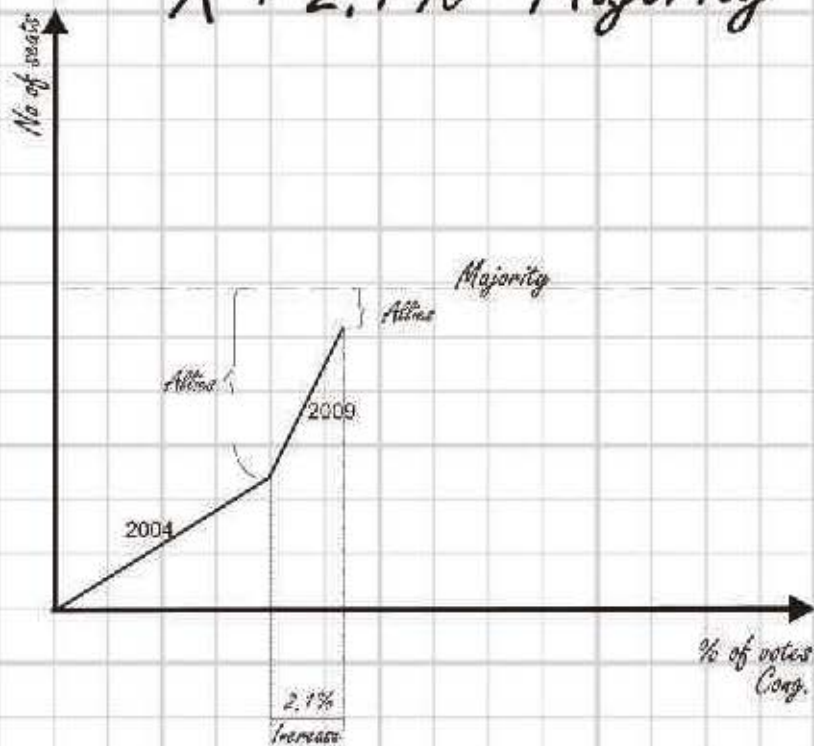


Freedom First

The Liberal Position

The Arithmetic of Stability

$$X + 2.1\% = \text{Majority}$$



Has the time come for a Party that was ahead of its time?

The Swatantra Party was founded on August 1, 1959. It challenged Nehruvian Socialism with its 'Permit-License-Quota Raj', calling it 'State Capitalism'. In 1967 the Swatantra Party became the single largest party in the opposition in the Lok Sabha with 44 seats. Yet, the Swatantra Party, founded by C.Rajagopalachari (Rajaji), Minoo Masani, N.G.Ranga, K.M.Munshi ceased to exist nationally in 1974.

The Swatantra Party's prescriptions, as given in its Statement of Principles and expanded in its Statement of Policy titled 'To Prosperity Through Freedom', are reflected to a large extent in official policies today. But economic policies apart there are numerous issues of governance which the Swatantra Party advocated which are sadly absent today. In these days of 'packages' the Swatantra Party prescribed a package of policies to go with economic reforms.

The Swatantra Party was clearly decades ahead of its time. On August 1, 2009 the Swatantra Party would have been 50.

Founding Day Event - August 1, 2009, Mumbai

To commemorate this unique event in India's political history, a programme has been organized on August 1, 2009. The Programme Director will be S.V.Raju, who was with the Party for 14 of its 15 years as its Executive Secretary at the National Headquarters. He was closely associated with Rajaji, Ranga, Masani and the national leadership.

- He will make a presentation on the Swatantra Party—its basic concerns, its organization, leadership, policies, strategies and performance in the elections to the Lok Sabha and state assemblies between 1962 and 1971.
- This will be followed by a discussion on whether in the current context the Swatantra Party provides a role model for a credible national alternative

Venue: Convention Hall, Y.B.Chavan Centre, Mumbai
Timing: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m followed by lunch

Participation by invitation only.

