Congress forced the diversion of the land under pressure from the former Governor Sinha, and the PDP sensing the mood in the valley walked out of the coalition leading to the fall of the government. J&K is now under President's Rule.

Excerpted and edited from a longer article on the subject by Mr. Ram Punyani published in *ISP* July 2008.

On Old Age

Two friends decided to share with me, two touching, yet defiant, thoughts on old age. I am sure you'll enjoy reading them as much as I did.

Crabby Old Man

When an old man died in the geriatric ward of a small hospital near Tampa, Florida, it was believed that he had nothing left of any value. Later, when the nurses were going through his meagre possessions, they found this poem. Its quality and content so impressed the staff that copies were made and distributed to every nurse in the hospital. One nurse took her copy to Missouri. The old man's sole bequest to posterity has since appeared in the Christmas edition of the News Magazine of the St. Louis Association for Mental Health. A slide presentation has also been made based on his simple but eloquent poem. And this little old man, with nothing left to give to the world, is now the author of this 'anonymous' poem winging across the Internet.

*What do you see nurses? What do you see?
What are you thinking.....when you're looking at me?
A crabby old man, ...not very wise,
Uncertain of habitwith faraway eyes?*

*Who dribbles his food.....and makes no reply.
When you say in a loud voice.....'I do wish you'd try!'
Who seems not to notice ..the things that you do.
And forever is losing A sock or shoe?*

*Who, resisting or not.....lets you do as you will,
With bathing and feeding ... The long day to fill?
Is that what you're thinking? Is that what you see?
Then open your eyes, nurse.....you're not looking at me.*

*I'll tell you who I am As I sit here so still,
As I do at your bidding,as I eat at your will.
I'm a small child of ten.....with a father and mother,
Brothers and sisterswho love one another.*

*A young boy of sixteen ..with wings on his feet
Dreaming that soon now.a lover he'll meet.*

*A groom soon at twentymy heart gives a leap.
Remembering, the vows.....that I promised to keep.*

*At twenty-five now I have young of my own.
Who need me to guide And a secure happy home.
A man of thirty My young now grown fast,
Bound to each other With ties that should last.*

*At forty my young sons ...have grown and are gone,
But my woman's beside me.....to see I don't mourn.
At fifty, once more, Babies play 'round my knee,
Again, we know children My loved one and me.*

*Dark days are upon me My wife is now dead.
I look at the futureI shudder with dread.
For my young are all rearing.....young of their own.
And I think of the years... And the love that I've known.*

*I'm now an old man.....and nature is cruel.
'Tis jest to make old agelook like a fool.
The body, it crumbles.....grace and vigor depart.
There is now a stone.....where I once had a heart.*

*But inside this old carcass A young guy still dwells,
And now and againmy battered heart swells
I remember the joys..... I remember the pain.
And I'm loving and living.....life over again.*

*I think of the years all too few.....gone too fast.
And accept the stark fact.....that nothing can last.
So open your eyes peopleopen and see..
Not a crabby old man, look closer....see.....ME!!*

*Remember this poem when you next meet an older person
who you might brush aside without looking at the young
soul within.....we will all, one day, be there, too!*

The Role of Money and Muscle Power in the Karnataka Elections

Nobody who has closely watched the scenario all these years can say money and liquor do not play a part in the elections.; the value of hard cash, liquor and goodies seized in Karnataka was Rs.45.57 crore; if muscle power is employed in poorer states, it is money power in richer states; and if we do not want our democracy hijacked by unaccounted wealth, we should sit up and take notice before it is too late.

These revelations clearly demonstrate that the Election Commission is helpless and unable to initiate concrete action to curb criminalisation of politics which primarily implies the use of money and muscle power by politicians.

MR. V. SUBRAMANIAN, a former Advocate General of Tamil Nadu in *The Hindu* of July 2

Old Age, I Decided, Is A Gift

I am now, probably for the first time in my life, the person I have always wanted to be.

Oh, not my body! I sometime despair over my body, the wrinkles, the baggy eyes, and the sagging butt. And often I am taken aback by that old person that lives in my mirror (who looks like my father!), but I don't agonize over those things for long.

