

Freedom First

No.466, July-September 2005. Rs.25/- only

A Liberal Quarterly

- **When MPs Did Their Homework**
Minoo Masani
- **Communist China's Expanding Military Strength**
Eustace D'Souza
- **Gopal Ganesh Agarkar - The Secular Rationalist**
R. Srinivasan
- **Advani on Jinnah - A Conundrum**
Ashok Karnik
- **Shama Futehally - Tributes**
Humera Ahmed - Laeeq Futehally
- **A Polish Honour for an Indian Soldier**
S. V. Raju



C. R. Irani (1930-2005)

An outstanding, courageous and tireless champion of the freedom of the press, Cushrow Irani passed away on July 23, 2005.

At the time of his death, C. R. Irani was Chairman of the Board of Directors and Editor-in-Chief of *The Statesman*, the leading Kolkata daily which, way back in the mid-sixties, he managed to rescue from falling into the hands of unscrupulous politicians and their minions and a decade later from being captured by Mrs. Indira Gandhi and her cohorts during the infamous 'Emergency'. In fact, all through 18 months of this freak dictatorship in the mid-seventies the fight was not only to preserve the independence of his paper but to assert the freedom of the Press in India. In this battle he was to keep company with another indomitable figure, Ramnath Goenka the founder of *The Indian Express* and with men of character and integrity like Mr. A. D. Gorwala editor of the Bombay weekly *Opinion* (which is no longer in publication), Minoo Masani editor of *Freedom First* and Soli Sorabjee, the eminent lawyer and former Attorney General of India.

For his role in preserving the freedom of the press in India he received the Freedom Award of Freedom House, New York and the Astor Award of the Commonwealth Press Union "for distinguished service in the cause of press freedom." He was made Knight Commander of the Order of Isabella Catholica by the King of Spain "for highest loyalty to democracy."

I first met Cushrow Irani in 1961 or 62. He was then a business executive in Calcutta. Rajaji had founded the Swatantra Party in 1959 and had issued a call to all young men and women with means to support the Party and be its flag-bearers. Irani responded to this call and wrote to Rajaji offering his support. Rajaji referred him to Minoo Masani who was the Party's General Secretary. Masani welcomed him into the Party.

We met a few months thereafter. Some years later he was elected national Joint Secretary and a member of its National Executive. But this foray into party politics was to be a brief interlude. It ended when in 1968, he was appointed Managing Director of *The Statesman* and he resigned, with the concurrence of both Rajaji and Masani, from the primary membership of the Party.

Irani was a Liberal by conviction. Masani supported him in his fight to preserve the independence of *The Statesman*, a fact that Irani publicly acknowledged at the first Minoo Masani Memorial Lecture held in New Delhi and which he Chaired. He persuaded Masani to write a fortnightly column in *The Statesman*, supported *Freedom First*, was a member of the Indian Liberal Group and a Patron of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom. Through the years we kept in touch and though our meetings were not so frequent, whenever we did meet, after long intervals, it was always as if we had only met the other day, and resuming where we left off! Less than a month before he died and not knowing how ill he was, I gave him notice that his presence would be required at the concluding meeting of the Masani Birth Centenary year. He replied that he would be there wherever and whenever it was held.

We end this tribute to a good friend and an outstanding human being by conveying our deepest condolences to his wife Threety, their daughters and grandchildren. We share their grief. Personally I will miss him.

S. V. Raju

Freedom First

A Liberal Quarterly – 53rd Year of Publication
No.466 July-September 2005

Contents

Many Voices	2
Of Cabbages and Kings	3
When MPs Did Their Homework	
Minoo Masani	5
Communist China's Expanding Military Strength	
Eustace D'Souza	9
Personalities	
Gopal Ganesh Agarkar – The Secular Rationalist	
Dr. R. Srinivasan	11
Advani on Jinnah – A Conundrum	
Ashok Karnik	15
Shama Futehally	
Humera Ahmed	17
Laeq Futehally	18
A Polish Honour for an Indian Soldier	
S. V. Raju	19
Visit of Fijian Prime Minister to New Delhi	
GOPIO Press Release	21
Book Reviews	23

BETWEEN OURSELVES

This issue has been delayed. You are likely to read this in early October. The culprit is the unprecedented rainfall (the highest in a hundred years, we are told) which flooded all of north Mumbai. I normally work on *Freedom First* from my residence (editing this journal is a labour of love) and being on the ground floor my home too was under five feet of water. All the papers relating to this issue (and perhaps to the next one too) were washed away. The material stored in the hard-disk of my computer were also destroyed along with the computer. As a result the cover feature which was to be on the rapprochement with Pakistan had to be abandoned. We will revert to this in the next issue because this time the dialogue between the two countries is going beyond *détente* and is proactive in a positive sense – a development that we warmly welcome. Meanwhile, we had to reconstruct the contents. This took time. Hence the delay.

The next issue, hopefully, will have a few more pages and will be released on Monday, November 21 to coincide with the concluding programme of the Minoo Masani Birth Centenary Year.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union Vassili Mitrokhin a KGB operative smuggled out of Moscow a huge cache of Soviet intelligence records. A PTI despatch from London reported that extracts from his book "*The Mitrokhin Archive, Volume II: The KGB and the World*" were carried in a London daily that the "Kremlin spent a fortune trying to influence the Press, police, ministers and the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. And that in the 1970s, India was one of the countries most successfully penetrated by Soviet Intelligence."

Our immediate reaction to this expose was 'So what's new!' *Freedom First*, is perhaps the only journal which, unmindful of calumny and ridicule (e.g. A comment that was often heard: 'It always suspects communists under every bed') has, from the time it was founded in 1952 repeatedly exposed communist machinations in India dictated by strategies that were devised in Moscow. In fact, soon after this report about the KGB appeared, an old friend of *Freedom First* phoned the editor to point out that *Freedom First* had been vindicated. *Freedom First* is therefore not at all surprised with the KGB story. Our only surprise is that it took so long for the truth to be out! Beginning with the next issue we shall recall those days to inform and educate our readers on the real nature of communism. In fact we shall also recall their role during colonial rule and expose as not being factual the claim made a CPI spokesman, after the KGB news appeared, that they too fought for India's freedom. What they did was to switch on and switch off their attitude to Gandhiji, the freedom movement and the Indian National Congress as it suited their masters in the Kremlin at any given time.

Editor

Founder: Minoo Masani • Editor: S. V. Raju • Associate Editor: R. Srinivasan
Publishers: Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF), 3rd Floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400 001
Phone: +91 (22) 2284 34 16 • E-mail: freedom@vsnl.com
Published by J. R. Patel for the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF) and printed by him at Kaiser-E-Hind Private Ltd., Plot No.A-191, Road No.16A, MIDC, Wagale Industrial Estate, Thane (W) - 400 604. Phone: 25804162
Typeset at *Shubham Print & Web* 59, Dr. V. B. Gandhi Marg, 1st Floor, Fort, Mumbai 400 001. Phone: 2284 2619 • Mobile: 98929 21277
Single Copy: Rs.25 • Annual: Rs.100 (Add Rs.30 for outstation cheques) • Overseas (Inland Class Air Mail) Annual: \$10 or £7
Cheques to be drawn in favour of ICCF and mailed to the publishers at the above address.

Freedom First July-September 2005

WITH MANY VOICES

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

Muslims must wake up to the truth that they remain an underclass because they have been made victims of secularism. And they are currently being targeted again by the "secular" Sonia-Manmohan government.

Tavleen Singh, *The Indian Express*, September 4

The rich, middle-aged Arabs increasingly stalk the deprived streets of Hyderabad like medieval monarchs would stalk their harems in days we wrongly think are history.

Mohammed Wajihuddin,
The Sunday Times of India, September 4

When ministers take oath they swear allegiance to the Constitution, not their wives.

Raju Santhanam, *The Indian Express*, September 4

Why do Biharis elect mafia dons? Because the police-judicial system is useless, and offers no protection or redress. By contrast the Mafia system functions. Mafia bosses hold court and give verdicts that are obeyed instantly.

Swaminathan S. Anklesaria Aiyar,
The Sunday Times of India, September 4

It's time GenNext took a considerate view of politics. If good people stay away from politics then, I am afraid scoundrels will have a field day.

Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister R. R. Patil,
The Times of India, June 28

We may not have more Nehrus but under the current situation, more Narasimha Raos may be equally serviceable.

Former Chief Vigilance Commissioner N. Vittal,
Mumbai Mirror, July 11

The Congress needs to urgently remind itself that the people of India never voted for this pamphlet (The Common Minimum Programme of the Congress-led UPA government).

Mr. Shekhar Gupta, Editor, *The Indian Express*, July 16

It is nobody's brief that the judiciary should not be accountable. But while in Parliament for six years I came to believe that we MPs had a holier than thou attitude.

Kuldip Nayar, *The Indian Express*, August 30

The Congress projects itself as a secular party but many of its actions have been disgracefully communal.

Minhaz Merchant, *DNA*, August 29

Delhi: A consummate power city where you are only as important as your job title.

Ashok Malik, *The Indian Express*, August 23

Among all three organs – executive, legislature and judiciary – if anyone acts beyond its jurisdiction, judiciary can clip its wings.

Supreme Court Chief Justice R. C. Lahoti,
Mumbai Mirror, September 4

China will press ahead with its development of democratic politics, that is reconstruction, in an unswerving way, including direct elections.

Communist Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao,
DNA, September 6

If the Chinese people can manage a village, I believe in several years they can manage a township. That would be an evolving system

Communist Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao,
DNA, September 6

Historically, the Indian government has impeded the Internet with a combination of studied indifference and myopic government monopoly policies.

Sabeer Bhatia, Co-founder of Hotmail,
The Week, August 21

Why should India go and beg for a permanent seat in the UNSC. Nations of the world should confer it on us.

K. V. Rupchand in a letter to *Outlook*, July 25

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

Our National Flag – Only above the Waist!

A brief note in the weekly *Outlook* of July 25 informs us that a "cabinet amendment now allows the public to sport the Tricolour, as long as it is above the waist. Hankies, cushions, gloves etc. are still a no-no." It will be recalled that it was not the state but a PIL by a citizen that released the Indian flag out of the government's closet for all days in the year and not just for display on Independence and Republic Days. The Tricolour belongs to the Indian people and the government being a mere creature of the people has no business laying down do's and don'ts on its display as if the people who own the flag want deliberately to desecrate it. This silly cabinet amendment forbids the sporting of the tricolor below the waist. The body below the waist performs bodily functions crucial for the survival and procreation of human beings! Why then are we being told that we cannot sport it below the waist implying thereby that the body below the waist is unclean? Hankies and cushions are also not allowed. Why because we blow our noses into hankies or lean or sit on cushions? What about the flag sported on cars of VIPs with known criminal records, does it not get devalued because of this. In fact we would welcome a law to prevent the flag being displayed by known VIP criminals in or out of office or legislatures. The fact is most often, form for us Indians, is more important than substance. And this is at the root of these stupid restrictions imposed by the Cabinet decision.

Judiciary to the Rescue

It has now become quite common to seek judicial redress even on very trivial issues. Public Interest Litigation (PIL) has become an important part of the judiciary's work in the last decade and more, adding to the heavy load already being borne by them. Whether this kind of judicial activism is good or bad, in the context of the separation of powers is another matter. But there can be no denying that the citizens of this country long deprived of good governance, find in judicial activism a reasonably effective analgesic.

Take for example the case of the Sarvajani Bal Mandir School a co-educational institution in Kala Chowky, Mumbai city. Its 750 students have had only one toilet for their use for the last seven years. There was a second toilet but it was taken over by a Central government office. The school principal expressed his helplessness to do anything, saying "There is no place to build another toilet." His efforts to persuade the authorities for a solution came to nothing." Exasperated the parents of the students studying in the school petitioned the Bombay High Court which directed the school authorities to draw a plan to construct new toilets and asked MHADA (Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Board) officials to approve the plan before the next hearing of the court on September 19.

