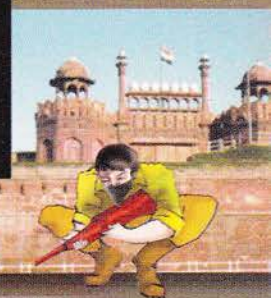
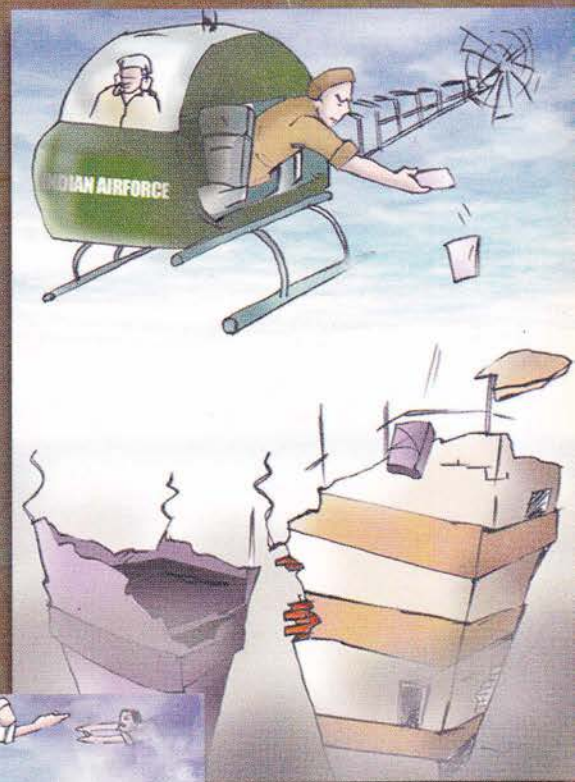
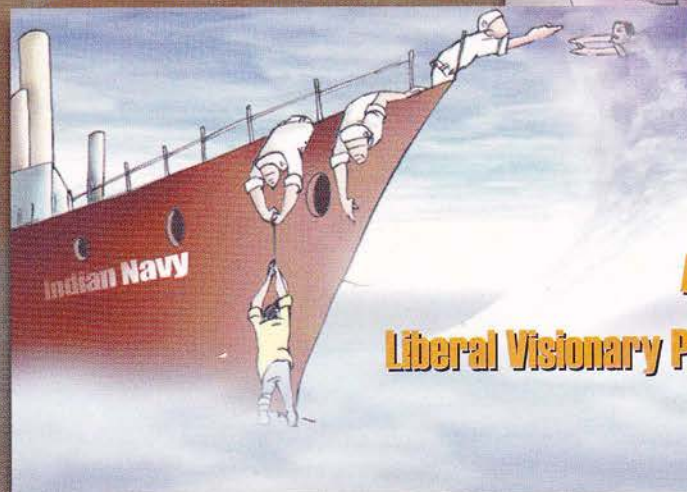


Freedom First

A LIBERAL QUARTERLY
49TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION
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No. 448
RUPEES TWENTY FIVE



**Thank God for
India's Armed Forces, But...**



**A Courageous Ruling
Liberal Visionary Punjabrao Deshmukh
Angels from Tibet**

Professor M. P. Rege

24.01.1924 – 28.12.2000

In the passing away of Professor M. P. Rege, Maharashtra and all those who cherish liberal values in our country have lost a friend, philosopher and guide.



Professor Meghshyam Pundalik Rege graduated from the Elphinstone College in Mumbai and took his Master's degree in Philosophy from the Bombay University. A scholarship from the British Council in 1959 enabled him to spend a year in Oxford to continue his studies in Philosophy.

His teaching career spanned over thirty years, a large part of which was spent at the Kirti College in Mumbai. After retiring from the teaching profession he spent the next 16 years from 1984 to 2000, first as Vice President and later President of Pradnya Pathshala in Wai. He was also the Chairman of the Vishwakosh Mandal and edited the well-known magazine *Navbharat*. This was a period when he was very closely associated with Tarkateerth Laxmanshastri Joshi who was Chairman of the Marathi Viswakosh project.

A high point of his career was a special project funded by the Ford Foundation to bring about a dialogue between Western Philosophers and traditional Indian Pandits, through a number of sessions conducted at various places in India. He was a good moderator translating into Sanskrit what the Western Philosophers had to say and putting into English from Sanskrit the Indian Pandits' response. At the time of his death he was engaged in a study of Buddhism.

Many of us came in close touch with when he took over as editor of *New Quest*, after the demise of Professor A. B. Shah who had founded the journal. Professor Rege was the recipient of many honours, notably the Maharashtra Foundation's Award for eminent thinkers and the Konkan Sahitya Bhushan Award.

Professor Rege was a Liberal in the best sense of that term. Very recently he was asked about his expectation from the younger generation. He replied, inter-alia:

"It is not proper for old men to impose any expectations on the younger generation and thus hamper their freedom to live the way they want to. I only hope that they are not unmindful of the opportunities that have come their way, which men and women of my generation never had. They are living in a world in which knowledge and technology are expanding almost without any bounds and they can actively shape the future course of this world if they equip themselves to do so with the requisite knowledge. At the same time, they must never forget the fact, that almost half the population of India lives below the poverty line and that, scientific and technological advances will be a mere mockery, if they are not used to alleviate human misery and help men and women live happy and dignified lives."

A man of immense learning, charm, subtle humour and humanity, he was a civilizing influence on all those who came in touch with him. He has left a void but his fragrant memory will be cherished for a long, long time.

Arvind A. Deshpande

Dr. S. Ambirajan

19.01.1936 – 04.02.2001

Dr. S. Ambirajan, Professor of Economics, is no more. He passed away in Chennai on February 4, 2001.



He belonged to a family of scholars. His father, Mr. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar was a renowned scholar and poet. Dr. Ambirajan's first research degree, M.A.(Hons.) in 1957 was followed by a Ph.D. in 1961 from Andhra University. He went to England to study at the University of Manchester in 1959. Here he held the Bank of England Houbton-Norman Research fellowship and the

Hallsworth Research fellowship with distinction, taking a doctoral degree from the University of Manchester as well in 1964.

He taught economics in Australia for 12 years before deciding to return to India in 1981 as Professor at the Indian Institute of Technology, Chennai. He retired from the Institute in 1996. When he passed away he was Honorary Professor, Madras School of Economics.

My association with Dr. Ambirajan began in the early nineties when he was in the I.I.T. Madras. He not only wrote for *Freedom First* but over the years monitored its contents and would tell me where I was going wrong and suggest correctives. When the Indian Liberal Group was formed I invited him to join the group. He replied: "It has been my policy not to join formally any groups except professional associations because that ties me down robbing me of freedom of expression. I am not saying that it is the best way of looking at things. It suits me. However as I value what the group is aiming at, I am making a token contribution which I hope will be accepted." He sent a cheque for Rs.400 which was equal to the initial subscription of an Active Member. We respected his wishes by not asking him to fill up a form but we considered him a member nevertheless.

Thus the Indian Liberal Group at its meeting in Chennai on February 11 adopted the following resolution:

"In the sad demise of Dr. S. Ambirajan, the Indian Liberal Group has lost an eminent member. An erudite scholar, a fearless critic with no animosity towards anyone, an affable, genial and a highly cultured person, Dr. Ambirajan, was a committed and earnest Liberal and a pillar of strength to the Indian Liberal Group.

The Indian Liberal Group cherishes his memory and places on record his work in promoting the Liberal philosophy. Without doubt he greatly added to the ILG's credibility and prestige.

This meeting of the members of the Indian Liberal Group deeply mourn his untimely passing away and convey their heartfelt and sincere condolences to Mrs. Ambirajan and other members of her family on their irreparable loss.

May his soul rest in peace"

In the next issue of *Freedom First* we shall carry a tribute to this outstanding Liberal, by his sister Dr. Prema Nandakumar.

S. V. Raju

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BETWEEN OURSELVES...

The distribution of the last issue was disrupted by the postal strike. While in some metropolitan cities we had copies distributed through courier agencies, others had to wait till the postal strike was called off. Consequently information concerning the next cover feature was received late by a large number of readers. We therefore decided to postpone the feature "Penalising Honesty in the Land of Gandhi" to October to coincide with Gandhi Jayanti. Please send in your contribution for this feature by August 31.

For this issue we substituted instead a cover story on the Armed Forces and invited Major General E. D'Souza to write on the goings on in the Armed Forces. Then came the killer earthquake in Gujarat. And then, in less than a fortnight came the big spectacle in Mumbai - the International Fleet Review. In all three, the presence of the Armed Forces was larger than life and we decided that we would deal with all three in this cover feature on the Armed Forces.

Our Next Cover Feature THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION

The WTO seems to have become a favourite whipping boy for any or all ills in our economy. The effort in this cover story will be to get those who know, to explain what the WTO is and its impact on our economy.

Last Date for receiving your contribution: Monday, April 16, 2001

We accept contributions by post, fax and Email: freedom@vsnl.com or on a diskette (Microsoft Word format).

Subscription Renewal: If you have not renewed your subscription for 2001, please do so immediately on reading this reminder.

Bimonthly Fund: Nothing new to report. The Bi-monthly is still as far away as it was towards the end of last year.

This issue is of 68 pages of which 29 comprise book reviews. The additional pages were made possible thanks to a contribution from a generous friend who does not wish to be named.

Editor

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WITH MANY VOICES

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

The absence of coordination is repeatedly illustrated whenever and wherever disaster strikes in India.

Maj.Gen. Manjeet Singh, GOC, U.P.Area,
The Sunday Times of India, January 28

We can do nothing to stop earthquakes and hurricanes, but we can reduce environmental degradation. Let us not behave as badly as nature does.

Swaminathan S. A. Aiyar,
The Sunday Times of India, January 28

What Bhuj and the area around require are rescuers... What it is getting are politicians on an inspection tour.

Busybee, *Afternoon Despatch & Courier*, February 1

We salute Indian Army, Police, Public and our country. We hate corrupt, coward and dirty politicians.

A banner displayed by residents of
Maninagar, Ahmedabad, *Outlook*, February 19

While our men were struggling to rescue the trapped survivors, the police, home guards and municipal babus covered their noses with handkerchiefs.

A senior army officer, *Outlook*, February 19

The state government perhaps does not even know of our existence. No one has visited our village till date to take stock of the situation.

Naveenbhai Mehta, a local grain dealer
in the village of Lodhai near Bhuj,
Outlook, February 19

We didn't have sophisticated equipment or an idea of such rescue operations, we dug up tunnels using our own judgement and saved many lives. We were surprised that people had no faith in the civil administration and reposed trust in us.

Naik Subedar C. P. Upadhyay, *Outlook*, February 19

Nothing has come from the government, people are fighting among themselves to grab whatever is dumped by various voluntary agencies.

Adam a farm labourer, and Sulaiman Rehman a lineman
with the Gujarat Electricity Board, Sukhpur village
near Bhuj, *The Week* February 18

They (a Swiss rescue team) refused food and accommodation and rushed to the rescue, even preferring to stay with those rendered homeless.

Hari Desai, an NRI coordinating rescue operations,
The Week, February 11.

Many employees including officers were away on account of three consecutive holidays beginning Republic Day. Communication was thrown haywire after the quake. Hence it took time to put our act together.

Gujarat Chief Minister Keshubhai Patel,
The Week, February 11

For thousands it was too late.

Anosh Malekar, Correspondent of
The Week, February 11

Gujarat is trying to live again because people who built it with enterprise won't let it die of despair.

Sudeep Chakravarti, *India Today*, February 12

We have been warning the administration since 1995 about these buildings. But we couldn't break the nexus of land sharks, politicians and officials.

Kirtibhai Khatri, Editor, *Kutch Mitra*, Bhuj,
cited in *India Today*, February 12

There are three kinds of officials who thrive under Keshubhai - those who are favoured by the chief minister's family, those who are recommended by the RSS and those who *manage* the chief secretary.

A Minister in the Gujarat government,
India Today, February 12

The havoc wrought by the Gujarat Earthquake Situation as on February 7

Population affected	3.78 crores
Districts	21
Villages	8,792
Human deaths	16,480
Injured	1,44,927
Houses collapsed	2,28,906
Cattle Deaths	18,352
Estimated loss of property	Rs.3,500 Crores
Impact on trade & industry	Rs.2,000 Crores

Courtesy: *The Week*, February 18

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

To Smoke or Not to Smoke

Two friends, both Liberals, both non-smokers, have protested the proposed ban on tobacco advertising, but for different reasons. Louella Lobo Prabhu's objections are practical - sports will suffer because of the loss of sponsorship of sports. Also, government's loss of revenue.

In her column in *Business Today*, Seetha smells a sinister motive. Quantitative restrictions on tobacco products will be removed on April 1, 2001. There will be unrestricted entry of foreign brands and this could hit *desi* companies like ITC, Godfrey Philips and Vazir Sultan Tobacco! So they lobbied with the government to ban advertisements. "How will new entrants ever get into the market if they are not able to advertise?" asks Seetha. "So it's good old crony capitalism at work here. The state has succumbed to pressure from the big daddies of the tobacco world to deny smokers choice" she concludes.

Both therefore oppose the ban. Apart from the fact that such habits do not disappear because of legislative action, such bans are counterproductive. What is proposed to be banned is advertising cigarettes and not cigarette smoking itself. A ridiculous move. As Louella Lobo Prabhu says "Generally those who want to smoke or drink, do so because they want to and not because some cigarette company is sponsoring the game...the fact is the State cannot play the nanny or policeman to the whole population." Very true.

Also Liberals oppose bans unless there is some very grave reason, one which threatens liberty itself. Bans not only militate against the liberty of the individual but also rarely achieve their purpose. They only succeed in driving the banned item or practice underground. Public education and not banning is the Liberal way, almost always.

State Promotion of Partisan Weeklies

Some years ago, in this column we took strong objection to the communist-led government in Kerala compelling panchayats in that state to buy the complete works of CPM leader the late E. M. S. Namboodiripad. It is not the State's business to promote party literature. We now take issue with the education department of the Gujarat government over a circular issued by the Commissionerate of Gujarat asking schools to subscribe to *Sadhana*, an RSS weekly from the grants they received from the state government. The circular tells the schools managements how to go about subscribing to this journal. Responding to protests by Christian organisations in the

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



State, the state education minister refused to have the circular withdrawn saying that the circular did not compel schools to subscribe. "If any school does not like the idea, it simply can ignore the circular" adding "After all it is not for the first time that we are issuing such a circular." That Madam (the minister is Ms. Anandiben Patel) is not the point. No organisation is likely to treat lightly circulars issued by the state. The fact that this has been done before (it is not clear if the Hon. Minister is referring to her own government or to previous governments) is no excuse. It is wrong in principle. What magazines or books its students should read should be largely left to the teachers - not even to the managements, which often toady to wealthy donors in addition to government authorities.

Dealing with the Burmese Junta

In international relations it is often a painful necessity to maintain diplomatic ties with a dictatorship. That is not the same thing as saying that such ties mean approval of such a system of government. Human rights are transnational and its violation in one country is a cause for concern in other countries. Hence the International Commission on Human Rights.

As we go to press comes the news of a thawing of India's relations with Myanmar (Burma). We trust that this does not mean giving up on pressure to release Aung San Suu Kyi who has been under house arrest after her party swept the polls many years ago. Incidentally a joker, a former Congressman turned Trinamul and now a minister in the External Affairs Ministry defending the government's decision to mend diplomatic fences with Burma observed that India could not interfere in the internal affairs of Burma and in any case the government had been chosen by the people. Where did you get that Mr. Minister? The party that got the support of the people in the last democratic elections some years ago was denied power and its leader Aung San Suu Kyi is behind bars!

Fortunately, with Mr. Jaswant Singh as External Affairs Minister it is unlikely that our shaking hands with the military junta will mean ignoring the aspirations of the Burmese people for freedom and democracy.

The BALCO Deal

At the time of writing the central government's decision to privatise Bharat Aluminium Company (BALCO) is under fire from the opposition. Mr. Arun Shourie, the minister concerned, is being sniped at. One could fault Mr. Shourie for other things but certainly not his honesty, integrity and diligence. That the communists are raising a howl is understandable. In their case it is a question of dialectics. But what about the Congressmen and Congresswomen who have joined the anti-BALCO disinvestment cacophony? This is opposition for the sake of opposition. It is laughable because they, of all people, are talking about transparency! How transparent their decision-making was public knowledge.

It is hoped that the sale of BALCO will be the

beginning of the end of a long list of white elephants that have been squandering the nation's wealth.

Bombing and/or Sanctions?

Liberals have no use for dictators, which of course includes Saddam Hussein. As someone observed in the course of a discussion on the Internet "Saddam is bad for his people but so are the Chinese in Tibet, the Iranians and the Taliban in Afghanistan and the North Koreans.. Who do you bomb and who you don't."

On the hand are those who argue that sanctions against Iraq have only hurt the population. The privileged in a dictatorship are just that - privileged VIPs who are not in want of anything to keep them in comfort while the people suffer. Therefore remove sanctions but "strategically bomb and destroy Saddam's military hardware and installations and keep doing it until the chorus of opposition to his regime grows within Iraq."

What ought to be the Liberal position on this one?

SVR

An Encounter With A Counterfeiter

My second officer MNS was a young enthusiastic chap. The day he got the chance to exercise his lending powers independently, he was in a rather festive mood. "Sir, I have exercised my powers independently for the first time today. This is the copy of the proposal for your noting. I would like you to meet the proponent personally if you don't mind", he said.

"Certainly. Why not?", I said. It was a small advance for a pulverizing unit. I had a rough idea as to what, the word *pulverize* meant but then I had no occasion till then to finance or inspect a pulverizing unit as such and thus I considered it a welcome opportunity to know something about it. The proposal *per se* was put up in a highly impressive manner supported by graphs etc. The unit had duly sanctioned power connection. It was a registered SSI-unit also. In short the paper work aspect of the proposal was perfect in all respects.

The proponent Mr. N arrived promptly at the appointed time. His thick Kerala-accent betrayed his origins. MNS had already ordered for coffee and biscuits and the interview thus got off to a fine start.

"Mr. N, you have been residing at Bangalore since when?" I inquired.

"For the last 10 years", was the answer.

"You have set up this unit 6-months back. What were you doing earlier?" was the next question.

"Throughout I have been in this pulverizing line only sir", was his reply.

"In fact, I don't have the faintest idea as to what *pulverizing* is all about", I said.

"Sir, although it's a specialized line, the process involved is very simple. It's nothing but crushing of stones to smaller sizes as per specification. There are over 10 to 12 different colour stones. And this being the RMC Yard, there is a very good demand for my product", was the shocking answer.

"But why so many different varieties in colour/size?", I wanted to know.

"As I told you earlier, it is a specialized line sir. The kind of stone used for rice is much different from that of wheat..."

MNS suddenly got up the original sanctioned proposal in hand and started tearing it up into small pieces shouting, "You are engaged in an anti-social activity and have the cheek to approach a Bank seeking financial assistance? Tomorrow you will come seeking a loan for making counterfeit notes. Please get out"

Pulverized thus, the *pulverizer* slowly got up and silently left my cabin. Our Branch is located inside the RMC-yard itself whereat wholesale trade in 22 different commodities takes place including rice, wheat, ragi etc., and the crushed stones are required by wholesalers, for adulteration purposes.

MNS profusely apologized for the lapse that could well have landed both of us in the precarious position of having lent resources of a nationalized bank for an anti-social purpose.

Eknaath Nagarkar, Bangalore.

Thank God for the Armed Forces But ...

When we started out planning this issue of *Freedom First* we had decided to once again focus our attention on the Armed Forces. There were three immediate reasons for this decision: The first was the ease with which terrorists were able to enter and inflict damage to an Army establishment in Srinagar, the second was the Red Fort incident where terrorists managed to gain entry and kill one or two of our Jawans and the third was the rather unconvincing attempt to blame Army officers down the line for intelligence failure preceding the Kargil war. We requested Major General E. D'Souza who writes for *Freedom First* on such matters. Readers may recall that the last time we discussed the Armed Forces was in the October-December 1999 issue of *Freedom First*.

Then came the killer earthquake in Gujarat. The earthquake shocked the state administration into a state of paralysis. But for the armed forces which have a major presence in Kutch (as it borders Pakistan) and which swung into action to save lives, many thousands more would have died.

And then, in less than a fortnight, came the big spectacle in Mumbai – the International Fleet Review where the Navy was asked to put on its finery and entertain. This they did with great aplomb.

In all three, the presence of the Armed Forces was larger than life and we decided that we would deal with all three in this cover feature.

We begin with Maj.Gen. Eustace D'Souza's apprehensions over the goings on in the Army.

Don't Politicize the Army – Please!

Eustace D'Souza

A series of events, seemingly interconnected, raise some important issues in the sensitive field of National Security, the ineffective National Security Council notwithstanding. The visits of two major players from the People's Republic of China including Li Peng, and that of the Number Two from the military junta ruling Myanmar, are significant. There is also the on-going Indian sponsored Ceasefire in J&K and its aftermath. The portents are not very encouraging. It has been suggested that the present Chief of the Army Staff is out of tune in suggesting an extension of the 'Cease Fire' and one report even suggests that senior retired officers have voiced their distress that he should have done so.

In our democracy, the Armed Forces, having made known their

views, are expected to follow the government's policies in such sensitive matters. That General Padmanabhan is conversant with the situation in J&K is evident from the fact that he commanded the 15 Corps in Srinagar at a very critical time, and was also the Director General of Military Intelligence before taking over the Northern Army. These events are significant but what are the problems besetting national security and the increasing focus of the media on the Armed Forces, especially the Army, the largest and most overused of the three Services?

The Many Uses of the Forces

Many of us seem to forget that the Services, and in particular the Army, have been on the alert without respite, since the dawn of Independence. And the scope of their use is vast and varied indeed:

- four major wars; the on-going low intensity conflict in J&K and counter insurgency operations in the East;
- 27 international peace-keeping/making missions on behalf of the UN, four of brigade plus size forces in Korea, the Congo, Somalia and Sierra Leone;
- disaster relief operations where civil agencies have failed as, for instance, in the devastating Latur earthquake, the Brahmaputra Valley, West Bengal and Orissa floods and now the Gujarat earthquake;
- in internal security duties where it is not uncommon for the competent civil authority to induct the armed forces at the drop of a hat;
- the poorly conceived intervention in Sri Lanka resulting in the

Thank God for the Armed Forces But ...

deaths of nearly 1200 of our troops; and equally important, the protection and restoration of the environment as at Harike in the Punjab and Kaziranga in the East. The list is legion. So why this spurt of media interest?

National Security Council

The high profile National Security Council is headed by a bureaucrat, who in addition to holding this vital portfolio, is also the head *honcho* of the PMO. How can he possibly devote his total attention to matters pertaining to National Security? This became evident during the Kargil intrusions where his so-called expert comments were farcical. Surely we have in our country better qualified individuals who know the nitty-gritty of National Security and how the Government works. The reason given for this bureaucrat to wear two important hats is that he has the ear of the PM! There is thus a creeping move to take control of the day-to-day running of the Armed Forces.

The country should pause for a moment and consider how fortunate we are today, to have a cerebral Army Chief who will not cow down to pressures. This is becoming increasingly manifest in his recent statements, including his stirring Army Day speech. Because of the bureaucrat's penchant of toadying up to his political master who is more concerned about his political survival than with matters of national security, there is a danger of the politicization of our traditionally apolitical Armed Forces. As a Corps Commander in the Valley, General Padmanabhan would not buckle down to political pressure in handling the *Charar e Sharief* issue.

Chief of Defence Staff

The delay in introducing the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) system because it would weaken the stranglehold of the bureaucratic mandarins in the Defence Ministry, is a case in point.

Is this not a ploy to dangle the carrot to those in the running, in the hope that the Services will become compliant? Surely the country can produce a worthy holder of this important chair who is knowledgeable on matters of defence and national security and who, because he holds just this one portfolio, is able to steer this important ship of state efficiently? Perhaps the alleged snags in the indigenously produced Main Battle Tank, and the delayed flight-testing of the LCA and the acquisition of the AJT, are classic examples of prevarication while our air force pilots are killed in avoidable air crashes. Or has this procrastination and unwarranted delay anything to do with kickbacks? We have gone to the Russians for the purchase of 300 T 90 MBTs, and have yet to make up our minds on the AJT, British or French. The present Defence Minister 'unchaired' the chair-bound bureaucrats in the Defence Ministry because they slept over the files on the procurement of snow mobiles for use in Siachen, he packed them off to Siachen to get a taste of what it takes to serve in such inhospitable and formidable terrain. Judging from the delays in the LCA/ Light Helicopter projects and the production of the Arjun indigenously produced battle tank, it would appear that we will be faced with another Bofors scam, as the financial implications for the deal are mind-boggling, compounded by the fact that the

Russians are aware of this lacuna in our military preparedness.

Security Lapses

It is therefore all the more necessary to have a well-established and ably-led National Security Council and a CDS. When shall we ever learn? There is now a debate between the hawks and doves as to whether we should further extend the ceasefire in view of the continued militant-sponsored violence not only in the Valley but now even in Delhi by the so called suicide squads who appear hell bent to undo the peace process. This became evident in the attacks on the Red Fort, Srinagar Town and most recently, the attempted attack on Srinagar Airport, all these at the cost of innocent human lives. Can one wonder then why there is a growing opposition within the Cabinet to the extension of the ceasefire? This is all the more reason for the Services to be free from political contamination, but never from strategic consultations on matters pertaining to national security.

Who is Responsible?

Much concern has been expressed in the media about the attempt to breach the security of the Chief of the Naval Staff's residence in Delhi. Unseemly delays in inducting the Delhi Police resulted in various interpretations being ascribed to this incident. And rightly so, if the Naval Commando on security duty at Navy House is alleged to have caused the ruckus.

Close on the heels of this incident was the Red Fort suicide bomber attack. Much has been made about it by a responsible journalist Mohan Guruswamy who has

Thank God for the Armed Forces But ...

ponderously pontificated that whoever controls the Red Fort controls Delhi! Such wild statements need to be viewed in the proper perspective. This archeological monument has housed an infantry battalion responsible for the security of Rashtrapati Bhavan since independence. The Army area occupies a small segment of the Fort. The first ever sound and light show has been held inside the Red Fort every evening after sundown for years. There are a number of shops catering to tourists. Hitherto, one has never experienced problems about security. With the Red Fort surrounded as it is by Chandni Chowk, the Jumma Masjid and the trans-Jamuna Colonies, the local police should bear the responsibility for security as it is much easier for them to have their intelligence operatives maintain a close watch on the crowded bazaars. The unseemly row between the Army and Police, with the Archaeological Department thrown in for good measure, makes confusion worse confounded. To say that this suicide attack can be construed to be an attack on the Capital is mere piffle. But these small incidents do create problems in security and intelligence acquisition where none is necessary. The Home Ministry, in consultation with the Defence Ministry, must chart out a pragmatic solution.