I would never trade my amazing friends, my wonderful life, my loving family for less grey hair or a flatter belly. As I've aged, I've become more kind to myself, and less critical of myself. I've become my own friend.

I don't chide myself for eating that extra cookie, or for not making my bed, or for buying that silly cement gecko that I didn't need, but looks so *avante garde* on my patio. I am entitled to a treat, to be messy, to be extravagant.

I have seen too many dear friends leave this world too soon; before they understood the great freedom that comes with aging.

Whose business is it if I choose to read or play on the computer until 4 AM and sleep until noon?

I will dance with myself to those wonderful tunes of the 60's & 70's, and if I, at the same time, wish to weep over a lost love..I will.

I will walk the beach in a swim suit that is stretched over a bulging body, and will dive into the waves with abandon if I choose to, despite the pitying glances from the jet set.

They, too, will get old.

I know I am sometimes forgetful. But there again, some of life is just as well forgotten. And I eventually remember the important things.

Sure, over the years my heart has been broken. How can your heart not break when you lose a loved one, or when a child suffers, or even when somebody's beloved pet gets hit by a car? But broken hearts are what give us strength and understanding and compassion. A heart never broken is pristine and sterile and will never know the joy of being imperfect.

I am so blessed to have lived long enough to have my hair turning grey, and to have my youthful laughs be forever etched into deep grooves on my face. So many have never laughed, and so many have died before their hair could turn silver.

As you get older, it is easier to be positive. You care less about what other people think. I don't question myself anymore. I've even earned the right to be wrong.

So, to answer your question, I like being old. It has set me free. I like the person I have become. I am not going to live forever, but while I am still here, I will not waste time lamenting what could have been, or worrying about what will be. And I shall eat dessert every single day. (If I feel like it)

"Crabby Old Man" from the Net courtesy Mr. Priyadarshan Pradhan; "Old A, I decided, was a Gift" from the Net Courtesy: Mr. B. H. Patankar.

Freedom First

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Reservations in Recruitment to Teaching Faculty Posts in the Indian Institutes of Technology

All directors agreed that such reservations for faculty posts would mar the quality of education at the institutes.

Buoyed by its success in pushing through a quota for Other Backward Classes (OBC) students in higher education, the Indian government has now ordered the world renowned Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) to introduce - with "immediate effect" - quotas in the teaching faculty for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and OBCs.

IIT directors, not surprisingly, were livid with the decision. The high quality of IIT faculty has built the institution into a globally respected brand. Said an IIT-Delhi professor: "It is hard to imagine that even teachers will now use the caste flag to get in."

The government diktat dated June 9, which has been sent to all the IITs, lays down 15% quota for SC, 7.5% for ST and 27% quota for OBCs in teaching positions. IITs currently have reservations for backward category candidates for administrative posts - from attendants to the level of deputy registrar. However, there is no reservation for faculty members in these premier technological institutes.

The order signed by Seema Raj, director of technical education in the HRD ministry, read, "I am directed to say that the matter relating to reservation of SC, ST, OBC categories in recruitment to teaching (faculty) posts in the IITs was considered in the second meeting of the SCIC (Standing Committee of IIT Council) held on 11/2/2008. The recommendations made by the SCIC have been accepted by the chairman of (the) IIT Council. Accordingly, it has been decided to implement reservation for SC, ST, OBC, in recruitment to teaching (faculty) posts in IITs with immediate effect."

For subjects in science and technology, posts will be reserved for lecturers and assistant professors. In areas like management, social sciences and humanities, reservations will be applicable up to the professor level. The ministry allows IITs to de-reserve the posts after a year, if they do not get filled "despite all efforts".

Insiders feel that merit, on which brand IIT rests, would be shaken by the decision of the government.

The order specifies that in departments dealing with

science and technology subjects, "reservation shall be applied to the extent possible at the school or broad branch of engineering, at least, if not at the individual department level."

The IIT directors contacted by *The Times of India*, who were yet to convey the order to their faculty members, said they are shocked by the decision.