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



Enforcing the Rule of Law

A bomb blast on July 28 2003 in a bus in Mumbai city killed two and injured 25. It was attributed to a terrorist group. On July 30 the Shiv Sena and the BJP called for Bandh. The Bandh passed off peacefully. Because of their muscle power such Bandhs called by the Shiv Sena shut down the city, not because of popular support but fearing loss of life, limb or property most citizens prefer to stay home. AGNI, an NGO in Mumbai filed a PIL in the Mumbai High Court on the ground that the July 28 violated a Supreme Court order of 1977 declaring Bandhs illegal.

A year later in July 2004 the High Court passed an order in favour of AGNI slapping a fine of Rs.20 lakhs each on the Shiv Sena and the BJP. Their appeal in the Supreme Court was rejected. The Sena and the BJP deposited the sum on September 20, 2005 – the money to be used for development projects in the city.

Most political parties, including those who were not directly involved are unhappy with the court order but thanks to the PIL the rule of law has been enforced.

Who'll Look After the Judges?

While judges and courts come to the aid of citizens, who will come to the aid of judges when they are in trouble? In the court of the fifth additional district judge in Kolkata a ceiling fan came crashing down on the judge's head. Fortunately he had just leaned forward to study case documents and the fan missed his head by a whisker. The blades left a deep gash on his neck. Surely this cannot be attributed to hazards that come with the job! It speaks of poor conditions in which many of our judges work. Some years ago, in a Cooperative Court in Mumbai the ceiling leaked so much during the monsoon that the Judge had to hold an umbrella during hearings. I don't know if the ceiling still leaks!

Antics of the 'The Ugly Chinese'

Those of you who have read Graham Greene's famous novel 'The Ugly American' will understand the connotation of the adjective "Ugly".

Some years back, *Freedom First* had carried a story on how a Communist Chinese Consul in Bombay was able to get an exhibition of Tibetan Women being held at the SNDT University campus in Mumbai shut down by protesting to the then Vice-Chancellor. In 2004 as a result of similar interference and pressure by the Chinese embassy and consulate, the Asian Film Festival in Mumbai was forced to withdraw a retrospective section on Tibet, from the films screened.

Very recently a Communist Chinese Consul took umbrage when India's Defence Minister addressing a meeting in Mumbai referred to Communist China's invasion of India in 1962. This 'Ugly Chinese' interrupted the meeting to lodge his protest. The proper thing would have been to take this up through diplomatic channels and lodge his protest saying

perhaps the 1962 episode was not 'invasion' but the 'friendly visit'. Being a totalitarian dictatorship the Communist Chinese do not seem to appreciate the fact that in a democracy the citizens enjoy freedom of speech which they have denied to the Chinese people.

And now we are informed that the Deputy Consul has been intimidating an Indian Citizen to cancel a meeting essentially of a spiritual nature merely because a Tibetan loyal to the Dalai Lama will be addressing that meeting.

We resent this repeated interference in our internal affairs by the Chinese 'comrades' and express our solidarity with the Dharma Rain Centre and the Friends of Tibet India. We would advise the Communist Chinese government to train their diplomatic personnel on how to behave when posted in democratic nations like India. And not behave in the manner of the 'Ugly American' that Graham Greene portrayed in his novel.

SVR



Freddie Mehta

1928 - 2005

Yet another Liberal has left us. Dr. Freddie Mehta who had a distinguished career with Tatas passed away in Mumbai on 19th June. An outstanding student he topped the BA examination of the Bombay University in 1947. With a Masters in Economics and Politics from the Bombay University and the London School of Economics, Freddie Mehta obtained his doctorate in International Economics from the LSE thanks to a J. N. Tata scholarship. The first alumnus of the Tata Administrative Service, he was Economic Advisor to the Tata Group and later a Director of Tata Industries and Trustee of the J. N. Tata Endowment and the Dorab Tata Trust. While an outspoken champion of Free Enterprise he was not a blind supporter. Even though an admirer of Prof. B. R. Shenoy, Dr. Mehta believed unlike Prof.

Shenoy, that in a developing country a certain amount of deficit financing was inevitable. He excelled in debates and had the courage of his conviction to declare his views openly, the mark of a true Liberal. While economics was his forte, he had definite views on societal, political and cultural issues. He was actively associated with the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom of which he was a Patron.

As Jerry Rao points while paying tribute to Dr. Freddie Mehta:

"History was a passion. What if the Surat congress had taken a different turn? What if Gokhale had lived longer? When did Bihar lose its creativity? After all, it was the cradle of Indian civilisation. Why has it sunk into lassitude? The conversations were always a joy. Freddie's face would light up. He would wave his right hand in a gesture of elegant grace. He would introduce a witty aside. He had all the attributes of a master raconteur. And most important of all he was never patronising. He was an eminent person, but he listened to you as if you were an equal extending to you courtesy, attention and respect." As someone who had the opportunity to interact with Freddie, every once in a while, for over four decades I endorse every word in these impressions of Jerry Rao published in *The Indian Express* of September 7.

Replying to our letter of condolence, Dr. Freddie Mehta's wife Ketu wrote *inter alia*: "Freddie was an admirer of your Society (the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom) and appreciated its several intellectual activities and was happy to be part of it."

We once again express our heartfelt condolences on her sad bereavement a loss which we share with her and their children.

SVR

Remembering Minoo Masani on his Birth Centenary Year – November 20, 2004-2005

When MPs Did Their Homework

Minoo Masani



In the April 1957 General Elections Minoo Masani was elected to the second Lok Sabha as an independent from Ranchi (now the capital of Jharkhand). In the four months between May and August of 1957 he delivered seven speeches and, as a member of the Select Committees on the Wealth Tax and Expenditure Bills he presented Minutes of Dissent. He had these published in a booklet titled "A Plea for Realism."

We reproduce from this booklet his Minute of Dissent on the Report of the Select Committee of Parliament on the Wealth Tax Bill.*

The Minute of Dissent indicates how seriously he took his role as a member of parliament and the amount of homework he did before making his point on the floor of the House or as a member of the Select Committee.

The proposed levy of Wealth Tax on Joint Stock Companies is bad in principle and contrary to the national interest. It is a matter for regret that the Select Committee turned down a proposal to exclude companies from the purview of this Bill.

2. The application of the wealth tax to companies, which represent the interests of thousands of shareholders, rich and poor, is altogether beyond the objectives of the tax. While conceding that the Wealth Tax is intended primarily as a measure of personal taxation, it is said that in the peculiar economic structure of India it is not possible to exclude companies from its purview. What this peculiar structure which justifies this levy has not, however, been made clear. It is worth noting that even Professor Kaldor, who favours the introduction of an annual wealth tax, has not suggested that it be extended to corporate holdings.

3. Perhaps at no stage of our economic development has the need to promote savings been so critical as now, for it is mainly from savings within the country that the bulk of the resources must be found to meet the considerable investment which is required for development and expansion under the Second Five Year Plan. The Wealth Tax on companies is certainly among the most serious disincentives to industrial development outside the State sector. The cumulative effect of this new impost alongside of other existing

ones will undoubtedly be to retard capital formation and discourage production which are so badly needed.

4. The Wealth Tax on companies will inevitably mean either double taxation on individuals who are liable to pay Wealth Tax themselves, or imposing the tax on small investors who are otherwise exempt and not liable to pay this tax. In so far as the first category is concerned, the Bill, oddly enough, gives relief from double taxation, by way of a tax ceiling, to those owning Rs.22 lakhs or more, but none to smaller investors.

5. The importance of the middle class investors in our economy cannot be overemphasised. A survey of the ownership of shares and securities in Bombay City, carried out by the department of Research and Statistics of the Reserve Bank India in 1955, should do a great deal to remove the misconceptions on this point that prevail in certain quarters. The survey shows that 59.5% of the shareholders were persons having monthly income below Rs.666; 17.5% had incomes between 666 and Rs.1,250; 13.2% between Rs.1,250 and Rs.2,500; and only 9.8% over Rs.2,500. The pattern of distribution also indicated that more than 73% of the total number of shares were held by various income groups below Rs.2,500 per month and only 27% were held by those with incomes exceeding that figure.

6. A concrete case will help to illustrate the point. The shareholdings of the Associated Cement Companies are distributed as follows:

* Mr. T. T. Krishnamachari was the Union Finance Minister when this Finance Bill was presented.

Holding No. of Rs.100 Units	No. of shareholders in each group	Percentage
1- 100	28,747	94.70
101- 200	980	3.23
201- 300	273	0.90
301- 400	107	0.35
401- 500	65	0.21
501- 600	41	0.14
601- 700	19	0.06
701- 800	20	0.07
801- 900	16	0.05
901-1,000	3	0.01
1,001-5,000	70	0.23
5,001 and above..	15	0.05
	30,356	100.00

Of the 85 shareholders who own 1,000 shares or more 43 are private individuals, and the remainder are investment trusts, insurance companies (most of them now nationalised), and other public bodies which in their turn are owned by a large number of shareholders. The 43 private shareholders together own 8 per cent of the issued stock. Therefore 92 per cent of the Associated Cement Companies' capital is held by a wide cross section of Indian society consisting of Individuals and families, who have invested their savings in this Company.

7. If the present provisions of the Bill are not changed, the effect will be that every rupee invested in a joint-stock company by a small investor will be taxed, while it would have gone scot free if it had not been so productively utilised. The unfortunate implications of this do not need elaboration.

8. The Bill, as amended, exempts a certain class of companies such as those engaged in shipping, banking, insurance and investment. It is difficult to see any justification for restricting exemption to these companies alone. While their exemption is welcome, since they are playing an important role in our country, it is no less true that companies engaged in the

production of cement, automobiles, textiles, steel or locomotives, etc., are just as vital to our economy.

9. While I do not wish to ignore the fact that in the Bill, as it has now emerged from the Select Committee, certain concessions have been made in favour of certain classes of companies, I regret my inability to agree to the application of this tax to joint-stock companies at all.

10. There are certain other specific features of the Bill in regard to which I am constrained to express my dissent. One of these is that the Bill, in contradistinction to the recommendation by Prof. Kaldor, would lead to the over-all taxation in the case of certain individuals being substantially more than 100% of the income. This, in fact, introduces an element which can only be described as a capital levy. In no country of the world, as far as I am aware, has a capital levy been imposed as an annual feature.

11. Another discriminatory feature is the distinction between those who own their homes in towns and those who do so in rural areas. While the latter are exempt, the former are not. I believe it would be sound public policy to encourage citizens to build homes for themselves, wherever they may reside.

12. The Bill also discriminates unfairly between different classes of officers and employees. Some persons on retirement get a pension while others get provident fund benefits and retirement gratuities instead. The Select Committee did not accept a proposal that provident fund monies and retirement gratuities should be exempted. The result is that those who draw pensions (mainly certain categories of Government officials) spread in small amounts over the years are not affected, while those whose old age benefits are capitalized are prejudiced.

13. Finally, I believe that the limit of Rs.10,000 on tools and instruments needed for professional and vocational purposes is unfair to surgeons, engineers and others. Investment in such instruments is productive, it advances the public interest and it should not be thus discouraged.

August 14, 1957

(Sd/-) M. R. Masani



We should learn to distinguish the general from the particular and thereby to extract the permanent out of what was said very long ago under very different circumstances. We should exercise our power of imagination which will enable us to do all this. This applies to the Koran and the Bible and to all holy books as much as to the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita of India.

C. Rajagopalachari
Swarajya, November 16, 1957

Communist China's Expanding Military Strength

Eustace D'Souza

The point of concern is whether we in India can accept these 'friendly' gestures from Communist China at face value or are we being lulled yet again into a sense of complacency?

Communist China appears to be flexing its muscles again if the latest figures of its Defence Budget and the comprehensive modernization programme of its Armed Forces is any indication. These details have been extracted from internet articles authored by responsible 'think tankers'. A group of concerned retired Officers from all the three Services and an eminent Professor of Strategic Studies from Chennai who have been monitoring China, decided to examine the 'fall-out' of the scene and collectively issue a Storm Warning *not* to take this Asian Giant for granted. The *raison d'être* for these concerns is listed here.