The Samba and Kargil Cases

The other cause for concern that seems to be impacting on the Armed Forces is the 25-year old Samba spy scandal. The highest court in the land has now exonerated the accused. Aspersions are being cast on the impartiality of those in power although all those concerned have long since retired,

including the Army Chief of that period. As one who was in service then, the Army JAG Branch or the CPRO must come out with a statement stating the Army's view. Silence on this issue may have the wrong connotations. What is worrying is the fact that this old case is being linked with the Kargil witch-hunt in which Brigadier Surinder Singh and Major Bhatnagar are being implicated so that the Government and those in the Army in power then, can pass the buck. What is surprising is that the expert committee set-up to determine the Kargil intrusions has failed to apportion blame on those responsible for this obvious intelligence failure. One hopes that the present Chief, with his knowledge of the issue will take the required steps to examine the allegations dispassionately and remove any doubts in the minds, not only of the public but of the younger officers. Passing the buck is not going to help in the maintenance of morale. One needs to know what political pressure is being brought to bear on the Armed Forces to play ball or else! The repercussions are far too serious for this case to go by default.

Then there are the tiresome complaints of the National Human Rights Commission and other NGOs to castigate the Armed Forces for alleged human rights violations against the peoples of J&K. Do these do-gooders not realize what it entails to tackle a faceless, highly motivated, well armed and well trained militant in a condition peculiar to J & K where the insidious hand of *jihad* and religious fanaticism have crept in? It is tantamount to fighting the problem with one hand tied behind one's back.

Attempts to Politicize the Forces

It is not the first occasion that attempts have been made to politicize the Army. The first attempt on record, was during the regime of V K Krishna Menon when he was the Defence Minister. The late Brigadier John Dalvi's well-documented book *Himalayan Blunder* tells it all. Attempts were made to pass the buck on to the late Brigadier Dalvi. General K S Thimayya went to the extent of submitting his resignation to Pandit Nehru, who, in his own disarming way, managed to persuade this much loved and respected Army Chief to withdraw his resignation. Lurking behind these moves was, unfortunately, a politicized Lieutenant General. Then came the forthrightness of Lieutenant General Thorat, Eastern Army Commander, who warned Pandit Nehru in the hey-days of *Hindi-Chini bhai bhai* of the Chinese threat. His sage advice was ignored and resulted in the ignominious defeat of the Army. Because of his forthrightness, the Eastern Army Commander was denied the opportunity of succeeding General Thimayya as the Army Chief. Again, this war-experienced General recorded all these events in his book in a most dignified manner, and published many years ago. Yet another attempt to politicize the Army was made during Mrs Indira Gandhi's reign in which Lieutenant General Sundarji, the Western Army Commander, was persuaded to undertake Operation Blue Star, an operation certainly not meant for a professional Army. He later became Army Chief. After his retirement he wrote: "The Blind Men Of Hindoostan" which was reviewed in *Freedom First*. It is not yet certain under whose aegis he caused

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"Operation Brass Tacks" to be undertaken taking the country to the brink of war against Pakistan, and later provoking the Soudurong Cho episode against the Chinese.

General Krishna Rao on retirement in the well-documented book hinted at attempts to politicize the Army. A second book, soon to be published by Penguin, records the problems he faced as Governor of J&K. Lieutenant General Harbaksh Singh, described as the hero of the 1965 war against Pakistan in the West, completed writing his memoirs prior to his death. It is reviewed in this issue of *Freedom First* (see page 57). What emerges in this autobiography, *inter alia*, is the nexus between the then Defence Minister Sardar Swaran Singh and the late General, which hints at parochialism, pertaining to the selection of the next Army Chief.

And then followed the case of the totally unjustified and unilateral decision of the Government to remove unceremoniously a Chief of the Naval Staff because he stood up to the bureaucracy. This sad event has also been recorded in an article in this very journal. One is led to the fervent hope that the government will hopefully tread warily in such

matters to ensure that the morale of the Armed Forces is not impaired. Hopefully, the on-going efforts to pass the blame for the gross intelligence failure at Kargil, to a Brigadier and a Major by those in power at that point of time, will now be set right by the present Chief, General S Padmanabhan. The signs that he will review it in a dispassionate and fair manner are positive.

To end this study of what one can term as the attempts to politicize the Armed Forces, one needs to read that eminently readable book published by Penguin aptly named *Fidelity and Honour: The History of the Indian Army from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* by Lieutenant General S L Menezes, PVSM, SC which was reviewed in this journal (FF No.445, April-June 2000). It spells out clearly why the Indian Army ticks and why it has remained secular and apolitical. An updated second edition was recently released to include Kargil and the report of the Special Committee to examine exactly what happened.

Conclusions

What conclusions can one draw from the trend of events discussed in this article? There are quite a few. First and foremost

attempts to politicize the Armed Forces or rob them of their secular character must be resisted firmly if the Nation's security interests are to be protected.

The long delayed decision to appoint a Chief of Defence Staff must be implemented expeditiously so that there is a single authority between the Government and the Armed Forces to tackle the problems being faced by the Armed Forces. The National Security Council needs to be activated by appointing a suitable individual who will wear just that hat and no other, so that it is in a position to consider *inter alia* the huge delays on such issues as the indigenous production of the MBT, LCA and Light Helicopter, and the procurement of the AJTs. The Armed Forces must be given every opportunity to make themselves leaner and meaner. And, above all, the Nation needs to pay greater attention to the Armed Forces and National Security

MAJOR GENERAL (RETD.) E. D'SOUZA, PVSM. The author who needs no introduction to *Freedom First*, is a defence analyst and a regular contributor and book reviewer for *Freedom First*. He writes and speaks extensively on matters relating to National Security, based on his long association with the Armed Forces since 1943.



The big problem of government in our century is to reconcile the interests of Society as a whole with the liberty of the Individual, to make sure that one does not destroy the other. That government is the best which strikes a perfect balance between the two.

Mino0 Masani, *The Growing Human Family*
(page 116, Oxford University Press, 1951)

Thank God for the Armed Forces But ...

Preserving the Professionalism of the Armed Forces

Vishnu Bhagwat

The Armed Forces are regarded the world over as the last and final instruments of the State. In our country they were long regarded as a professional and apolitical force sworn to protect and defend the Constitution of India, and therefore the honour and dignity of the people, not merely the territorial integrity of our land. They have always, hitherto done their duty by the Constitution and earned the deserving approbation of the people who have in turn looked upto them.

In more recent years, their high professionalism has been compromised and has seriously eroded their professional functioning, judgement and conduct. It was the civil services and the police hierarchy that were at first systematically infiltrated by people with a communal bent of mind and this is more than amply proved in the Reports of the Commissions of Enquiry into pogroms and riots, in fact break down of law and order, that has become, more and more, a frequent part of our lives. The Army intervened on request from the State Governments on more than 800 occasions and acted in a strictly non-partisan manner, defending the weak and the victims of these organised onslaughts on the dignity of the people. Politicisation and communalization weakens the morale, damages the moral fibre and destroys ultimately the professionalism of the armed forces, making it like any other poorly-led police force, in simple words unfit to defend the Republic. The game plan of this government was simple

pick and choose, select for appointments and promotions those that are known to be sympathetic to its aims and objectives or who would bend to its will or even those who were known to be corrupt and share in the loot. This they did with near complete success as the Sangh Parivar has had a good system of record keeping, and when they had a willing Army Chief there was no one to stop them.

An analysis of the Army Promotion Boards since 1998 would substantiate this statement. The present army chief has stopped or changed a few since he took over but the order of two and three star generals has been so set that the present army chief would only be able to make marginal corrections. It is a maxim that the character of the armed forces is set by its general officers and the time to do it is now

Look at the Kargil affair and its aftermath - passing on the blame to the juniors and not accept responsibility; the Sindhu Darshans 1999 and 2000, the senior generals briefing the BJP Executive then the army chief saying, he did not know, much in the style of Fernandes; the visit of Giriraj Kishore, Vice-President of VHP International to give his blessings to the wounded, the parading of troops before so called Sants for Tilak, the wearing of religious symbols by senior officers in uniform, the systematised arrangements for army personnel to visit certain places of pilgrimage and also of their families at state expense. The list is endless.

It all started like this in the P.A.C and the police stations where religious icons are now a part of the office - in a secular state. Look at the United States on the other hand where the Attorney General designate of the Bush administration had to withdraw because some 10 years ago he had said "Jesus was the King". When we compromise the integrity and the professionalism of the Indian Armed Forces as it is being systematically done as per a carefully drawn up plan, we should remember the toast that Warren Hastings raised on hearing the death of Tipu Sultan "Death to India"....It was said of Napoleon's Army that every soldier carried a Field Marshal's Baton in his knapsack. Today, as compared to what was true of our Army only 10 years ago, if you are not with them or belong to their sect, you will be politely told that you have done extremely well to reach the rank of Brigadier and may be advised that it is now time to look for a job in the private sector and, may even, genuinely help you find one. The finest Institution of the State is being subverted in a manner similar to what is happening in the civil, police services, the educational institutions, the propaganda and information channels. In fact like all that was done in Germany by the Third Reich so well described in William Shirer's *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*. History is being repeated and there is no European Union to save Austria 2000, from its predators.

ADMIRAL (RETD.) VISHNU BHAGWAT
was former Chief of Naval Staff.

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The Samba Spy Case

R. V. Chari

In mid-1975, two gunners, viz. Aya Singh and Sawwan Das were arrested in the Samba sector on charges of spying for Pakistan. Aya Singh, named Ranbir Singh Rathaur and Ashok Kumar Rana, in the interrogation that took place in March 1978. On the basis of the alleged statement of Rathaur, more than 50 army officers were arrested. In January 1980, all the officers were dismissed. In mid-1980, the Intelligence Bureau and the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) stated that the army officers were innocent. The dismissal order was challenged in the Delhi High Court in 1982. At that time, the Court felt that it could not interfere in the matter as the termination order was at the pleasure of the President. However, in 1994, the same High Court felt that the doctrine is subject to judicial review. The Supreme Court upheld the view in November 1994, and the Delhi High Court exonerated all the officers on December 21, 2000, ordering the Government to reinstate them with back wages.

A few facets of this case are discussed here.

On December 21, 1969, Ranbir Singh Rathaur joined the Indian Army as a commissioned officer. When Aya Singh named him as well as Ashok Kumar Rana, the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), reportedly furnished Rathaur with a list of officers to be implicated in the so-called espionage case. This, Rathaur refused to do.

He was disrobed, beaten up, his bones broken and he was dragged through the road at night, tied to a jeep. Such inhuman, bestial, barbaric treatment didn't break his spirit. He spent the next 14 years in jail. His

wife Swaran, along with two daughters, both under two years old, were evicted from their home.

Elsewhere, another sordid drama was unfolding. After surreptitiously reinstating jawans, Aya Singh and Sawan Das, the DMI now arrested a havaldar, Ram Swaroop, who was on leave, from his Gur-gaon home and subjected him to torture of the worst kind. Within three days of his arrest, he was found dead, at the interrogation centre of the DMI with 39 injuries on his body. Major R. K. Midha, his superior was ordered to cremate the body. He flatly refused. Meanwhile, the Delhi police took custody of the body, insisted on a thorough investigation and registered a case of murder against some of the army officers. The tug-of-war that ensued between the army and the Delhi police ended with the former taking charge of the body, which was cremated in Gurgaon. In order to mollify and placate the family of Ram Swaroop, purse strings were loosened. This brought an end to the chapter about Ram Swaroop. Now Major R. K. Midha became the next target. He was arrested, imprisoned, tortured and finally dismissed in 1979.

After this murky episode, the DMI crossed swords with Major Nirmal Ajwani. Major Ajwani, judge advocate-general, was conducting the court-martial against Om Prakash. He was reportedly asked to toe the line of the DMI. On his refusal to accommodate the DMI, he was transferred to Pune, from Udhampur. (On January 23, 1979, he was arrested, detained at Deoli and then dismissed.)

The Samba Spy case has some similarities to the famous Captain

Dreyfuss case in France. Captain Dreyfuss was convicted for espionage and sentence to solitary confinement in the notorious prison on Devil's Island. After 10 years, the French Government exonerated and reinducted him in the French army with full military honour. It also made amends by decorating him with the Legion of Honour. In both cases, the wrong persons were picked up, tortured and convicted, despite their innocence. In both cases, the years of suffering, mental agony and trauma were quite substantial. In fact, Ranbir Singh Rathaur and Ashok Kumar Rana were to suffer for 14 years before receiving justice.

The High Court verdict throws up certain pertinent questions:

- (1) The DMI arrested the two gunners Aya Singh and Sarwan Das in mid-1975. But the interrogation took place only in 1978. Why?
- (2) It is very strange to observe that the DMI went ahead with the trial and dismissals despite the fact that the IB and RAW had vouchsafed the innocence of the officers.
- (3) If the prosecutor himself, also dons the judicial garb and pronounces the verdict, the judgement is bound to be partisan. This is what has happened in the Samba Case. *The Indian Express*, in its editorial on December 23, 2000, observed: "The dual role played by Military Intelligence Directorate, of being both prosecutor and judge, makes a mockery of the whole court martial process."

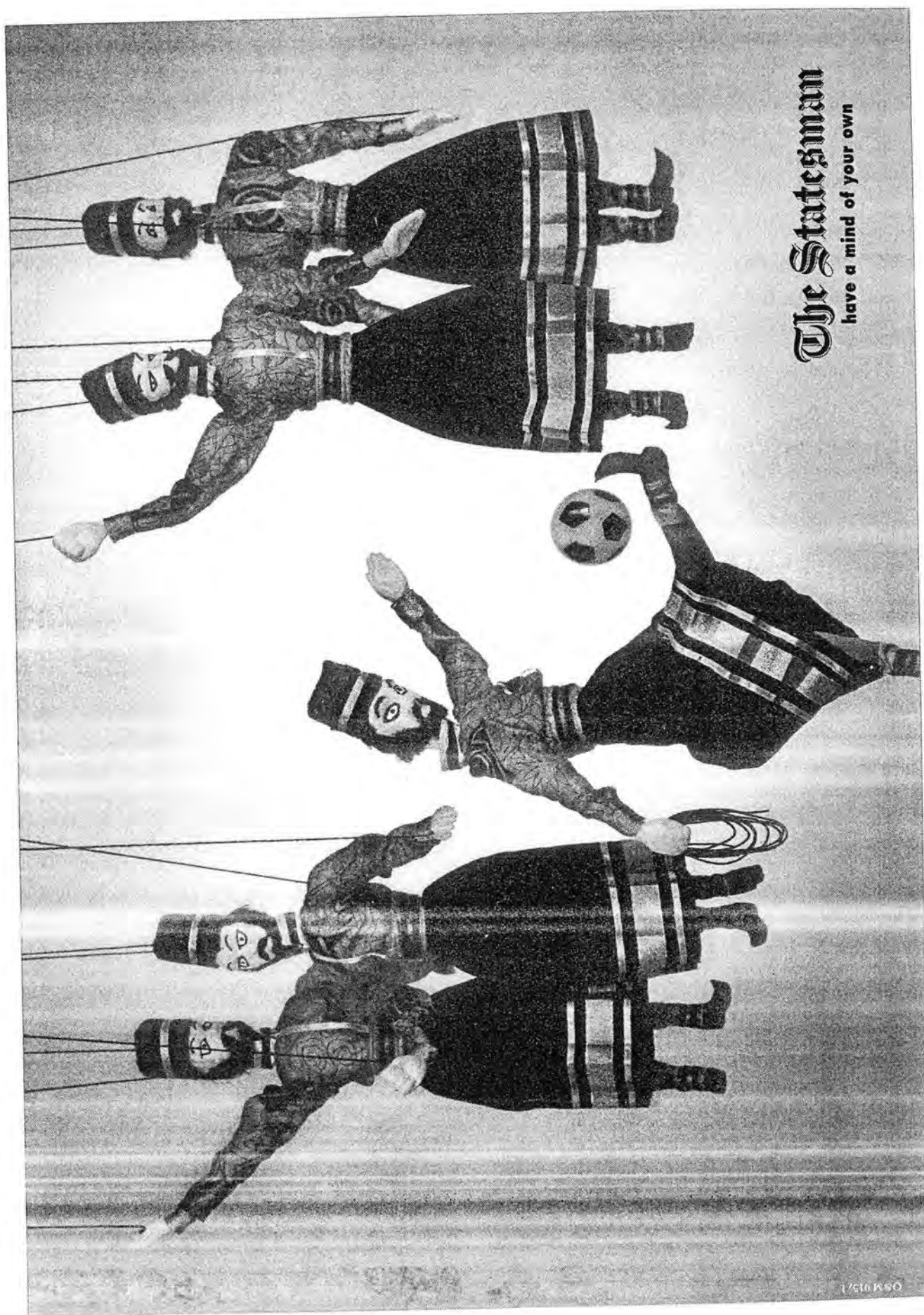
PROFESSOR R. V. CHARI, a freelance writer, is a professor of Commerce and Management.

"CIVILIZATION BEGINS WITH ORDER,
GROWS WITH LIBERTY AND DIES WITH CHAOS"
- Will Durant



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The Gujarat Earthquake

A. K. R. Hemmady

On February 2, *Freedom First* organised a discussion¹ on the earthquake that had ravaged Bhuj and other parts of Gujarat. The half-day discussion covered a number of aspects - ranging from the question whether the Bhuj quake could have been predicted to the manner in which the State both at Gandhinagar (Gujarat's Capital) and Delhi (the Nation's Capital) responded.

In this article I shall deal with, what I would loosely describe as the 'technical aspects' of this phenomenon. Readers of *Freedom First* may be familiar with the various articles I wrote on the subject from time to time in this journal. For a list of these please see the footnote at the end of this article.²

Predicting Earthquakes?

Can earthquakes be predicted? The simple answer is no. Earthquakes cannot be predicted on a scientific basis. The Japanese began research into the possibility of being able to predict earthquakes as far back as 1965 till around 1995 spending around 160 million Yen in the process. Their Geodesy Council installed about 70 seismograph stations, 20 crustal deformation observatories (tiltmeters and strainmeters) and 10 magnetometer stations. This line of research got a boost in 1975 when the Chinese accurately predicted a big earthquake in Haicheng and thus helped save many lives. The Japanese even passed a law requiring advance warning of major earthquakes and to put emergency measures on full alert.

The Kobe earthquake in 1995 shattered all hopes of earthquake prediction. The Geodesy Council did not foresee this earthquake and that too in an area which was supposed to be seismically inactive. Mr. Kiyoo Nogi, the doyen of Japanese seismology quit his post as his government's earthquake adviser.

If this was the case with Japan are we being realistic when some of our geophysicists venture to predict earthquakes. How many seismograph and magnetometer stations and crustal deformation laboratories do we have? Do we carry out detailed levelling surveys in known seismic belts, let alone intraplate areas?

Foreshocks and Aftershocks

What about foreshocks? Can foreshocks help in putting the government and the people on the alert? I don't think so. One estimate has it that about 1000 earthquakes of low magnitude (1-2 on the Richter Scale) occur every day. About 800 earthquakes of magnitude 5 to 6 occur every year which cause some damage and about 18 earthquakes of magnitude 7 or more, occur each year. Most earthquakes are also followed by aftershocks. In such a situation it is very difficult to differentiate one from the other. A small event may be a main event by itself. But the fact remains that we are unable to deduce from foreshocks the exact time, place and intensity of a potential earthquake. For instance the earthquake in Latur was preceded by a series of small shocks between 2.5 and 3.5 over a

period of a year in that area in Marathwada. But no scientist anticipated that an earthquake would take place at that point of time and at that place at a magnitude of 6.4 on the Richter Scale. Latur was not known to be an earthquake prone area except that about 600 years ago in 1340 AD there was an earthquake there.

Reservoirs and Earthquakes

Then there is the debate over Reservoir Induced Seismicity (RIS). The theory of RIS assumes that the enormous load of impounded water can trigger an earthquake by destabilising a fault. A corollary speculation is that the water may seep down underneath to act as a lubricant along a fault plane and reduce the sheer strength of rocks under stress and thus facilitate movement along the fault plane which otherwise is in a state of equilibrium. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) has compiled a list of more than 1000 instances of reservoirs which have presumably induced local seismicity. Reservoirs more than 100 meters deep are likely to produce a seismic effect.

On the other hand the late Dr. K.L.Rao a leading irrigation engineer observed that the weight of the waters of a reservoir on the terrain is like the weight of a fly on an elephant's back. When the Koyna dam was being constructed, evaluation of the seismic risk was not as advanced as it is today. Following the standard U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Procedures, allowance was

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made for a seismic force of 0.05g but during the Koyna earthquake the dam survived a record acceleration of 0.50 g - a force ten times larger than provided for. That the Dam survived is a tribute to Maharashtra's engineers.

Nuclear Testing and Earthquakes

What about the impact of underground nuclear testing. Don't these cause or increase the risk of earthquakes? Nuclear blasts do generate earthquake waves and it is through seismology alone the explosion site in one country is located by other countries. It is, however, not certain whether, from the time nuclear testing began in the early 'forties there has been an increase in the frequency of earthquakes. On the other hand nuclear-triggered quakes may have a brighter side. Such explosions may lead to premature stress relief and thus lessen the severity of earthquakes !

The Bhuj Earthquake

The quake that shook Gujarat on January 26 will be identified more specifically as the Bhuj Earthquake. Bhuj and its adjoining areas, although classified as intraplate

areas, have a well-known seismic past and are placed in seismic zone IV and V (high and very high seismic zones respectively). Unlike the Koyna and Khillari earthquakes, an earthquake in Bhuj and its surroundings does not surprise earth scientists. Kutch has a long history of seismic activity. On 16 June 1819, a devastating earthquake hit the area with an intensity of 8.5 on the Richter scale. This quake reduced Bhuj and Anjar towns to ruins and killed over 15,000 inhabitants. The earth movements were so severe that a scarp came into existence in the Rann of Kutch. It is still there - about three meters high and 28 kms. long. It is called 'Allah Bund' (the Dam of Allah). The other earthquakes in Western Gujarat of 5 or more magnitude were Bhavnagar (1872 and 1919), Kutch (1903), Paliad (1938), Dwarka (1940), Anjar (1956), Bharuch (1970) and now Bhuj (2001).

The Hurdle of Fatalism

Ever since my childhood, when I became aware of happenings around, there has not been a single year free from disasters. Drought as the summer approaches, then rains

invariably followed by floods, cyclones and of course, though less frequent, earthquakes. In fact we ought to have by now boasted of the best expertise in the field much sought after by other countries. Why is this not so ? Perhaps we lack the scientific temper. Mahatma Gandhi ascribed the Bihar earthquake to divine wrath ("chastisement for the sin of untouchability" - a Hindu view) and in turn invited Rabindranath Tagore's wrath! Recently a Christian Mr. T. John, also invoked God's wrath for the Bhuj earthquake but in the process he provoked the Karnataka Chief Minister's wrath who asked him to resign from the Ministry! Muslim clerics believe that earthquakes are a punishment for sins. For the average Indian therefore, an earthquake is a divine dispensation against which nothing can or should be done. This fatalism is a major hurdle in our being able to acquire a scientific outlook.

Disaster Management

Studies show that well-organised preparations exist in communities or societies that have repeatedly experienced the same disaster. Developed institutional mechanism of warning and relief exist in areas frequently affected by floods and cyclones. In general, however, highly organized and effective long-time preparations to manage disasters are exceptional. Most communities and societies have not prepared adequate technological, social and psychological defence against hazards to which they are vulnerable. The situation in the United States is no different. According to a report prepared as far back as 1975, by the U.S. National Academy of Sciences entitled "Earthquake Prediction and Public

Engineering Disaster through Nuclear Implosions?

In 1979, the National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad, carried out a Deep Seismic Survey in peninsular India in collaboration with Soviet scientists. Criticising this collaboration, Dr. K. D. Jayaram, a Nuclear Physicist writing in *Science Today* observed that foreign scientists should not be allowed access to this kind of sensitive geological data because there is a distinct possibility that crustal dislocations along fault and plate boundaries could be reactivated or the slow movement along them could be accelerated by an atomic device. According to him it may not be necessary to plant a sophisticated device within the boundary of a targeted enemy country. It can be placed somewhere away, say under the high seas upto which the trace of the fault continues. That will take care of the infringement of territorial sovereignty and make an engineered disaster look like a natural calamity!

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Policy" there has been a general failure to adopt such long term hazard reduction programmes as land-use planning and building regulations designed to withstand seismic disturbances. According to the Report: "Groups advocating disaster preparedness must compete with others who want limited national or local resources used for more immediate, imperative or well defined social needs...long-range disaster-preparedness programmes and plans, at all levels of government and at the family level, are often sacrificed for other more pressing social and personal concerns..."

Richter (after whom the scale measuring earthquake intensity has been named) observed: "Very few people are ever injured or killed by earthquakes as such. They lose their lives or are injured in the collapse of very old buildings which need to be reinforced or replaced, or in fires which get out of control." Therefore the only long-term measure to lessen the impact of earthquake disaster is to make our dwelling houses earthquake-resistant to the extent possible. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) had as far back as 1962 codified "Recommendations for

Earthquake Resistant Design of Structures" and along with it, published a seismic map of India indicating seismic zones I (no risk) to V (very high risk). This code entitled IS:1893 was revised five times between 1966 and 1998. The BIS has laid down what is called a "seismic coefficient" for each of these zones which ought to be incorporated in the design of buildings constructed in the respective zones. Seismic coefficient is the acceleration of the ground during an earthquake. For convenience it is expressed in terms of 'g' acceleration due to the earth's gravity or the change in speed of a freely falling body equal to 981 cms. per second. However these are only recommendations and not mandatory. Making them mandatory will give rise to their own problems, not the least of which is corruption – the unholy nexus between unscrupulous builders, corrupt bureaucrats and corrupt politicians in positions of authority.

Reinforced cement concrete buildings are the most earthquake resistant structures. But for rural India where people can't afford such buildings, the BIS has provided some broad guidelines. Iron structures are not well suited, well-bonded brickwork with properly baked bricks is recommended; heavy blocks of stone for masonry is unsafe (this caused the maximum damage at Killari), but a masonry of small blocks set in a strong mortar is much safer. The most suitable house is that known as a 'monolith' building in which the main walls are so bonded and knit together as to behave as a single unit. Such structures should be of low height, with a circular plan and have a free and un-deformable roof in order to avoid an increase in the bending movement of the walls.

A Multi-hazard Prone Zone

What is not commonly known is that Kutch is one of the most vulnerable multi-hazard prone zones in India, with a high degree of risk of exposure to earthquake, cyclonic storms and storm surge (BMPTC, Vulnerability Atlas of India 1997). It is also the home of recurrent drought. This year is among the most serious drought years in the last two decades.

Courtesy: taru.org

Earthquake Engineering

In 1931, John Ripley Freeman, a civil engineer, lamented: "It is strange almost beyond belief, until one makes a search, that most college textbooks on structural engineering say nothing whatever about resistance to earthquake stress, and no book in the English language attempts a reasonably complete presentation of the principles of earthquake-resisting design".