"Some of the finest people have given up top positions and fat cheques that were offered to them in other parts of the world to come and teach in the IITs, despite the low pay scale that the government offers. With reservation in faculty positions, I see a day, not far from now, when the IITs will crumble," said one director.

Another director said that there had been no bias against hiring backward category candidates to teaching positions if they were found meritorious. "Till now, if a backward category candidate was found on par with another candidate, the former was given preference, but reservation will change the atmosphere on the campus," said the director.

All directors agreed that such reservations for faculty posts would mar the quality of education at the institutes.

The lecturer's post in the IITs is a contractual one and the basic salary is Rs 10,000 per month. Usually, fresh PhD candidates are taken in at this level.

If their services are found satisfactory, they are promoted to assistant professor and get onto the permanent rolls of the IITs. But now, almost half the posts - 49.5% to be precise - will be reserved at both these levels.

Scheduled castes (SC) :

0Scheduled castes generally consist of former "untouchables" (the term "Dalit" is now preferred). The present population is 16% of the total population of India (around 160 million). For example, Delhi state has 49 castes listed as SC.

cont'd.p.17

“SAM BAHADUR” (Cont’d. from p.2)

‘girlie’ books for the young officers picked up from the shadier streets of Calcutta!

As Army Chief, during the 1971 Operations in the Barmer Sector in the Thar Desert he was visiting the troops. To address the officers seated at a distance from him a microphone had been set up. General Manekshaw got up, ordered “that thing to be taken away” and moved forward so that he could talk to the young officers freely and informally.

Leadership

Much after retirement this writer, then on the Advisory Board of the Xavier Institute of Management

Mumbai, invited the Field Marshal to address the faculty and students on Leadership in the Indian context. He spoke for over an hour without referring to notes. His incisive talk was interspersed with humour and at the end of it, after fielding questions, he received a standing ovation. He emphasized these qualities: There is just no substitute for thorough and updated professional knowledge; decisiveness – once you have made up your mind do not vacillate; impartiality especially when treating offenders and in awarding commendable work; presence; and to stand up for what you feel is right. He gave personal examples of these qualities. He was asked whether leaders in India are born or made. He answered emphatically that like him, they are made unlike sons of our politicians and MPs who believe that they are born to be leaders!

On Sam Maneckshaw

Ardeshir Cowasjee

Field Marshal Sam Maneckshaw, MC, was the second Indian soldier to be so honoured, with justification, with the highest rank that can be bestowed upon a soldier, the other being Field Marshal K. M. Cariappa, the first Indian to command the Indian army, friend and contemporary of our Field Marshal Ayub Khan, the first Pakistani to command the Pakistan army. (However, unlike Ayub, both Cariappa and Manekshaw were honoured for their military skills and prowess.)

Sam Bahadur became India's chief of army staff in 1969 and, as we in Pakistan must accept with heavy hearts, the highlight of his outstanding career was his resounding victory over the armed forces of Pakistan in 1971, when we lost East Pakistan to Bangladesh.

Another good friend of Manekshaw from this side of the border was our Rangila Raja Gen Agha Mohammed Yahya Khan. At the time of partition Major Manekshaw and Major Yahya Khan were together on the staff of Field Marshal Sir Claude Auchinleck. Sam owned a red James motorcycle which Yahya had always had an eye on. He offered to buy it, and did, for the princely sum of Rs.1,000 which he promised to send over from Pakistan. Yahya, being Yahya, let it lapse. After the 1971 victory, Sam was heard to quip, “Yahya never paid me the Rs1,000 for my motorbike, but now he has paid with half his country.”

When I met the Field Marshal I told him that Yahya had never forgotten the debt, but had never got round to it. I offered to pay back the Rs.1,000 with interest, on his behalf. No, no, said the Field Marshal, Yahya was a good man and a good soldier, we served together. There was not one mean or corrupt bone in his body. Your politicians are as bad as ours. Yahya was condemned without being heard. After he was put under house arrest at the end of December 1971, up to his death in 1980, he clamoured unceasingly for an open trial. Why was he condemned unheard?