Firstly the sharp criticism by the Chinese Consul General in Mumbai, Song De Heng to a very frank and pertinent comment made by our Defence Minister Pranab Mukherjee recently on the 1962 debacle spelling out in clear unambiguous terms that it was China that invaded Arunachal Pradesh. What was most surprising and against all diplomatic conventions was that the Consul General sharply criticized our Defence Minister, stating that it is India that has been dragging its feet on the resolution of the border dispute. But as is their wont the Chinese Ambassador Sun Yuxi, according to press reports, "defused the tension by asserting that we are friends" a typical case of the Chinese blow hot blow cold tactics. And if a letter to the editor of a well known daily in Mumbai is any indication, we are so gullible that one reader states that "Pranab Mukherjee was blatantly indiscreet"! How naïve can we be?

A 'Web Army'

The second eye opener that has come to light is that there is now a

"Web Army" in China that has been monitoring all traffic on the internet emanating from our Missions abroad with the Central Government, leading to sharp criticism by China of the alleged interactions between the Indian and Taiwanese Navies. In short we are being told "to keep off Taiwan: it is an internal matter between the PRC and Taiwan an integral part of China". This "leak" cannot be viewed in isolation but needs to be linked to what happened in the Naval War Room at NHQ New Delhi, widely reported in the media. Such intelligence leaks are a cause for serious concern. Let us never forget that the Chinese Diaspora is far reaching and widespread.

Admiral Fallon, a senior US Naval Commander in the Pacific (the erstwhile CINCPAC), after his recent visit to China, has come out openly recommending that US and China further develop their defence ties. When a NRI who is doing all he can to develop closer relations with the US was questioned on this score he replied that what this very senior Admiral said was not endorsed by the US Department of Defence. But the signs are ominous.

China's Lucrative Markets

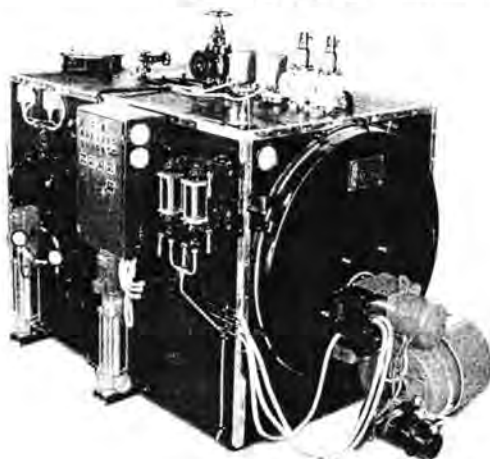
This cozying up between the US and China must obviously have a design and that is the booming Chinese economy. US business is anxious to have a share in this very lucrative pie. The degree of active participation between Russia and China as manifested in joint military exercises and Exercise *Peace Mission 2005* must also be taken cognizance of. These indicate without doubt that all these power points – US, Russia and Chinese are concerned either about their reliance on oil found in Central and West Asia

for China's booming economy needs, or the need to control it and so dictate terms.

Russia is doing all it can to capture the large market for the sale of weapons and military hardware to China as it gains momentum to sharpen its military capabilities. So where does India figure? The US is now turning to India to be a balancing factor in South Asia to counter the growing might of China. China and Russia are collaborating with each other to counter US dominance in this part of the world. China is now also making overtures to India as evidenced in the recent bonhomie in inviting the top brass of both the Armies to witness military manoeuvres. China recently held a major exercise to display the effectiveness of its armoured forces. India is conducting one of its biggest war games with armoured and mechanized forces to a far greater degree than those deployed in Exercise *Purna Vijay* in the Thar desert. One may well describe these moves as one-upmanship. De-escalation of troops along the border of these two Asian giants and the exchange of military delegations appear to have become a regular feature between India and China.

The point of concern is whether we in India can accept these 'friendly' gestures at face value or are we being lulled yet again into a sense of complacency? A recent report in the media mentions that with the opening of the Gangtok-Lhasa road for trade over Natu La in East Sikkim there is a proposal on the anvil to hand over this sensitive border along the Sikkim Watershed to the paramilitary Indo Tibetan Border Patrol (ITBP). To one who has first hand experience of this

We make Steam.



Every other company sells boilers. Not us

We sell total steam solutions. With a full range of Spirax steam energy conservation products, microprocessor based control instrumentation to ensure optimal energy usage and services to help you better harness steam, air and water.

Our Energy Audit service helps optimise your energy costs, our Consultancy service provides with detailed engineering of all process utilities, and our Steam Engineering Centre provides education and training on efficient utilisation of steam. The result is lower energy consumption, improved product quality and better control of your process.

And yes, we make boilers, too. The best in the business. Our fully packaged boilers with efficiency monitors and automatic blowdown controls give maximum fuel efficiency, so you don't waste heat.

So the next time you want a big metal box in which to burn up your fuel budget, call someone else. And the next time you want to conserve energy and save money, try a total steam solution.

Forbes Marshall

Mumbai-Pune Road, Kasarwadi, Pune 411 034, India.

•Tel: 91(0)20 - 7145595 •Fax: 91(0)20 - 7147413 •E - mail: bizdev@forbesmarshall.com •www.forbesmarshall.com

border during 1965, this would be a retrograde step. We have not done so in J & K where the more sensitive areas along the border are the responsibility of the regular Army.

State of the Art Armed Forces

Let us now briefly touch upon the upgradation of the Chinese Armed Forces that we need to take serious note of.

- The three Service Heads are being inducted to the high profile PLA's Central Military Commission while we continue to dither over the appointment of a Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), an issue that on the face of it does not seem to be considered with any kind of urgency
- The integration of air space, and ground sensors to provide early warning for effective counter measures.
- Eight new state of the art surveillance satellites, ICBMs, SLBMs LACMs, SAMs and both nuclear and non-nuclear weapons
- Enhancing missile technology in satellites in what has been nomenclatured as "Informalization".

A new 15th Air Borne Army of 15,000 is on the anvil and the possibility of some more is very much on the drawing board. Investments in AWACS and transport aircraft of IL 76s, fine tuning of Laser and Optical precision guided missiles are on record, and the Upgradation of multipurpose fighters based on the SU 30 and China's own indigenously produced equivalent. Ostensibly, these are meant to reunite Taiwan to China and to counter any measures by the US and Japan to protect that island nation. But by no yardstick can our defence planners afford to ignore this modernization. By the year 2010 China will have 200 SU 30 and Xian JH 7A Fighter Bombers. In so far as India is concerned our main worry is the development of airfields in Tibet.

The Navy too is being modernized in a very pragmatic manner, ostensibly to handle Taiwan

and any possible interference by the US and Japan. It has taken a conscious decision not to invest in aircraft carriers but to rely on missile technology and underwater-craft. It is investing heavily in submarines of the latest vintage, both diesel and nuclear, and that is an area where we need to sit up and hone our underwater detection skills and of course anti-missile defence. In the immediate future China is investing in Guided Missile Destroyers of the USN *Aegis* type, surface to air and surface to surface missiles, 57 diesel and 6 Xia Class nuclear submarines, 21 destroyers and 43 frigates. The aim of this modernization is to ensure 'protection of choke points like Malacca, Sunda and Torres Straits crucial for oil supplies and trade. Though this expansion is unlikely to match the armed forces of the Americans and the Russians in the next decade, we, poised as we are, geo-strategically located between three major water bodies, need to heed these storm warnings.

Cosmetic Confidence Building Measures

Our memories tend to be short. Although China claims that it is doing all it can to improve Indo-Chinese relations, why has China consistently refused to support India's nomination to the Security Council? Nor has Communist China kept away from Nations on our periphery that are of vital concern to India's security interests. And therein lies the danger. China is playing its traditional game of blowing hot and then blowing cold in its relations with India.

Such confidence building measures are cosmetic in content. Both China and India can afford to flex their 'armoured' muscles in public but if one harks back would these two giants ever confront each other in a traditional tank vs tank battle, along the high altitude mountainous borders in Himalayas? Would India or China hold similar exercises involving their respective Navies, Air Force or troops experienced in mountain warfare?

The very fact that China raised a stink when the Indian and Taiwanese Navies interacted is a pointer. One may

argue that tanks can be used on the Tibetan Plateau but to what extent would they be effective at such high altitudes? As mobile gun platforms in a support role possibly but have we the communications required to move our armour to those heights? Food for thought! Even during the battles fought in Ladakh or NEFA armour on both sides was conspicuous by its absence.

Militarisation of Tibet

India needs to heed the militarization of Tibet including the construction of the Gormu-Lhasa-Shigatse railway line being constructed by imported Han labour. The world is aware of the fact that such a railway has no economic value but is being constructed mainly for military purposes. By importing Han labour the demographic balance will tilt in favour of China as this work force is to be permitted to settle in Tibet.

Equally, let India not forget that China has located nuclear weapons including missiles, in Tibet which is literally a mere stone's throw away from the Indian mainland. China is better poised militarily with a formidable presence in Tibet facing the disputed borders with India and with Bhutan and even Nepal. For India to react to any possible Chinese depredations, our forces will have to move up to the watershed against the grain of the country. Equally, Chinese forces are well poised in the Chumbi Valley to excise NE India from the mainland at the narrow Salinger corridor and thus it is all the more necessary to develop healthy relations with Bangladesh.

Preventing Another 1962

What needs to be done to resolve this issue? We should not desist from improving our relations through transparent confidence building measures as in Kashmir but never at the expense of our national security interests. We need to maximize the utilization of the leadtime of next two years reference to the Beijing Olympics in 2008, to improve our defence capacity to meet all possible threats from Communist China. Sensitive border

areas along the Himalayan Watershed should be entrusted *in toto* to the Regular Army; paramilitary forces could be deployed in less sensitive areas along our borders with Nepal and Bangladesh. Intelligence acquisition and collation must be intensified for which we should strive to use our Indian Diaspora in South and South East Asia. It is time we orient our defence relations with Japan, ROK, ASEAN, Australia and even Taiwan. We need to do a rethink of how we can use the Tibetan Diaspora to obtain intelligence. We should constantly strive to improve our nuclear deterrence capability and utilize to the maximum our experience in space and satellite technology for defence purposes. We need to be wary of attempts to withdraw from Siachen and

keep a watchful eye on the tri-junction in the Western Himalayas. We must devote more time and diplomatic skills to enhance our relations at every level with Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and even in Myanmar to counter the increasing Chinese influence now becoming manifest even in Sri Lanka. We should develop closer ties with Muslim minorities in the countries along our eastern and northern borders based on the fact that we have the second largest Muslim population in the world. We should encourage the developing ties with the US. And we must continue to build on the economic boom that is evident today.

Whatever else, India must not be taken for a ride as it was in 1962.

This article has been compiled by Major General (Retd.) Eustace D'Souza, a regular contributor to Freedom First, with inputs from Dr. Vijay Sakhlaja, Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation New Delhi; Prof. Lawrence Prabhakar, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Madras Christian College, Chennai & Research Fellow, Maritime Security Programme, Institute of Defence & Strategic Studies, Singapore and a security expert; Brigadiers Suresh Sharma and Thyagarajan of Mumbai, Wing Commander Raju Srinivasan (Retd) all ardent China Watchers, and Mr. Ram Narayanan, an NRI in the United States USA and a staunch supporter of Indo-US ties.

WE ONLY WANT TO HEAR THE DHARMA

MUMBAI, SEPTEMBER 21, 2005: The Dharma Rain Centre, a recently formed organization was today "advised" and pressured by the Deputy Consul-General of China at Mumbai to cancel a public meeting being organized by the Centre, a group engaged in promoting the understanding of various spiritual traditions, including Buddhism.

Though it is unconventional to address a Press Release in the first person, I am afraid that this is the only way in which I, the founder-member and Secretary of this organization, can do justice in narrating the unconventional, unwarranted, illegal and shocking interference by a senior member of the Chinese diplomatic corps of China, in the affairs of a private organization in India, and thereby in the way Indian citizens conduct themselves in their religious, social and political life.