Those interested please write to Editor, Freedom First at email: jurasv@gmail.com or call Ph:022-22843416 ; 022-66396366. Cell: +91-9820016392



Freedom First

A Liberal Monthly – 56th Year of Publication
No.505 July 2009

Contents

<i>Many Voices</i>	2
<i>Of Cabbages and Kings</i>	3
<i>Cover Feature</i>	
General Elections 2009	
● India: A Credible Democracy and a Functional Anarchy Suresh C. Sharma	5
● The Dynamics and Impact of Elections 2009 – A Liberal Perspective N. Vittal	7
● The Independents' Story Three First-Person Narratives	10
G. K. Sundaram, RIP K. Vedamurthy	16
Hind Swaraj R. Srinivasan	17
<i>Point Counter Point</i> Ashok Karnik	21
<i>Come On, Liberals: Let's Change India!</i> Educating Our Children: A Free Market in Schools Sanjeev Sabhlok	23
Youthful Memories of Muslims in India and the Implications for Britain Christie Davies	25
<i>Cornucopia</i> Firoze Hirjikaka	30
<i>Point Counter Point</i> Ashok Karnik	31
Obama Jiggles US Strategy in Central Asia Tabasum Firdous	33
<i>Book Reviews</i>	37

Between Ourselves...

The General Elections of 2009 are behind us. We had our post election discussion but with a difference. With a surfeit of comments in the media both printed and visual, we felt the need to focus on why citizens decided to be pro-active, came forward and offered themselves as candidates. In retrospect, this turned out to be a sensible decision. Not only were the presentations by those who were themselves candidates interesting, they triggered a lively discussion. The articles by former Chief Vigilance Commissioner N. Vittal and Brig. Sharma along with first person accounts cover considerable ground. Tell us what you think. We await your feedback.

Gandhiji seminal classic *Hind Swaraj* is a 100 years old. How did Gandhiji's contemporaries view it and how relevant is it today? Dr. Srinivasan takes a critical look.

50th Anniversary of the Founding of the Swatantra Party: Have you read the announcement facing this page? If not a quick look is recommended. It informs you, dear reader, of an interesting programme to be held on Saturday August 1, 2009 in Mumbai to commemorate the 50th anniversary of The Swatantra Party. It is open only to invitees and all you have to do is to contact us in case you wish to attend.

In the next issue we shall discuss the ferment in Iran following the presidential elections. As we go to press the situation is that Ayatollah Khamenei the "Supreme Leader" has rejected the call for the annulment of the elections and his warning that he will not "tolerate" street protests. Did we hear that the Islamic Republic of Iran is a democracy?

Editor

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

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

India's strategic rapprochement with the US is a topic of continuous anguish or irrational joy, depending on which side of the political spectrum one is located in India.

Mint, March 2

The right to criticise religion is being slowly doused in acid. Across the world, the small incremental gains made by secularism – giving us the space to doubt and question and make up our own minds – are being beaten back by belligerent demands that we “respect” religion.

Johann Hari, *The Independent*, published in *The Statesman*, February 5

It is an unhappy part of history that morality in public life has been declining and one of the pillars of democracy is likely to be eroded. Let us hope that the statement that the “death of democracy is not likely to be from ambush but will be a slow extinction from apathy, indifference and undernourishment” does not come true in India.

Supreme Court of India Advocate K. K. Venugopal, *The Hindu*, April 9

In the name of democracy, the CPI-M has perpetrated in the state...committing atrocities on political opponents and depriving the people of their legitimate rights.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi, *The Statesman*, April 28

When governments have to depend on their own citizens, they develop a vested interest in the prosperity of their citizens. When governments depend on foreign donors for revenue, they develop a vested interest in manipulating international donors for money.

Editor of *The Independent*, Ugandan newsmagazine Andrew Mwenda, *The Insider* (a publication of The Heritage Foundation), Winter 09

Indians are much better at holding two contradictory thoughts at the same time and not exploding

Eric Weiner author of *Geography of Bliss*, *Mint* January 3

Iran's enemies are like dogs. If you retreat they attack and if you attack they retreat.