Sam was buried quietly in his home in Tamil Nadu, a modest affair rather than the grand funeral he should have had in the capital, Delhi. Last year his name was linked to bizarre allegations made by the son of President Gen Ziaul Haq, our ‘exceedingly clever’ politician Ejazul Haq, against an unnamed Indian brigadier who allegedly had sold Indian war plans to Pakistan. The slur lingered on and the prime minister, the army, navy and air force chiefs all stayed away from the field marshal's funeral.

From Pakistan's Karachi-based daily Dawn, 9 July 2008

When he was posted as Commandant of the Defence Services Staff College Wellington, (Niligiris, Tamil Nadu) he very nearly met his Waterloo when a disgruntled Officer reported to Delhi that SHFJ was anti-national! Fate intervened again. The inquiry was conducted by Major General Daulat Singh, ex IDC on instructions of the thoroughly impartial Lt.Gen. Kumaramangalam, Vice Chief, and Sam Bahadur was exonerated at about the same time as the 1962 debacle in NEFA.

Sense of Humour

His sense of humour was proverbial though at times he overstepped the bounds. There is the classic example when he addressed a high profile gathering in Delhi. In his inimitable manner he told this audience that if he was the Pakistan Army Chief during the 1971 War Pakistan would have won the war!

There was a tussle as to who should be the next Chief between Sam Bahadur and his course-mate at the Indian Military Academy, the imposing war veteran Lt. Gen. Harbaksh Singh who led the Western Command in the 1965 War. There was considerable delay as the Cabinet Committee debated the choice. It was touch and go but the choice fell on Sam who had held successfully command, staff and instructional appointments. The rest is history.

Sam Bahadur was expectedly appointed Colonel of the Regiment of 8 Gorkha Rifles. He perhaps overdid this bit and when he as Eastern Army Commander deemed that only Gorkha Battalions would be located in Fort William, HQ Eastern Command on the specious plea that Gorkhas knew best how to handle volatile Bengali crowds!

He had his idiosyncrasies in that he never ever wore a beret but always the peak cap or his famous side cap and he always carried a cane. He was meticulous in appearance and always, but always well groomed. He had his own close coterie of officers but was very secular in his attitude. And he stood up firmly when the occasion demanded as when Indira Gandhi wanted to enter East Pakistan in April 1971 and he resolutely declined for very bonafide reasons. He had a good team of staff officers and the detailed planning for this most successful operation in East Pakistan was the handiwork of Lt. Gen J.F.R. Jacob the Chief of Staff Eastern Command and the late Major General Inder Gill, Director Military Operations at this critical juncture.

To sum up, what then made Sam great and reach the heights that he did? His professional knowledge and varied experience in command, staff and instructional

appointments. His *savoir faire* and flamboyance. His ability to weld a good team. This was manifest during the 1971 War where he received maximum cooperation from the other two Service Chiefs, the brilliant and highly intelligent Air Marshal P C Lal, and the Naval Chief Admiral Nanda. One remarkable quality of his was that within his own command he could be very strict but outside it he would always stand up for his subordinates. He could establish rapport with his subordinates, especially the younger officers and jawans. Though a Field Marshal he was by no means pompous or rank conscious.

He had some negatives and which human being does not? After the successful war in East Pakistan, the Field Marshal's estimation would have been higher had he publicly acknowledged the invaluable services of Lt. Gen J F R Jacob, Chief of Staff Eastern Command who was responsible for all the meticulous planning and in cahoots with then Major General (later Lt Gen) Inder Gill, the DMO, another great soldier, for changing the final objective to Dacca instead of Chittagong even to the extent of moving a brigade to East Pakistan. The proof is in the pudding for when Dacca was taken, Niazi knew the end was up and surrendered. Perhaps the Field Marshal overdid his fondness for Gorkha troops and to some extent the Sikhs because of his close association with the Punjab in his youth, and in his enthusiasm tended to forget that all Indian troops are equally good or not so good. But these negatives are minor glitches.