When the Deputy Consul General Mr. Song, rang me up on my cell phone as I was on my way out of Mumbai on a retreat. I thought he was genuinely interested in knowing details about the public talk that the Venerable. Geshe Lhakdor-la, (a senior and experienced Tibetan Lama, official translator to the Dalai Lama and Director of the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives) is scheduled to give on Tuesday, September 27, 2005 at 6.30 pm at the Rama Watumall Auditorium in the K.C. College premises.

His topic is "Combining Head and Heart: Wisdom and Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism". However, having verified who he was speaking to, he bluntly said he wanted us to cancel the program as this was political interference in the affairs of China.

Despite all my efforts to convince him that this was not a political topic or a political meeting, he insisted the speaker had close ties with the Dalai Lama who was using India as base for anti-China activities. At this point, I had to politely remind him that this was India, a democratic country unlike China, and we had every right to conduct any meeting, religious, political or otherwise. I reminded him that the Dalai Lama was one of the world's most respected leaders, and as an Indian I was proud that India had given him sanctuary and the opportunity to save his country's religion and culture, despite its illegal occupation by China.

Mr. Song then decided to take a more personal angle and asked me what was my relationship with the "Friends of Tibet (India)."

It will be recalled that last year, as a result of similar interference and pressure by the Chinese embassy and consulate, the Asian Film Festival was forced to withdraw a retrospective section on Tibet, from the films screened. At that time, I was the spokesperson for Friends of Tibet and he was obviously referring to that. I reminded him that I was the same person who had spoken to the BBC (The World Today) about that disgusting and obnoxious episode. I have informed him that we support not only Friends of Tibet, but all Tibet activists around the world. We may not always agree with everyone but we shall always defend their right to say what they wish and the manner in which they wish to say it.

We call upon all freedom loving individuals and organizations to protest this extra-territorial influence and "diplomatic license" that the Chinese diplomatic corps here in India is deluded into thinking it possesses.

Issued by Aspi B. Mistry, Secretary For Dharma Rain Education Society, Mumbai.

Gopal Ganesh Agarkar – The Secular Rationalist



Dr. R. Srinivasan

Freedom First has continually highlighted the contributions of intellectuals in different parts of the country, who have promoted the liberal temper. Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, who passed away in 1895 remains the quintessential Liberal who for a decade indefatigably propagated a liberal philosophy in a climate that was far from conducive to liberalism. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his demise, *Freedom First* pays its tribute to this illustrious son of India, who needs to be known more widely among the non-Maharashtrian public. Dr. Ganachari's book fills this void and is therefore, in this context, most timely and should have a wide readership. Thorough in its examination of the writings of Agarkar, it is the result of a careful winnowing of all supplementary literature.¹

For over a century since the 1840s, Maharashtra has had the unique distinction of fostering a liberal tradition, in spite of formidable obstacles. Intellectuals have tirelessly nursed and advocated what can be regarded as the basic principles of Liberalism – the equality of the sexes, the promotion of women's education, the rights of widows to remarriage, public education, qualified support to the colonial power, on occasion criticizing its policies and even condemning its exploitative nature; promoted the library movement, and founding journals to publicize different points of view.

It must however be accepted that the rights of the downtrodden was not a dominant theme but with the emergence of Jotiba Phuley, this was set right; thereafter the socially deprived sections found a champion who asserted their rights.

Western and Indian Liberalism

The basic thrust of western liberalism that of a suspicion of religious domination on public life and on individual conduct was absent here. The Hindu liberal intellectual did not see in his religion any great obstruction to the conduct of the individual's life in every day life. This is surprising for social regulations based on religious injunctions in our country tended to oversee and regulate in minute detail

many aspects of individual life – as to when girls should marry, the professions that were barred to people, the right to travel across the seas and a formidable list of do's and don'ts, the don'ts being exhaustive. However, since such religious injunctions did not have the backing of the alien government, these were not seen as oppressive. Social-religious oppression in the sense of ostracizing the dissident, not allowing him to engage in his religious rituals by boycotting functions in which he participated, etc. were not uncommon. Yet there were loopholes like religious rites of repentance which restored the "offender" to the community and extended him social peace. The most eminent of them subjected themselves to these social humiliations. This perhaps illustrated the fact that conscientious objection was not part of the Hindu psyche.

While the western liberal saw the past as a finished era and hoped to build a better future, the Indian liberal looked upto the past nostalgically. They continued in the religious and social arrangement of bygone centuries in which they grew up and were generally comfortable in its near stifling cocooning warmth. All of them were deists and many theists. The most daring tried to alter and correct the "heritage" in bits and pieces but never re-examining it *de novo*. They were sanguine in reforming gradually the more oppressive of the customs. However a minority, impatient with the iniquitous social arrangements wanted to reform them on rational principles. They remained deists, some exchanging

the familiar local Hindu deity for a strange creed, e.g. the Swedenborgian Reform which had a limited measure of success like the Prarthana Samaj worked within the shade of the Hindu umbrella. If any attempt was made to radically depart from the basic tenets of the dominant religion it collapsed as did the Paramahansa Sabha.

This acceptance of the dominant religious heritage is explained by the social status to which the intellectual liberals belonged. Not one of them came from a depressed caste. They accepted the inequities of the inequalitarian society in which they were born. The social differentiation was neither too sharp nor too jarring of their sensibilities. Apart from the ban on inter-dining with the highest caste, they did not see any hurtful slight in the disabilities.

Intellectual Consensus and Reform

There was agreement among the enlightened of a general decline in the country and that determined efforts had to be made to put in on its feet. By now the ugly foundations of colonial rule were evident – the exploitation and drain of the wealth of the country, the heartlessness of the administration, recurrent famines, the crushing agrarian debt were not matters of dispute among the intelligentsia.

A patriotic fervour reasserted itself by fits and starts. The glorious days of Maratha rule were recalled. The Vedas and the Vedic age were postulated as golden eras and there was

¹ Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, the Secular Rationalist, Aravind Ganachari, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai, 2005, pp.371, Rs.395.

The Statesman
Why settle for less?



Catching them young, freeing their minds.

The Statesman
Voices
EVERY THURSDAY

Purveying the joy of adolescence and the pangs of growing up...
A platform for their many frenzied opinions. A cabinet to showcase
their many trophies. A patient ear to their many concerns.
Can any school better that?

a harking back to those primordial days. Even a judicious mind like Ranade's posited those days to be pristine and contrasted it unfavourably with contemporary times.

The late 1880s found the social reformers confronting formidable opposition and they were almost apologetic on their agenda. They resorted to rather irrational arguments by searching the religious texts for legitimizing their proposals and argued that these had the sanction of the sacred books. Even one of the towering leaders and a high office holder like Rajnarain Bose delivered a lecture in 1872 on the superiority of Hinduism to all other forms of faith warming the cockles of the Hindu heart; the pamphlet was reprinted several times. A stream of foreigners from Annie Besant began to discover virtues in ancient India, and its religious and social arrangements. This was to give a comforting sanction for the continuance of the old ways and unchanging institutions. What did it matter if girls went uneducated, if child widows had their crowns shaved and disfigured, or oppressive disabilities visited upon some sections of the population?

Enter Agarkar

Even as Henry Derozio [see *FF* No.389 (April 1986) for his profile] in the 1830s in Calcutta was to inspire a whole generation of students to question the verities and postulates of the religion of their forefathers, Agarkar was to challenge the comforting doctrines of the older generation of Maharashtra intellectuals. He queries whether the vaulted structures had any solid foundations at all. Like a whiff of fresh breeze, he sought to blow away the mental cobwebs in the mind of the Marathi reading public, and this was indeed bracing. Perhaps he was the first Marathi intellectual who had no need for the comforting dubious hypothesis of a divine Providence. Rationality and utilitarian philosophies sufficed for him. If Bishop Butler's *Analogy of Religion* was the sheet-anchor for Ranade, Mill and Herbert Spencer were the shrines at which Agarkar worshipped. And he trained a whole generation of Maharashtra intellectuals the most notable of whom were Maharishi Karve, R. P. Paranjpye and R. D. Karve.

The sedulous advocacy of rationality, of enlightenment values and a sceptical attitude to religion, the advocacy of equality and a persistent critique of colonial exploitation and a steadfast reiteration of the value of representative institutions were indeed salutary influences. Education of women, championing of widow marriage and advocating the limiting of families spoke eloquently of his deep concern for women and their well-being. His call for birth control was prescient. Between Agarkar and Gokhale were laid the parameters of a rational social policy suffused with liberalism which could not be improved upon. And Phule's strident call completed whatever was wanting in them. Cumulatively they posited a liberal agenda that was to work itself out in the next half century and more.

Disciple of Mill and Spencer

Agarkar paraphrased the arguments of his masters in many of his writings. Central to him was the concept of the individual and the promotion of individuality a value of great importance. His writings are shot through and through with Mill's views expressed in his essay *On Liberty*. It is natural that he should emphasize persuasion, public enlightenment through education and publication of one's views. He welcomes contradictions as contributing to a broader perspective. From Spencer he adopted the centrality of evolution as a concept. If evolution is inherent in all social organizations, it follows that there are no permanent social arrangements. These need to be periodically examined, reassessed and rejected for better ones. The caste system has to be seen as a stage in the development of Hindu society. Equally important is the centrality of science to modern society and in the future it will play increasingly an important part. Rationality and science would imply dissent as inevitable in all development. Coercion cannot be ruled out in the initial stages of a community's growth.

Social reform was a central issue in Agarkar's time and he had no use for the methods adopted by many of his distinguished colleagues who resorted to examining whether the hoary tradition would adapt itself to reforms. He was impatient with the

reformers searching for sanctions in outdated, old, mouldy scriptures, many of them of doubtful authenticity and lending themselves to contradictory interpretations.

The rational method was adequate for initiating reforms and he was aware of the long path that reformers would have to tread, facing ridicule, contumely and social ostracism. Citing Mill, he recalled the great names that had undergone endless suffering for the cause of reform; and in his own time of Charles Bradlaugh.

Reform and progress generally is the contribution of gifted individuals who swim against the current. According to him, the problem of India was the widespread breed of reformers who though in their personal life accepted the need for reform "... but refused to take a public stand on vital social issues and in fact prefer(red) to side with the orthodoxy." (*sic* p.123).

Religion

Influenced by Comte and Spencer, Agarkar saw the importance of religion in society but emphasized its historical evolution, and saw its utilitarian functions. He perhaps viewed religion as an illusion (as Freud was to characterize it later). If discussion and disputation could be admirable in other spheres, why not in religion? He was concerned at the social power that the religious heads exercised over the masses and was pained by the needless pernicious practices that were inflicted upon widows and others and indefensible customs enforced on the threat of social ostracism. If Hindu religious obscurantism was bad, he did not expect it to be improved by the acceptance of Christian religion or its doctrines. As a follower of Comte he believed that gradually science and its pursuit would engage the minds of men and religion correspondingly would step down from its high pedestal. Agarkar would not accept the arguments that religion is valuable for the solace it brings to suffering men and that it develops the higher reaches of the mind. He regarded these defences as degrading to the concerns of religion and to equate it with the benefits of "compulsory vaccination".

Contemporary events

As a newspaperman he had to comment on contemporary developments in politics such as the Ilbert Bill, Ripon's proposals for the improvement of local government, the Indianization of the services and the like. On all these, he took a nationalist stand. In the context of the reforms of local government, Mill's chapters relating to the principles of democracy were translated. He assessed the nature of British rule in India, compared it with earlier instances of imperialism and documented the ill effects of British rule such as starvation deaths for instance. The country had been reduced to slavery and on all counts, whether it be of military expenditure or neglect of education and justice, British rule stands condemned. Agreeing that liberty was alien to the Indian temper, he hoped that with education and the examples set by the better type of Englishmen, his people would develop the passion for liberty but not for xenophobic nationalism.

Agarkar and the Liberal tradition

He remains one of the most

outstanding of liberals, a sceptic only a little lower than Bayle and one who advocated the total separation of religion from the public sphere. Continually toiling for educating the public he does not appear to have left any worthy successor. The great tradition of Maharashtrian liberalism which started with Jambhekar almost found its fruition in the labours of Agarkar; both died unnaturally young at the height of their intellectual powers, leaving society all the poorer.