Iran's President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, cited in *The Week*, June 7

The entry of a small minority of educated urban middle class citizens into the electoral fray as independents, in the ongoing 15th Lok Sabha general election is a good augury for the future of Indian politics.

Dilip Thakore, editorial, *Education World*, May 2009

A vote is as important as a testimony or witness is in Islam, hence it must be utilised correctly. A vote must not be kept back and wasted.

A *Fatwa* issued by Darul Ifta, Lucknow. *The Times of India*, April 28

Politicians are the same all over. They promise to build bridges even where there are no rivers.

Nikita Khrushchev quoted in *The Times of India*, April 21

Capitalism isn't dead; it lost its way. Expect a more sensible version than the one that just crashed in which capital flows freely and regulations see that markets don't go off the rails. As perverse as it sounds, a touch of socialism is needed to resuscitate capitalism.

Columnist William Pesek. *Mint*, March 31

The world has fallen in love with the China miracle. India has slipped between the cracks in all this euphoria... Shifting political winds now give a well-balanced Indian economy a real chance to emerge as Asia's biggest surprise in the years immediately ahead.

Stephen Roach, Chairman Morgan Stanley Asia, *Economic Times* June 2

The only disappointment, from her (Mrs. Hillary Clinton's) point of view, is that she did not bring the same skills to fighting Mr. Obama, a year ago, that she is now bringing to serving him. If she had, Mr. Obama might have been the one learning how to play second fiddle.

In the article “Madame Secretary” *The Economist* June 18

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

G. K. Sundaram

We mourn the passing away of Mr. G. K. Sundaram. He was a genuine Liberal in the 24-carat sense of the word. Not many of the present generation know about this man whose name was synonymous with the textile industry. On page 16 of this issue, Mr. Vedamurthy who was a close friend of Mr. Sundaram pays his tribute and refers very justifiably to the courage of Mr. Sundaram's conviction. Soft spoken and humble Mr. Sundaram's demeanour hid an iron will. It is not widely known that after the break-up of the Swatantra Party in 1974, the Delhi, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu units of the Party were not prepared to dissolve the Party. They re-formed electing a new National Executive with Mr. Sundaram as President. In 1977 the Swatantra merged into the Janata Party and Mr. Sundaram was included in the Janata Party's National Coordinating Committee.

For almost 30 years, he provided advertising support to *Freedom First* which, I was told by one of his aides he read from "cover to cover".

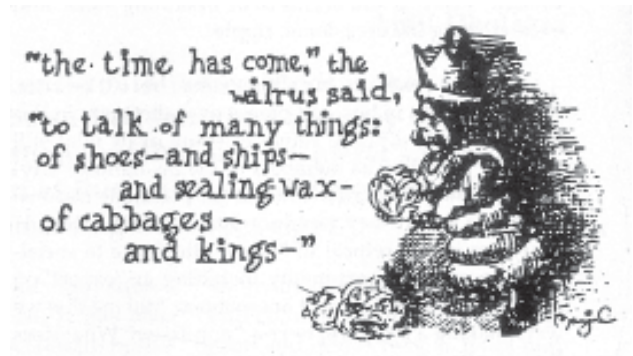
We shall miss him. We convey our deepest condolences to members of his family and to the management, staff and workers of Lakshmi Mills.

*

The First 100-days Gimmick

The media has been full of reports about the agenda for the first hundred days of the UPA government. I have never understood what the fuss is all about. I was under the impression that we elected a government for a five year term and they are expected to perform through the term. One reason could be that before the momentum generated by the election campaign slows down and is forgotten before the year is out, the UPA wishes to show what it is capable of. Much was also made of the first 100 days of President Obama. What dramatic developments took place during his 100 days?

As for our government's hundred days, even



while wasting too many days in coalition arrangements and finalising a jumbo cabinet (every 3rd MP in the UPA is a minister) they have already shown what they can do by taking up the all important question of the titles of our former princes and banning their use as part of their names. They are now going to be asked to remove the titles masked as names. A solid achievement, indeed, during the first 100 days of the second tenure of the UPA. Not surprising to those of us who have lived through 40 years of Congress rule during which non-performance was no problem so long as they paid appropriate obeisance to the 'High Command.'