These then are some of the qualities that made Sam Bahadur India's first Field Marshal. All that now remains is for him to be the first soldier to be deservedly awarded posthumously the Bharat Ratna!

Those who saw clips of the last rites at Wellington could not have missed the large number of jawan's families including many Gorkhas who stood in silent homage to their very own Sam Bahadur.

Much has been written in the print media and discussed on the electronic media of the glaring and indiscreet behaviour of the Government and the three Service Chiefs for not being present in Wellington for the last rites when this true son of India was laid to rest aside his wife Silloo.

One can only end this tribute by repeating the Gurkha cry of success - "*Hoki Haina*"!

MAJOR GENERAL EUSTACE D'SOUZA PVSM is a free-lance writer and a regular contributor to *Freedom First*.

The Nuclear Deal (cont'd. from page 6)

the super-patriot, sporting his party's halo of high morality, sneaks up to the UNPA and tells them that they can choose their Prime Minister with the BJP's support. On the other side the Akalis say: If the Shiv Sena could vote for Pratibha Patil for President because she is a Maharashtrian, we can vote for the Nuclear Deal, or at least abstain, to support the first Sikh Prime Minister! The entire circus has degenerated into mutual abuse most of it emanating from the BJP whose ravenous greed for power is now nakedly visible.

The true democrat that Dr. Manmohan Singh is, he has now announced that the UPA on its own will seek a Vote of Confidence on July 21st and 22nd, even though it needs to do no such thing. It is the BJP that should put through a Vote of No Confidence. The BJP is reluctant to talk about that because it does not have the numbers, even with the Communists in tow.

Point Counter Point (cont'd. from page 7)

that Rane's supporters wanted to show that Chief Minister Deshmukh is unwanted by the partymen. Rane alleged that the disturbance was deliberately created by his opponents to denigrate him in Sonia's esteem. Rane has vowed vengeance. His ambition of being the Chief Minister (again) is nurtured by the high command but not fulfilled.

The Prime Minister in his interview on board his plane on his way to Japan described the Communists as "patriots". One wonders how many saw the irony. Do we refer to Mahatma Gandhi as a patriot? Or for that matter L. K. Advani (notwithstanding his being a super-patriot)? It is taken for granted. The Left serves the interests of Beijing, even if the Chinese have agreed to support India on the nuclear deal. Ask them from where they get their money to run such a vast organisation and fund the Naxalites. That was what the Prime Minister meant on board that plane. Prakash Karat and Company should be arrested on grounds of treason and tried. Someone has to say this openly. The halo of super-patriotism on the head of their supporters, the BJP, is getting more than a little threadbare.

MR. SHARAD BAILUR is a frequent contributor to *Freedom First*.

Readers are invited to send in their points of view on serious issues of the day to avkay@mtnl.net.in

Reservations in Recruitment to Teaching Faculty Posts in IITs (cont'd. from page 14)

Scheduled tribes (ST)

Scheduled tribes generally consist of tribal groups. The present population is 7% of the total population of India i.e. around 70 million.

Other Backward Classes (OBC)

The Other Backward Classes (OBCs) comprise the castes - in the middle of the Hindu caste hierarchy - who do not face so much exclusion or isolation in society but are educationally and economically backward.

Muslims, Christians and other minorities also benefit by falling in all the above three categories. In addition they get further concessions and special reservation benefits.

Ambedkar the "father" of the Dalits argued that the social evils in Muslim society were "worse than those seen in Hindu society".

The caste-based reservations in India have led to wide-spread protests, with many complaining of reverse discrimination against the forward castes (the castes that do not qualify for the reservation). The 2006 Indian anti-reservation protests are one major example. Many view negative treatment (or hatred) of forward castes as socially divisive and just as wrong. The modern view is caste-based reservations should be based on the individual's personal economic status, as there are now many Dalits who are more wealthy and more educated than forward castes but still benefit from caste-based reservations and other government advantages, which is seen as unfair & discriminatory against forward castes. Many view the only realistic solution to these problems of unfairness is caste-based reservations should be based on the individual's personal economic status not on their caste, social background or cultural heritage.