I don't think the situation in our country is any different though we are now in 2001. We do have a faculty of Earthquake Engineering in Roorkee University but by and large most of our civil engineers are as hazy as I am about how a seismic coefficient is incorporated in the design of a dam or structure. I have come across many civil engineers associated with river valley projects who have not heard of IS: 1893 – Recommendations for Earthquake Resistant Design of Structures. They don't know that a seismic zone map of India exists, let alone how that map can be a guide to engineers. I hope the Bhuj earthquake will impel the civil engineering faculties to wake up and include earthquake engineering as one of the important topics to be taught to our future engineers.

A. K. R. Hemmady

Earthquake Insurance

And finally there is the question of earthquake insurance'. John Ripley Freeman, a civil engineer, wrote an authoritative book entitled "Earthquake Damage and Earthquake Insurance". His researches led him to "believe that, ultimately, a clause covering earthquake damage could be included in nearly every fire insurance policy for an additional charge so extremely small that it would be a burden to no one and that general protection of this kind for dwellings, factories, hotels

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and offices would add to the general peace of mind."

In addition to the question of providing insurance coverage for natural disasters, there are other important questions. Fire insurance is now required by most lending institutions. Should disaster insurance be similarly made compulsory? Should disaster insurance be comprehensive i.e. covering all natural hazards? Should premiums vary according to seismic zoning? Are public subsidies for disaster insurance justified? Is there a practical way of insuring economic losses other than physical damages, such as general income losses? What would be the effect on the mortgage industry and real estate markets if insurance companies did not renew property-damage insurance after announcement of earthquake warnings?

After the San Francisco earthquake of 1908 the building code in California for instance is very strictly enforced. And there are the insurance and banking interests which ensure strict adherence to the code. Almost 85% of housing in the US is financed by housing finance

companies. The buyer puts in 25% of his own money and 80% is given by these companies at 8 or 9% interest repayable in 30 years. And the mortgage itself is a transferable commodity. In other words you can sell your house to another who takes on the mortgage liability as part of the terms of purchase. In fact people make money or lose money because when prices appreciate you get the benefit of the hike or when prices fall you suffer a loss.

So in the US there is a three-pronged strategy. Firstly, there is a clear cut code laid down for planning permission; secondly that code is strictly implemented and no permission is given unless the code has been adhered to; and thirdly, banking or mortgage companies take care to see that the mortgages they have in hand, are really worth the price they pay.

1. Participants at the discussion were Mr. Arvind Deshpande, Honorary Secretary, Leslie Sawhny Programme; Mr. Dilip Douza, columnist and social activist; Maj. Gen. Eustace D'Souza; Mr. A.K.R. Hemmady, Deputy Director General (Retd.), Geological Survey of India; Mr. N. Raghunathan IAS (Retd.) among positions held were Defence Secretary Government of India and

Chief Secretary, Government of Maharashtra, Mrs. Kashmira Rao, Programmes Executive, Project for Economic Education; and Mr. S.V. Raju, Editor, *Freedom First*.

2. Articles by Mr. A.K.R. Hemmady in *Freedom First* on Earthquakes:

All About Earthquakes, January-March 1994

A review of the book 'Earthquake Hazard and the Large Dams in the Himalayas' edited by Vinod Gaur - October-December 1994

On Predicting Earthquakes - January-March 1996

Dams and the Environment - April-June 1997

The Jabalpur Earthquake - April-June 1997

Earthquakes by A.K.R. Hemmady, published by the National Book Trust, New Delhi.

Others who wrote on the subject in *Freedom First* include:

Mr. Raphael Kazmann *The Laws of Nature Cannot be Ignored*, April-June 1997

Dr. M. Ramakrishna - *The Need to Strike a Balance*, April-June 1997

For copies of these articles please write to the Editor. You will be required to reimburse copying and postage charges.

Surely, Not a Wife For All Reasons !

S. V. Raju

When the earthquake shook Gujarat everyone in authority in Delhi was at the Republic Day parade. The earthquake took place ten minutes before the Parade began. What prevented the Prime Minister and the Home Minister from rushing back. One can understand that the Parade could not be called off because it must have got ready at least two hours earlier. The President of India as the Commander-in-Chief takes the salute. The rest, from

the Prime Minister downwards are only spectators. They really have no role to play in the Parade. Two or three ministers, like the Ministers for Protocol or External Affairs could have been in attendance on the President; but those involved in taking action arising from the earthquake like the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and the Agriculture Minister should have rushed back to organise and monitor rescue and relief operations.

The Centre for Crisis Management is located in the Ministry of Agriculture because they are supposed to deal with floods, droughts and natural calamities. But the Agriculture Secretary, who presumably was also at the Parade, did not convene the first meeting till 2 p.m. What were these gentlemen doing between 9 am and 3 pm?

As for the state government,

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their officials from the chief minister downwards, appeared shell shocked. I can say this with confidence, and thousands like me who watched the chief minister and his ministers and bureaucrats will bear me out. They stammered, hesitated, repeating themselves, often trailing off in mid-sentence when not mouthing inanities or spreading alarm as the chief minister did when he warned of more earthquakes.

By fortunate circumstance Bhuj is an Army and Air Force base. The 11th Infantry Division based in Bhuj were training in neighbouring Barmer in Rajasthan for their annual manouvers when the earthquake struck. They returned immediately and their commanding officer took charge straightway and the units that had come for training - the five battalions - were sent out on relief work. Everyone is unanimous even the shell-shocked ministers that but for the Armed Forces many thousands more would have died. Newspapers and magazines acknowledged and praised their role in saving lives, keeping open a line of communication, delivering essential commodities ranging from drinking water and food to bandages and medicines. It took ages for the civil authorities to shake off their shock and take action.

And then there is that terrible

nuisance - the VVIP and the VIP. They land like flies in disaster areas for a personal look-see. And this means the local administration's attention is diverted from dealing with the consequences of the disaster and saving precious lives, to protecting, chaperoning and mollycoddling these VIPs who are often more intent on media publicity for themselves than in being of real help to the victims of these disasters.

Because the Prime Minister wanted to see for himself, the airport in Bhuj was closed for 24 hours and relief planes from many countries were not allowed to land. They had to be diverted to Ahmedabad. Can anything be more callous? Even some of the relief planes that landed, after cooling their heels at the airport, returned home in disgust. They told the press that they did not know whom to talk to. And even where supplies landed, they lay at the airport unattended for days together with no one to take them to places where they were urgently needed because there were not enough trucks to transport them not to mention the ubiquitous Customs officials who went by the book regarding import regulations.

For the first 24 to 48 hours there was no governance worth the name. One has only to read the newspapers of those days or have watched TV

(other than DD of course) on the aftermath of the earthquake. Doordarshan did not consider the earthquake important enough to put everything else aside including the Republic Day Parade and the many entertainment programmes that followed. Mercifully we had other channels that did precisely that. Some channels like *Aaj Tak*, *Star News* and *ZEE News* did a great job of informing the people of India the havoc and misery wrought by the earthquake. Had these non-official channels not been there DD would have enforced a partial blackout of the extent of the tragedy and the incompetence of the civil administration.

Mr. Richter has been cited as saying that "very few people are ever injured or killed by earthquakes as such. They lose their lives or are injured in the collapse of very old buildings which need to be reinforced or replaced, or in fires which get out of control." In many ways our corrupt builder-bureaucrat-elected representatives have sought to prove Richter wrong. A majority of buildings that crumbled particularly in Bhuj and Ahmedabad were of more recent construction.

Disaster Management

By all accounts our disaster management has generally been disastrous management. Apart from the Armed Forces, hundreds of voluntary organisations ranging from the Ramakrishna Mission and the Sarvodaya Mandals to the RSS were the first to reach the sites of natural disasters. Politics and petty differences are often forgotten when everyone lends a helping hand. While these examples of citizens' initiative are what go to make for a healthy civil society, the fact is that they can supplement but not supplant the resources of the State in organising succour for victims of nature's wrath.

It has been mentioned earlier

An Admission of Guilt

Officials are now admitting they messed up. Most of them have themselves lost somebody they know or loved. All the 100 buildings that were built over the last five years either collapsed, or, if they are still standing, have been certified as unsafe for habitation.

Over the last two years, buildings of up to eight floors had been approved in Bhuj without checks and balances. Countries such as Japan insist that rules governing building in seismic zones should be sacrosanct.

In Bhuj, builders and contractors chipped away at safety considerations. Prices reached as much as Rs.5 lakhs for 1,000 square feet before the earthquake. "We are all selfish people. As long as it did not affect us, we kept sanctioning building plans," admitted Kirit Sompura, president of the Bhuj Municipal Corporation.

The Indian Express

Thank God for the Armed Forces But ...

that there was no one at Krishi Bhavan which is the office of the Ministry of Agriculture and which is responsible to deal with natural disasters. This was also true of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD). It is reported that there was no one in the IMD's office because it was closed being Republic Day, a national holiday! And it took eight hours for the Disaster Management Group to meet.

Our governments are good at getting out of difficulties by the simple expedient of forming committees. All that happens is that members of these committees get TA (which is Travel Allowance), DA (which is Daily Allowance) a house in Delhi or the State Capital concerned, free rail or air travels and often a foreign visit or two thrown in. These are sinecures for defeated politicians or those whom the powers that be at any given moment of time wish to oblige or are obligated to for services rendered. Prof. Northcote Parkinson equated the work of Committees to visiting the lavatory. As he put it so picturesquely 'There is a sitting, a report (which the Oxford dictionary says also means sound of a loud explosion) and the matter is allowed to drop!'

Committees that are dependent for their continued existence on the government of the day and have no statutory rights are generally without teeth. The country needs a Disaster Management Group comprising the best available professional talent in the country. The Group must have statutory status and report to Parliament. The head of the Group should be a person with Cabinet status, who reports to the President of India and must have the right to report to Parliament even if he is not a Member of Parliament - generally the way politics has developed in the country after 40 years of 'socialist pattern' competent persons and persons of integrity keep their distance from elective office. And in times of

natural calamities this Group will have full powers to do all that is necessary to deal with the situation. And they should have a well-equipped (with the latest in mechanical equipment and well-trained sniffer dogs) force which can launch with minimum loss of time relief and rescue operations.

Such Disaster Management Groups need professional help. And there are many if only the authorities look. And they don't have to go far. Click on the internet and they can locate them. One such which was brought to my attention is a website called www.taru.org. Taru has prepared a comprehensive website on the Gujarat earthquake. It has scientific information on quakes, details of the Gujarat quake, damage and casualties, relief efforts, details of aid, situation reports *et al.* It is not as if we lack expertise. But when politicians wish to hog the limelight and the credit, they are reluctant to let experts take over. This is the sad aspect of our public life. This has to change if we are to get anywhere near solving our problems.

Meanwhile the Army must, as far as possible, be spared tasks that are not directly related to the defence of India. This was among the reasons for the creation of the Border Roads organisation and several other paramilitary forces. There is also the Territorial Army drawn from ex-servicemen, that is responsible for the protection of the environment. Any or all of these could be developed as action-arms of the Disaster Management Group.

Our governments and politicians may buckle under when faced by disaster but they are very good in organising spectacles whether it was the Asian Games in the seventies or the most recent spectacle - the International Fleet Review that put the average Mumbai citizen to considerable inconvenience and the

nation to tremendous financial loss. One report estimated that Mumbai city lost on an average around Rs.1,000 crores or Rs.100 million a day for five days.

The police were rude to the common people. I experienced this rudeness personally when policemen screamed at us going about our business, to move on. I was also witness to their shoving and preventing people from entering the road that leads to the Gateway of India. With fighter planes leaving vapour trails with colours of the national flag it was indeed a celebration. And all this when the ravages of the earthquake were till fresh in our minds and the various non-government TV channels brought us dreadful tales of people's suffering.

A friend said that the review could not be postponed because preparations for it had begun over a year ago. I disagree. Participating nations would have understood and sympathised if this international fleet review had been cancelled or postponed for the time being. For almost a week parts of Mumbai resembled Delhi with its many restrictions on the movement of people along thoroughfares where their majesties the ministers live.

This is no reflection on the Navy. They performed as ordered by their civilian masters. They too bore the burden of rescue and relief at Kandla and Gandhidham; and now they were asked to put on their finery and provide a spectacle much as a husband who makes his wife do all the household chores and then expects her to put on her finery and be the cynosure of other's eyes. Surely the armed forces is not a wife for all reasons!

(This article is partly based on the discussions held by Freedom First on February 2.)

The Dangers of General Knowledge : Crorepati Style

Everyone has agreed that the show put up by Zee TV as a counter to the Amitabh show over Star Plus, would be a non-starter. One must admire Amitabh's resilience as a survivor. Dogged by Myasthenia Gravis; bogged down by an unfortunate political innings; the storm centre of controversy, when he turned himself into a corporate entity, he was written-off as a "has-been". He has come back in triumph – a Caesar of the small screen, "Veni Vidi Vici".

However, the craze for general knowledge which has suddenly hit the *hoi polloi*, has a psychological aspect, no less than a moral one. Sherlock Holmes put this into an interesting theory. When he looked blank on Dr. Watson's telling him about the Copernican theory, he said it was irrelevant to his areas of work, and he was uninterested. He then gave an analogy

which makes sense. He said that the human mind is like an attic. It can be tidily stored with objects which can be immediately accessed. Or, it can be untidily stacked with useless lumber, which hinders access to what one needs. The range of questions asked, especially on sports and films, are extremely obscure. No one human being can hold such a diversity of interests - naturally. If unnaturally mugged up, the knowledge will pass out of the user's head. It may, perhaps be useful for the I.A.S. General Studies' Paper. Quizzes of the "Mastermind" variety, more validly test the knowledge of the quizzer, in a subject in which he has specialised knowledge. The ethical part of the conundrum, is the easy money on damn-fool questions, greater than the cash prize awarded to Nobel Laureates after decades of work.

Celebrity Endorsement

It is said that each of us has one novel in us. But anyone who calls himself, or herself, a novelist, needs to write more books, as an evaluation of a writer depends on quality writings, over a period of time. Arundhati Roy's overhyped first novel, has been followed, not by another novel, but a series of polemics, on the Narmada agitation. She was a dropout from architecture school; sustained herself as a hippy in Goa, baking cakes. She has thus, no professional knowledge of dams, environment and economics, in general. Long after the hype of her first novel has faded, the celebrity added to her name, by her participation in this movement, has kept her in the public eye. In a recent issue of *Outlook*, she has also given us a demonology of globalisation and multinationals.

There is no question, that India needs power: it has the lowest indices of power consumption in the world. Gujarat, in particular, is a State of semi-permanent drought, which adversely affects both agriculture and industry. Presumably, the judges of the Supreme Court, know more on the subject, than Ms. Roy in giving the dam a "go-ahead". Medha Patkar's work, by causing delay, has added, in thousands of crores, to the cost. She and Arundhati should have stuck to one point – rehabilitation of the displaced, which seems to be on paper, not on the ground. The fact is, that no technical innovation starting with the industrial revolution can take place, without human costs. In this day and age, these are now taken into account or should be at the planning stage, which was never done before.

Requiem for Jeetendra Prasad

Astonishingly, Jeetendra Prasad died weeks after his unsuccessful foray for the Congress Presidency. Was it the mental and emotional strain of the exercise which killed him? The collective fury and hate of the loyalists, were like a laser-gun trained on him. The fraud of party elections, a further direct-hit. Despite the rec-

ommendation with sword, much advertised in the press, he must have felt impotent to make the swordblade be felt. The editorial hypocrisy of the *Times* combined with ing to view the body added bathos, not pathos, to their visits.

There are two majestically defiant endings, of well-spent lives, based on conviction. Beethoven shook his fist at the storm, which was raging while he lay dying (did the Heavens themselves weep?). The second, that of the novelist Thomas Hardy, a lifelong agnostic. He refused to recant and die a pious Christian death, repeating a Omar Khayyam couplet: Ph thou inverted bowl we call the sky, whereunder crawling cooped, we

live and die, lift not they hands to it for help – for it rolls impotently on, as thou and I". I believe, even God would look on dissent tolerantly, at the agnostic, if the latter led an otherwise good life: genuinely tried and failed to find God. In my own life, I have seen, that agnostics live by higher standards of morality, than the absolute believer with the luxury of periodic confession.

Hillary Clinton

Hillary Clinton has won her election to the Senate, being the first U.S. First Lady to do so. No doubt, she is also the first First Lady in the U.S. to bring such intellectual strengths and inputs, in this high, but clearly secondary role.

It is likely that she tolerated her husband's infidelities, with a refusal to share the Presidential bedroom, even on a foreign tour. They probably arrived at the understanding that she would play the part of the accommodating wife, till the end of his tenure, while he would throw behind her, the whole of his prestige and perks as President. His campaigning for her was undoubtedly an important ingredient in her victory. She was more than a candidate as the

President's wife, she had the advantage of the Secret Service protection, limousines and other aids, to make her campaign safe and comfortable. The biggest hurdle she had to face was that of not being a New Yorker - a shallow argument. In India, a Deputy Commissioner gets a fair idea of his charge within 6 weeks of taking over. Her choice of a home in New York State, even before the result was known, indicated that she had, and has every intention, of being *in situ* for her constituents. On both sides, big money was spent on the election, which indicates that even in First World democracies, the element of money-power has overtaken personalities and ideologies. Conceivably, her next goal is The White House.

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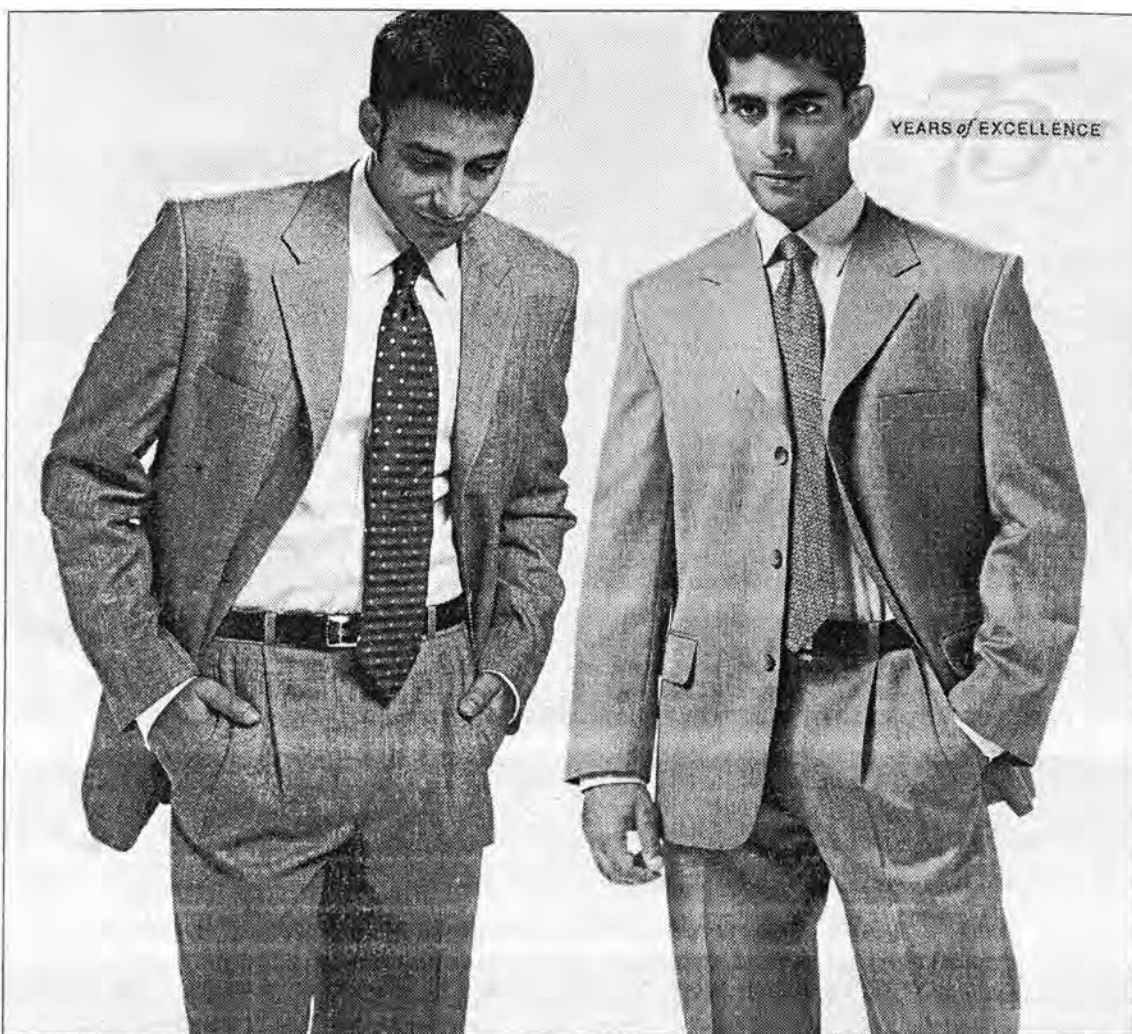
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Angels From Tibet

Tenzin Tsundue



Venerable Tashila la and Phuntsok Wangchuk in a suburban train in Mumbai.

Two unusual visitors came to Mumbai on the first of February. Phuntsok Wangchuk and the Venerable Tashi la were to arrive at the Mumbai Central railway station that morning. An Indian friend and I went to receive them as they were coming to the city for the first time. They must feel free in the city. They were not quite used to freedom having been political prisoners in Tibet and had escaped to India.

Four years ago when I came here to study, my friend had given me his address and phone number and I managed to locate him. Tashi la is a monk and though he has been in India for the last ten years his Hindi hasn't gone beyond 'aapke nam kya hai?' Phuntsok had been invited by 'Friends of Tibet India' to participate in a programme entitled: 'Tibet: Eyewitness Accounts'. Tashi had come to Mumbai along with Phuntsok.

Tashi had not been aware of the Chinese presence in Tibet until the age of 17 when he joined the Samye Monastery. As a monk he was irked by the restrictions arising from the Chinese rule in Tibet. He started participating in freedom campaigns

responded by scribbling freedom slogans on the walls of government buildings. One fateful night, he was 'caught red handed' as it were with a paint brush in his hand. He was sentenced to three years imprisonment and rigorous labour. After his release in 1993, he managed to escape to India.

Phuntsok looks older than his age. When he was arrested by the Chinese police on a charge of counter revolutionary activities, he was only 21. He was studying in Lhoka middle school number two. One afternoon, at around 3 o'clock seven policemen barged into their school and searched every nook and corner of their dormitory. They then whisked away Phuntsok who was never heard of for a long time. Such is the fear the Chinese have instilled in the minds of the Tibetans. Any attempt to express Tibetan sentiments is suppressed brutally.

Lhasa is enveloped by a huge cloud of silence. The youngsters are particularly watchful. They can see from the rooftops watch every movement of the people in the streets. Youngsters are suspect. Everyone, even friends suspect one another of

In the five years of stay in prison what Wangchuk found most difficult was the flag salutation. Prisoners are regularly called out in the prison quadrangle and made to stand in a straight line to salute the Chinese national flag.

secretly with his fellow monks. In 1989, when a major demonstration broke out in Lhasa, they

being Chinese informers. Many activists have been lynched in the cover of the night, interrogated in prisons and if found not directly involved in 'illegal' activities, they are beaten unconscious and dumped in some dark corner of the town.

Phuntsok was interrogated repeatedly and sentenced to five years imprisonment in the infamous Drapchi prison. Prisoners in this prison are allowed just fifteen minutes each day to go out of their cell for fresh air in the prison corridor.

In the five years of stay in prison what Wangchuk found most difficult was the flag salutation. Prisoners are regularly called out in the prison quadrangle and made to stand in a straight line to salute the Chinese national flag. Since they were all tortured to the point of physical disability, they were unable to stand straight or turn right or left as commanded. For this, defaulters were kicked and caned in front of everybody. They are accused of being counter-revolutionary and abused for their stubbornness in refusing to change. Though Phuntsok was educated in Tibet in schools controlled by the Chinese he is one among many who continue to voice their feeling for an independent Tibet.

At the end of May 1990, a Chinese national flag raising ceremony was held in the prison. The prisoners were asked to parade and salute the flag. Some

prisoners defied the order and started shouting slogans for a "Free Tibet". The prison guards were unable to control situation. This resulted in more torture and increased prison terms for many. One evening, Lobsang Choephel a monk prisoner (age 25) committed suicide by hanging himself from the toilet window bar with his belt. He left behind a note "I will never salute or bow to the Chinese flag".

Next morning the prisoners carried Lobsang Choephel's dead body on their shoulder and went around the prison shouting "Free Tibet". The prison guards again tried to clamp down on the demonstration and this led to a scuffle. Two prisoners suffered bullet injuries. Phuntsok was among those who were charged with spearheading the demonstration. He was interrogated and when he denied the charges he was tortured. He was made to stand in a crucified position and a beam was tied to his stretched hands. A plank was sent down his thigh and his legs were tied to it. He

has beaten by six policemen for two hours. When he became unconscious, a bucket of cold water was splashed on him. When he regained consciousness, he was beaten with an electric baton and iron rod. This went on for days together. As a result of injuries sustained during the torture, Phuntsok walks with a limp.

We walked around Kala Ghoda (in Mumbai) on our way back to the hotel. He showed me his swollen ankle and marks of injuries on his elbows, knuckles and knees. Marks that will remain for long and marks he will never forget all his life.

About being in India, he said, "Here I don't have to be cautious about where I walk and with who I speak. I feel at ease here whereas in Tibet I was always being watched."

Phuntsok left for Dharamsala soon after the meeting. He is still under medication. He wants to learn English and arm himself with

computer knowledge. He is among those youngsters who believe that violence is a means to achieve Independence. The general destruction of Tibetan culture in Tibet that he has seen and the fear of turning Tibet into a huge Chinese province is genuine and it is happening. He believes that the only way to save Tibet is to foil the Chinese attempts to settle a large number of Chinese in Tibet. This he says can be done by unsettling the new settlers.

Phuntsok is neither educated in a particular doctrine nor is he linked to an organisation. He has lived in Tibet and through his struggle he has grown up into a determined freedom fighter. He views the little freedom he has attained by escaping into India as an opportunity to equip himself to fight for the independence of Tibet. A freedom fighter is at large. Time will tell us when the Tibetans will be able to go back to a Free Tibet.

TENZIN TSUNDUE, a Tibetan exile, is a post-graduate student in Philosophy at the University of Mumbai.

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OLYMPUS

Profiles of Indian Liberals

Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh

Anjali Patil-Gaikwad



India, known as the land of wisdom, had, for a long time, denied the right of education to a sizeable section of her people. Education remained the prerogative of a few, thanks to a rigidly enforced system of prerogatives based on caste. It was this prejudice that forced India to stare in awe at the breathtaking pace of progress which the Industrial Revolution had heralded in Europe. Even the so-called elite who regarded education as their birthright did not find the idea of throwing the doors of education wide open to all and sundry, very palatable. They were unsparing in their criticism of mavericks who tried to infuse a progressive spirit into an age of orthodoxy and tried to thwart their efforts at all possible levels, often successfully. As a result, even at the turn of the nineteenth century, only 5.4% Indians were literate, of which women were less than 1%.