Almost all their programmes seemed to have found their fulfillment during the first few decades of independence – a Constitution that fostered secularism and promoted freedom and equality under whose dispensations elections were held, where all adults voted; women came into their own though they still had a long way to go.

However, the last two decades have been years that have witnessed the negation of all the ideals that Agarkar held to be precious. A strident religion-based policy was sought to be imposed upon a gullible public, the minorities

were in fear of their lives and property and a government that tried to use religion for its own base designs. The relevance of the ideas of Agarkar has bounced back and his writings now more than at any time need to be pondered over. Today he appears to be even more relevant than when he wrote his provocative columns in his newspapers.

Dr. Ganachari's book, in this context, is most timely and should have a wide readership. Thorough in its examination of the writings of Agarkar, it is the result of a careful winnowing of all supplementary literature. It is the first full-length book in English on him in a century. Professor V. N. Naik wrote a small biography in 1916 but it was tantalizingly brief. If non-Maharashtrians were not aware of the greatness of this illustrious son of Maharashtra, now they have no excuse for being ignorant any more, for this book atones for the neglect of him by the English reading public.

DR. R. SRINIVASAN is retired professor of Political Science, Mumbai University and Associate Editor, *Freedom First*.

A SUITABLE NAME IN THE SUSTAINABLE ENERGY

UGAR POWER GENERATION & CONSULTANCY SERVICES LTD.

(Associate of The Ugar Sugar Work)

P.O. Ugarkhurd, Dist. Belgaum (Karnataka) Ph. : 08339-272230 (5 Lines) Fax : 2272232
E-mail : uswcogen@sify.com

ONE-STOP SOLUTION FOR

■ BAGASSE BASE
CO-GENERATION
■ CAPTIVE POWER AND
INDUSTRIAL CO-
GENERATION
■ SUGAR PLANT
■ NON-CONVENTIONAL
AND DE-CENTRALISED
POWER PLANTS
■ ETHANOL
(ANHYDROUS ALCOHOL)
PROJECTS
■ ENERGY
AUDIT/PROCESS RE-
ENGINEERING

Karnataka Govt. Has reduced Excise recently.
Kindly enjoy our following :

✦ OLD CASTLE PREMIUM ✦ GOKAK FALLS
✦ H S SERIES ✦ MILAN ✦ HAWK ✦ GAGARIN

The Ugar Sugar Work Ltd.

P.O. Ugarkhurd, Dist. Belgaum (Karnataka)
Ph.: 08339-272230 (5 Lines) Fax : 2272232
E-mail : uswcogen@sify.com

Advani on Jinnah – A Conundrum

Ashok Karnik

It is intriguing why Advani chose to say what he did and create such a controversy.

The furore over Advani's 'praise' of Jinnah turned out to be a storm in the teacup. The RSS and the Parivar loyalists in the BJP apparently rushed into condemnation of Advani's statement in a pavlovian manner. Indians have always held Jinnah responsible for the partition of the country. The Parivar wondered how Advani of all the persons could absolve Jinnah of all the guilt? Besides, Advani had already blotted his copybook by expressing regret over the demolition of the Babri Masjid.

What could be a greater betrayal of the Hindu cause? The context in which he said it and what he actually said were questions that remained unasked. The motive behind Advani's visit to Pakistan would not allow him to state his reservations about Jinnah's secular credentials. After all, Jinnah is the father of that nation and it would be mindless to fulminate against him during a diplomatic visit like Advani's. Advani's statements have to be examined in the diplomatic context and not within the Hindutva paradigm.

Sangh Parivar's reaction

Advani first angered the VHP/Bajrang Dal fanatics by admitting that the day of destruction of the Babri Masjid was the saddest day of his life. This was taken as betrayal of the Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir agitation that was effectively spearheaded by Advani himself. How could he go against what he had fought for? The Hindutva brigade was outraged. They never stopped to think that the demand for a Ram temple at the RJB and destruction of the mosque could and should have been seen as two different issues, albeit closely linked. One could espouse the cause of the Mandir and still feel sad

about destruction of the mosque. Both Advani and Vajpayee had spoken a number of times that their agenda was not the destruction of the mosque but construction of the Mandir through mutual understanding with the Muslim community or through a legal provision. To a fanatic such subtle variations and nuances are incomprehensible. Fanaticism and finesse do not go together. Advani should have borne this in mind. In India he could have explained his statements but in Pakistan, he could not afford to be seen quibbling.

The Sangh Parivar had obviously decided to see the end of the Advani regime. K. S. Sudarshan, the Sar Sanghchalak, had made it clear in a TV interview that Advani should quit and allow the second generation to take over. This was a golden opportunity provided by Advani himself to see the end of Advani. The RSS jumped the gun and demanded withdrawal of Advani's statement in praise of Jinnah. It is obvious that the RSS sees things as black and white; there are no gray areas in their mind-set. No wonder Advani became a traitor for Togadias of this world. The nuances of diplomacy are not for such men. What was surprising was that the normally cautious RSS lost its cool.

Ordinarily, the Sar Sanghchalak would have offered to discuss the matter with Advani after his return and bided his time to let the tempers cool. However, the Sar Sanghchalak is loath to wait and bide his time. He is a man in a hurry. The Sangh spokesman Ram Madhav demanded withdrawal of the Jinnah statement. Advani was asked to bow down or quit. He did neither and decided to fight it out with his own mentors.

Advani's logic?

It is intriguing why Advani chose to say what he did and create such a controversy. There are several scholarly theories doing the rounds but none very satisfying. Some of these are:

- 1) Advani was unaware of the impact his statements would make or the interest these would generate in India. He was only doing what any diplomat would do i.e. to pick out the good aspects of the local hero's character and stay away from his faults. Advani has not turned a Jinnah admirer overnight; he merely highlighted the most acceptable of Jinnah's speeches and nothing more. His inscription on the visitors' book at the mausoleum reads, "His (Jinnah's) address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan is a classic, forceful espousal of a secular state....". Advani believed that this was an innocuous but clever touch to his diplomatic foray.
- 2) Advani's was a more ambitious experiment where he tried to give a defining turn to BJP's communal ideology. He was deliberately defying the RSS and was prepared for the consequences. He wanted acceptance as a liberal leader of international stature.
- 3) Whatever the motive, Advani had no need to certify Jinnah as a secular leader. Advani went too far. Jinnah was a mixture of good and bad and could not be called a secular leader considering the role he played in dividing India on the basis of religion. Whether Advani indeed called Jinnah a secular leader is a matter of debate but the Advani detractors had no time for verifications.

- 4) There was nothing wrong in what Advani did. Jinnah's speech on Aug 11, 1947 in the Constituent Assembly is a wonderful exposition of what Pakistan should strive to be. His exhortation, "You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place of worship in this state of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed — that has nothing to do with the business of the State." This has shades of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's ideals. This was worth quoting, particularly now when Pakistan has drifted so far from these ideals. It could have been construed as a backhanded compliment to Pakistan's present polity.
- 5) VHP/Bajrang Dal's reaction was in tune with their well-known rhetoric but to call their one-time icon a traitor was unacceptable. The fact that the RSS did not deign to rein in these elements and advice restraint reflects also on RSS'

growing impatience with BJP leaders in general and Advani in particular. While RSS leaders were hostile, BJP leaders were dumb-founded till Vajpayee spoke in support of Advani. Nobody offered even a modicum of defence of Advani's statements till Advani made it a matter of prestige to get his statements accepted.

The prospects

The above arguments are there for acceptance of rejection depending on one's predilections. The jugglery displayed by the wordsmiths to please Advani and RSS both, was spectacular. A resolution acceptable to all was drafted and a crisis averted. Advani emerged the victor on points but the battle has just begun. RSS is not likely to put up with Advani's intransigence. The future looks bleak for the BJP without the RSS. On the other hand, the RSS may find it difficult to have a political party that fits into its puritanical straitjacket.

The rumblings in the BJP have continued as it tries to self-destruct. Advani is embroiled in one controversy after another. Madanlal Khurana tried to take advantage of the RSS antagonism towards Advani by asking for Advani's resignation. When Advani hit back by removing Khurana from the party for indiscipline, Vajpayee stepped in to give succor to Khurana. As has been his practice, Vajpayee turned around and said he fully supported Advani. Again the spin-doctors went to work and produced a letter of regret from Khurana to facilitate his re-entry to BJP. The matter does not end here. As Advani lamented the permissiveness and lack of discipline in the party at its National Executive meeting in Chennai, Bangaru Laxman of the infamous Tehelka tapes came up with the demand for Advani's ouster again. There is no end to BJP's internal shenanigans. BJP workers are confused. Worse, the common man has stopped to care which way the BJP goes!

MR. ASHOK KARNIK is a retired government servant and currently a freelance writer.



VIRAT INDUSTRIES LIMITED

**A Leading Manufacturer & Exporter of
Excellent Quality SOCKS.**

Our Export Markets include UK and Switzerland.

Our socks are available in Reputed Chainstores such as John Lewis, New Look, TK Maxx, NEXT, Top Shop in the United Kingdom and Migros in Switzerland.

Also supply socks to Levis & Dockers in India.

For Any Enquiries / Further Information, please contact us
on number 3094 4131 / 3094 4217.

VIRAT INDUSTRIES LTD.

Head Office:

605, Veena Killedar Indl. Estate
10/14, Pais Street
Byculla (West)
Mumbai 400 011 (India)
Tel : (022) 3094 4131 / 3094 4217
Fax : (022) 2307 0486
Email : viratbby@vsnl.com

Registered Office:

A-1/2, GIDC Industrial Estate
Kabilpore, Navsari 396 424
Gujarat (India)

Tel : (02637) 242011 / 242022
Fax : (02637) 251009
Email: viratnvs@sify.com

Shama Futehally

Shama Futehally, daughter of Laeeq and Zafar Futehally, mother of three who carved a niche for herself as a sensitive writer in English and a teacher, passed away prematurely on December 2, 2004. We carry two tributes to her memory – from her mother Laeeq Futehally and from her friend Humera Ahmed. The Futehallys – mother, father and daughter were associated with the work of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom generally and its literary journal Quest which ceased publication in 1976 – a victim of Mrs Indira Gandhi's bogus 'Emergency'.

We at the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom and Freedom First, pay our tribute to the memory of Shama Futehally. We should have done this almost a year ago but we did not know earlier. We are grateful to our reader Khairu Mecklai who drew our attention to Shama's tragic demise and provided us the opportunity to share in the grief of her family and friends. – Ed.

A Friend Remembers

Humera Ahmed

In "Tara Lane" a novel reminiscent of Jane Austen's work, Shama Futehally wrote "There is a certain kind of silence which is not just the absence of speech, but the absence of its possibility ... those who are caught in the silence are not free to move until one of them has the courage to do so first, to rise from a chair or move a hand and thus break the bond for others."

Though these lines echo our personal experience, they acquire a searing poignancy as the writer has gone beyond these barriers of speech and the silence can never be broken. Shama passed away in the early hours of the morning of 2nd December. She left behind a bereaving family, a large circle of friends and many admirers of her literary style.

Shama who taught Cultural History for eight years began her literary forays with short stories, two of which were published in the widely read collections "Inner Courtyard" & "In Other Words". She then went on to write two highly acclaimed novels; "Tara Lane" published by Ravi Dayal in 1993 and "Reaching Bombay Central" by Viking in 2001. In between, in 1994, Harper Collins published her translation of Mira Bai's songs titled "In The Dark Of The Heart: Songs of Meera."

Both "Tara Lane" and "Reaching Bombay Central" are – like most art – to a great extent autobiographical.

Shama like Tahera Mustaq, the gentle, charming and naïve heroine of "Tara Lane" grew up in a gracious cultured upper class Muslim family, insulated and protected from the crass outside world. She recreates the experience of this upbringing with its pre-occupation with ethical values, emphasis on etiquette and observance of social niceties and then depicts with great sensitivity and understanding, the painful compromise they have to make with the reality of the outside world, when it impinges and threatens to disintegrate this privileged life style.