COURTESY: <http://hassers.blogspot.com/2008/07/center-for-inquiry-humanist.html>. Report in *The Times of India* of June 28

BOOKREVIEWS



EMPIRE OF KNOWLEDGE, CULTURE AND PLURALITY IN THE GLOBAL ECONOMY by Vinay Lal ● Vistaar Publications, B1/11, Mohan Co-op. Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110 044 ● Year of Publication : 2005 ● No. of Pages : 287 ● Price : Rs.380

Reviewed by Professor R. Srinivasan, former Professor of Economics, University of Mumbai and associate editor of *Freedom First*.

This is a valuable book which ought to be read and pondered over. It is provocative, and skeptical of many

present-day nostrums. Two or three themes dominate this interesting book which can be regarded as reflections on the present discontents relating to civilization, politics and social happenings. Politics on an international scale dominates the discussion and the role of international bodies such as the UN, the Security Council, the IMF, World Bank, W.T.O. dominate the domestic politics of many countries of the third world. These, the author argues are essentially an extension of American dominance. For all practical purposes, the UN has been in the penumbra and the other international bodies are far from being truly international. Several pages lay bare the blotted record of the U.S. in the American hemisphere, in the Middle East and the use of blatant lies such as “weapons of mass destruction” to pulverize Iraq and reduce the people to misery. Similar has been the pounding of Afghanistan. In short the U.S. has become a war machine and its illegal bombing of Laos and Cambodia and it “sponsored ironically under the aegis of an anti-terrorist law, death squads in El Salvador and Guatemala”(p.107).

This needs to be stressed in a context where most educated Indians view the U.S as a Utopia and set their sights on God’s own country enamoured by its opulence, vibrancy and its social, political, academic institutions and the corporate sector; almost all of us hope for the most prized privilege of getting a citizenship and are often satisfied with a green card. The darker side of active discrimination where one out of three Black American males would have spent time in prison is of course not known.

We know and should not forget that the record of major and minor European powers during the 19th Century and the 20th Century in Asia and Africa has been one of decimation of populations, unrelieved destruction of nature, forcible taking away of lands from a helpless people and ruthless exploitation of invaluable resources, natural and mineral. All countries have been complicit in this plunder – England, France, Germany, Belgium, Portugal and the Dutch. The Americans stepped in and

adventured in colonialism in the Pacific and parts of Southern America.

Concepts and categories are the building blocs of any mental exertion and we cannot do without them either in a loose sense in every day life or precisely in the different intellectual disciplines. While these are indispensable to all cultural life, there is also a tendency for concepts both to obfuscate and dominate. An extremely interesting chapter examines this with disturbing findings. Often used in every day politics one of the dominant concept is terrorism, particularly Islamic terrorism. Similar killing of innocent people on a large scale happens and the word terrorism is not used for this. In Northern Ireland there were 70 deaths due to the terrorism (of the Irish extremists) but in the U.S. in 1980 there were 30,000 homicides, generally described as Street crime. According to the CIA “during the period 1969-1980 international terrorists claimed 3,368 lives, but in just two years 1965-66 Suharto’s armed forces massacred not less than 500,000 communists. Suharto’s forces then went on a killing spree in East Timor where conservative estimates place the number of those murdered at about 200,000. Yet Indonesia a bulwark in the anti-communist defence shield, was never described as a terrorist State by the U.S.” (p.100).

Categorisation tends to distort social reality. The nation-state is a category often used approvingly but he reminds us that for decades and almost for many centuries people lived with multiple identities in lands that were not nation-states. In Africa people identified themselves with tribes and the nation states created in the continent by drawing lines on a map of Africa in a European capital did violence to tribal identities dividing people of the same tribe into different nationalities often in deadly conflict. Complex cultures and civilizations have been docketed Islamic and these are regarded as a menace to the whole world (see p.187).