It is against this backdrop that we assess the contribution of a man called Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh. This remarkable man was responsible for taking education right down to the grass-roots of Vidarbha (now a part of

He was keen to see an India which was closely knit wherein the fabric of society would not be rent by petty squabbles of caste and religion. He, along with others who shared his views, in his own words, had "always done our best to put down not only untouchability but the rivalry and jealousies between castes".

Maharashtra) at a time when education was not only thought unnecessary, but was actually sneered at. People of this region were of the opinion that the best source of income was agriculture, next came business and service was a measly third. Since education inevitably led to the last end, people had no use for it. Dr. Deshmukh took upon himself the task of persuading such people that an educated man would not only find endless opportunities for himself, but would also be recognized as a national asset in the long run.

The Will to Learn

Dr. Deshmukh's respect for education probably stemmed from the fact that his parents, though of modest means and with hardly any education, had endeavoured to see their son well educated. A brilliant student, he was always at the top of his class, but he was to lose many years of education owing to different reasons – once because his village school did not go beyond the primary level, due to ill health; and, at other times for lack of money. Yet his parents were determined. They raised money by mortgaging or selling their land. Bhau, as he was affectionately called, when in a hostel, cooked his own meals and

studied by a small oil-lamp late into the night. He passed his Intermediate examination from Fergusson College, Pune, and set sail for England for further education. (The funds were once again raised by mortgaging land). After surmounting many difficulties, including having to return to India once because he was broke – a further loan of Rs.15,000 saw him through – he returned to India, a Barrister.

He wrote: "If I had not had to face untold hardships right from childhood, particularly in getting educated, I would not have had the will power and enthusiasm, I have today, for working for the welfare of society". Having been through every stage of helplessness, Bhau could easily sympathise with those who had the will but hadn't the means. He took upon himself the responsibility of extending a helping hand to all who needed it. Even with massive loans to repay, he did not take the soft option of joining government service, writing to his father that it went against his grain to tie himself down to anything that would restrict his activities in the social field.

"Mashtifund"

In his active career that spanned forty years from 1925 to

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1965, one of the first things Bhau did was to open a students hostel. Started in 1926, the Shraddhanand Hostel in Nagpur had only seven students to begin with, and even then, it was difficult to manage with the meager resources available. He started a 'Mushtifund' ('Mushti', a Marathi word, means fistful) along the lines of Swami Shraddhanand's 'Attafund', which was a plea to the people to set aside just a fistful of foodgrains every day and donate these for the students at the hostel. Bhau himself did the rounds of numerous villages on his bicycle to collect the food thus set by. The scheme was a success and Bhau's tribe increased. He conducted another experiment at the hostel. Realising that parochial tendencies could never be eradicated unless all castes and classes were deliberately thrown together, he started the practice at mealtime, of seating one untouchable between two touchables. Nearly three decades later, he wrote: "It is a matter of glory that in the entire life of the institution extending over a period of 28 years, there never was a quarrel, based on caste distinction."

On Reservation

Himself belonging to the Backward Class, Dr. Deshmukh's ideas on reservations differed from those of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. As a member of the Constitution Committee, he made it clear that though he was not against reservations *per se*, he was keen that the economic status of the candidate concerned should be a major deciding factor in providing him extra facilities. At the same time, he was not against reservations based on caste; on the contrary, he was one of the first to implement the concept in his own institutions. At the same time, Bhau also made sure that nobody in need was ever turned away empty-handed from his doorstep, even if

it was a brahmin. One can't help getting a feeling that had Bhau's ideas on reservations prevailed, the country would have been spared many agonies stemming from caste consciousness. The present system only makes one more keenly aware of one's caste instead of obliterating the scars and blemishes left by centuries of caste discrimination.

In 1928, Dr. Deshmukh became the Chairman of the Amravati District Council. During his tenure, he drew the attention of other council members to the fact that of the pitiful 3% literates in the region, 2% were urbanites and only 1% from the rural area. He proposed compulsory education for everyone. The money was raised by increasing the education cess from 19 paise to 27 paise, but not without a fight. With Rs.52,000 thus collected, Bhau immediately opened a hundred primary schools in the district.

Temple Funds

He observed that many Hindu temples had hundreds of acres of land under them and that the Trustees earned thousands of rupees every year out of the produce of this land. None of the Trustees ever thought of spending even a fraction of this income on selfless acts that would fetch them no material returns. Bhau held a doctorate in Hindu philosophy which talked so much about austerity, renunciation of wealth, and the paramount importance of giving away even that which had been earned through toil and sweat. It angered him to see the Trustees of the temples use temple funds as a tool to siphon off what should legitimately have been the property of the laity. He demanded that this money be diverted to provide educational facilities in the region and unsuccessfully tabled the 'Hindu Temple Bill' in the erstwhile Central Provinces and Berar Legislative

Assembly when he was the Minister for the Co-operative Sector, Education and Agriculture. The 'religious sentiments' of these guardians of religion, so called, were hurt and they refused to let go of the goose that laid the golden eggs.

It was around this time that the Backward Classes, the community to which Bhau belonged, asked Punjabrao to drop all else to work only for the benefit of his community. When he refused to oblige them on the ground that his concern was for the needy in all sections of society, they threatened to withdraw support. Punjabrao resigned from the ministry rather than give in to this demand.

Although he lost the support of members of his own community, he received support from those who respected him for his dedication to education and not for (or in spite of) his caste. The Shivaji Education Society which had been founded in 1932 was on the brink of bankruptcy. He readily agreed to the Society's request to manage its affairs. In 1936, he became what turned out to be a life-long association with the Shri Shivaji Education Society. Once again, he set about asking for donations. Shri Rajaram Maharaj, the son of Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj of Kolhapur promptly donated Rs.10,000. Dr. Deshmukh went to Hyderabad in 1938 on the occasion of the Nizam's birthday and requested him for help. The Nizam responded with a donation of Rs.20,000 followed by another donation of Rs.30,000 in 1944 and an assurance of a further donation of two lakh rupees soon after. Besides, there was no dearth of financial help from people who were inspired by Dr. Deshmukh's efforts in the field of education.

In just a few years, he had put up dozens of schools, colleges and hostels all over Vidarbha. Such was

the confidence he inspired in others, that many handed over entire education societies to him, when the task proved too much for them. When the tottering Dhanwate National College of Nagpur was handed over to him, he turned it into a vibrant institute. It is today one of the leading commerce colleges in the region.

This son of the soil also made an important contribution in the field of agricultural education. It was a sad paradox that students from rural areas – sons of farmers – found it difficult to get into agriculture colleges for lack of good scores in qualifying examinations. This was a consequence of poor educational facilities in the rural areas. The urban elite cornered seats in these colleges and then cornered plum posts in the agriculture sector. In order to check this trend, Dr. Deshmukh made a provision whereby agriculture universities had to grant an extra 12% over the score of the qualifying examination to those students whose family occupation was farming.

Women's Rights

Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh promoted co-education, saying that it was vital for the two sexes to get to know each other at an early age so as to avoid awkwardness between them later in life. He also believed that by denying women the right to a career, the nation was being deprived of the services of 50% of its human resources. It was necessary to mobilize this tremendous work force. Accordingly, he appointed lady teachers liberally in his own education society at the school level. The first lady lecturer of Vidarbha at college level, Mrs. Kusumavati Deshpande of Morris College, Nagpur, was also appointed by him. Since he was a man who taught by example, one of the first women to be so appointed was his wife,

Vimaltai. Incidentally, his marriage to Vimaltai was an intercaste one. For a man who intended to get society to support him, this must have been a bold step indeed.

Dr. Deshmukh stressed the need for training prospective teachers and started colleges which imparted such training. He established libraries, sent promising youngsters abroad for higher studies, paid the salaries of his employees in difficult times, mortgaging his own house when it became necessary, brought about uniformity in the examinations of Middle School when he was Education Minister, convinced doctors that their services would be more valuable in remote parts of India – in fact, no sphere of life was left untouched by his benevolent hands. Above all, he was keen to see an India which was closely knit wherein the fabric of society would

not be rent by petty squabbles of caste and religion. He, along with others who shared his views, in his own words, had "always done our best to put down not only untouchability but the rivalry and jealousies between castes".

Dr. Punjabrao Deshmukh passed away in 1965 after a lifelong struggle with narrow-mindedness in every walk of life. This visionary with a missionary zeal will, of course, be remembered with warmth for his various gestures of goodwill towards society, but he will be most remembered as a man who held aloft the torch of liberalism and progressiveness during his lifetime. ♦

MS. ANJALI PATIL-GAIKWAD, a lecturer in communication skills gives talks regularly on the Nagpur station of All India Radio.

Was Rama Foolish ?



What a fool Rama was, say Congressmen, to give up the crown and go to the forest in order to enable his father to keep his word of honour and not break his pledge "We break our pledges without compunction", the Congress Party says. "Our ideas of morality and honour have marched with the times. We are not old fashioned like Gandhiji or Vallabhbhai Patel".

C. Rajagopalachari
Swarnajaya, July 27, 1968

A Courageous Ruling

The U.S. Presidential Election

Minoo Adenwala

Almost three weeks had passed since the end of the presidential election, but there was no sense of panic, no talk of an army coup, no doubt that the crisis would finally be solved. If this was a test of democratic stability, the U.S. passed it with flying colours!

On 12th December 2000, the Supreme Court of the United States issued its ruling in *Bush vs. Gore* ending five traumatic weeks following the end of the formal presidential election. Cries of hysteria, and hyperbole greeted the decision in certain quarters. But, the incontestable fact remains, that one of the nation's most respected institutions brought successful and legitimate closure to an uncertain, tumultuous and troubling episode. To evaluate the Court's decision and role, certain crucial facts must be recalled and analysed.

Florida's Crucial Role

November 7, election day, and early November 8 set the stage for the coming five weeks of tension and indecision. On election day all the major television networks predicted that Gore would beat Bush in the state of Florida, then that Bush would be the victor. Finally they gave up trying to predict. The election was too close to call. It was clear, however, that whoever won Florida's 25 electoral votes would win the Presidency.

On Nov. 8, the Florida Division of Elections reported that Governor Bush had won by the slim margin of 1,784. This triggered, under Florida law, an automatic machine recount, which showed Bush still winning, but by a reduced margin.

"Undervotes"

This is when the Gore press unleashed their relentless effort to overturn the Florida election results. The Gore team sought, under Florida's election protest proceedings, a manual recount in four Florida counties: Palm

Beach, Miami-Dade, Broward and Volusia. In these and other counties, a large number of disqualified machine ballots, with no vote registered for president, were discovered. These votes are known as undervotes. The Gore team claimed that a hand or manual recount of such undervotes might still discover the intention of the voter! They were sure that such "discovery" would add to Gore's numbers because all four counties were known to be heavily Democrat! These were the *only* counties in which the Gore team wanted the hand recount!

Under Florida law the protest period could last for only seven days following the election. Some of the counties, backed by Gore and the Florida Democratic Party, wanted more time and sought an extension of the seven days before state certification. The Florida Circuit Court ruled that though the statutory deadline was mandatory, the Florida Secretary of State, Katherine Harris, who under Florida law was in charge of certification, "could exercise her discretion in deciding whether to include the late amended returns in the statewide certification." Harris, a Bush supporter, ordered that by 2.00 p.m. the following day, Nov. 15, any county that wanted to return late returns had to submit a written statement justifying the action. The four counties submitted such submissions. Harris ruled that none justified an extension! So on Nov. 16 Gore and the Florida Democratic Party went to state court claiming that Secretary Harris had acted arbitrarily and in contempt of the court's earlier ruling. On Nov. 17 the Florida Circuit Court ruled in Harris's favour saying that she had not acted arbitrarily and

had used her discretion in a manner consistent with the court's earlier ruling. Undaunted, the Gore team appealed the decision to the Florida Supreme Court. Everyone knew this to be Gore's best chance. The seven judge Florida Supreme Court had six of its members appointed by Democrat governors. It was known as a liberal activist court. So far, Gore had lost on November 7, in the state's initial presidential election. He lost in the automatic machine recount. He would have lost on November the 14th, which was Florida's statutory deadline for state certification.

As expected, the Florida Supreme Court obliged Gore! On November 21 it extended the statutory deadline to Nov. the 26th. for return of the ballots. Though it violated the statutory deadline, it claimed that it hadn't. Using strange legal logic it said, "Because of our reluctance to rewrite the Florida Election Code, we conclude that we must invoke the equitable powers of this court to fashion a remedy." But its remedy had rewritten part of the code!

On November 24, to the surprise of many so called experts, the United States Supreme Court agreed to hear Bush's appeal of the Florida Supreme Court's decision to extend the statutory deadline and allow the manual recount to continue. The Bush team argued, that by extending the deadline, the Florida Supreme Court had violated Federal law. The law in question was Title 3, Section 5 of the U.S. Code, governing presidential elections and the resolution of disputes over presidential electors. Section 5 held that in the resolution of such disputes, a state's law passed

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"prior to" Election Day "shall be conclusive and shall govern in the counting of the electoral votes." The Gore team claimed that the Florida Supreme Court was only providing "flexibility" to the state election law, not writing a new one!

Later, on December the 4th., a unanimous ruling of the U.S. Supreme Court vacated the judgment of the Supreme Court of Florida "finding considerable uncertainty as to the grounds on which it was based." It asked the Florida Court to clarify to what extent consideration was given to Title 3 Section 5 of the U.S. Code giving priority to the election dispute law of the legislature.

On November 26, however, the new deadline set by the Florida Supreme Court, Bush was still ahead by 537 votes. Gore had lost for the 4th. time! Secretary of State, Harris finally certified the results of the Florida election. She did not, however, include the manual results from Palm Beach County, which missed the official deadline by two hours. Moreover,

Miami-Dade County stopped its recount because its officials claimed they did not have time because of the Nov. 26 deadline of the Florida Supreme Court.

The Acid Test

Almost three weeks had passed since the end of the presidential election, but there was no sense of panic, no talk of an army coup, no doubt that the crisis would finally be solved. If this was a test of democratic stability, the U.S. passed it with flying colours!

A tenacious Gore refused to quit and went for a fifth try! On November 27th, his lawyers moved to what is known as "the contest" stage" of the election in the state circuit court in Tallahassee. In long-established Florida law an election "contest" allows the unsuccessful candidate to challenge the final election result and show that he has a right to the office. Gore claimed that Secretary of State Harris in her certification, had excluded thousands of votes that were never fully tallied. This included the uncounted Miami-Dade ballots.

December the 4th. dealt an almost fatal double blow to Gore. It was the date, as stated above, when the U.S. Supreme Court vacated the judgement of the Florida Supreme Court extending the recount deadline to November 26th. On the same day, Judge N. Saunderson of the Tallahassee Circuit Court, completely rejected Gore's contest to Secretary of State Harris's certification of the Florida vote, on the ground that the vice-president had failed to show that the manual recounts would have changed the results. Many observers, including prominent Democrats, suggested that it was time to concede. The country had been put through enough! The Gore team refused to quit. Once more, on December the 7th., they appealed to the Florida Supreme Court arguing against Judge Saunderson's ruling. Once again the Florida Supreme Court did not disappoint! On December the 8th. a divided 4-3 Florida Supreme Court, among other things, ordered manual recounts in *all* Florida counties where there were undervotes. It ordered that a vote should be judged a legal vote for a candidate if there is "clear

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indication of the intent of the voter." It did *not* say how that was to be determined!

In a scathing and prophetic dissent, the Chief Justice of the Florida Supreme Court, Charles Bell, wrote, "I believe that the majority decision cannot withstand the scrutiny which will certainly immediately follow under the U.S. Constitution....The majority returns the case....for this partial recount of undervotes on the basis of unknown, or at best, ambiguous standards."

Bush immediately appealed this decision to the U.S. Supreme Court and sought an injunction to stop the hand recounts. One of the grounds claimed that "the standardless manual recounts violates the equal protection and due process clauses" of the Constitution. The very next day the U.S. Supreme Court in a 5 to 4 ruling halted the manual recount and set a full hearing on the case two days later,

On December the 11th. the Florida Supreme Court in a 6 to 1 opinion, attempted to answer the U.S. Supreme Court's original question, posed on December the 4th., concerning its initial extension of Florida's statutory voting deadline from November 14 to the 26th. If you recall, the U.S. Supreme Court had originally found "considerable uncertainty as to the grounds' on which" the Florida Court has based its judgment." It wanted to know whether the Florida Court had rewritten the Legislature's law concerning election disputes. This would have been a violation of Federal law, of Title 3, Section 5 of the U.S. Code. The Florida Court argued that its decision was based solely on "a narrow reading and clarification of" Florida's Election Code.

The climax to the whole drama came around 10.00 p.m. on Tuesday the 12th. when the U.S. Supreme Court issued its "per curiam" (meaning "by the court") ruling on the Bush appeal. The U.S. Supreme Court made two major points.

Supreme Court Ruling

Seven of the nine justices held that the Florida Supreme Court's ruling

violated the "equal protection of the laws" clause of the 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution. No one could claim that on that major point the justices were split by partisan feeling. William Rehnquist, the Chief Justice, Antonin Scalia, and Clarence Thomas are often considered the "conservative" wing of the Court. Anthony Kennedy and Sandra Day O'Connor are seen as the "swing votes", while Stephen Breyer and David Souter belong to the "liberal" wing. The seven argued that the haphazard and arbitrary way the manual recount was conducted debased and diluted the votes of many voters. As the opinion, in part, held:

"The recount mechanisms implemented in response to the decisions of the Florida Supreme Court do not satisfy the minimum requirement for non-arbitrary treatment of voters necessary to secure the fundamental right... As seems to have been acknowledged at oral argument, the standard for accepting or rejecting contested ballots might vary not only from county to county but indeed within a single county from one recount team to another....This is not a process with sufficient guarantees of equal treatment."

The second major point, on which the 7 justices split, 5 to 2, was the question of a possible remedy. Justices Souter and Breyer argued that the U.S. Supreme Court should remand the case back to the Florida Supreme Court to allow it to decide whether to try to accomplish a new recount by December 18th under proper standards that would ensure "equal protection". December 18 was the ultimate date because Florida's 25 electors would have to cast their votes, on that day, as part of the country's electoral college. It seems highly unlikely that this six day window of opportunity would have sufficed for the task. To have set new safeguards to ensure "equal protection", to have trained the canvassers, to have engaged in a recount of *all* the counties' 45,000 undervotes, to have considered possible new challenges to the results would have been a seemingly impossible task to complete by December 18th. But the onus of the failure would have been on the Florida

Supreme Court and the U.S. Supreme Court majority would have remained at 7 votes, giving their decision even greater clout and legitimacy. Yet that route could have lead to greater complications and a prolongation of the crisis.

Five of the 7 justices declined to take the Souter-Breyer route. They saw December 12 as the final deadline, not December 18. That was because Title 3, Section 5 of the U.S. code "requires that any controversy or contest that is designed to lead to a conclusive selection of electors be completed by Dec. 12." If the electors were picked by December 12, six days before the electoral college voted, Congress would recognize that decision as final, and Florida's electors would be guaranteed "a safe harbor" in the electoral college vote. The U.S. Supreme Court bolstered its case by pointing out that the "The Supreme Court of Florida had said that the legislature intended the state's electors to 'participate fully in the federal electoral process,' as provided in 3 U.S.C. Section 5."

If the Supreme Court had allowed a possible recount, as Breyer and Souter wanted, and made December 18 the final deadline, the Republican Florida legislature was all set, on December 13th to intervene, and pick or select the electors themselves, to guarantee "a safe harbour." This step though completely constitutional would have caused a national uproar. Florida would have been the *only* state in the Union to have withdrawn the right of its voters to select the electors, and substituted the choice of its Legislature. This would have put the clock back to the 19th century! And so the die was cast. The United States Supreme Court by a 5 to 4 vote ruled that not only had the Florida recount violated the Constitution's "equal protection clause" but that since December 12 was the conclusive date, there was no time for a new recount under new and proper standards. The battle was over. Bush had won. The rule of law had prevailed. ♡

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Democratic Renewal

G. R. S. Rao

"Dr. Rao has given us a very useful book. It is useful because it is short and clearly written (and thus easy to assimilate) and because it reviews the essential ideas in India's constitutional history. Beginning with the nineteenth century, he reviews their development before and during the independence movement, their expression by the Constituent Assembly in the Constitution, and their relevance to citizens today.

"Dr. Rao is to be congratulated for having produced such a readable and thoughtful book at a time when some persons - misguidedly, I believe - are questioning the suitability of the Constitution for India."

Professor Granville Austin

Author of *"The Indian Constitution - Cornerstone of a Nation"*

The Constitution of India was carved out by the founding fathers as the road map, with a clear destination, and the instrumentalities and processes to reach the destination were also provided. Mobilisation, or the democratic participation of the people, was envisioned as the source of energy and leadership.

The Essence

The essence of the Constitution was not merely democratic governance for India, but it encompassed a set of universal and eternal values of humanism; in a sense, it was a hundred years ahead of its time. Even if a hundred wise and dedicated souls creatively interact for three full years *de novo*, they cannot carve out an alternative vision for India's democratic Republic.

It is in this perspective, that Syed Muhammad Saadullah's reflections on the merits and demerits of India's Constitution assume significance in contemporary times. He observed that "if we work it in the spirit of the Preamble, we must say that we have a Constitution which can be made an ideal Constitution by working it in the proper spirit".¹ India's problem is that it has a leadership today that looks at the Constitution like the proverbial seven blind men

and the elephant.

The dominant ethos of the political process during the struggle for freedom was consensual in order to attain the supreme objective of freedom. The Constitution represents a consensual framework for economic development and social transformation; but the objective of political process has shifted from social agenda to political power.

Dr. Ambedkar's Caution

Dr. Ambedkar's words of concern for the future and the smooth functioning of Constitutional democracy in India are prophetic. He cautioned: "If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing, in my judgement is, we must to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil disobedience, non-cooperation and *satyagraha*. When there was no way left for constitutional methods for achieving economic and social objectives, there was a great deal of justification for unconstitutional methods. But where constitutional methods are open, there can be no justification for these unconsti-

tutional methods. These methods are nothing but the grammar of anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned, the better for us."²

Adult Franchise

Reflecting their concerns on the deteriorating standards of political culture, some well meaning observers of democratic governance in India have been suggesting stipulation of minimum educational qualifications as one of the criteria for representative institutions and elective offices. Before concretizing remedial action to the problem, the issue has to be seen in a holistic manner. Apart from a move in the direction of a negation of human rights, the suggestion is based on an assumption that education lends knowledge, skills and appropriate socio-political value-orientation. This assumption gets demolished not only by the inadequacies of the educational system in India, but much more so by the fact that even highly educated, meritorious administrators carefully selected, put to extensive as well as intensive and repeated training in a large network of academies at an annual cost of Rs.1,000/- crores have not adequately equipped themselves to working in a democratic polity.

Viewed from another angle, the average 'educational' qualifications of legislators and

parliamentarians show a consistent improvement, even though the quality of debate and performance are revealing a rapid decline. The nature of tasks that elected representatives are called upon to perform are such that even post-graduates cannot adequately appreciate and perform. The role and tasks performed by the representatives call for trans-disciplinary, holistic understanding of socio-economic problems, conceptualizing policy options and their alternative implications, and to be able to interact on par with the general administrators as well as specialists in such spheres as internal security, globalisation, atomic energy, role-relationships of the elected and appointed executive, the Constitutional framework and processes and a host of such intricate aspects of governance and the challenge of change, in a global context. What is needed is adequate nourishment through appropriate methods to the elected representatives. During the

early decades of democracy, representatives used to graduate through the Panchayati Raj tiers, cooperatives, voluntary institutions of civil society to the state legislatures and onwards to Parliament. But today, political 'illiterates' are making a lateral entry into Parliament, though the level of their educational profile is showing a steady if not rapid increase – the parchment *sans* the skills that ought to go with it.

We cannot stipulate entry qualifications without damaging the democratic fundamentals. But what we need is democratic Constitutional 'nourishment' to political cadres as much as elected representatives. If we do not meet this urgent requirement, "the present dislike of politicians", as Dr. Alexander says, "should not develop into an attitude of disdain towards politics. If that happens, there will be a devaluation of democracy".³ Such change cannot be brought about through Consti-

tutional amendments, but if we do not bring about such a qualitative change in the political culture by other effective methods, constitutional culture as much as the democratic fabric would be at stake.

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Dr. G. R. S. Rao is Director of the Hyderabad-based Centre for Public Policy and Social Development. Earlier, he was Professor and Chairman of the Centre for Public Policy and Systems at the Administrative Staff College of India. In October 1998, he authored the book "Constitution of India - Vision, Reality and Reform". Eminently readable, written in simple language, this book is well worth its printed price of Rs.180. This is an extract from Dr. Rao's book.

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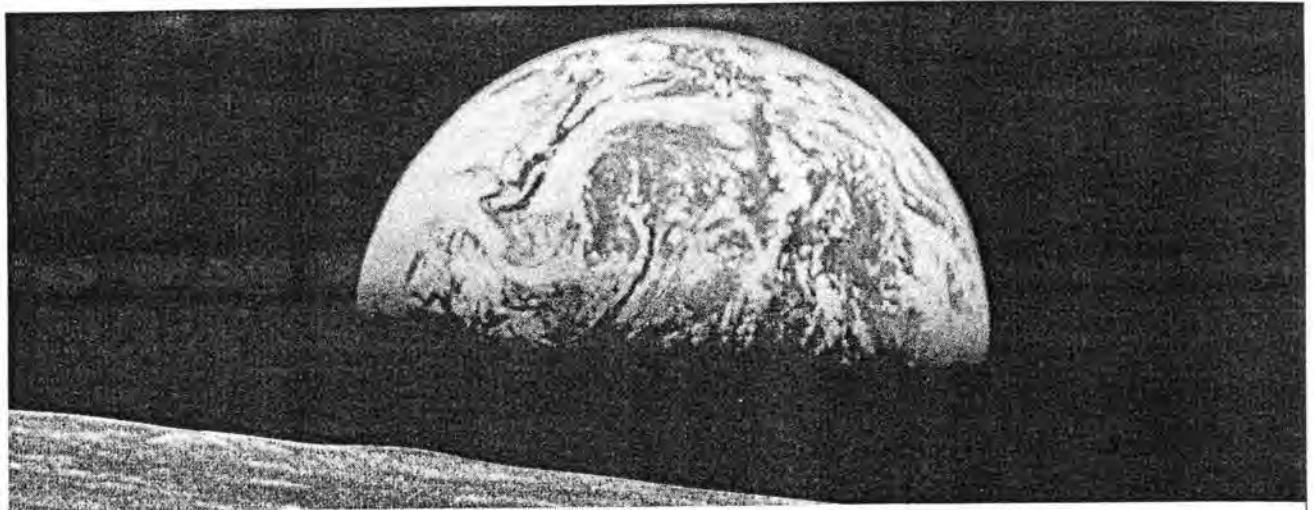
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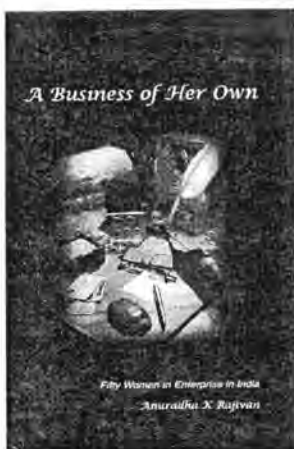
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BOOK REVIEWS



A BUSINESS OF HER OWN.
FIFTY WOMEN IN ENTERPRISE IN INDIA
By Anuradha K. Rajivan

Published by
FICCI Ladies' Organisation
East West Books (Madras) Pvt. Ltd. 62A Ormes Road, Chennai 600 010
Year of Publication: 1997. No. of Pages 372. Price Rs.295.