In her second novel, Ayesha Jamal the heroine like Shama is married to an IAS officer. Hence it is not surprising that she is not only able to present with the familiarity of an insider the hierarchial intricacies of "Babudom" and the political shenanigans in India's Capital but also describe graphically the lurking dangers and the ever present fear of getting embroiled in corrupt or unfair practices or being coerced into extending undue favours.

Though the autobiographical element lends to the novel its air of authenticity, the unique feature which makes her novel a land mark in Indo-English writing is the fine craftsmanship lilting, facile prose and the deft use of a phrase or image to create an atmosphere or illuminate a character.

I did not know her intimately or for a long time. My first meeting with Shama was at the residence of a

common friend, the writer and artist Manju Kak. Shama at that time – it was the winter of 1992 – was collecting short stories on communal harmony at the instance of a government organization (the name of which I cannot recollect). Her charm poise and serene presence made a visible impact. Her ingrained graciousness and affectionate nature made one feel instantly comfortable and liked.

For some reason or the other that collection to which I had also contributed did not see the light of day. But we met often – as we had common friends and interests at the National Gallery of Modern Art or the National School of Drama where she taught Western Drama – I have fond memories of these meetings, as any interaction with her was a pleasant experience.

When my collection of short stories, "Check Mate and Other Stories" was published by Writers Workshop, Shama in spite of her hectic schedules took time to review it in *The Pioneer* under the title "Haveli Life". While highlighting the positive aspects she gently toned down the criticism, tempering it with praise and empathy and sisterly advice. To illustrate, here is an excerpt from the review:

"Having said all this, I would add that, if I were the author I would concentrate on developing the character and situation so as to make the fiction more substantial. Its virtues are fundamental ones: the setting is very

recognizable, the style is unpretentious, the story line is strong. What is needed is that all these things should be bodied out by sensitive development of character."

Shama achieved this and much more in her novels. If "Taralane" is reminiscent of Jane Austen's "two inches of ivory", then "Reaching Bombay Central" covers a larger canvas. It is a journey from Delhi to Mumbai in which she was able to project through the passengers travelling in compartment C of the Frontier Mail, the social and cultural fabric of India with its underlying caste and communal tensions which can erupt in riots but can be avoided through the innate humanity, civility and good sense embodied in the characters of Ayesha, Ranjit & Jayshree.

Shama, through the character of Ayesha portrayed the new Muslim woman who though rooted in the Muslim social consciousness and belonging to an elitist class could reach out – with sympathy and understanding – bridging barriers of caste, class and community, attuning herself to the true spirit of the country.

In her death we have lost not only a writer of exquisite fiction but also a remarkable and lovely human being. I will always miss her, as will all those who knew her.

HUMERA AHMED is PMG at the General Post Office in Mumbai. She is also a writer of short stories.

A Mother's Tribute

Laeq Futehally

My daughter Shama Futehally who died last December left behind her a small but impressive and varied body of work. Apart from short stories and novels, she had translated the *bhajans* of Meera (from Hindi) as well as Sufi poetry (Urdu) where she managed to combine great beauty with a faithfulness to the letter and spirit of the originals. Her last finished work was a Play about the Taj Mahal, which the National School of Drama expects to produce. She left behind an unfinished novel based on the Upahar fire tragedy (a Cinema house in New Delhi). Her fiction was usually based on some real life experience.

While at school and college in the sixties, Shama used to do small editing jobs for *Quest* so she became a familiar figure in the office of the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom. The first Editor of *Quest*, Nissim Ezekiel became a teacher and mentor. She wrote a deeply felt tribute to him. "We took it as a given" she wrote "that Nissim's time was not his own - it belonged to anyone who wanted his help" She emulated Nissim when she in her turn always took the time and trouble to help any young writer who approached her.

Her books are not of the best seller types, but they are of the kind which can be read again and again. Her fiction manages to convey with sharp insights and delicate humour a time picture of our Indian ambience - our prejudices, our hypocrisy, our frustrations and also our occasional niceness.

This is particularly true of her novel "Reaching Bombay Central" where passengers are cooped together on a railway journey for twenty four hours- a situation which exposes their inner personalities, which are in fact common or garden Indian. Amita Malik caught the spirit of the work when she wrote: "Shama Futehally has the gift of making the ordinary extraordinary. Not by high drama but by what John Gerson once called the drama on your doorstep. And she does it rather like a painter who with a deft line brings an entire personality to life. And the little linear details that creep in unobtrusively make us aware that we are not the keen observers of ordinary routine behaviour which Futehally undoubtedly is."

The thoughtfulness and accuracy of her writing – the fastidious search for the exact word, might suggest that Shama spent long meditative hours at her desk. The fact is that she had to squeeze her writing into small nuggets of time between being a wife, mother, and a teacher and writer. Each one of these was a full time role and she neglected none of them. She taught herself to write in the waiting rooms, in hospitals, in buses and trains, while standing on a footpath. She could write with one baby in her arm and the other attached to her sari. She had learnt to combine her domestic responsibilities with her intellectual life, and to put both first.



Whither India? - In Search of New Postulates

Mr.S.S.Bankeshwar, who has been on the Advisory Board of *Freedom First* and a regular contributor, has published a collection of his articles, interviews with VIPs, book reviews and astrological predictions. The book is entitled *Whither India? - In Search of New Postulates*

Retiring after a long stint with the Godrej Group of Companies, Mr. Bankeshwar is currently a Free Lance Journalist.

Priced at Rs.250, he offers the book to *Freedom First* readers and subscribers at Rs.200.00. He has left a few copies with us. Those interested may collect their copies from our office on payment of Rs.200 in cash. Our address: 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001. Phone: 022 22843416

A Polish Honour for an Indian Soldier

The Bond of India-Poland Friendship Comes Alive

S. V. Raju

At a function held in Mumbai in July this year, the Consul General for the Republic of Poland in Mumbai presented Poland's highest military award the 'Gold Medal of the Polish Army' to Major General (Retd.) Eustace D'Souza "in recognition of his 'significant contribution to the popularisation of the history and heritage of the Polish Army.' Maj. Gen. D'Souza is the first Indian Serviceman to be so honoured.

What did he do to deserve this award?

In March 1944 as a young Lieutenant Eustace D'Souza travelled with Polish Troops on the Polish Ocean Liner MV Batory to Taranto in Italy from Port Said. They were reinforcements for the famous 8th Army.

In April 1945, the capture of Monte Cassino in Italy was entrusted to the 8th Indian Division, the Polish General Anders' Kresova and Carpathian Divisions, the Free French Brigade and the Canadian Tanks. The bridgehead across the fast flowing Gari river in front of Monte Cassino was entrusted to the experienced 8th Indian Division which included Eustace D'Souza's Battalion the 1/5 Mahrattas, 5th Royal Machine Gun Battalion and the 4th Mahratta Anti-Tank Regiment. Two Maratha soldiers who swam across the river did the initial reconnaissance of the bridge site. Once the crossing site was secured and the bridge launched by the Indian Engineers, the Poles and the Free French crossed over under cover of tank support from the Canadians, the 8th Indian Division moved to provide flank protection while the Poles launched the final successful assault on this impregnable fortress held tenaciously by German Paratroopers who had repulsed earlier attempts by Mark Clark's 5th Army.

When these little known facts of the Indian Army's association with the free Polish Army came to the notice of the Polish Consul General in Mumbai,

he requested Eustace D'Souza to put these experiences in writing and this was sent to Poland in time for the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of Monte Cassino. Included in this memoir, the Major General also mentioned that when the late Pope John Paul II (himself Polish) visited Mumbai and members of the Organizing Committee were introduced to him at the Goregaon Seminary, his face lit up when he was told that the Major had fought alongside Polish troops in Italy during World War II.

Freedom First congratulates Major General Eustace D'Souza on being honoured by the Polish Government. As readers are aware he is a regular contributor to our journal.

This reminds us of another event that involved Poles and Indians during the years of World War II and the Cold War that followed. In March, 1939 Hitler annexed Czechoslovakia. In August 1939 Hitler and Stalin signed the infamous Non-aggression Pact. In a secret protocol to this pact they coolly partitioned the countries of Eastern Europe between themselves! Poland was divided along the line of the rivers Narev, Vistula and San. On September 1 the Nazis invaded Poland and World War II broke out on September 3. On September 17 the Soviet Union followed suit when the Red Army also invaded Poland. Large numbers of Polish citizens fled the country. Some of them made their way to India. They and the resident Polish community already in India were interned at a Polish Refugee Camp at Valivade in Kolhapur, Maharashtra, as the then British colonial government viewed them as citizens of an enemy nation. The war ended in 1945 and the Polish internees were free to return to Poland. But most of them chose not to go back because their country continued to be under the heels of the Soviet dictator Stalin. Poland was destined to remain enslaved until 1990, when with the disintegration of the

Soviet empire, she finally regained her freedom.

On September 1, 1947, on the anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Poland, the Indo-Polish Library (IPL) of the Indo Polish Association, published a booklet entitled "15th August - Its Meaning for India and the World" comprising Polish thoughts and greetings to the Indian people on their achievement of freedom from British rule on 15th August 1947. The booklet reproduced an editorial published in their weekly, "The Pole in India" of August 16, 1947. It said: "We Poles, who were all through our history faithful to our confession of faith - 'for your freedom and ours' - we take an especially vivid part in the great joy of India, in spite of our own bitter trial, knowing our country is now enslaved and oppressed. We believe that the independence of India opens a new era, in which we too shall regain our freedom; we would like to see in free Indians new allies in our unceasing struggle for liberation. This small Group of Poles who, deprived by force of their homes and the right to live as free people in their Motherland - enjoy now the hospitality of India, express our most heartfelt and sincere wishes for her glorious future." Welcoming these Polish expressions of solidarity and greetings on India attaining independence, *Freedom First* founder Minoo Masani who was invited to write an introduction to this booklet said: "Expressions of solidarity with us and of joy in our good fortune are naturally welcome, wherever they may come from; but there is in addition a touch of poignancy when they come from those who are themselves still not free."

It is in this context that the award of the "Gold Medal" to an Indian soldier by the sovereign and free Republic of Poland is so welcome! It brought back to the fore the bonds of friendship between the two people.

Our greatest rewards lie in the lives we touch.

With a large range of hair dyes
to keep him looking young.

With specially formulated hair colours
to suit Indian skin tones.

By helping him
enjoy a smooth
shaving experience.

By giving her
blemish-free fairness.

By giving her attractive skin
for that extra confidence.

With soft, fluffy woollens for
a huggable experience.



At Godrej Consumer Products Limited, we build brands that touch a special chord with those who use our products. Each brand is geared to flourish in the toughest markets, and also reflect the focus of our primary commitment – you. Giving individual attention to every brand has helped us uphold the superior

quality of our products. Enabling us to create niche markets in the respective product categories – whether they be skin care, hair care or fabric care. Ensuring that our shareholders are well rewarded for their faith in us. Because we too feel rewarded when you welcome us into your lives.

Godrej

Godrej Consumer Products Limited

Visit us at: www.godrejcp.com

Godrej
CINTHOL

Godrej
FairGlow

Godrej
No.1

Godrej
COLOUR SOFT

Godrej
HAIR DYE

Godrej
Ezee

Godrej
SHAVING CREAM

Visit of Fijian Prime Minister Mr. Qarase to New Delhi

The following is summarised from a press release by Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) Inc.

The Fijian Prime Minister Mr. Laisenia Qarase will be in India on a state visit from October 8-10, 2005, in connection with the opening of the Fiji High Commission in New Delhi. The Global Organization of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO), which actively monitors the interests and concerns of NRIs/PIOs worldwide, expresses its concerns on this visit by the Prime Minister of Fiji.

The planned visit of Mr. Laisenia Qarase has greatly disappointed the Indian Diaspora and PIO community members, especially those from Fiji. We believe this is a major negative departure of India's established policy towards Fiji, particularly after the brutal sabotage of a freely elected government in 2000 when a person of Indian origin was ousted in the coup.