Categories like development which are words of approval conceal a great deal of coercive elements which lead to a rejection of spiritual and religious values, ruthless exploitation of natural resources, disruption of traditional

livelihoods, forcible tearing off people from lands they had occupied for centuries and an assault of their social and moral economy. In the name of development we have forcibly unsettled thousands of people, particularly aborigines, taken their forestland and means of livelihood and destroyed whole cultures. This is true of the building of dams which has had its own narration of misery. "A single enterprise, the Three Gorges Project in China which entails the construction of the world's largest hydroelectric dam will upon completion have displaced 1.2. million people. In India between 12 and 33 million people have been displaced by large dams since 1949..." (pp.113-4)

Similarly the nation-state has been regarded as a good thing. In the pursuit of this, whole languages and dialects and local cultures were smothered and wiped out all in the name of nation and nationality. One such instance was the development of the French language; till the later half of the 19th century French was not spoken in many parts of France and force was used to impose the language. We saw in our country the dimensions of violence that were let loose on the "imposition" of Hindi in the South. In the mid nineteenth century, Chief Seattle in painful

anguish expressed this eloquently and was indeed prophetic of the doom that awaited his helpless people who were to be ruthlessly sacrificed for the avarice of the western man.

The Mahatma's turning away from western nostrums and his asserting an indigenous alternative social order becomes relevant in this context. He has been characterised by the author as the ultimate dissenter. The inheritors of Gandhi's legacy, the Indian political elite are regarded by the author as betrayers of his ideals."...with each passing year, every wreath laid at his *Samadhi*, or national memorial meant that India was coming close to extinguishing Gandhi's influence from the life of the nation-state." His moral earnestness, his not flinching from grappling with what appeared unresolvable problems, and his going to the heart of issues are what appeals to the younger generation born decades after his passing away. Though he wrote nothing on ecology yet the environmentalists today in the country are deeply influenced by his writings. The author has several insightful pages on the Mahatma which are worth reading and pondering over.

Nelson Mandela 90

The public celebrations that accompany elderly politicians' birthdays are not voluntary. If they are still in power it is not by popular choice and if they are retired their anniversaries are private affairs. Nelson Mandela must surely be the first public figure whose 90th birthday on 18 July 2008 was anticipated with an internationally televised rock concert held in a packed public space in London. The audience on 27 June included a fair share of people who were on average a decade or two older than the crowd that would camp out at Glastonbury the upcoming weekend, but among the statesmen, divas and television personalities there were plenty of fresh faces. It's a fair bet that many of the concert-goers in Hyde Park that day were still learning to stand when Nelson Mandela walked out of his prison cell. For them, the anti-apartheid struggle is a history lesson, something that happened in another country in another time. But the affection and admiration Mandela commands across such a vast and varied public following was very evident. How can we explain it?



The straightforward answer was the one that Stephen Fry supplied in his interview backstage in Hyde Park. Mandela is a good and great man; such people are rare; and they have an unusual capacity to inspire public optimism and social solidarity. This is all true but it can be only part of the explanation. It doesn't take much imagination to think of public figures with equivalent moral qualities that do not evoke such adulation. Vaclav Havel? Aung San Suu Kyi? It takes a bit more effort to identify public figures with comparably heroic careers, but they exist and indeed include many of Mandela's own compatriots.

Mandela's iconography projects an ordinary man with ordinary weaknesses who was nevertheless capable of magnificent courage, compassionate generosity, and at certain key points, righteous acts. Identifying mistakes and blemishes hardly detracts from these noble capacities and actions - it only makes them more remarkable

Excerpts from 'Nelson Mandela Assessing the Icon' by Tom Lodge, professor of peace and conflict studies at the University of Limerick, Ireland. **Courtesy:** Open Democracy, 18 July 2008

Between Ourselves ...

By the time you receive this edition of *Freedom First* the game of musical chairs would have been played out in Delhi. Whichever combination 'wins' the country has lost. Other than a small handful of politicians – on both sides of the fence – the vast majority of our 'law-makers' do not really understand the Deal and what it means for our country. What they have understood is that they are valuable commodity who can till the 22nd of July command a high price! The wheeling and dealing that is going on now and correctly described by Sharad Bailur in this issue's lead article is indeed fishing in a horse trough – perhaps even a horse trough is cleaner! Its all so very disgusting. In the September number we shall discuss the sorry mess we are in – and this has no reference to Inflation.