Reviewed by
Mrs. Suman Oak, Professor of English (Retd.), SNDT Women's University, Mumbai and a freelance writer in English and Marathi.

This book is a Research Report – case studies of 50 women entrepreneurs who made their mark braving social pressures and cultural shackles during the 50 years of post-independence in India. F.I.C.C.I deserves to be congratulated for publishing this book which provides role models for women.

Even today most of us, men and women alike, do not expect women to work for a living or to undertake a commercial enterprise. They are expected, instead, to indulge in cultural activities like arts, music, dance, drama, literature, etc. It is high time we gave up these ideas and stopped putting women on high pedestals and denying them active lives on par with men, testing their qualities and letting them prove their mettle. This book will help us do that.

The whole study is presented in a Panchatantra-like narrative of women entrepreneurs' experiences, motivations, struggles, successes and frustrations as narrated by the women themselves. The flow of the narrative is not allowed to be obstructed by statistical data but gives an insight into the spark that drives them and the sterling qualities that bring them success.

The tyranny of the deadline for publishing the volume during the 50th anniversary of independence, forced the author, Anuradha K. Rajivan to confine the scope of the research to 50 women entrepreneurs. 50 is not a small number for case studies, each entrepreneur being a potential subject for a separate study. In fact it is a vast canvas.

The reasons for starting an enterprise or entering an existing one are varied. It may be adversity (a widow Gita Shetty taking over K.L.N. Engineering products) or Uma Singh, who delights in her creation in glass decor, more than the income from it, it may be a hobby painstakingly pursued and turned into a profitable business. Many like Nidhi Reddy (personal consulting) choose and prosper in enterprises, which enable them to have the best of all three - work, family and leisure. The most common reason is the desire to supplement family income or be financially independent. The ages of women in the study range from 88 years for Sumati Morarji (when the book was published) to 24 years (Sujana Jindal, born in 1973). The entrepreneurs belong to 25 different sectors ranging from traditional feminine art, beauty, and body care;

through bees, poultry, enzyme, biotechnology to chipping and stainless steel including hotels, hospitals, publishing and stock-broking. These women come from all parts of the country and many of them travel or have contacts all over the world. Their enterprises range from a one-woman show to huge corporations. Some of them have inherited their business or industry while others have made it on their own with or without financial backing or other support. Rita Singh, managing director of M.B.S.C.O group of companies is a self-made millionaire.

These women are self-assured and therefore do not need to be aggressive. With their emotional and mental endurance, they can afford to have a humble demeanour. They are decisive, confident and ambitious. Although a few might look frail, their physical hardihood and determination help them cope with the ups and downs of their businesses. They have a drive to create. They are also capable of great maturity and wisdom. In the early post-independence period, the government, with their policy of central planning and public sector undertakings were increasingly becoming involved in commercial activity. Many entrepreneurs were alarmed.

But Sumati Morarji, whose passion and mission was the "Scindias" decided not to confront the government. "After all", she maintained, "our proud objectives were similar - national development. Besides, let the government realize first-hand, the real issues in doing business"

These women having tasted success and the fruits of their own labour are keenly aware of a woman's complex position in society, her backwardness and exploitation - physical, emotional, sexual. So they not only employ women where they can but also train them in their own trade and encourage them to start their own enterprises. They give their time to women's causes and to their social upliftment. Dilnawaz Shroff, the self-made woman of the El Dorado group of finance companies has planned a new venture for actually grooming women to enter into business on their own.

Theirs is an enlightened labour policy. They take personal interest in their staff and provide a range of benefits. Many of them possess a keen aesthetic sense and skillfully use it to create a pleasant ambience in the work place. Like Sminu Jindal they are fussy about pollution and safety standards. She gives half-a-day holidays to workers on their birthdays. Sharayu Daftary, chairman and managing director of Bharat Radiators has no floor checkers as that would insult her workmen's capability. They are intelligent human beings; she, therefore, approaches them with trust and fosters their self-esteem. These women are easily approachable and good at handling people.

There is a widespread misunderstanding about women that they tend to be contented more easily and not grow beyond a certain level; that they are more involved with

their families and are not committed to their enterprise. This figment, socially cultivated through generations has been exposed by the case studies reported in this book. These successful women are totally committed to their work and enjoy it hugely. For Preetha Reddy (Indian Hospitals Corporation, Ltd.), "the work has become a part of me - it is like another baby." Kavita (Kavita Chadha Interiors Company) says, "it (the work) is something you put your whole life into." Another lie about women entrepreneurs is that they are high-risk cases and therefore denied bank loans or other finance; they do not have staying capacity, etc. But this did not deter any of these women, who had to make it on their own, from entering into business. Small entrepreneurs like Kavita Chadha keep their overheads very low, have a small inventory and little infrastructure and have no need of big finance. Others start humbly and achieve success. Eventually the financial institutions approach them offering huge loans. Nidhi Reddy quit her comfortable H.R.D executive job and started her enterprise to cope with child rearing.

All of them are highly organized and have an uncanny sense of time management which enables them to manage their work and home efficiently. They generally have happy families, with intelligent and understanding kids and in-laws and supportive husband. Sarpraveen Kaur who lives under the same roof not only with her parents-in-law but also grandparents-in-law, does not even have to think about domestic matters. The husband of Rita Singh (Mid-East Shipping Company) is the symbol of the beginnings of the new Indian male - not threatened at all by the lime-light his wife gets. In this whole galaxy of successful women only Urvashi Butalia of "Kali for

Women" has chosen to remain single, and Sminu Jindal, in her wheel chair, had not married at 24 although her younger sister has. All of them, to the chagrin of the "rationalists", are religious and seek strength in prayers.

Prema Sagar's Genesis P.R is an unusual company that provides a range of services like creating and retaining a corporate identity; crises planning and response; communication for marketing and brand launching. Madhura Chatrapati's AWAKE for women entrepreneurs is another such unusual company. Kali For Women is a publishing company that would not consider Shobha De's books, for they prefer to stick to their principles, observe strict rules and are not unduly worried about profit making. Sun-gene International - a BIOCON group is called a "third wave company" by Kiran Mazumdar - its managing director. All these examples, representing hundreds of such self-made women, dispel many misunderstandings regarding Indian womanhood.

Although the author of this extremely readable and informative book has not cluttered the episode with statistics, she has given a very revealing table from the UNDP Human Development Reports 1995, 96 and 97. In this table India's rank is 86th out of 94 countries ranked in 1997 by GEM (Gender Empowerment Measure), even below Ghana, Kuwait, Zambia and UAE. (The latest UN report, however, gives India a much more favourable assessment). It is a telling commentary on women's empowerment in India.

Moneymaking, a male prerogative, is not considered a noble, upright activity for women, especially by those women who are involved in social enterprise. But the sterling qualities these money

making women display and their concern for other women and for the ignorant and poverty-stricken rural population, their enlightened labour policies, their efficiency and ability

to cope with demands of the family as well as their business, and so on - as related in this book would be a humbling experience to those men who in their hearts cannot accept

woman as their equal and to those women who consider money making ignoble. ♦



A. D. SHROFF : TITAN OF FINANCE AND FREE ENTERPRISE
By Sucheta Dalal

Published by

Viking, Penguin Books, 11, Community Centre, Panchsheel Park,
New Delhi 110 017

Year of Publication: 2000. No. of pages: 158. Price Rs.295.

Reviewed by

Dr. Subroto Roy, a leading economist. He is currently Professor at
the Vinod Gupta School of Management, I.I.T. Kharagpur.

A. D. Shroff died on October 27, 1965. But if you want to know when he was born you will not find it in this biography – it could be deduced to be 1898, 1899, 1900 or 1901 depending on where you look in this book. We are told Shroff got a second at Bombay University and proceeded to the LSE in the early 1920s. That was an exciting time to be in Europe and at the LSE in particular, yet this biography tells us nothing of what Shroff may have felt or experienced there, except that he got a job with an American and not an English bank, and attended evening classes at the LSE. Shroff is said to return in 1924 and almost immediately becomes a partner in Batlivala & Karani, stockbrokers, where he remains until 1939 when he joins the Tatas. Now Shroff was a Parsi, and his early education, career and professional relationships in the Bombay financial world were doubtless governed by this central fact. Yet even this vital aspect of his life has not seemed worthy of serious development by Sucheta Dalal.

Then Ms. Dalal tells us numerous times that Shroff was "astonishingly successful" and a

"financial wizard", yet she does not offer a single concrete example which may have illustrated this definitively for us to reflect upon or learn from. Shroff was a stock-broker who actively traded, we are told, on the international exchanges, yet we do not come to know whether he made money or lost money during the boom of the 1920s, the Great Crash of 1929 or the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Ms. Dalal tells us (p.16) the young Shroff's tax return for 1935 showed an income of Rs.167,000. As a "well-known financial journalist" herself, she could have calculated this to amount to something like Rs. 20,752,707 at today's prices. But Ms. Dalal makes no attempt to explain how Shroff made this enormous income, nor does she delve into the further obvious question how a man like Shroff was then eventually to die with taxes unpaid, leaving his family in some financial distress or difficulty. We may have reasonably expected some explanation of all this, but no, it is all going to be left a mystery. That Shroff was "particularly charming to women", was fond of throwing "lavish" parties,

or that he suffered a "nervous breakdown" in 1938, only serves to deepen the mystery.

Practically the only concrete example of Shroff's financial wizardry given by Sucheta Dalal in this biography is that he seems to have been close to the regime of the Nizam of Hyderabad, and borrowed from that source to get the Tatas out of a financial jam.

Ms. Dalal makes much of Shroff being considered for the job of Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India in 1936, in succession to Sikander Hyat (later Premier of Punjab), a job which went to Manilal Nanavati, a senior administrator of Baroda. Dalal says that Shroff was the preferred candidate of the RBI's first Governor, an Australian banker by the name of Osborne Smith, and that his appointment was sabotaged by the machinations of the senior Deputy Governor, James Taylor, and his fellow civil servant and Finance Member, James Grigg. Now the RBI's official history spends long pages discussing some of the roots of a conflict between Smith, Taylor and Grigg (*History of the Reserve Bank*



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of India, 1939-1951, RBI Bombay 1970, p.222 *et seq.*). Ms. Dalal has done well to throw some new light on that early conflict, but she makes no comment on why the official history makes no mention at all of Shroff, then a youthful stock-broker, being a candidate for the job, only that "about 25 people were in the run for the post" (*History*, p.227). The same official history mentions Shroff and others being members of the "Currency League" which agitated against parts of the original RBI Bill, but Ms. Dalal seems not to have looked up Shroff's name in the index of that book and so says nothing about it.

Leave aside facts and economic history and turn to the sort of gossip, anecdote and rumour which fills many of these pages. Ms. Dalal tells us Shroff had monumental confrontations with two senior contemporaries of his in the Bombay financial world: J.R.D. Tata and Ardeshir Dalal. Fascinating, the reader says, tell us more about this at least. But again there is only disappointment, and we learn almost nothing of the depth or dynamics of these conflicts either. Time after time, a reader is forced to decide whether the biographer has been merely lazy in dealing with her chosen subject or whether facts are being glossed over thirty five years after his death.

This is a great pity. A.D. Shroff's lasting legacy for India has been the Forum of Free Enterprise, run so ably by his friend and disciple M.R. Pai for so long. Post-Independence Indian liberals, like many liberals elsewhere, are of two kinds – those who were arguing for liberalism before it became fashionable to do so, and those who are filled with newly discovered liberal ideas now that it has become fashionable to be so. The way to fix which category one belongs to is by recalling one's opinions before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, our nation of hundreds of millions of people, produced a sum total of perhaps a dozen or so genuine liberals in political economy: Rajagopalachari, Masani, Shenoy among them.

Shroff's Forum of Free Enterprise was one rare beacon of hope that Indian liberals had in those dark days before 1989. (To her credit, Ms. Dalal records Shroff's assessment of Nehru: "Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has indulged in a very serious self-contradiction when he wants a rapid industrialization of the country and at the same time preaches the abolition of private property"). The Forum's little, plain, inexpensive pamphlets, with their massive reach among

unknown multitudes of Indian students, often seemed more important than most Indian newspaper editorials at the time, because they defiantly permitted the opinions of a Milton Friedman or a Peter Bauer to be expressed to contradict the Sovietesque intelligentsia in Delhi and elsewhere. From each of those pamphlets peered out a photograph of and a quotation from A. D. Shroff. Many Forum readers must have wondered who this man was who had given them the chance to read these little pamphlets in the darkness. The opportunity after all these years of even a sponsored biography was an outstanding one. It should have been seized properly and professionally, for the production of a full and comprehensive picture of the man – his talents as well as his faults.

This reviewer has little doubt that Shroff was a strong, hard, rambunctious kind of man, who hated all things puny and narrow-minded, who may have had in him rare qualities of economic leadership which India did not come to properly utilize. (Suppose Nehru had made him Finance Minister – could he have been India's Ludwig Erhard?). A chance to properly write the biography of *that* man has been squandered. ♦



Man does not live only to eat, but he has finer and deeper hungers to satisfy. Therefore try to integrate your outward life with the inner, so that it becomes fuller and meaningful to you as well as to those among whom you live and work...There is within each of you a small still voice: withdraw yourself inward, be calm and carefully listen to that voice, no one else can be a better guide.

Jayaprakash Narayan, *Towards Total Revolution* (page 36, volume 3, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai).



BABA AMTE: A VISION OF NEW INDIA

By Hans Staffner S.J.

Published by

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

Year of Publication: 1999. No. of pages: 109. Price Rs.150.

Reviewed by

Ms. Bharati Patil, Lecturer, Department of Political Science,
Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

This is a biography of a creative humanist - Baba Amte. He is not only a well known figure in India but also acclaimed internationally. Baba Amte is one of the six persons honoured by the UN for his outstanding achievements in the field of human rights. Yet few efforts have been made to document his life, vision and work, such as those of TISS, Mumbai, and UNICEF, New Delhi. Baba Amte himself has published accounts of his life, mission and philosophy - '*Jwala ani Phule*', '*Ujjawal Udyasathi*', '*Karunecha Kalam*', '*Cry-Beloved Narmada*'. But a synthesis of his life and work in the form of a biography was not available. This gap has been filled by Hans Staffner's book.

Through this biography the author has attempted to answer some interesting questions about Baba's life. What moved Amte to renounce a rich inheritance and to give up a lucrative legal practice in order to devote his life to the service of leprosy patients? Why did he get involved in other missions like *Bharat Jodo*? Leaving Anandwan why did Baba Amte settle in the Narmada valley? Who inspired Baba in his venture? What is his philosophy of life and what is his vision of a new India?

In the first two chapters the author in a very lucid style has opened up the secret of Baba's life.

It is an interesting account of how a privileged man became a crusader for the poor, the exploited and the diseased. Murlidhar Devidas Amte born in 1914 was the eldest son of a wealthy brahmin family, which owned 450 acres of land in a small village near Wardha. He led a luxurious childhood full of zest and zeal. However two incidents in his childhood affected his later life. Once he had revolted when he was not allowed to play or eat with children of low-caste servants. Another of a blind beggar during the diwali festival which left a lasting impression on the mind of Amte.

Obtaining a law degree Amte established a lucrative practice at Wardha. But was soon disturbed by the disparities of life around him. In spite of bitter opposition by caste Hindus he allowed low caste Hindus to use the well in his farm. The awareness of misery in the world and the realization that real contentment in life will come only if he stood by the poor and the oppressed, changed the life of Baba Amte. He extended this philosophy to his married life too. He even tried to avoid marriage and opt for celibacy. But he found an ideal girl in the younger sister of a bride at a wedding who left the wedding party to help an old servant woman who was washing clothes. He immediately realized that this girl could be an ideal partner in his

endeavour to serve the poor. Thus Sadhanatai became the companion of Baba devoting her life to the mission which Baba cherished. The author of this biography has devoted the book to Sadhanatai.

At his wedding Baba resolved to renounce his property and to give up his legal practice. Baba and Sadhanatai established a Shram Ashram open for people of all castes and creeds who were ready to work. He got involved in various organizations and even became the Vice-Chairman of the Warora Municipality. As the Chairman of the Scavengers' Union he did scavenging not just for one day but scavenged for nine months.

Baba's life took a new turn when, on a rainy evening he saw a leprosy patient in the terminal stage, lying on the road. Baba frightened and afraid of getting infected ran away. But later he introspected and decided to conquer fear. He went back to that man and provided him food and shelter. After six restless months he decided to help those suffering from leprosy. He started reading books on leprosy and opened a clinic for them. He even joined a specialized course at Calcutta where he offered himself as a human guinea pig. Baba soon realized that mere physical cure is not sufficient but rehabilitation was also equally important.

Thus the miracle of Anandwan began. The author has given an interesting account in minute detail, of how the barren rocky land was converted into Anandwan. Wells, cultivated land, dairy, schools, colleges, orphanage, school for deaf and mutes - all these were created not by ordinary people but by leprosy patients. Baba's motive of making the patients self-supporting and thereby build self-respect was fulfilled, with leprosy patients flocking from all over India, Baba was helped by Sadhanatai and his two sons. Today his elder son Dr. Vikas and his wife Dr. Bharati have taken over the management of Anandwan. Dr. Vikas faithfully follows the spirit in which his father had started the institution.

Baba Amte's success in building Anandwan had a two fold impact on his mind. It increased his desire and conviction to lead India's suffering millions the impoverished masses by arousing their creative awareness for self development. Anandwan also helped Baba Amte conceive the idea of what the New India, the India of his dreams could be like. Amte's basic principle is 'charity destroys, work builds'.

Baba's vision of a New India is shaped by Gandhian principles. As a true follower of Mahatma Gandhi Amte believes that the real revolution has to start by rousing in the people an awareness of their capabilities. A combination of awareness and practical work is Amte's formula for a creative revolution. Only a revolution which leads to a higher sense of human dignity can lead to a higher and nobler way of life. Revolution based on hatred and violence, merely transforms the people who had been exploited into a new class of exploiters but hatred and exploitation remain.

Baba had great confidence in the youth. He wished to create in the younger generation a courageous and aggressive desire to build a new India. Baba believes that youth has vision, vigour and a dashing spirit but they need guidance. Hence he organized many camps at Somnath and other places.

In 1970s in an effort to create a new India, Baba took up another mission. This time the living conditions of the Madia and Gond tribes. Amte helped these *adivasis* to get integrated into modern civilization without becoming estranged from their tribal culture. The result was the Lok-Biradari project at Hemalkasa. The objective of the project was to express the intention of working not *for* the people but *with* the people becoming one with them. This time it was Dr. Prakash, the younger son of Baba who shouldered this responsibility. The author has illustrated these projects in such a way that it entices the reader to visit both Hemalkasa and Anandwan. While working with the *adivasis* Baba had taken up the issue of their displacement and submergence of their land. Here the seeds of 'Cry-Beloved Narmada' were sown.

Baba took up two other missions. In the context of rising communalism, regionalism and casteism, *Bharat Jodo Abhiyan* was launched from Kanyakumari to Jammu. The march started on 24th December, 1985, the birth anniversary of Sane Guruji and culminated on 9th August, the day when the Quit India Movement was launched. After the demolition of the Babri Masjid, Baba took up a healing mission to riot-torn Mumbai.

A question that comes to mind is despite his ill health, why did Baba leave Anandwan and settle in Narmada Valley. The book

has answered the question by including a separate chapter on "Narmada Bachao". The influence of Gandhian philosophy, the constant urge to get involved in new ventures of social causes and his experience while working with the Gonds and the Madias motivated Baba to study the Narmada Project. Baba was aware of the problems involved in India's development policy. After studying the Narmada Project, it was clear to him that this project would destroy nature and endanger human race at the cost of development. Hence Baba decided to leave Anandwan. Today he lives with the tribals in the Narmada Valley, has become one with them, assuring them that they are not altogether forgotten and forsaken.

The last three chapters of the book deal with the spirituality of Baba Amte. Amte's spiritualism is his quest for human values and this very quest leads him to a greater knowledge and love of God. Amte himself said, "When there is fear, there is no love, where there is no love there is no God". Baba shared Sane Guruji's conviction that much of what is beautiful and of value in life owes its growth to tears of compassion, to kinship in pain. He sees God in the hearts of the common people. It is for this reason Baba considers himself a follower of Jesus Christ.

In today's world of conflict and strife, this little biography based on self-reliance and humanitarian values will inspire many generations to come. ♦

A Correction

Mrs. Neela D'Souza is an occasional freelance writer. This information was not stated in the last issue where she reviewed Usha Jasudasan's "I Will Lie Down In Peace". We regret the error and our apologies to the reviewer.



SIR C. P. REMEMBERED by Shakuntala Jagannathan

Published by

Vakils, Feffer & Simons Ltd., Hague Building, 9, Sprott Road,
Ballard Estate, Mumbai 400 001.

Year of Publication: 1999. No. of Pages: 214. Price: Rs.180.

Reviewed by

Dr. Jayanthi Srivardhan, Principal, APEX, Chennai-based Academy
for promotion of educational excellence.

Sir C. P. Remembered, written by Mrs. Shakuntala Jaganathan, Sir C. P.'s granddaughter, encompasses in just 214 pages, the straddling of a giant over the political, economic and social scenarios of pre- and post-Independence India. With a flair for personalizing the private family life of C.P. (as he is fondly called) and of objectively viewing C.P.'s role in India's political life, the writer has at once endeared the private man and the public figure, to the reader.

Traversing the entire life and career of Sir C.P., the *leitmotif* of C.P. as a liberal thinker, progressive and rational human being, emerges as a recurrent one throughout the biography. One need not look very far to discover that his family background, especially his mother, exerted a strong influence on him. Broadminded as she was, she thwarted social norms, by inviting the Ali brothers to be guests at her home, 'The Grove'.

C.P.'s wholesome education which included not only Sanskrit and Tamil literature, but a study of European literature as well, helped in sharpening his curiosity. Highly commended for being balanced in his views, even in the aspect of education, he firmly believed that nourishing the mind without strengthening the body, would lead

to an imbalance in the human system. Therefore, his excellent grounding in yoga and tennis.

C.P.'s interaction with Gokhale and involvement in his Servants of India Society led to C.P.'s initiation into liberal thought. He fully appreciated Gokhale's effort to 'spiritualise public life'. C.P., a stickler for principles, never once strayed away from them either in his public or personal life. One instance is that while practising as a lawyer, his clients' fees was always fixed in advance. Even when offered double the fees on winning a difficult case for a client, C.P. refused to depart from his principles. C.P.'s juniors endorse this fact and remark with admiration on C.P.'s capacity for hard work, his sense of pride at being an Indian that never let him be browbeaten by the British, his intelligent, convincing manner of arguing a case, and above all his unequivocal commitment to social causes.

The fruition of a lifelong friendship between C.P. and Annie Besant of the Home Rule Movement could be seen in C.P. rebelling against several of Gandhi's policies. The dissent from Gandhi's principle of "Khadi only" movement was a rational one, as C.P. questioned the plight of workers who would be

rendered unemployed in cotton mills.

C.P. equally disapproved youth burning their books and abstaining from going to schools/colleges to show their solidarity with the non-cooperation movement. C.P. argued that student indiscipline should never be encouraged. Such foresight, C.P. had, when today, public transport buses seem to be the prime targets of attack during student unrest.

C.P.'s vision of a united India did not permit the partition and the creation of Pakistan, which the Congress clamoured for. His plea for state's autonomy, with only residual powers in matters of defence, foreign affairs vested in the center, went unheeded. How prophetic he was, is realized now with increasing centre/state tensions.

His outstanding contribution as a social reformer, is the momentous decision of making Temple Entry for untouchables, a reality. This was made possible during his tenure as the Dewan of Travancore. During this period, the state made leap-frogging developments in the fields of education, industrialization, infrastructure and women empowerment.

As Law member in the

Madras Presidency, C.P.'s legacies, the Pykara Dam and the Mettur Dam, are landmarks in the area of industrialization in Tamilnadu.

C.P. was a visionary with great plans for India. One such dream that was unfulfilled, though much talked about still, was the linking of rivers from the Ganges to the Kaveri. If only this was implemented, it would have had such far reaching consequences of even

breaking down linguistic barriers, thereby facilitating unity among the diverse Indian population.

Sir C.P.'s multi-faceted personality as a liberal thinker, social reformer, educationist, lawyer, political activist, scintillating speaker, interesting teacher, practical philosopher and an amiable father/grandfather, are sensitively sketched. Instances quoted from Sir C.P.'s juniors,

contemporaries, congressmen, lend authenticity and life to the biography.

The reader not only shares the sentiments of his granddaughter as she emotionally reminisces on her grandfather but the reader is proud that here was an Indian who "with malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right ..." was an architect of Modern India. ♦



Romancing the Past

"How shall I love thee? Let me count the ways" burred the poet to his dark lady.

The authors of these two beautifully produced volumes are similarly obsessed with their own dark lady, the City that we now call Mumbai, but which they have cel-

ebrated in a magnificent earlier volume called, "Bombay - The Cities Within" published by IBH Pvt. Ltd. It's as if they cannot have enough of her. They must return again and yet again to reconstruct her hidden charms. Unearth just a little more of her long forgotten glories. They feel the need to retrace the faint outlines of the buildings, streets, walls, churches, godowns, ancient warehouses on the waterfront, until they appear before us with the vividness of ghost cities that are said to materialize to those who are adepts at listening to the faint cries and whispers of the past. They listen to the ticking of a clock as patiently as a doctor taking the pulse of a patient who is too old now to care about appearances, and

collect sharp snippets of observations made by earlier diarists and travelers, until they are ready to make their case: Bombay Lives!

For those who could not afford the sumptuous offering of the earlier book, *Fort Walks* is a neat compact volume that does the job of introducing Bombay to the interested reader. It's ostensibly meant to encourage the aspiring explorer to take to the streets of the erstwhile Fort precincts, the important, if not pompous heart of the old colonial town. There are ten different walks, each one with a clear map and a suggested route. At every point of the way, the authors are one step ahead, urging you up the steps that they have counted for you, taking

FORT WALKS

By Sharada Dwivedi and Rahul Mehrotra

ANCHORING A CITY LINE

By Rahul Mehrotra and Sharada Dwivedi

Published by

Eminence Designs Pvt. Ltd. Mumbai

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'Anchoring a City Line' - Year of Publication: 2000. No. of pages 176. Price Rs.350.