Ever since he assumed the position of Prime Minister and interim PM before that (after the 2000 coup), Mr. Qarase has been engaged in actions of racial discrimination and has shown minimal tolerance towards the Indian community. He has initiated the so-called affirmative action programme for the indigenous community which blatantly discriminates against the people of Indian origin.

Then there is the multi party Cabinet case in which Mr. Qarase has denied the Fiji Labour Party, and through it, the entire Fiji-Indian community, their constitutional right to participate in government at the Cabinet level. Mr. Qarase's stance in this case is racist, as there can be no other reason for him to deny the right of the duly elected Labour Party representing the PIO community in Fiji to participate in national policy making.

Mr. Qarase was very devious and manipulative in the manner in which he finally responded to Fiji's Supreme Court ruling that the Labor Party must be invited to participate in government and be given Cabinet seats in proportion to their representation in Parliament. But tokenism was not acceptable to the elected officials of the PIO dominated Labor Party, so having exhausted all other avenues; they finally and grudgingly opted to take up the role of official opposition.

There is now the matter of the so-called *Reconciliation Tolerance and Unity Bill* which the Labour party has rightly dubbed 'Terrorist Amnesty Bill'. Mr. Qarase is adamant in going ahead with this Bill designed to pardon George Speight and his close accomplices now serving jail sentences for their criminal activities in the 2000 coup that ousted the then ruling Labor party.

That so-called "Unity" Bill has been widely condemned in Fiji by people of all races and from all walks of life. In particular, the Fiji Law Society, the Army and Police are vigorously opposed to it. Likewise, international legal and judicial opinions have also expressed opposition to the Bill.

"We also urge Government of India to reconsider any grant of technical and financial assistance to Fiji unless and until the above issues have been amicably resolved," said Dr. Thomas Abraham, GOPIO Chairman.

The people of Fiji go to the polls next year and it is expected that Mr. Qarase will use his visit to India as a major public relations exercise with the PIO community in Fiji as a means of legitimising his actions in Fiji. India should not – and must not – be seen condoning the anti-law and order activities of this government at this point in time, or at any time for that matter.

Considering all these facts, the Global Organisation of People of Indian Origin (GOPIO) requests the Prime Minister of India to exercise best judgment and to consider canceling the visit of Fiji Prime Minister Qarase to India. If indeed he makes a state visit to India, it could be viewed as a slap in the face of the Indian community in Fiji.

GOPIO is a non-partisan, not-for-profit, international organization based in USA with chapters in various parts of the globe, representing the interests and aspirations of People of Indian Origin (PIOs), and promoting awareness and understanding of issues of concern – social, cultural, educational, economic, or political, to global NRI/PIO community. GOPIO can be contacted at gopio-intl@sbcglobal.net or by telephone (818) 708-3885 or (203) 329-8010.



Once upon a time there were 3 little pigs.
so I ate them. End of story. Now go to sleep!

**“MANY TAKE THE FREEDOM
AS A POWER TO BOSS OVER OTHERS”**



ESTD - 1910

**THE LAKSHMI MILLS COMPANY LIMITED
COIMBATORE**

BOOK REVIEWS



GENDERING THE LAW : THE CASE OF SOUTH ASIA
Violence, Law & Women's Rights in South Asia

Edited by
Savitri Goonsekere

Published by
UNDP & Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., B-42, Panch Sheel Enclave,
New Delhi 110 017.

Year of Publication: 2004. No. of Pages: 352. Price: Rs.390
ISBN 0-7619-9797-0

Reviewed by
Dr. Shobha Venkatesh Ghosh, is Head of the Department of English,
SIES College of Arts & Science, Mumbai.

It is clear that violence against women can no longer be read in terms of its exceptionalism but as the defining context of women's lives. The continuing, indeed, intensification, of violence over the past few decades calls attention to the asymmetries in gender relations that undergird our social formations, legal processes, and the very notion of citizenship rights. This is why the need to identify and address the multiple forms of gendered violence perpetrated against women has assumed a centrality within women's and human rights movements all over the world.

The volume under review is part of an on-going project by UNIFEM in collaboration with UNICEF that aims to identify and critique South Asian legal perspectives on the specific and endemic forms of violence that women in this part of the world are subject to. Apart from a comprehensive and incisive introductory overview by Goonsekere, the book carries three chapters that are micro-studies of the legal systems in India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, respectively. The concluding part of the volume reproduces, in the form of Appendices, the multilateral treaties known as the United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (UN-CEDAW) that have been ratified by all the SAARC member countries.

Goonsekere's overview of the terrain engages with some fundamental issues. She clarifies the rationale for the book's focus on what is only one dimension of the problem – the

response of the law and judicial system to the many manifestations of violence against women in the multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies of South Asia. There is the candid acknowledgement that legal interventions alone can do only so much. However, in tandem with other extra-legal interventions, the reform and stabilising of legal norms, standard setting, regulatory controls and effective judicial implementation are necessary part of the process of securing for women their civil rights to personal security and liberty, as well as a host of related socio-economic entitlements. The significant conceptual shifts that have occurred in the past few decades within the human rights discourse are, first, the identifying of gendered violence as fundamentally a human rights issue and, second, the recognition of the indivisibility and interdependence of women's civil and socio-economic rights. This must necessarily inflect our understanding of violence against women. For instance, specific laws on dowry or domestic violence are toothless without a complementary reform of inheritance laws and laws pertaining to ownership of marital property.

That the legal systems in South Asia have failed to deliver substantive justice to women is an incontrovertible reality that is reiterated by the contributors to this book. A pervasive hetero-patriarchal culture, antiquated and gender-blind laws, biased judiciary and law enforcement agencies, and a lack of awareness of women's rights have together created a climate where

the violation or denial of women's entitlements is the norm rather than the exception. The role of the state calls for special scrutiny here. Goonsekere's essay touches upon the central dilemma that all democratic movements face vis-à-vis the state. While these movements have persistently critiqued and, indeed, confronted the state as the stabilizer of patriarchies and class interests, they also recognise that the state may be, at the same time, the final guarantor of democratic rights. This is especially so in an increasingly communalised scenario in which religious communities harden their boundaries, intensify their patriarchal customs and resist any interference in their customary and religious laws. The issue undergoes a further torsion when the state itself (through its organs) becomes the active violator of women's rights, such as in times of insurgency or communal conflagration, or during women's incarceration or custody by the state.

Countering the assertion by votaries of globalisation about the withering away of the state, Goonsekere underlines the continuing relevance and, more importantly, responsibility of the state in protecting the rights of its citizens. If anything, the role and accountability of the state must be deepened. Having ratified the CEDAW (though not without reservations) South Asian states must bring their laws into concordance with international rights treaties. Only so will the issue of violence against women be displaced out of the 'private' sphere of family or community and relocated

within the 'public' frame of human rights and citizenship.

The troubled issue of the enactment of a secular uniform civil code becomes a test case here. Both Gnanasekera and Kirti Singh (Chapter 2, "Violence Against Women and the Indian Law") take the stand that even as the process of internal reform within communities is initiated by civil society, the state must put into place a UCC which will be available to women of all communities as an option to Personal Laws. And having enacted gender-sensitive laws the state must be made accountable for their realisation in actual judicial practice and law enforcement. It must be added here that this solution may be rejected as a half-way 'compromise' measure by many within the Indian women's movement who position themselves at one or the other pole of the UCC debate – those who believe in the striking down of Personal Laws and call for greater state intervention in a growing climate of communal polarisation; and others who, located within a more liberal or postmodern politics, are suspicious of further empowerment of the state and its control over personal and community freedoms.

Kirti Singh's essay on the Indian legal system takes a critical look at the domestic laws pertaining to overt forms of violence against women in the areas of rape and sexual assault, domestic violence, dowry and dowry-related violence. Sections of the Indian Penal Code as well as specific laws addressing gendered violence are analysed for their anomalies, ambiguities, lacunae, and inherent biases. The fact that conviction in cases of gender violence is an abysmal 4 per cent is a chilling pointer of how the system is not only inadequate but is actively manipulated against those it is meant to protect. Singh discusses various court cases to substantiate her critique of the implementation process. Citing instance after appalling instance of the failure of justice for women, Singh emphasises the need for judicial activism and gender-sensitivity in court procedure, investigative processes and legal interpretation. She provides examples of certain cases in which the judges'

creative interpretation of existing laws, focus on the spirit rather than technicalities of law, empathetic attitude to the victim, and stringent sentencing, gesture to the positive potential of the legal system. The only limitation (if one can call it that) of the chapter is that because of its chosen focus on the Penal Code and other state legislations, it does not bring within its ambit community laws such as the Hindu inheritance laws, or the question of the Islamic triple talaq which has been the subject of much recent debate in the country.

Pakistan presents a special case because, while its law as that of India and Sri Lanka has colonial antecedents, the official Islamisation of the criminal justice system and family law makes even the most basic Constitutional entitlements unavailable to women. A persistent feudal-patriarchal ethos along with a resurgent religious orthodoxy since Zia ul-Haq's introduction of the Hudood Ordinance in 1979 have created a legal culture that is heavily weighted against women. Hina Jilani and Eman M. Ahmed paint a powerful picture of the outrage of 'honour killings' and 'stove deaths' which are not just viewed with leniency but actively condoned by judges who see themselves as guardians of 'tradition' and 'morality' rather than as those charged with the ultimate responsibility of upholding women's fundamental rights. Other violations discussed by the authors are rape, child sexual abuse, sexual harassment, trafficking, domestic violence, custodial violence, child marriages and forced marriages, and the systemic violence against powerless women in protective detention shelters called Dar-ul-Amans. The chapter concludes with very concrete and detailed recommendations aimed at not only reforming the law but also at transforming the larger ethos within which legal remedies must operate.

The final chapter, "Sri Lanka: The Laws Response to Women Victims" by Shyamala Gomez and Mario Gomez, is an extremely well-written piece that negotiates between a general theorising about the role of the law and the specificities of Sri Lankan law. In a country with a history of ethnic

violence, early human rights initiatives revolved around political abuse and state-sponsored violence. Now, however, there is the recognition that women's human rights violations extend beyond the 'political' field to the family and the workplace. In a sense, this is the recognition of the 'political' nature of all gender violations whether in the public or private spheres. The essay critically reviews a comprehensive range of legal norms and procedures related to issues taken up by the other studies in the book – rape, child abuse, murder and domestic violence. In addition, an issue that has a special resonance in the context of Sri Lanka – torture – is given special emphasis and recommendations made about securing accountability from the state. Other recommendations made are specific reforms in law, the striking down of provisions such as the defence of 'grave and sudden provocation', radical changes in legal procedures and requirements of evidence and corroboration, stringent sentencing policy, sensitising of judiciary and law enforcement agencies, constitutional reform and recasting of domestic law to bring it in line with international norms.

In sum, this is an extremely important publication whose greatest strength lies in its holistic and comparative perspective on the legal systems in South Asia. It is a perspective that underlines the need for international standard setting and normalising of laws without, however, glossing over the specificities of regions and countries.



One good thing is, since the electrification of this village sales have been brisk!
Courtesy: R.K. Laxman & Times of India, August 18, 2005.

We make the things
that make India proud



LARSEN & TOUBRO LIMITED

www.larsentoubro.com

www.hdfc.com

Everyone benefits from
expert advice.

**Personalised
Loan Counselling
from HDFC**

Buying a home is the single-largest investment for you. You need the advice from someone you can trust. Someone from HDFC. After all, we have over 27 years experience. And our expert counsellors offer you free guidance on all your Home Loan issues.