We welcome Sanjeev Sabhlok and his column "Come On Liberals: Let's Change India!". It starts at an appropriate time when India's politics and public character have touched a new low. Sanjeev is looking forward to plenty of interaction with you, dear reader. Please do not

disappoint him. It is not often, at least in these days, to see someone with his passion for liberal values and prepared to give his time to promote what we all stand for. Not many would have the courage to say what he says: "We (liberals) must gain the people's mandate to govern India." He has our good wishes - and of course two pages in our journal each month!

Though the lead story is on the Nuclear Deal, Sam Bahadur occupies more pages! Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw is a soldier we are all very proud of. While joining Major General Eustace D'Souza in cheering him in his tribute to the Field Marshal, we are ashamed of the manner in which the establishment denied Sam Bahadur the honour that was due to him.

The article by Mr. V. Balachandran "India Must Know its McCain and Obama" (*Freedom First*, July 2008) was first published in *Asian Age*. This acknowledgement had been inadvertently left out.

– Editor.

Many Voices

Recently, for the wedding of his son, one Chief Minister gave an invitation card package estimated to cost Rs.15,000 per invitee. The top leadership is imitating the businessmen in their lavish lifestyle and aspiring to get there.

Arun Kumar, *Janata*, April 13, 2008

I have told Nawaz Sharif that if we fail to remove Pervez Musharraf, we both might end up in jail.

Pakistan People's Party Chairman Asif Ali Zardari
quoted in *The Week*, July 6

When Prakash Karat goes to meet Sonia Gandhi, it is called 'suhaag raat' (wedding night), but when we go to to meet Sonia Gandhi, it is called 'balaatkaar' (rape)

Samajwadi Party General Secretary Amar Singh,
DNA, July 10

I have a question to ask our politicians; don't you have better things to do than work yourselves into a froth about cheer girls?

Columnist Karan Thapar,
Sunday Hindustan Times, April 27

India is a country where marriage is considered sacred, so it is hardly a surprise that there is no word in Hindi for divorce.

Andrew Burncombe, *The Statesman*, May 3

In India one never knows what's going to happen next.

Former Canadian High Commissioner
David M Malone, *Mint*, July 10

The most important catalysts of the current food crisis are government policies. – especially in the US – that encourage farmers to divert their production away from crops toward ethanol and other biofuels... the culprits (are) farmers in rich(countries) and the politicians they have in their pockets.

Excerpted from an article in *Foreign Policy*,
The Indian Express, July 3

There may be a few billionaires in the country, but our basic infrastructure for the millions is non-existent.

BJP Member of the Lok Sabha Rao Santosh Gangwar,
The Week, July 6

Founder: Minoo Masani ● **Editor:** S. V. Raju ● **Associate Editor:** R. Srinivasan ● **Advisory Board:** Sharad Bailur, R. V. Chari, Firoze Hirjikaka, Ashok Karnik, Nitin Raut, Brig. (Retd.) S. C. Sharma, Sameer Wagle

Publishers: Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF), 3rd Floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400 001.

Phone: +91 (22) 2284 34 16 ● E-mail: freedom@vsnl.com

Published by J. R. Patel for the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF) and printed by him at Kaiser-E-Hind Private Ltd., Plot No.A-191, Road No.16A, MIDC, Wagle Industrial Estate, Thane (W) - 400 604. Phone: 25804162

Typeset at **Shubham Print & Web** 59, Dr. V. B. Gandhi Marg, 1st Floor, Fort, Mumbai 400 001. Phone: 2284 2619 ● Mobile: 98929 21277

Single Copy: Rs.10 ● Annual: Rs.150 (Add Rs.50 for outstation cheques) ● Overseas (Ind Class Air Mail) Annual: \$20 or £10

Cheques to be drawn in favour of **ICCF** and mailed to the publishers at the above address.