Reviewed by

Mrs. Geeta Doctor, freelance journalist; Member, Advisory Board, *Freedom First*.

you by the elbow and leading you to admire an ancient balustrade, or balcony, whispering into you ear as they tiptoe past statues of the grandees from the past, that lie in forgotten corners of the once magnificent buildings. Here, I have to confess to a special interest. The Asiatic Society premises, within the Town Hall, used to be a favourite haunt. I never tired of walking up along one of the double curving staircases, from the side entrance of the ground floor, paying my respectful *salaams* to the magnificent statue of Sir Jagannath Shankershet, famous educationist and philanthropist of Bombay. Then tipping my hat, metaphorically of course, at all the others, who were shown in suitably heroic or pensive modes, sitting magisterially, like Sir Jamsetjee Jeejeebhoy, on a thin wedge at the top of the staircase, or standing in an alcove, with the proper Patrician's curling locks over a noble brow and disdainful glance, like Mountstuart Elphinstone.

There was even a dramatic event in the life of these somnolent figures, that it once happened to witness. One of the regulars at the Asiatic Society in those days was a tiny, but fiery freedom fighter, named Durga Bhagwat. She used to bring her embroidery along, for one of her numerous interests was in reviving the local techniques of stitching by hand. We had been told that she had defied the prohibitory orders imposed by the Emergency and had spoken out against it, in print. What we did not expect was - to see a posse of policemen enter the Asiatic Society and arrest her in public. A small, trim figure wearing the sari in the Maharashtrian way, she got up and walked down the curving staircase, past the statue of Jagannath Shankershet, her head erect. All of us members and staff stood around the circular balustrade and watched in appalled

silence. At that moment, it seemed as if we too had been turned into stone. While the stone statues themselves seemed to stiffen and glare at us in anger "If only, one of you had shouted, 'Long Live, Durga Bhagwat!' our presence here would have been vindicated." But of course, none of us did.

It's particularly gratifying therefore to find that the authors begin their very first walk from the steps of the Town Hall. There are some magnificent pictures, both old and new that bring to life the exterior and the interiors of the Town Hall and the Asiatic Society. It's not exactly surprising that the statues are so life-like. They are executed by some of the best known sculptors of the day, people like Marochetti, Sir Francis Chantrey and Matthew Noble. Perhaps one day, there will be a book that details some of the statues of public figures that are scattered around the big Cities of the sub-continent. It's only in some cases, Calcutta being one of them, that the Statues have been able to survive the nationalist wave that swept them off their pedestals and consigned them to the dusty oblivion of odd corners in Museums, libraries, or worst insult of all in Zoos (as in the case of Mumbai). The Victoria Memorial Hall not only has a splendid statue of Victoria in her best Queen Empress mode, but several others arranged at suitable vantage points in the vast grounds, the most spectacular of course being the statue of the King Emperor Edward VII on a horse. Incidentally, Calcutta has also been elevated recently to a "Walk" status, with a charmingly informative volume entitled, "10 Walks in Calcutta", by Prosenjit Das Gupta. If you were to compare the two, the Calcutta walks are like biscuits and tea, that you can munch as you walk along, the Bombay walks are like rich Christ-

mas pudding, full of nuggets of information that you can enjoy in small doses, savouring the morsels in the quiet confines of a book lined study. The two authors are much more ambitious. They want to educate, propagate the message of conservation and inculcate a sense of pride in the City.

The photographs of contemporary Mumbai, brilliantly taken by Chirodeep Chaudhuri are also encouraged to tip you straight into the picture, as the one on the frontispiece suggests. The straight lines of the tiles on the pavement, the corner Bhel-puri man dispensing his wares so intently, you can almost smell the onions, along with the man at the side, just partially glimpsed with his dark fingers in the steel plate, the fine filigree of leaves around the picture that suggests that there's plenty of shade for the tentative walker, the clear outlines of the buildings, that appear like a study in black and white, are all meant to lead you into the vortex of the City.

Equally, however, the manner in which the material is presented with long architectural vistas and uncluttered compositions that highlight the bare bones of the buildings, with tight framing, suggests that the book is even better for the armchair explorer. Both Dwivedi and Mehrotra could be placed in the category of cultural activists for the City's past. The first is a social historian, the second, an architect. Their approach is almost cinematic, their gaze goes back into time, to present the broad historical picture. The dates, the persons concerned with the development, are all there, then just as quickly they swoop down into the present, and urge you to look out for the details, swishing past staircases, pausing just a moment to comment on a pillar, or a lintel, or a grimy carved statue, and

then zero in for a close up.

Every now and then, there are voices from the past, that nudge you to take note of what the scene must have been like a 100 years ago and more. One of the most vivid voices, the Samuel Pepys of the saga, is that of K.N.Kabraji. Kabraji was an editor of "*Rast Gofar*" a Gujarati paper, whose memoirs of the mid-19th century were published in *The Times of India* in the early part of the 20th century. His anecdotes selected by the editors often bring to life a long forgotten place name or area. For instance this is what they say about Bazaargate, the triple gated entrance of the Fort that looked towards the native City. They describe how Kabraji noted that there were sentries posted at the gates. "These were usually Indian soldiers but during the Crimean War of 1854 and the Indian Mutiny of 1857 they were replaced by Highlanders, known locally as the Petticoat Regiment because of their uniform of Scottish kilts. Kabraji notes that no Indian could pass through the gates with an open umbrella, 'nor at night with a burning light. The Indian sentry on duty used to challenge the wayfarer with the cry, '*Ho hum dore?*' which was a corruption of *Who comes there?*' and the person challenged had to answer, '*Friend*', before he was permitted to pass.' According to Kabraji, Bazaargate (now Perin Nariman Street) was frequented by a notorious band of ruffians who were under constant surveillance of the police."

This one paragraph alone suggests the wealth of information that a proper historic perspective can bring. The two dates, the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny so close together in time and yet so far apart in our imagination, that we cannot even think of them as events that have anything to do with

each other, mark two aspects of the High Noon of Empire. We shall not go into their relative effect except to notice how they impinged on the life of the citizens of Bombay. Security was tightened, not much was needed, only a swift twitch of the reins. The Fort that had been built for just such a contingency was once again under the vigilance of an elite corps of Scotsmen wearing kilts. One is immediately reminded of the handing over ceremony of the island of Hong Kong, not so long ago. There too the last soldiers to leave were the black kilted Scotsmen. The process of Empire did not need much imagination. Once the infrastructure had been put into place, it more or less ran on auto pilot.

That perhaps is what makes both these volumes so fascinating. While giving us a glimpse into the social and architectural history of Bombay, the authors also reveal how each of the structures that were built, or dismantled as in the case of the old ramparts of the Fort, followed a logical progression of events. Commerce was and has always been at the hub of Empire. The making of Bombay as an entrepot of goods first received and eventually manufactured and transported not only entailed an excellent system of transport and communication, it was also a City of tradesmen and merchants. They came there to make it "The City of Gold" of Gillian Tindals title.

It allowed for a much more egalitarian outlook amongst its citizens. The various communities who came in from the hinterland and who settled in their carefully distinguished neighborhoods, according to their hereditary calling, were able to meet as equals in the market-place. Each community was also conscious of the need to maintain its identity by the setting up of institutions either for education,

culture or religion, following as they did the example set by the Western elite of the time. By giving the quick pocket histories of the great mercantile families, the Sassoons, the Jeejeeboudys, the Petits, the ship-building Wadias, the Sunkershetts, the Dadajis, the Peerbhoyas, (amongst others), the authors underline the cosmopolitan character of the City. It does not belong to just one community, or to one linguistic group. At the height of its material prosperity, the talents of several people were needed to build the harbours, the docks, expand the roads and the railways, which story forms the nub of the second book, and contribute to the rich urban fabric of the City. Bombay was its own best advertisement. Its architecture reflects its self-confidence at a period of industrial expansion.

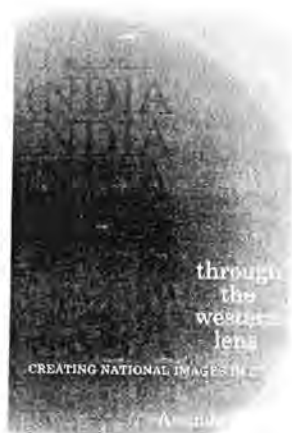
The second book is equally well illustrated and researched. It's meant either to be read in tandem with the first one, or to appeal to the avid train-spotters amongst us. Both are volumes that the lovers of the older Bombay, or swinging new Mumbai, call it what you will, must cherish.*

Gag on Universities

All the brilliant works on India and its vexed caste problem like that of Untouchables, Tribals, Backward Castes and even of Muslim, Christian and Sikhs are done by foreign scholars because they alone can study such problems without any caste-bias as they belong to no caste. The government in Delhi wants to stop foreign scholars coming to India, fearing they may expose the caste oppression

Dalit Voice Sept 1-15.

Courtesy : Vigil India Movement, September 2000.



INDIA THROUGH THE WESTERN LENS CREATING NATIONAL IMAGES IN FILM

By Ananda Mitra

Published by

Sage Publications Private Ltd., M-32 Market, Greater Kailash 1,
New Delhi 110 048.

Year of Publication: 1999. No. of pages: 254. Price Rs.200.

Reviewed by

Sanjit Narwekar, a Media historian. Formerly News Editor of *Screen* and Editor of *TV and Video World*, his definitive history of Marathi cinema bagged the President's Gold Medal at the National Film Awards.

India has always held a great fascination for the countries of the West. In the case of Britain, of course, this fascination largely stems from India's colonial heritage, which includes being "The Jewel In The Crown". Many countries are bewildered by the benign (almost careless!) co-existence of India's abject poverty with its awesome tradition and intellect (now manifesting itself so emphatically in the Silicon Valley). These stereotypes are further reinforced by the media – particularly the cinema. More so, in these days, when Indian films are making a dent in the Western market and are being taken seriously even by non-ethnic audiences.

The Lumiere Brothers may not have included a single film on India in their huge repertoire but later-day filmmakers made up for this lapse by creating a genre of films centered around Asian countries – primarily India. It is this body of work which the author seeks to document and analyse. Having said this one must make a qualification: that the author does not include each and every movie centered around India or Southeast Asia. He names only those films (between 1930s and 1993) which will strengthen his thesis. He also clarifies that since the book is primarily aimed at the Western reader his use

of words (like "exotic", "traditional", "rustic" etc.) is in the Western sense.

In true academic style, Mitra devotes the first two chapters towards charting the field and postulating a methodology. He admits that though there are a wide variety of images being produced, films have "retained their popularity for nearly a century and are able to reach out to a greater number of people" which is why he chooses "to focus on the medium of film". Having agreed that "films are the primary representative texts" Mitra suggests that only popular films made between the 1930s and 1993 be chosen for the database. However, since these films belong to a wide variety of genres they need "to be categorised in a systematic way in a manageable group".

In effect, Mitra creates several categories to place the films in: The Place As Motivator, which deals with films (*The Black Devils of Kali*, *Gunga Din*, *The Householder*), which could not have taken place anywhere but in India; The Unmotivated Place (*Monsoon*, *Octopussy*, *Tarzan Goes To India*), which deals with films which could have taken place anywhere; and finally The People (*The Party*, *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Shakespearewallah*) which

deals with films about people who are obviously Indians. Within each category, Mitra further sub-divides the films into known genres like Action/Adventure, Drama, Political Drama.

With the main semantic units of his analysis fully in place, Mitra goes about defining his tools. While doing so he explores the different ways in which ethnicity can be analysed and makes clear that his analysis will steer clear of stereotypes of ethnicity and, in fact, try to go beyond it. He, therefore, uses "constructs obtained from structuralism, semiology and cultural studies to posit an alternative way to examine films". At this stage Mitra warns the reader that the purpose of the analysis is not to look for specific plots and story lines but to identify structural similarities and dissimilarities between a set of films.

Having defined the framework and its tools, Mitra now proceeds with the first phase of his analysis: that is, defining the "Pieces of the Story". Having argued that the Place is a critical semantic unit of his analysis, Mitra deals with the different ways in which the Place can be brought into the film. He argues that Naming the Place is an important step. The use of the suffix "pur" automatically locates the Place in South Asia. The

railways play a critical role in linking places in the early films and hence "Junction" also helps to locate the place in South Asia. The local bazaar and the jungle are other ploys to define the location.

Mitra deals with the other semantic unit (the People) in a similar way: by using the dress code and the practices of everyday life to define the location of the film. The turban, the dhoti and the saree are enough to define the film's location just as a roadside juggler, a magician and roadside bazaars are enough to locate the film in a particular geographical space.

From here Mitra proceeds to the next phase of his analysis: "Putting the Pieces Together". This, as he points at the very beginning, is the product of editing: that is, "by stringing together a series of scenes that include shots of trains, stations, bazaars, people and places so that a final logical story of a film is produced. Mitra quotes T.Todorov to the effect that "narratives attempt to present an initial stability that is upset in the progression of the narrative and finally resolved at the end of the story". Towards that end he presents several sets of dichotomies from early (East vs West/ White vs Non-White) and latter-day movies (Evil vs Good/Saved vs Saviour). Of course, it is no secret that the tension is often resolved when "militarily or socially, the West wins the battle with the East". Though this tendency is more obvious in the early British Raj films like *Gunga Din* it also manifests itself in the later films like *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.

To reveal 'The Emergent Image' of the analysis, Mitra examines four areas of culture: Geography, Religion, Tradition and Colonialism (and, by implication, Post-Colonialism). Under the first

theme, Mitra points out that "the image attempts to produce a geographical space that is simultaneously splendid in appearance and hostile in nature". The space is also shown to have "a specific set of exotic and strange religions with violent and malevolent Gods". Religion is then connected with tradition by defining the place to have "a long history and antiquity". Finally, the colonial history of the region plays a crucial role in the way the place and the people are represented. Mitra claims that he focuses on these four areas primarily because these are issues over which the narrative faces a challenge. It is in the choice of the issue and the manner in which it is portrayed that the image finally emerges. Mitra sums up: "The image that emerges is a result of such selections and consequently in producing the preferred image a particular resolution to the crisis is offered".

The final step of the analysis is trying to connect this emergent image to questions of national identity. At the outset Mitra points out that with a few exceptions, "most of the films have been made primarily by people working in a Western film industry using story lines from authors who were looking at India and South Asia from a primarily Western perspective". Thus, he says, all these images are "products of a specific ideology" which emanate from the point of view of the author or the filmmaker. Further, these images are produced within a system which is "a network of political, cultural, religious and ideological viewpoints".

To tackle the subject of "national identity" Mitra also works out the concept of nation, first as a well-defined geographic region and then with the non-geographic

concept of nationhood as "a set of shared history and common (social/religious) practices". Overarching all this is the concept of the nation as a former imperial colony, which is the baggage which all these films carry. This baggage of colonialism can be seen not only in the Raj films but also in the present television images where the Western television producer "selects" a particular kind of "story" and gives it the "colonial" slant.

Mitra suggests that these stereotypical images, further strengthened by other texts, have had an impact on the Indian immigrants in the West who have had to counter these "images which exist in the popular culture of the West". Mitra further suggests that the diasporic NRI community must come together to "manage this image" and actively alter public memory. While claiming that there already are grassroots movements in the West doing just that, he suggests that NRIs couple their individualistic attempts at personal growth with "social, political and cultural works to ensure the sustained health of the community in an increasingly hostile environment".

The framework is imposing and the analysis impeccable but the conclusion drawn from the entire exercise is somewhat disappointing. After this elaborate infrastructure of analysis one would have expected a more generalized and stronger conclusion than the tame ending. The other problem that this reviewer had with the book was that it was much too academic (often laboured) which makes it inaccessible to the lay or casual reader. The flipside, of course, is that without the academic trappings the study may have degenerated into a mere listing of films. Maybe Mitra could have found a golden mean. Maybe ... *



INDEPENDENCE AND PARTITION THE EROSION OF COLONIAL POWER IN INDIA

By Sucheta Mahajan

Published by

Sage Publications Private Ltd. M-32 Market, Greater Kailash 1,
New Delhi 110 048.

Year of Publication: 2000. No. of pages:425. Price Rs.495. (Cloth)
Rs.275.(Paper)

Reviewed by

Professor S. V. Kogekar, Professor of Political Science and formerly
Principal of Fergusson College, Pune

This volume is the first in a new series in modern Indian history proposed to be published by Sage Publications. The three editors of the series have explained the main features of this new venture in their preface to the volume. Unlike the familiar format of a series of this type, there does not seem to be any chronological or topic-wise plan according to which the series is expected to take shape. Instead, the series' editors set out the methodology of the undisclosed number of volumes that are to be published over an undisclosed period of time. Speaking of the way teaching and research in the field of history are promoted at the Jawaharlal Nehru University to which the three editors belong, they say that they "have endeavoured to steer clear of colonial stereotypes, nationalist romanticisation, sectarian radicalism, and a rigid and dogmatic approach". They recognise that "a historian is a creature of his or her times, yet a good historian tries to use every tool available to the historian's craft to avoid a conscious bias to get as near the truth as possible". All this is unexceptionable no doubt. But later on, they also say that "at the broadest plane our approach is committed to the Enlightenment values of rationalism, humanism, democracy and secularism: All honour should go to those who will

be able to fulfil these expectations. As for the volumes to come, we have been forewarned that "while sharing a broad historiographic approach" they "will invariably have considerable differences in analytical frameworks". And finally we have been told with all humility that "the series will only mark the beginning of a new attempt at presenting the efforts of scholars to evolve *autonomous* (but not indigenist) intellectual approaches in modern Indian history". The reviewer's emphasis on the word *autonomous* virtually leaves the author of every volume in the series as free as he likes to deviate from the norms elaborated earlier. One wonders if it would not have been better to bring out the volume under review and those hopefully to follow without being made part of a *series* of which presupposes a much more detailed thinking on the part of the planners than can be discerned here.

Moving from the "series" to Ms. Sucheta Mahajan's book on Independence and Partition, it does indeed illustrate the highly *autonomous* approach to the writing of modern Indian history. Its five parts, thirteen chapters and a concluding essay examine the tug-of-war between secular and communal forces which underlie the independence and partition of India

in August 1947. In doing so, the author sounds an alarm at the increasingly fashionable intellectual attitude of being non-ideological and apolitical in writing history in today's post-modernist world. She has through her own writing tried to counter this trend by reasserting the role and values of nationalism, secularism and pluralism cherished by the Indian people. The roles played by the British, by Jinnah, by Hindu nationalist organisations as also by the Congress struggle for freedom have been greatly misunderstood and often deliberately distorted by modern day writers. Ms. Mahajan points out these 'unhistorical' stories by reference to various sources and tries to correct their misinterpretations by delving into a wealth of historical sources both within the country and outside.

The book starts with the assessment of the extent and influence of the nationalist activity during the period of the Second World War and the British response to it as well as the nature of the post-war political settlement the former colonial rulers were led to envision. Following a thematic rather than a chronological sequence of the various events which shaped the history of those fateful years, it deals with the forces of imperialism and nationalism in the next part. Next

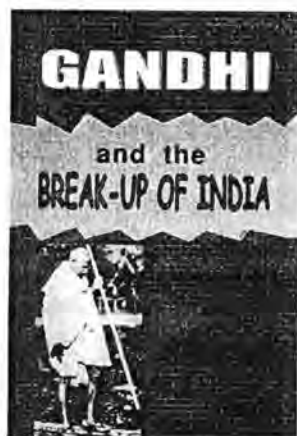
comes a detailed discussion of the various options along which events could have moved and deals with the responses of imperialism, nationalism and communalism. The fourth part deals with the interactions between nationalism and commercialism within different political groups including, of course, the Muslim League and Hindu communalists, with independence within sight. The direct action launched by the League against the Congress governments in the interim period and its impact on Congress thinking on partition are well brought out here. The fifth and final part sets out the circumstances in which partition became a concomitant of independence and its reluctant acceptance by the Congress. The final chapter in this part deals with the somewhat speculative subject of why Mahatma

Gandhi finally acquiesced in the division of the country in spite of his strong opposition to the idea from the outset. The concluding essay brings the various strands in this narration together in a highly readable account.

The book gives ample evidence of the author's industry, dedication and scholarship in dealing with a sensitive and provocative subject of independence and partition of the country which took place over fifty years ago. To older readers like the present reviewer, who have lived through the whole of this period as participating adults, everything that is said in the book is like current history. To those who were born after independence, this should prove to be a fascinating and authentic work on the momentous

happenings preceding their times.

Since Ms. Mahajan's book is intended to be a work of history, and not a presentation of a particular point of view in a seminar on a controversial subject, she could perhaps have been a little more impersonal in combating the contrary views advanced by other writers on various events. In many places she appears in the role of an advocate for the Congress which she has persuaded herself to have been on the defensive, especially regarding the acceptance of partition. The writing therefore often appears polemical or unduly argumentative. Needless to say that this comment is not however meant to detract from the undoubted merit and scholarship manifested in the book.♦



GANDHI AND THE BREAK UP OF INDIA

By Rafiq Zakaria

Published by

Bhavan's Book University, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Chowpatty, Mumbai 400 007.

Year of Publication 1999. No. of pages: 304. Price Rs.300.

Reviewed by

Professor Nagindas Sanghavi, Political commentator and columnist

Gibbon described History as a record of the crimes and the follies of Man. This volume is devoted to disprove the claims of a murderer and his admirers. Nathuram Godse who murdered Gandhi in 1948 is a ghost that refuses to disappear from public debates because he thrives on the glory of his victim. Godse who had no intrinsic merits of his own would have vanished into oblivion but for Gandhi and it is, in fact Gandhi and not Godse who is being discussed all the times.

A Marathi play '*Mee Nathuram boltoy*' [It's me Nathuram speaking] has lashed up a furious controversy all over Maharashtra and beyond. The play seeks to justify the murder of a hypocrite whose life long policy of appeasement of Muslim communalism resulted in the traumatic vivisection of India into two bleeding blocs. It is still a horror that is fresh in the Indian psyche. The entire blame for the holocaust with all the staggering figures of the

dead and the displaced, of those who were maimed and raped and abducted is sought to be laid entirely at the door of the Mahatma. Dr. Rafiq Zakaria, an educationist and an author of great eminence has single handedly undertaken the herculean task of clearing Gandhi of all the disgusting charges levelled against him time and again. Every sane man will applaud his adventure but few will vouchsafe the long and circuitous road chosen by him to reach his destination.

In order to illustrate the mind set as also the approach of Gandhi to contemporary issues and events, Dr. Zakaria has attempted a biographical - it is rather hagiographical - narration of Gandhiana. All such efforts are bound to prove futile, because Gandhi is too vast a subject to be encompassed in a slim volume. Even several volumes of Tendulkar fail to do full justice to him. Dr. Zakaria has been forced to choose and pick bits of Gandhi and his choice is not always very happy. The central theme and purpose of the book gets clouded and the reader is left unconvinced as to what we are driving at. Dr. Zakaria does raise a few very interesting and very pertinent questions but he never stops to analyse or explain them.

The most virulent Gandhi haters - Munje, Bhopatkar, Godse, Ambedkar, as also Gandhi's Guru - Gokhale and his most favourite pupil Vinoba come from the Marathi speaking region. Gandhi's crusade against the evil of untouchability occupies several pages in the volume without it being mentioned even once the intense anti-Gandhi hatred it generated amongst the orthodox sections of the Hindus who would consider such a fusillade a sacrilege. Gandhi like Socrates or Jesus before him was widely hated by his countrymen.

In his enthusiasm to demonstrate the close links which Gandhi always had with the Muslim community, Dr. Zakaria has not only made mountains out of mole hills, but his assertions may fuel the very fire he wants to extinguish. Gandhi's African safari is a case in point. Commercial and professional relations between the Hindus and the Muslims are quite common and no significance need be attached to them. Dr. Zakaria specifically mentions the niggardly amounts contributed by the Nizam and the

Aga Khan to the African fund. His silence about others will make a deafening noise to those who seek to portray Mahatma as a stooge of the Muslims.

Gandhi's struggle in India indeed makes a strange story. Gandhi, like George Washington lost all his battles, but he won the war. Some of his battles are indeed rather curious in nature. Gandhi began his political career in India on the wrong foot and complicated the communal problem no end by supporting the wrong issue and a wrong type of leadership. Dr. Zakaria keeps on harping on the *Khilafat* as if it was the best short cut to communal amity. He overlooks the fact that the euphoria was deceptive and short lived.

Dr. Zakaria fails to project the *Khilafat* issue in its proper perspective. Dr. Zakaria is either unaware of the issues involved, or he has deliberately turned a Nelson's eye to reality. History has not witnessed another such movement that was as stupid as the *Khilafat* agitation in India and Dr. Zakaria has to confess that much by expressing his dismay at the final outcome. *Khilafat* was scarcely effective as a camouflage for Turkish imperialism. It deceived nobody. All the Muslim nations in West Asia from Iraq to Egypt hated it from the bottom of their hearts and were struggling hard to be free from the cruel and heavy yoke of Turkish hegemony. The European nations were fomenting the trouble for their own interests. In Turkey itself, the corrupt and despotic regime was hated by the young and the enlightened and Young Turks were fighting to dethrone it. When the Arabs and the Turks were keen on destroying *Khilafat*, obscurantist leaders of the Muslim community were agitating in support of the doomed *Khalifa*. The agitation was justified neither by the tenets of

Islam nor by the traditions of Muslim history. Some of the articles and speeches of Gandhi about *Khilafat* are the most shocking examples of his total ignorance of History as well as his utter blindness about the political situation in the area concerned. *Khilafat* was kicked out of history, unsung and unlamented and Dr. Zakaria's lament would not evoke even the faintest echo in the Holy Places - Mecca and Medina.

The consequences were disastrous for Gandhi and India. Gandhi was pushed into the wrong corner and the dominance of the obscurantist leadership sidelined modernist leaders like Mohammed Ali Jinnah. It is no wonder that Maulana Shaukat Ali candidly confessed that even the most depraved of the Muslims was far superior to Gandhi because he was a Muslim. A series of shocking riots, starting with the Moplahs in Malabar rocked India in the immediate aftermath of the *Khilafat*. The iron entered the Indian soul blasting all chances of a reasonable and balanced approach to the problem of communal amity in India.

Dr. Zakaria, quoting chapter and verse has convincingly demonstrated Gandhi's dogged opposition to all proposals for the division of India and his strenuous efforts to fight against all its consequences. Gandhi had lost his grip over the party he had nourished for three decades and suffered his agonies in silence and isolation. To those who are aware of the context, Dr. Zakaria has effectively refuted all the charges leveled by Nathuram and his fellow travelers, but to the outsiders Nathuram will still remain a puzzling enigma. The profuse and accurately quoted source material will make this volume a useful reference work for researchers. ♦



GANDHI STRUGGLING FOR AUTONOMY

By Ronald J. Terchek

Published by

Vistaar Publications (A Division of Sage). 32, M-Block Market,
Greater Kailash I, New Delhi 110 048.

Year of Publication: 2000. No. of pages: 279. Price Rs.245.

Reviewed by

Professor G. N. Sarma, Professor of Political Science (retd.),
Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Aurangabad.

Prof. Terchek starts his work with the announcement: "I show that Gandhi is a serious political theorist who has contributed much to the major debates of the century as well as someone who wants to open new debates. *Gandhi: Struggling for Autonomy* is first and foremost, a work in political theory. This is an emphatic answer to the question whether Gandhi was a political thinker at all.