Counselling on ■ Properly-related queries & documentation ■ EMI structuring for tax benefits ■ Small/Large EMIs for initial years ■ Large loan entitlements ■ Moving to a larger home



Talk to us today. **Call HDFC Home Line 5663 6000 WITH YOU, RIGHT THROUGH**

MUMBAI/NAVI MUMBAI • HDFC Home Line 5663 6000. Branches at: • **MUMBAI:** Ambarnath (E)*, Andheri (E)*, Andheri (W), Andheri-Kurla Road, Borivli*, Chembur*, Churchgate**, Dombivli*, Kalyan*, Malad*, Mulund* (W), Parel**, Virar (Tue to Sat; 12.30 pm to 8.30 pm), • **NAVI MUMBAI:** Belapur (Tue to Sat; 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.), Koparkhairane (Tue to Sat; 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.), Nerul*, New Panvel*, Pen (Tue to Sat; 10 am to 6 pm), Vashi**, • **THANE:** Gokhale Road*, Vikas Complex (Mon & Wed to Sat; 12.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.).
Working days & Hours: (Mon to Fri; 9.30 a.m. to 5.15 p.m.), * Working Days & Hours: (Tue to Sat; 12 noon to 8 p.m.), ** (Tue-Sat, 12noon-8 p.m.)

FN/HDFC02-05



INITIATION :
Spiritual Insights on Life, Art and Psychology

By:

Michael Miovic, M.D.

Publishers:

Sri Aurobindo Society, Hyderabad

Year of Publication; 2004. Pages: xxviii + 296 Price: 250.

Reviewed by:

Prema Nandakumar, author and freelance writer

A kind of seeker's *olla podrida*, Initiation is the autobiographical reminiscences of a westerner who tried various zones of attachment to India and finally found a haven in the Aurobindonian vision as it chimed very well with his profession as a psychiatrist. It all began in the south of France when as an atheist teenager Michael Miovic happened to read about Sri Aurobindo. Now he had to go to the mysterious east "to give this most literate of all Indian mystics a chance."

This sentence, no doubt scribbled in a humorous vein, also reveals the limitations of the author. Apparently he has no idea of languages like Sanskrit and Tamil and the great Indian mystics like Tirumoolar and Sri Ramanuja who have recorded their experiences with infinite care. Dr. Miovic, of course, cannot be easily swayed by indigenous religions. Academic excellence is his instrument to gauge the worth of a mystic. Sastha worship and Babaji's Kriya Yoga fall by the wayside but where the Doctor's psyche gets attached, the reverence is total as in his reference to "Dr. Emiliano Ananta Alexander Pakal Zapata y Hidalgo, Professor Emeritus of Overmental Studies and Tardive Evolution at the Wandering Institute of Greater Life (WIGL), for his constant friendship and invaluable tutelage on the Gods."

It is then natural that the immediate attraction of Initiation lies in such autobiographical snippets, whistling humour and creative writing that make up the bulk of the volume. His subjects are varied. The painter Monet, the Beatles, the gods of ancient Greece. However, the long-term importance of the volume is in the four chapters on 'Integral Psychology'. Dr. Miovic's graciously giving Sri Aurobindo a "chance" has been abundantly fruitful for his own practice of psychiatry. The inner countries of the mind are "a splendour of ecstatic anarchy" (Sri Aurobindo) and manage to keep the outer form in a state of tense equilibrium. But when there is a clash within, where is the doctor who can minister unto the soul? As Shake-speare says, imbalanced and infected minds need the divine more than the physician.

It is now clear that the base of spiritual psychology must needs be a firm faith in the Divine. After having caught this point, there is the next step of helping the sufferer with external accessories and waiting passively as the patient "must minister to himself" (Shakespeare again). Dr. Miovic has a clutch of significant essays on the place of flowers in giving such help to get the psychically disturbed minds reach out to what we consider normal behaviour. He gives detailed citations from the work of Dr. Edward Bach in flower

therapy and the amazing importance given to flowers by the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. The essay insinuates that at the highest level, the keenest and spiritually-tuned persons arrive at the same conclusions. Dr. Miovic gives a few case histories under his observation to show how flowers do act as medicines. The Indian has for long known that each and every plant on earth has a medicinal value, so Dr. Miovic's cures do not surprise us. However, there are endless possibilities in this area. As he rightly says, the Mother's work is but a glorious beginning:

"For what the Mother recorded is most likely only part of what She perceived in the course of her long life, and much less does it number the riches of this green earth. One can scarcely imagine what She might have seen in the treasures of the Amazon, the heart of Africa, the valleys of Kashmir in springtime, the arctic tundra, the jungles of the ancient Maya, or California's spectacular deserts. One has the sense that Her aim was perhaps only to leave us a large, luminous key and point the way to a golden door." (p. 145)

To the next step, then!



We should understand and do our duty as citizens of a democratic country. Political parties, legislators and ministers are becoming autocrats. They are not afraid of public opinion since there is no public opinion. They care less for their voters because voters are not enlightened or organised. Political parties do make their own propaganda, but that is not to create a healthy and impartial public opinion, which may rise above party politics and effectively express itself in matters of right or wrong, moral or immoral, just or unjust. To build such a public opinion is the greatest national task and bounden duty for us.

Jayaprakash Narayan

Towards Total Revolution, Vol.3, Popular Prakashan, Mumbai



FROM SARASWATI RIVER TO THE INDUS SCRIPT

by

N. S. Rajaram

Publishers

Mitra Madhyama, 410 Upstairs, 17th Cross, 6th Main, BEML Layout, 1 Stage,
Basaweshwaranagara, Bangalore 560 079.

Year of Publication: 1999. No. of Pages: 170. Price: Rs.200

Reviewed by

Brigadier S. C. Sharma, currently working in industry as an adviser,
is a freelance writer.

Accounts of the history of ancient India based on a comparative study of languages are little more than guess work. These historians assumed an invasion by Aryan hordes from Central Asia in around 1500 BC and have tried to fit data to support this theory. Fortunately today, interdisciplinary evidence from agriculture, metallurgy, archeology of cities and artifacts and cross reference to cultures of Egypt and Babylon reveals that the Vedic culture dates back to periods much earlier than the civilizations of Egypt and The Middle East. The book is a summary of this data. The key evidence is the ancient course of River Saraswati which once flowed from the Ambala hills to the Rann of Kutch.

History is influenced by politics. Underlying the theory of Aryan invasion was the belief that the Indians were always ruled by foreigners, had no aptitude for science and kept no

historical records. Absence of invasion in the Vedic records was thus brushed aside. After Independence, the only change made was to fit the theory into a Marxist model. These historians got the patronage of Nehru and Indira Gandhi. A different picture emerges when we follow a scientific approach. Tilak showed from references to stellar and planetary positions mentioned in the Vedic literature that the Vedic people must have established themselves in India before 4000 BC. The Western scholars had placed the composition of Rigveda to 1200 BC.

Poliakov and Shaffer have suggested that the invasion theory suited the aspirations of 19th century Europeans who were keen to free themselves from the tradition of Judaism. They were happy with the thought of migration or invasion from Central Asia towards East and West. Absence of invasion in the Vedic

literature cannot be due to forgetfulness, considering that they kept a record of the Vedas through the oral word. The French scholar Jean le Mee comments the pyramids have been eroded by the desert wind, the marble broken by earthquakes and gold stolen by the robbers, while the Vedas are recited by an unbroken chain of generations.

The author explains the reasons for similarities in the European languages and Sanskrit to migration of the Druhyus people inhabiting the North West towards Central Asia and Europe after suffering a defeat from Mandhatr around 4600 BC. A major breakthrough has been the decipherment of the Indus Valley seals by Natwar Jha and others. The Vedic people were maritime people so different from the pastoral nomads of Central Asia. The book is interesting and thought provoking.

POWERING INDIA'S GROWTH for MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS

Thermal • Hydel • Nuclear • Diesel • Gas • Wind

A leading ISO 9001-2000 Engineering Company

Products & Services offered :

- Medium & Large Pumps
- Hydro-Electric Generating Systems
- L.T. & H.T. Alternators and Motors
- Special Rotating Electrical Machines
- H.T. Switchgear & Switchboards
- Electronics & Control Systems
- Jyoti assumes single-source responsibility for implementing Turn-key Projects.
- Jyoti Pro/ENGINEER Design Service Centre offers CAD/CAM/CAE solutions to improve engineering processes.



Jyoti Ltd.

Nanubhai Amin Marg, Industrial Area, P.O. Chemical Industries, Vadodara - 390 003 (India).

Phones : (0265) 2280633, 2280627 Fax : (0265) 2280671, 2281871

E.mail : cmd.jyoti@sril.net Website : <http://www.jyoti.com>

Freedom First

OUR MISSION

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

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

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

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

We invite you to subscribe to *Freedom First*. Kindly complete the form below and return it to us with your subscription to

Freedom First

3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400 001
Phone: (022) 284 1340 • email freedom@vsnl.com

I wish to enter a subscription to *Freedom First* and enclose my cheque* in favour of ICCF (Please type or write in block letters).

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

PIN _____

* Subscriptions can also be sent by MO/DD. No postal orders please. For outstation cheques (within India), please add Rs 30 for bank charges.

For Subscribers in India

- | | |
|--|---------|
| ☐ 3 Years' Subscription | Rs. 250 |
| ☐ 2 Years' Subscription | Rs. 180 |
| ☐ Annual Subscription | Rs. 100 |
| ☐ Single Copy | Rs. 25 |

For Overseas Subscribers (By Second Class Airmail)

- | |
|--------|
| Annual |
| \$10- |
| £7 |

Do A Favour

to your friends
send them
a sample copy of

Freedom First
with your compliments.

Freedom First

3rd Floor, Army & Navy Building,
148, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Mumbai 400 001

Please send a sample copy of
Freedom First to the following, with
my compliments:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pin: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pin: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pin: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pin: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

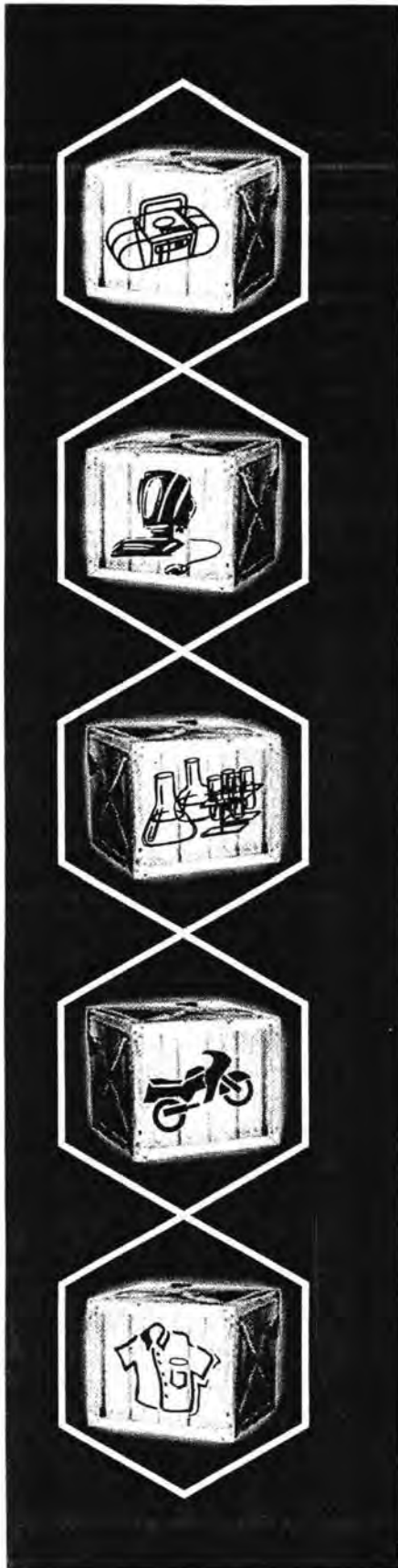
Pin: _____

(Sender's Name & Address)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pin: _____



Most cargo companies

design Solutions

around their

Business.

Our Solutions are

designed around

Your

Business.

AFL

Since 1945

Masterminding the Science of Movement

Air & Sea Cargo • Third Party Logistics • Express

AFL Private Ltd., AFL House, Lok Bharati Complex, Marol Maroshi Rd., Andheri (E), Mumbai 400 059
Tel: 5694 3042 / 5694 3052 Fax: 2850 6993 / 2850 8994
www.afl.co.in