The clue to Gandhi's political theory is to be found, according to the author, in the concept of autonomy. It may be noted, at the outset, that the concept of autonomy has two dimensions - the spiritual and cosmological and the secular and temporal. In purely philosophical speculations the first has figured more prominently than the second, the realm of the self being treated as totally private and the relation between autonomous selves as an expansion of the essential universality of spirit. In this cosmological outlook all living creatures are one and are held together by love, truth and non-violence.

The secular and temporal aspect of autonomy relates to one's place in society and state and the present human condition where freedom is invaded by restrictions of state and government and the

psychological pressures of society. There are again, the inhuman elements of tradition and superstition and institutionalised inequality which deny freedom, without the individual being even aware of the deprivation. More than all, what denies the autonomy of the individual is the cultural, economic and social consequences of modernisation, an indiscriminate copying of western models, the progress of industrialisation and the advance of technology. The individual finds himself alienated, rootless and marginalised, one of the numerous "remainders" in Society.

Autonomy in either sense means the recovery of self and the consciousness of self government. Government and law are here to stay and the individual has to keep his conscience always awake while generally accepting the rule of law and prepared to assert and fight for his conscience non-violently when authority oversteps its legitimate province. There can be no compromise on this score.

For autonomy in the spiritual as well as the temporal sense the discipline of the self is an imperative. The unredeemed self cannot be a rightful claimant for autonomy. Much of the discipline of the self derives from the tradition and morality of the community. But

the self is intrinsically above the authority of tradition though tradition and current morality are to be accepted in the normal course. The final authority for the autonomous self is the inner voice. It is well known how Gandhi followed his inner voice on numerous occasions when reason failed to show the light. The sensitivity of the inner voice has always to be kept alive and alert if one's autonomy is to be assured. But Gandhi warns us against mistaking any voice for the inner voice - it may well be, even in the most confident, 'the echo of one's own pride'.

The freedom which is absolute for all in their inner life is not available in the same degree to the individual in community. While in the West, freedom and rights are synonymous, freedom for us is the reward for duties rendered to the community. This is no doubt necessary for the stability of the community but a point may be reached at which the claims of the community may threaten the autonomy of the individual. The stability of the community is normally a desirable end but it is only a means to the true end which is the individual. The individual has generally to abide by the law of the community and follow its conventions and practices but where these are inhuman and morally

obnoxious he should boldly resist and strive for their abolition. Instances of these are child marriage, child widowhood and untouchability when the laws of state are opposed to the moral law and human rights, conscientious non-violent resistance and submission to the sanctions of law is the Gandhian prescription. Gandhi, in this respect, as Tercek shows, is in line with Antigone, Socrates and other civil resisters and with the teaching of Thoreau. Gandhi would not permit resistance except under the gravest provocation. The law and morality of the community are to be generally followed as they provide safe lines of conduct. The individual should not take to weighing every particular detail in "Golden scales" and make himself a habitual and unbending dissenter and law breaker.

Love, non-violence and truth

are the very soul of Gandhi's philosophy. The appeal of love and voluntary suffering is to the heart of the opponent and is unfailing in its power to win and transform. Love and non-violence constitute a moral absolute for Gandhi but in its application he permits "a string of exceptions"

Tercek would view them not as negations of Gandhi's Law. The Law stands in spite of the exceptions. He notes, like several critics of Gandhi, the striking ambivalences in his message of non violence - especially when Gandhi justifies taking of the life of one's own daughter threatened with rape. He questions, mildly though, why Gandhi does not extend his justification of violence when he talks about Jewish resistance. Tercek also makes the important point that there are two faces of Gandhi - he is at once a visionary and a realist. His economic theory

with its emphasis on the village and on handicrafts may appear far fetched and unrealistic but it can serve as a touchstone to assess the human value of our economy. Gandhi is neither inconsistent nor a paradox though he may appear to be so. According to the author this is the distinctive merit of Gandhi's thought.

Tercek's work is original, thorough and eminently reliable. His exposition of Gandhi's thought is clear and judicious and brings out Gandhi's relevance not only to our times but to the millennium we have entered. It is unique in relating Gandhi to the mainstream of political philosophy and showing how the basic problems of life are common to the East and the West. This study will be widely appreciated as an important contribution to Gandhian studies and to political philosophy. ♦

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THE TREE OF TONGUES
AN ANTHOLOGY OF MODERN INDIAN POETRY
Edited by E. V. Ramakrishnan

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Reviewed by
Ms. Elizabeth Reuben, Professor of English Literature,
formerly of Wilson College, Mumbai.

To begin with, I found myself utterly dumbfounded. "You ... care for me as a boil / is cared for as a tree minds a flower ... / as the sky preserves the sun," says one poet (Narayan Surve), and another (Teji Grover): "A rabid dog / subdued before the bite / ... is silenced cucumber". Well, really! Never never would I have dreamed of treating a boil like that or of expecting a cucumber to be anything but silent. Does this point to some great gulf between me and my countrymen? Am I hopelessly colonized? But then, it's the business of poetry to make extravagant statements, and when translation robs them of tone and tune and word order, there are no signposts left into the experience of the poet. The simplest and most obvious things can go wrong. The whole spirit of the line changes, for instances, when Vinod Kumar Shukla's "*Dur se apna ghar dekhna chahiye*" assumes the monosyllabic tramp of "One should see one's own house from far off". And 'twinkle' gives a bathetic Santa Claus effect to Jayant Parmar's "All the sacred rivers / Flow in my veins / Sun Moon Stars / Twinkle / In my eyes". So it really isn't fair to the poets to say grandly as the introduction does, "No attempt has been made here to make these translations particularly presentable", and to leave the

reader to do some scrambled mental tidying up.

But if this happens, it's far from always. The anthology is designed as a companion volume to the editor's own critical study *Making It New : Modernism in the poetry of Malayalam, Marathi and Hindi* (1995), which concerns itself chiefly with subversive, marginalized voices, struggling to remould the literary language to their purposes, and moving towards a poetry of the public sphere. So we get the clean incisiveness of:

*A broken broom; a stinking swab;
a bowl with a twisted rim:
she is now a mound of earth.*

(Attoor Raviverma)

or

*Tar and gravel embedded
it lies on the road
a worn-out, shapeless shoe.
I think of the feet
it has protected
and bow
in reverence.*

(Sarveshwar Dayal Saxena)

or

*if you ask his age, he'll tell you =
several thousand years, give or take
a few
has fallen off high places more than
once,
and got all broken up, so*

*looks glued together
like the map of India.*

(Kunwar Narayan)

And that's only a few of the most easily quoted.

Strangely though, or may be not so strangely, but naturally rather, these weren't the first to come through – it was poems turning on family relationships. First of all was Gulammohamed Sheikh's "*Father in Dream*":

*Father, I saw you again, yesterday
thousands of miles away from home,
here on the shore
of the Baltic when I lie asleep ...*

After that came Bhalchandra Nemade's "*Granny*", a single sweep of complex and urgent emotion that can't be quoted effectively, but never fails to bring a trickle of tears each time I read it. Both these poems worked as total structures, not just a striking image or two, and the other poems by the same poets, did almost as well even with different translators. It is something about their styles or were they just lucky in those translators? I long to be able to tackle the originals and find out for myself. Shrikant Verma's spare and evocative group of poems *raakhon* can feel the same way too – so resonant in translation with such economy or means, what must the originals be!

*Which way lies the city of Magadh?
Listen, O rider of the horse,
From Magadh I come
And to Magadh
I must return ...*

Most haunting perhaps in the long run are likely to be some of the most elusive poems – elusive not because they are obscure (which they are not) but sometimes for an intriguing combination of simple elements:

*The last trumpeting of the rogue
elephant hit by a bullet
slowly dissolved into silence ...
I alone walk
not knowing why
along the unfinished walls of these
houses.*

(N. N. Kakkad)

Or a beautifully eloquent balance of inner and outer like Kedarnath Singh's "Remembering the Year 1947":

*Kedarnath Singh, do you remember
Noor Miyan? ...
Do you know where he is at present?
In Dhaka or Multan?
Do you know how many leaves
fall every year in Pakistan?
Why are you silent, Kedarnath
Singh?
Are you weak in mathematics?*

And Dhoomil's "Twenty Years After Independence":

*It's afternoon now,
there are padlocks hanging on every
side,
a disaster's written in the language
of the bullets buried in the walls
and the shoes scattered in the street,
a cow has slopped its dung
on the map of India
flapping in the wind ...*

That particular blend of feelings centred on 1947 is something I recognize very well: both these poets are my contemporaries, Midnight's school children like myself. Again and again, it turned out that way with

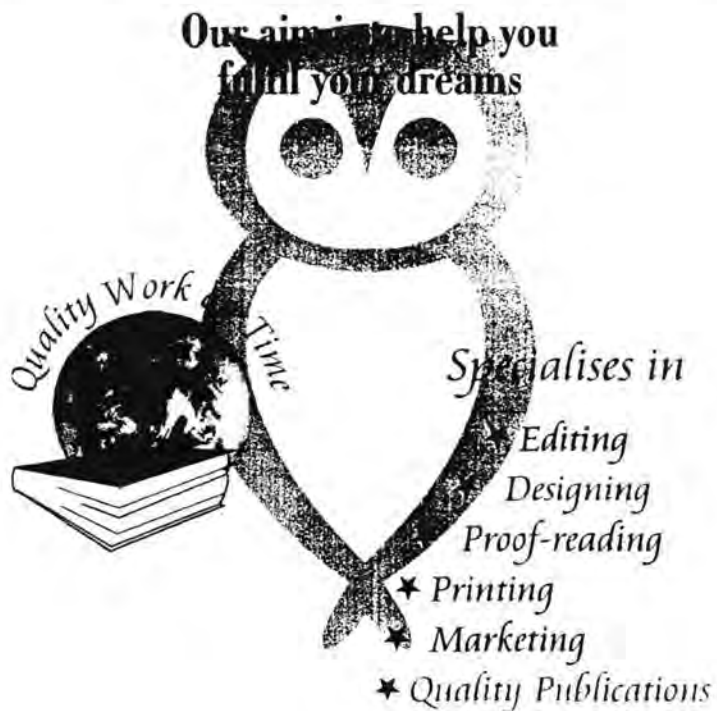
poems that seemed to strike home with particular force – astonishing how one's generation counts for even more than one's language. But the younger poets were far from alien and inaccessible; altogether, in spite of some clogged patches the editor and the 32 translators have made an anthology that's excellent value for someone like me, a monolingual poetry-lover who wants to explore beyond those confines.

Of course, these 230 pages can't be and aren't intended to be, a basis for generalizations about

Modern Indian Poetry. Nevertheless, 136 poems by 52 poets translated from four great languages (Gujarati has been added to three of the companion volume) is rich fare. Some of the poets were mere names to me before, some not even that, other's I'd read a little of in translation already, but it was wonderful to meet them all together – so many alert and sensitive minds grappling with this vast confusing, distressing yet deeply loved country of ours. And how nice to find I don't after all need to learn to be kind to boils and cucumbers. ♦

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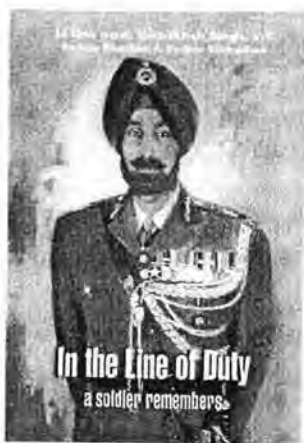
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**"IN THE LINE OF DUTY"
A SOLDIER REMEMBERS**
By Lt.Gen.(Retd) Harbaksh Singh, VrC

Published by

Lancer Publishers & Distributors; 56 Gautam Nagar, New Delhi 110049;
Year of Publication: 2000. No. of Pages: 440. Price Rs.595.

Reviewed by

Maj.Gen.(Retd.) E. D'Souza PVSM, Defence columnist, writer and
author and a regular contributor to *Freedom First*.

This absorbing book is the autobiography of an eminent soldier, who was born to be one. This reviewer has had the opportunity of serving under him when he was GOC 33 Corps and again when he was the Western Army Commander. On retirement both served on the Organizing Committee of the Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Committee in New Delhi.

There can be little doubt that Lieutenant General (Lt Gen) Harbaksh Singh had a very imposing presence being tall and ramrod straight, to the very end. The reviewer has no hesitation in stating that throughout his service from 1943 to date, no General Officer had the physical and commanding presence and personality of this Sikh General, which is perhaps why he was such a good field commander, his crowning glory being the handling of Western Command during the 1965 War against Pakistan in the West, at a time when that Command covered J & K, HP, Punjab, Delhi and Eastern Rajasthan, all 'hot' spots.

It is unfortunate that Lt Gen Harbaksh undertook to write this autobiography late in life, because it is a valuable mine of information on leadership in battle.

The book was put together and published by his daughter Harmala Gupta who, in the preface, has said that had he lived longer he would have been able to arrange and annotate the photographs, all black and white, more realistically. There is yet another reason why this fine Infantry General delayed putting his thoughts down on paper so late in life. Going through the book it is obvious that the General, because of the ageing process, perhaps forgot places and names, or found it difficult to recall them.

His story is fascinating because it covers his whole life and how events and personalities influenced his soldierly qualities and military thinking. His frequent references to the tenets of his religion and the influence that it had on him throughout his service are transparently evident. There is little doubt that his faith, and his strong religious convictions, sustained him during the years he was a Prisoner of War of the Japanese in Singapore during World War II. The point is that if religion is a source of inspiration and good, there is nothing wrong in following it, even in a secular society, but it should not influence one's judgment. It is unfortunate that many of the things that he saw and experienced in this book, have not been translated into English, nor for that

matter many of the quotes in Punjabi and Hindi. If this book is to find favour among people outside India, it adds to its value if such translations are indicated, as it would add to the value of this book.

That he was a human being comes out very clearly in practically every page of this book. In this context, the reviewer recalls one small and seemingly insignificant incident, when the General was GOC 33 Corps in Siliguri and was visiting the very newly raised battalion, 17 Maratha Light Infantry, at that point of time commanded by the reviewer, on the Penlang Ridge outside Gangtok, Sikkim. The Commanding Officer, anxious for the inspection to end on a high note, the General, who was inspecting the well-concealed defences, was advised of the number of leeches in the area on which he was standing. The ploy worked. No human being likes to have blood-sucking leeches on his person and so, the General said very diplomatically, that he was satisfied with what he had seen and moved to the Mess!

In the chapter describing his stay in Singapore as a Prisoner of War, his abiding concern for his fellow prisoners came to the fore in many ways. In doing so, exposing himself to hazards which, it came to light,

could bring in their wake severe punishment. This trait surfaced whenever he was involved in operations. The second important period was during the operations in J & K as a battalion and brigade commander in the battles raging round Srinagar Airfield, Shalatang and Uri and later in the hard fighting at Tithwal. His grasp of tactics came to the fore for the simple reason that he did not command his troops from the safety of a bunker but was invariably present where the action was and so was able to influence the battle by his sheer presence and grasp of the situation. For his outstanding leadership he was awarded the Vir Chakra for bravery; the Maha Vir Chakra would have been more appropriate; others who had done less were so awarded. It is difficult to accept his observations that though he was recommended for it, it was General Cariappa who scaled it down. Whatever else, the then Chief was never known to be vindictive or else one wonders how the Army was held together at a very critical juncture of its history after partition.

The third important period in his illustrious career was his commendable handling of Western Command during the 1965 War against Pakistan. There can be little doubt that it was because of his insistence that a serious situation was averted and that a counter offensive was launched towards Lahore. He asked for permission to see the then Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri to seek his approval to do so. His determination not to withdraw when asked to do so was perhaps his master-stroke during this hard fought war. He was able to do so because he had his hand on the pulse of the operations by going forward whenever his presence was required, an object lesson for senior commanders that

there is no substitute for personal contact. Equally important is the fact that he did not interfere with lower commanders in the conduct of operations unless he felt that such a step was called for.

For his sterling services, Lt Gen. Harbaksh Singh, VrC, was awarded deservedly, both the Padma Bhushan followed by the Padma Vibhushan though in his book he mentions that he declined the Padma Bhushan when his deeds were compared to other lesser commanders.

When General Kumaramangalam's term as Army Chief ended, there was much debate as to whether the next Chief would be Lt.Gen. Sam Manekshaw, then Eastern Army Commander, or Lt.Gen. Harbaksh Singh, the Western Army Commander. This reviewer happened to be serving in the Military Secretary's Branch at Army HQ when the final decision to appoint the next Chief of the Army Staff was taken. Mrs. Gandhi took the decision at about 1315 hours. Was she right in ignoring the claims of a successful Army Commander in operations? General Harbaksh did not think so and mentions that he was given that assurance by the Defence Minister Sardar Swaran Singh. Without detracting from the merits of General Harbaksh, in the final analysis the right decision was made. That was the general feeling in the Army. Gen. Sam Manekshaw was a term senior to Gen. Harbaksh. Both the claimants for the 'gadi' were graduates of the Army Staff College Quetta and the Imperial Defence College, London. Both commanded infantry brigades, the key 26 Infantry Division and Corps. Both were Army Commanders with Sam Manekshaw having the edge of commanding both Western Command albeit for a short period and then Eastern Command at the

height of the insurgency. Both received gallantry decorations, one the Military Cross in Burma and the other the Vir Chakra in J&K. Both studied up to intermediate level in the Punjab and both their fathers served in the Indian Medical Service in Mesopotamia during the First World War. The reader will now be the best judge whether the right choice was made.

Some of the comments made by General Harbaksh of his contemporaries and seniors like Gen. (later Field Marshal) Cariappa, Lt.Gen. Bogey (L P) Sen and others are perhaps uncalled for. Lt Gen Sen commanded with distinction, an infantry brigade against the Japanese in Burma and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order, a rarity in those days. General Chaudhuri (and not Chowdry) was considered to be a cerebral General. After retirement he was appointed as our High Commissioner in Canada after which he took up a post in academia in that country. But there can be little doubt that his assessment of Lt.Gen. Bijji Kaul as an inexperienced field commander with his penchant for politics, and Major General Niranjana Prasad's conduct as a divisional commander at Sela in 1962 and in the Punjab in 1965, cannot be questioned.

To sum up then this book undoubtedly is a valuable addition to all those interested in the conduct of war both at the tactical and strategic levels. Whereas its contents cannot be challenged except in certain areas mentioned, it is flawed because of the lack of maps/sketches of areas of operations, poor proof reading manifest in the number of spelling errors, especially of personal and place names, the use of punctuation, and not standard editing. Be that as it may, it is well worth investing in a copy. ♦



VALOUR TO THE FORE
A HISTORY OF THE 4TH BATTALION
THE MARATHA LIGHT INFANTRY: 1800 TO 2000
 by Major General (Retd.) E. D'Souza, PVSMD;

Published by
 ARB Communications, Bandra, Mumbai 400 050.
 Year of Publication: 2000. Pages: 338. Price: Rs.500.

Reviewed by
 Admiral (Retd.) Vishnu Bhagwat.

Our Army lives and fights by the spirit of the Regiment or "Paltan" in which the soldier is brought up – it is forever. The Uniform and the Insignias become a part of the skin. Every Officer, JCO and Jawan swears eternal loyalty to uphold the traditions of his Unit. For him (and now her), the years in the "Paltan" become the foundation of his/her life, their whole life.

Regimental Histories, both oral and written are treasured by the soldiers. Stories, anecdotes and humour abound. Every achievement, each adversity, whether on the playfield, war games, or the actual battlefield is a teacher for those serving and those still to come and enter the precincts of the Unit Lines.

General D'Souza's book "Valour To The Fore", the history of an illustrious Unit of the Army, the 4th Battalion of Maratha Light Infantry, is a labour of great love, the selfless, meticulous and an inspiration for us all in its detail of battles and events of the last two hundred years.

Central to this History is the spirit that this famous Regiment blazes.

The Commandant, Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, UK,

suggests that it be retained as it is with no alterations – it is a very good example of a regimental history rich in material, photographs, sketches in detail, and a guide to unit level combat in the theatres stretching from Egypt to Burma, and more recently on the Indo-Tibet border in 1962, in Punjab-Rajasthan in 1962 and 1971, in the highest military battlefield in Siachen, or the treacherous terrain of counter insurgency where narcotics, illegal arms and politics make for an explosive mixture.

The main merit of the Book lies in its authenticity through a highly researched endeavour from archives, personal diaries and memories of officers and men who served the Regiment at all levels. Its objectivity extends not only to the Regiment as a fighting collective, but to individuals who give it life and blood.

A former Army Chief of Staff General K V Krishna Rao finds that it has been extremely well brought out, high praise indeed and in fact General Krishna Rao suggests that the Author does a History of the 2nd Battalion of the Maratha Light Infantry too.

The Author is proud of this History from the year 1800 when the 8th Regiment, Bombay

Native Infantry raised in Mangalore by Colonel Gore to its evolution as the 4th Battalion of the Maratha Light Infantry, makes some very telling comments on the reorganization of the Presidency Armies of Bengal, Madras and Bombay pre and post 1857.

Maj. General D'Souza draws attention to the sea change in British thinking post-1857 that the Indian Army would be restructured in the classic policy of divide and rule. The system of class composition especially in the Infantry, became the byword. Recruitment of the so-called martial classes was the new rule. The Poorbiyas of Oudh who won British victories in the Bengal Army in Northern India, the NWPF and Afghanistan, became outlaws. The aim of these measures was to exercise total control over the native troops, as the author pertinently draws attention to.

Interestingly, in 1800, Mangalore, the birthplace of the Regiment had a strong element of the Navy as well, charged with repulsing the French should they attempt to land.

Running through the 300 odd pages of this excellent Regimental History is a thread of participation it took part in, even those who do not 'belong' to the 4th M L I are

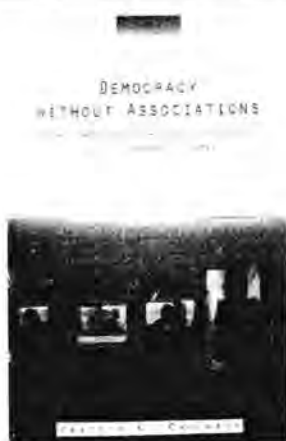
bound to be filled with a sense of pride.

The Regiment's Battle Cry "*Bol Chatrapati Maharaj Ki Jai*" is dedicated to Shivaji, the secular ruler and administrator as the historian Dr Pande describes him in the title of his book on Shivaji.

Our soldiers or jawans are of the finest material and they demonstrate the finest core values of the Constitution of the Republic and the secular fabric of the Nation they are sworn to defend.

Such a Regimental History as General D'Souza has authored

deserves our gratitude and our keen attention. Coming from a fifth generation Services family, I say a book review is not enough to do justice to his great contribution to a book that inspires those in uniform and is a fascination for citizens young and old.♦



**DEMOCRACY WITHOUT ASSOCIATIONS
TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE PARTY SYSTEM AND
SOCIAL CLEAVAGES IN INDIA**

by Pradeep K. Chhibber

Published by

Vistaar Publications (A Division of Sage Publications),
M-32, Market, Greater Kailash, New Delhi 110048

No. of pages: 287. Price Rs.450.

Reviewed by

Professor F. A. Mechery, Professor of Political Science, formerly
Head of the Dept. of Political Science, SIES College of Arts and
Science, Mumbai.

The party system in India has undergone considerable transformation during the last ten years and the changes have become clear in the 1996 and 1998 elections. The Congress has been repeatedly beaten electorally, and the party no longer enjoys a dominant position. During the same period, the BJP has improved its electoral fortunes and has somewhat reached its maximum limit as the two elections indicate. Pradeep Chhibber is propounding a theory on this transformation. He accounts for the changes with the help of certain reference points which he considers to be the determinants of the changes. As he puts it, "the central argument developed in this book is that in electoral democracies in which an activist state dominates political life, and associational life is weak, the emergence of a cleavage-based party system can result primarily from party strategy and competition". That sounds like a truism, however Chhibber develops the theme with plenty of empirical support.

Since 1996, regional and caste based political parties became key participants in forming a government at the Union. The coalition in power since 1998 led by the BJP illustrates this phenomenon further. Chhibber argues, explaining his main contention, that in India the State dominates social, political and economic institutions. The party in power has therefore distinct advantages. Parties therefore, contest for power quite bluntly taking any short cut without moral or other scruples. The federal structure makes it possible to go about it by mobilizing support on a state by state basis. Indian society is stratified in many ways, most of all by cleavages of caste, none of which by itself has the numerical strength to ensure electoral victories on a national scale.

The argument further states that in India associational life is weak as most Indians do not belong to any formal association. It then follows that the predominant role

assigned to the state and the lack of well developed associational life have given political parties in India a larger role than in societies with more associations and a less dominant state. The activist state and weak associational life are said to explain the transformation from a party system dominated by the Congress party (the 'catch all' Congress party, to use the author's much repeated term), to a system rooted in 'social cleavages', to use the author's another favourite expression. Also, this is said to provide an explanation for the linkages between political parties and the social cleavages such as region, caste and religion.

Chhibber admits that not all social divisions are translatable into cleavages that structure a party system. History plays its part in determining which divisions are politically relevant. In India, caste is one such distinguishing characteristic, and so are language, region and religion at some time or other.

The phenomenon which Professor Chhibber is analysing is clear to any observer. The cleavages he is referring to have been playing a role at the state government's level for some time. In the 1990s, regional and caste based parties jumped from the state level to the Union level, resulting in 'hung' parliaments and coalition governments, which gave even small parties a chance to share office. As a result, small parties usually based on caste, particularly in the northern states, have found their position quite satisfactory, if not ideal. Assured of sharing power, without the need to organize any nationwide campaign, with a safe vote bank, and with plenty of local issues and grievances to sustain them, these small caste and regional parties enjoy a self sufficiency in politics. They want to stay where they are and not seek to expand as national parties. This pattern is clearly identifiable. Chhibber establishes with the help of empirical tools the fact that parties are largely based on social cleavages in the present time and then extends his empirical study (very marginally) to Spain and Algeria. This comparison is sketchy and unimpressive.

Different patterns of party behaviour are not new to Indian politics. Increased politicization has made the political system dynamic and innovative. Even parties at the national level have occasionally tried to work out adjustments with local parties by leaving most of the state level activities to a local party and getting in return that party's support in national politics. It was a clean division of roles for mutual advantage. But in this game, the national party is the loser in the long run, because it cannot give up having a state level organization, and the state cadres and leaders get frustrated with no opportunity to hold power. State parties develop

national ambitions also, at least on a small scale.

Chhibber analyses the fall of the 'catch all' Congress party and observes that the transformation of the party system in India started with the decline of the Congress party. This, however, did not take place entirely in the 1990s. Chhibber seems to assume that the decline of the Congress and the rise of the new system were parallel developments of recent years. Since 1991, the weakness of the Congress became more apparent. Narasimha Rao was able to put together a Congress government under the shadow of the death of Rajiv Gandhi. Though the Congress policies, particularly economic liberalization, were widely welcomed, the political fortunes of the Congress did not become brighter in the subsequent elections. The 'catch all' strategy did not work.

The Congress(I) was constituted by the loyal followers of Mrs. Gandhi. Organisational elections within the party were never held until Mrs. Gandhi's death in 1984 and much later. Loyalists were nominated for all party posts also. The party became a bunch of office seekers chosen on the basis of their loyalty and winnability in their own base. There was no concern with the grassroots organization of the party. The party was only in Parliament, not among the people. It was only a matter of time for the party to crumble at the hustings. The history of the Congress party is well documented. The 'open umbrella' system, as it was most often described in scholarly discourses, was the strength of the party. When that was destroyed, the consequences were inevitable. It did not need any other reasons.

Chhibber's contention that

the Congress and the whole system dominated by that party was transformed into the present 'cleavage based system' largely because of the low associational life' is carrying the argument too far. Chhibber, of course, brings formidable evidence to show that associational life in India is low. This is true beyond doubt. He quotes from World Values Survey 1991 enough statistical proof. In India, the percentage of people belonging to at least one association is only 13, "the lowest for all democracies for which data is available". Iceland tops the list with 90 percent, followed by Sweden, Netherlands, Norway, Denmark – all above 80 percent, and then followed by Finland, US, and South Korea – all above 70 percent. In India, belonging to a formal association can happen only to a few urban professionals. The criterion does not apply to most Indians for whom the social system itself takes care of all needs, social, professional, economic, emotional, aesthetic and all. That the low associational life caused the transformation in the party system has little evidence to support it. For half a century, when the 'catch all' Congress dominated the scene, the low associational life also existed. It could have been worse. At the same time, one can accept the other part of Chhibber's argument that low associational life adds to the importance and primacy that political parties enjoy in India.

Indian democracy with its modern structure and processes exists and operates, as Morris-Jones had pointed out, in a traditional society with certain undemocratic values and practices. It can be described as a fragmented society rather than a plural society. Political parties in the present stage of development are breeding on that fragmentation and not on pluralist values. As Chhibber puts it, this can

be called a cleavage-based party system.

Though the terminology is new, the points of reference are not substantially different. If we put back the old terms for the new, such as 'umbrella' party for 'catch all' party, 'caste system' for 'social

cleavages', 'centralised' state for 'activist' state, 'plural' society for 'associational life', then the central idea of the book becomes old conventional knowledge. The presentation is of course attractive. To support the main theme, the book goes into empirical analysis of electoral competition, coalition

building, central intervention in states, and the rise of the BJP. These chapters provide insights into various aspects of Indian politics, and are useful far beyond the purpose of establishing the main theme.✧



KIN STATE INTERVENTION IN ETHNIC CONFLICTS LESSONS FROM SOUTH ASIA

By Rajat Ganguly

Published by

Sage Publications Private Ltd., 32, M-Block Market,
Greater Kailash 1, New Delhi 110 048.

Year of Publication: 1998. No. of pages: 268. Price Rs.350.

Reviewed by

Mr. K. F. Rustomji, retired police official, formerly Director,
Border Security Force and member of the
National Police Commission.

India had scant interest in Pakistan in 1947. But Pakistan directed all its attacks on us and gradually became weaker and weaker in the process. Today when it is on the brink of crumbling or fragmenting we have to re-create interest in Pakistan, and for that the book 'Kin State Intervention in Ethnic Conflicts' by Rajat Ganguly should prove useful.

Rajat Ganguly, a scholar of International Relations and Asian Studies in New Zealand, has noted a phenomenal increase in secessionist movements based primarily on assertions of ethnic identity. These conflicts invariably suck in neighbouring countries. He refers to Kashmiri secession in India; the Bengali movement in East Pakistan and the role played by India; Baluchi secession and the role played by Afghanistan and Iran; Afghanistan's role in the 'Pakhtunistan' movement; and India's role in the Tamil secessionist movement in Sri Lanka.

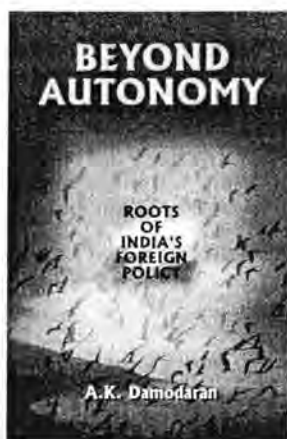
When we look back we find that partition was achieved in the face of considerable opposition. Sind voted for it by a narrow majority. There was hesitation in Punjab, and the North-West Frontier Province was positively against it. Unfortunately, the leaders of N.W.F.P. refused to participate in the referendum and it went in favour of Pakistan.

A prominent observer of the Asian scene, Selig Harrison, is quoted in the book: "As Harrison argues, Pakistan's haunting nightmare is economic and political disintegration culminating in an Indo-Iranian-Afghanistan arrangement to divide up the country. If this should ever happen, many Pakistanis believe that Iran would get Baluchistan, with Afghanistan getting the Pashtun areas and India getting the Punjab and Sind.

In this context, it is pertinent to mention, Altaf Hussein, the

leader of the Mujahirs who said that "the partition of India was the biggest mistake in history". He sang 'Sare jahan se achha Hindostan hamara'. People from other ethnic areas supported him. Then as a member of a delegation visited India and urged a pro-active role to re-structure Pakistan's polity, warning that the creeping spectre of Talibanisation could de-stabilize the entire region.

Rajat Ganguly's book is a timely warning to us that we have neglected a study of Pakistan and its ethnic problems all these years. History is going to be made in the next 10 to 20 years in the area of Afghanistan and Pakistan, and our ignorance of the area and the lack of interest in it may lead us into situations over which we have no control. Rajat Ganguly has done us a service with his scholarly analysis of events in Pakistan, and I hope he updates it in the next edition.✧



BEYOND AUTONOMY - ROOTS OF INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY
By A. K. Damodaran

Published by

Somaiya Publications Private Limited, Mumbai 400 022.
Year of Publication: 2000. No. of Pages: 261. Price: Rs.350.

Reviewed by

Mr. Nitin G. Raut, Advocate, Bombay High Court and member,
Advisory Board, *Freedom First*.

"Beyond Autonomy – Roots of Indian Foreign Policy" is a collection of essays and writings, all works of the author A. K. Damodaran, a former Indian Foreign Service Officer and an unabashed admirer of Nehru. His background and experience in Foreign Service is both his asset as well as his liability. This collection appears to be a subtle and laboured effort to justify the relevance of the Non-Aligned Movement even today. It is an expression of resentment with the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. The emergence of the U.S. as the only superpower is grudgingly and reluctantly acknowledged not as a reality but as a historical accident and not the least because of the inevitable failure of the Communist system.

As a member of the elite Indian Foreign Service, the author could have drawn upon his rich experience to present a truly national perspective in the book. But so beholden is he to the Nehruvian policy that the preconceived conclusion to berate the ghost of Western Imperialism and project the Communist bloc as a natural ally of the NAM makes objectivity and dispassionate analysis the biggest casualty in the book which otherwise is fairly rich in the narration of events. The failure to stress the redefinition of Indian

foreign policy in the context of the post-Cold War era appears to be insignificant and this is reflected in the introduction where the author observes: "The principle of Non-Alignment with which Nehru and India were identified for decades is central to any study of Independent India's foreign policy". While it may be partially true, the guidelines certainly invite a serious review in the context of globalisation and stress on economic diplomacy. But the constraints of ideological shackles preclude the author from any critical reassessment of the NAM or India's foreign policy.

In the chapter "The Estranged Twins: India and Pakistan", the narration is sought to be fitted in the straitjacket of anti-imperialist NAM policy. The Pak policy is sought to be simplified as to what India ought to have done to frustrate Western designs rather than a policy to suit India's own security and geo-strategic interests. Indeed, but for the West, Pakistan could not have been a good boy!

The reference to Prof. Huntingdon's thesis of "Clash of Civilisations" which mainly focuses the Judaeo-Christian convergence of interest against the threats of Islamic fundamentalism, is sought to be projected as a "temptation" to which India should not be a prey.

This and other essays are

steeped in the blinkered view of anti-West obsession which made the NAM more as a 'front' of the Communist bloc. And the futility of NAM's confrontation with the West at Soviet behest cannot look more ridiculous when today the East European members are lining up to join NATO!

The title "Beyond Autonomy" has its origin in Nehru's philosophy that independence consists of foreign relations and "that is the test of Independence. All else is local autonomy". But Nehru's foreign policy did not necessarily have the stamp of Independence in as much it had the seal of subservience to the Soviet Communist bloc.

The various essays in totality make disjointed reading as they lack sequential narration and no efforts are made to edit or update to present a comprehensive picture in totality. By itself, they are analytical to suit the author's ideological predilection.

"Ideologies in Flux" is an academic analysis of contradictions and conflicts of different political systems and ideologies and how geography and economic factors have influenced the changing course of ideology. In general, it shows how each ideology or political system needs to be flexible but at the same

time, it is a grim reminder of the inflexible approach of the author in the overall presentation of the subject.

"Roots of Foreign Policy" deals with the evolution of India's foreign policy in pre- and post-Independent India with comparative analysis of historical events in Europe and Asia. The article stresses the role of the Indian intelligentsia and leaders in internationalizing the freedom movement which later became the nucleus of India's foreign policy. This essay by itself presents a broad sweep of foreign policy developments in Asia and Europe. While eulogizing Nehru in tracing the roots of India's foreign policy can be understandable, the infallibility of Nehruvian policy is unacceptable. The failure of Nehru to assess China's hostile designs inspite of warnings from well-

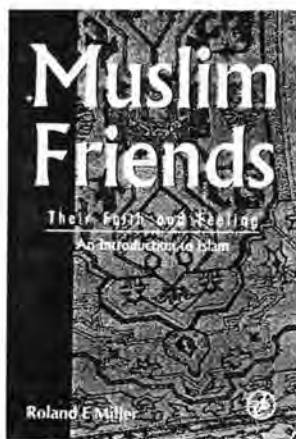
meaning statesmen like Sardar Patel and M. R. Masani can barely justify the author's views.

The other two essays "Indo-U.S. Relations: Prospects" and "India and Russia: Challenges and Prospects" are a study in contrast in their treatment. While the former is a general analysis of the history of Indo-U.S. relations, the latter is more analytical and the author barely conceals his passionate interest with a detailed survey. In respect of Indo-U.S. relations, even the specifics of differences and irritants find no mention.

The essay "Before Non-Alignment" discusses Nehru's philosophy of NAM conceived on "... a brief holiday in Switzerland" where for Nehru, China was an oppressed nation. While lauding Nehru's NAM concepts, the author

shies away from explaining how 'oppressed' countries like China could annex Tibet and attack India. The optimism expressed in respect of the Non-Aligned Movement is amazing. The chapter "NAM: The Road Ahead" is an essay without analytical direction. It is a path charted by the author leading to nowhere.

In the ultimate analysis, the author refuses to accept the 'rootlessness' of Indian foreign policy which after the collapse of the Soviet Union, had no option but to adopt a U-turn to strike fresh and firm roots. It was a belated realization that it is economics, and not just politics, which is of over-riding importance for the success of any foreign policy. In terms of politico-economic strategy as a key factor in a foreign policy, this book is a disappointment. ♦



MUSLIM FRIENDS: THEIR FAITH AND FEELING AN INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM By Roland E. Miller

Published by
Orient Longman Limited, 160, Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002.
Year of Publication: 2000. No. of pages: 429. Price Rs.375.

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

Mecca, the birth place of Mohammad was a teeming city, combining business with religion. Mohammad was born around A.D. 570, in the well-known political and commercial tribe, Quraysh. His father, Abdulla died even before his birth. His mother, Amina, with very modest resources, had to look to Mohammad's grand father, Abd al-Muttalib for support and assistance. Amina died in A.D. 583, leaving Mohammad orphaned and was now looked after

by his grandfather, who, unfortunately also passed away, when Mohammad was eight years old. Thus a string of misfortunes had befallen him at a very young age, and his uncle, Abu Talib, took him under his care. The series of tragedies, in quick succession, left a very deep impression on the child, which he could not erase easily.

As he grew up, he took great interest in the family's trading activities. He might have under-

taken several journeys to Syria and Palestine, though positive evidence is lacking.

The marrying of a rich business lady named Khadija, a widow, 15 years older to him, brought about a change for the better, in the personal life of Mohammad. She not only provided steady employment and financial security, but also gave him four daughters, the other children having died at an early age. Though

he was now leading a comfortable and settled life - a contented family, gainful employment, financial security and social respect - yet there was something troubling him. This restlessness made him undertake constant journeys of a solitary nature in and around Mecca. He spent long hours in deep meditation.

During the sacred month of Ramadhan, while fast asleep at Mount Hira, the angel, Gabriel, suddenly appeared before him. Mohammad was 43 years of age. The angel, showed him a cloth, with the writing on it, which read as :

Recite ! : In the name of thy Lord who created,

man of a blood-clot;

Recite ! : And thy Lord is the most generous,

Who taught by the pen

taught men that he knew -

not (96 : 1 - 5)

The prophetic career of Mohammad commenced with two fundamental commands which now were to determine his further progress in his life - firstly, to recite the revelation and secondly, to emphasize the reality of God. Armed with the revelation of the angel Gabriel, Mohammad now set out in his new career to Mecca. The first three to four years of Mohammad's religious activities were practically a tame affair. He was quite cautious and measured in his sermons. At times, he utilized, the prayer as a medium of approach. He was not an orator nor an educator nor was he accustomed to the art of public speaking. The reaction of the people of Mecca was, however, negative. According to Dr. Roland Miller : "they responded with a mix of curiosity and puzzlement, laughter and disdain, annoyance and outright anger.

For the first ten years,

Mohammad had to face tough situations. Having patiently put up with the sermons and discourses, the people of Mecca, encouraged by very prominent leaders, now opposed him. Amongst the foremost, was Abu Lahab, his uncle and Abu Jahl, a Qurayshite leader. If there is only one God, Allah, what would be the position of the shrine? Mecca might be ruined! So went on the arguments of those who opposed his views. As the hostile feelings and views gathered momentum, day by day, a majority of his followers took refuge, for a while, in Abyssinia (now known as Ethiopia) where the Christian king offered them comfort, solace and safe refuge. Expecting better reception and treatment, Mohammad and his companion, Zayd, left for Taif, a city 60 miles from Mecca. But this was not to be. Deeply devoted to their old deities and staunchly fanatical, the people of Taif were in no mood to listen to his sermons or accept his views. Bruised and bleeding due to the pelting of stones, Mohammad, along with his companion retreated from Taif, seeking shelter in a garden, where they were tended by a Christian slave named Addas. The comforting arid consoling revelations (17 : 1) that flashed before him quietened his nerves.

It was now A.D. 620, ten years after Mohammad started his rounds of preaching, when Khadija, his wife and Abu Talib, his uncle, both passed away. Two hundred and fifty miles north of Mecca, lies the city of Medina inhabited by heterogenous groups, the people of Medina were not hostile to the views propounded Mohammad. He was able to gather around him devout followers, who appreciated the discourses and also encouraged him. They were prepared to give it a try. Thus Islam was born.

Prayer, on a daily basis, acts

as balm on the mind, which most of the time becomes quite restless and difficult to control. It cleanses the mind of the impurities, accumulated over a period of years in the form of evil thoughts and ideas. The Holy Quran enjoins on all devout muslims to pray, at least five times a day. The sacred book is divided into 114 chapters or otherwise known as Surae, with a total of 6226 verses or yat (Sl. Aya).

Twenty three years after the death of the prophet, the Holy Quran was presented to the world in the form which we perceive today. Islam permits two types of prayer, known as salat and dua. Salat is the formal five fold daily prayer, while dua is a meek petition to God where the devotee is unable to pray in the formal manner. The salat is a complete surrender to God. In fact, the purpose of the salat is to focus the unruly mind, shut out other intervening meddling thoughts and deeply concentrate on God.

It is the earnest wish of every devout muslim to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca, at least once in a life time. It is a scene of millions of muslims of all nationalities gathering around the central shrine, known as the Kaaba. The Kaaba is made of stone, covered with a sloping roof, with the surrounding area being paved with marble slab. A devout muslim who has successfully completed the pilgrimage would have the honour of suffixing the word "Haji" after his name.

The author has adopted a very simple, lucid style that is easily understandable. The book should prove quite useful for both non-muslims as well as muslims. For the non-muslims it recounts rather in detail, an account of the second largest religion in the world. For the muslim, it serves as a sort of ready referencer on Islam.✦



**JUSTICE, EQUALITY AND COMMUNITY
AN ESSAY IN MARXIST POLITICAL THEORY
By Vidhu Verma**

Published by

Sage Publications Private Ltd. 32, M-Block Market,
Greater Kailash 1, New Delhi 110 048.

Year of Publication: 1999. No. of pages: 254. Price Rs.200.

Reviewed by

Dr. Ashok Chausalkar, Reader, Faculty of Political Science,
Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

Vidhu Verma's book "Justice, Equality and Community" is a critical and comparative essay on Marxist political theory. Though the Soviet marxism is condemned by the forces of history, Marx as a political theorist and philosopher continues to cast his shadow on contemporary social and political theory. Verma's book is a welcome addition to a constantly growing literature on Marxist political theory. In this book he has critically interpreted the interaction between concepts of justice, equality and community.

He points out that this book is mostly a response to the turbulent and confusing events of the last decade where there has been erosion of popular support for the ideas of Karl Marx. Certain characteristics of Soviet socialism, especially its elitist and undemocratic characters, and its violation of civil and political rights are responsible for this, but the failure of Soviet socialism was attributed to the intellectual tradition of Marxism. Its inadequacies were exposed by new social movements and the recent theories of justice but they failed to take into account the material and class basis of exploitation. It is the contention of Verma that despite its inadequacies Marx's concept of justice may help us better understand the problem.

Hence, according to Verma, the three aims of this book are (a) to draw attention to Marx's theory of justice, (b) to demonstrate disagreements regarding what justice is, reflect different policies of social change and (c) to discuss its relevance to the contemporary world where new social movements have appealed to new concepts of justice. He maintains that Marx's insistence on the link between exploitation and justice is relevant. He writes, "I think reassessment of Marxist ideology need not base itself on the causes of stagnation and authoritarianism but on the need to understand why such costs were paid and whether this was worth it." He admits that he has some fascination for analytical Marxism which enjoys some fundamental unity.

Verma divides his book in four chapters. The first chapter deals with the debate on justice in the light of concepts of equality and freedom. He holds that Marx challenged the notion of juridical and negative freedom and expounded the idea of freedom which was linked to developing productive capacities of individuals in community with others. Equality is the distribution of goods according to needs. The second chapter deals with Marx's critique of the juridical model of justice.

According to Verma Marx maintained that the law could not be divorced from material conditions and its immediate class structure. But Marx's understanding of law was inadequate because law is sometimes created as a result of conflicts between groups which cannot be identified in class terms. The feminists attack Marx for the inadequacy of Marxist theory to understand specific biological differences among men and women which are part of social reality. In this well-written chapter Verma seeks to present the complex nature of concepts of justice and equality in modern times.

In the third chapter, the relationship between justice and exploitation is critically examined. It is argued by Marx that the root cause of exploitation in capitalist society is the denial of entitlements to workers for the surplus labour they perform. He held that capitalism was wrong because it alienated human beings, denied autonomy, security, physical health and self-realisation to its members. Verma discusses this problem in the light of the standard theory of exploitation, simple theory of exploitation and the Communist theory of exploitation. Another important aspect of Verma's book is his discussion of the class based theory of justice and the rise of new

social movements launched by peasants, women, tribals, lower castes and the oppressed nationalities. They show the inadequacy of traditional Marxism to understand the changes in class structure and exploitation under welfare state capitalism. While critically analysing the ideologies of new social movements, Varma underlines the importance of the material basis of society.

The problem of justice in the good society is the theme of the fourth chapter which is discussed in the light of the distributive justice and beyond justice approach. Varma deals with the Communitarian critique of justice and

argues that a theory of justice for groups should take into account the unequal exploitation of groups by the Community even if they have a non-class basis. It is important to emphasise that the problem of justice cannot be solved by merely proclaiming the idea of abundance. Varma thinks that the Marxists will have to take a fresh look at the role markets are playing in society. Marx failed to provide a substitute to the market that would ensure an economic base for quality and liberty. In the contemporary world, the emergence of an integrated global economy is establishing the supremacy of markets all over the world. This has given birth to inequality and is going to raise new

problems. Hence, it is the contention of Varma that we will have to go beyond Marxist theory of justice. We must seek to integrate new ideas, concerns and insights that we have gained from different social movements and the Communitarians in order to give effect to our dream of establishing a good society.

On the whole Vidhu Varma's book makes interesting reading, but while defining multiple theories of justice, he gets involved in technicalities. Also due to his propensity of getting influenced by NSM, he ends up with an eclectic Marxian perspective.♦



PEN POWER Edited by Leo Rebello

Published by

Dr. Leo Rebello, President, All India (Press) Letter-Writers Association, 28/552 Samata Nagar, Western Express Highway, Kandivali East, Mumbai 400 101. Email: ailwa@hotmail.com.
Year of Publication: 2000. No. of Pages 328. Price: Rs.350.

Reviewed by

Mr. M. S. Kilpady, a freelance writer.

'PEN POWER' is truly an excellent compendium of letters written by social activists, crusaders for social justice, journalists, politicians, authors and leaders (national and international) adroitly and single-handedly researched, designed (assisted by his wife, Mrs. Kashmira Rebello, and sons Ronald and Robin Rebello).

A fragrant bouquet of roses is definitely due to Dr. Leo Rebello for this herculean task made easy by his gargantuan and selfless service. The task has been made fruitful by the timely financial assistance to the tune of 1,500 US Dollars donated by Dr. Kazuyosi Ikeda, a renowned

poet-scientist of Japan, towards its printing. Out of 9,000 letters, epistles and missives received by him after the mammoth task of sifting through them, selecting, editing, writing foot-notes, proof-reading, 1,000 letters, all gems of the first order, were finally selected for publication.

The book was released in Mumbai on September 24, 2000 by the irrepressible and inimitable veteran journalist, M. V. Kamath who commented that "The book is a monumental contribution to journalism, deserving to be published as a text book in all colleges of journalism". Writing in the *Free Press Journal* authoritatively and on an

analytically descriptive noting, he remarked that "the letters published in the book can be broadly divided into obligatory and discretionary, and further divided into opinion letters, informatory, appeals, corrections, rejoinders, responses to editorials and obituary". He has paid Dr. Leo Rebello the highest compliments and plaudits for single-handedly managing the completion of the task and for a singularly excellent piece of work, *non pareil*, which should be taken note of by the Union Government.

The letters are on diverse subjects written by about 200 letter-

writers, branded by the print media as 'disgruntled epistomaniacs', but who are the real 'conscience-keepers' of the nation. Publication of letters of historic persons like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Lokmanya Tilak, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Smt. Indira Gandhi and foreigners like Bertrand Russell, Andre Hibisch, Chester Bowles and Christopher Balchin add weight to this volume.

The illuminating highlights of the book are the 'Editors' comments (Pages 322 to 326) made by doyens of journalism like R.K. Karanjia, M.V. Kamath, Shoba De, Bachi Karkaria, Justice P.B. Sawant, Chairman of the Press Council of India, Behram Contractor (Busybee), John Mathew of *The Daily*, Malavika Sanghvi, Ranjona Banerji, Malathi Viswanathan, etc. and these illustrious personalities were interviewed

by Meena Raja, socialist activist and firebrand letter-writer.

In addition to these letters, the book contains Historic Letters, Foreign Letters, Award Winning Letters, Editor's Choice, Miscellaneous Letters, etc., which, it is highly regretted, cannot be accommodated here due to space constraint. In conclusion, this book is worth reading, to be understood, and digested. 'Pen Power' is a must.♦

The Pen is Mightier than the Sword

M. S. Kilpady

Mr. M. S. Kilpady had earlier sent us this article. In view of the relevance of his article in the context of his review of "Pen Power", we have pleasure in publishing an extensive extract from his article.

The "Press" is described as the chosen guardian of freedom, strong, sword-arm of justice and bright sunbeam of truth. The U.S. President, Thomas Jefferson had acclaimed: "Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or news papers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter". The "press" is truly the watch-dog of a democracy.

Lord Macaulay had written: "The gallery in which the reporters sit has become a fourth estate of the realm". One of the most important guidelines of the Press Council of India is that Freedom of the press is not only the right of the editor, publisher and reporter, but as much the right of the reader". It may be a paradox but truism nevertheless that this freedom is observed more in the breach in India.

"A pen is mightier than a sword", and many a time, it has proved to be true. Letter writing in the print media is not only a hobby but also a social service. The former Judge of the Bombay High Court, Justice Michael F. Saldanha had suggested that, "letter writers who fail to get their letters on social causes published in prestigious papers can seek justice by writing to the High Court". He cited the instance of a letter received by him from a citizen's group in Pune about

a tree-cutting scheme of the Pune Municipal Corporation which was allegedly a racket to make money on timber. He ordered that the scheme be stopped.

Letter-writers are considered the conscience-keepers of the nation, but the press treats them as "disgruntled epistomaniacs". I have since 1989 written about 3500 letters to the press. Of these, about 1500 letters have been published. Some of my suggestions were effective in as much as they evoked positive response from the authorities concerned.

For instance, I had written a letter on the absence of a Bus Depot in Goregaon (E) and the congestion caused by the vehicular traffic outside the railway station. This letter was published in the *MID-DAY* of 29th December 1989 and 23rd April 1992. I had also suggested construction of a Bus Depot on a vacant plot near the *tabela* (cow-shed) outside the Railway Station. The PRO of the Bombay Municipal Corporation replied that the matter was under consideration. Later, a traffic policeman was posted to control the traffic congestion and a Bus Depot was constructed at the same place in 1999.

A board had been put up on the outside wall of a vacant plot on the Sonawala Cross Road, opposite the SBI Staff Quarters, Goregaon (E), notifying that it belonged to the Bombay Municipality. My suggestion that a fruit and vegetable market be constructed there, was published in *The Free Press Journal* in 1996. As a result, there is a notice posted now that a Municipal

Market is under construction.

My letter "TADA for rapists" was published in the *MID-DAY* of 28th June 1993 when A. S. Samra was Bombay's Police Commissioner. It might have been a coincidence, but two rapists were arrested under TADA the very next week in Chembur on the charge of raping a housewife.

My letter "Bad delivery" was published in the *MID-DAY* of 29th September 1994, the *Indian Express* of 14th August 1995 and *The Daily* of 25th August 1995 on the issue of postal inefficiency. A Postal Inspector visited my place, narrated all the difficulties faced by the department and assured me that they would do their best to improve service levels.

My letter on power failure in Goregaon (E) was published in *The Daily* of 16th July 1998, in the *Afternoon Despatch & Courier* of 23rd July 1998, *The Free Press Journal* of 21st July 1998 and 27th July 1998 and *Bombay Times* of 28th July 1998, on the serious issue of frequent power failures is as many as 17 times between 25th April 1998 till July 1998. The Regional Manager and Senior Engineer, BSES, Goregaon (East), called on me and gave me a detailed explanation. Power failure has come down substantially.

My request to others, especially to the senior citizens is that they should treat letter-writing as a hobby, maintaining order, forwarding suggestions on social issues, as a part of voluntary humanitarian service.

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