We would welcome comments on the significance of the first 100 days. One thing it can't be – a probationary period because as we know the probation of an employee is a period of uncertainty, his or her services, if found unsatisfactory, can be terminated without notice.

*

A Reader's Initiative

An item in this column about a Supreme Court judgement of 16 May, 2008 cited from *Common Cause* on Medical Insurance involving Senior Citizens caught the eye of reader Nagesh Kini. The item drew attention to the fact that the judgement had been ignored.

Mr. Kini armed with a representation to the Insurance Regulatory Development Authority (IRDA) signed by 61 senior citizens, all Mediclaim policy holders, demanded that the IRDA take immediate steps to ensure that Insurance companies complied with the judgement or face contempt of court proceedings. Thanks to Mr. Kini's perseverance the IRDA issued guidelines to insurance companies on 25th May, 2009. While Mr. Kini has left a copy with us, he has also prepared a condensed version. Briefly: Insurance companies are asked to accept policies at least till 65 years of age; any proposal denied on any ground, should be made in writing with reasons; the premium charged should be fair, justified, transparent and declared; Policy holders be given option to change TPA before renewal date; delay in issue of identity cards beyond 30 days to entail penalty on insurer; Policies to enclose annexure briefly describing in simple language coverage and the key terms and conditions of the policy; Insurers will reimburse at least 50% of costs of pre-insurance medical examination, if risk is accepted and copies of reports made available; Disseminate in websites product information on all health insurance products; Insurers to evolve mechanism for action against medical establishments, TPAs and policy holders guilty of making or supporting fraudulent claims and sharing the information among themselves. These terms and conditions will be applicable for all policies issued or renewed on or after 1st July, 2009 and any insurer not implementing the above will attract appropriate action.

*

Policemen or Personal Attendants?

While a number of Police Commission Reports gather dust, leading one to the understandable conclusion that our rulers, irrespective of the party (or parties) they belong to are just not interested. One very mundane reason could be that police constables play a 'useful' role as personal attendants both of the senior officers in the force but also for their political masters. According to a report in the *The Times of India* (January 25) over 600 policemen in Mumbai "are working in the homes of IPS officials and politicians to open the door, get vegetables, drive their kids to school, answer their phones, do some household chores for the family, etc." Adds Prasad Nerurkar who

filed the story: "All this not only demoralises them but also affects their working and makes them feel helpless at times."

One police constable complained to Nerurkar: "We are not provided with quarters and only few get allotments. Even the people working in the homes of people get more than one set of clothes every year but we get only one uniform. Most of us are fed up with the system." Police Commissioners come and go but the lot of the policeman has not changed. Further comment about why their morale is low or why there is so much corruption, is superfluous.

*

Benefiting from Agitations

In the campaign launched by the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) to get shops to display signboards in Marathi, even as some shopkeepers faced the wrath of campaigners who, for good measure as a warning to others, damaged their property, the Mumbai Municipal Corporation (MMC) benefited. According to a report by Shweta Desai in *The Indian Express* (March 12), under the law commercial establishments are statutorily required to display their name in Marathi, but the rules have been largely ignored – until the MNS came on the scene and decided to take the law in its own hands. As a result the MMC was compelled to act and registered 12 427 cases getting a verdict from the court in respect of 2,893. They collected a penalty of Rs.75,38,610.

An MNS spokesperson said: "It is good that everyone is following the law (*sic!*). There are only a handful of people who are not displaying the boards in Marathi. We will soon have vigilance squads to inspect and identify such violators." The report naturally does not say whether the money collected as penalty adequately compensated the loss suffered by the MMC's transport undertaking, the BEST, when MNS agitators went on a rampage and damaged buses and public property in a rather violent agitation last year. The other thought that arises is because of delays in the law many a citizen seeks the help of strongmen to secure 'justice'. Could it be that the MMC too finds that to be a good method to collect their just dues!

SVR

General Elections 2009

India: A Credible Democracy and a Functional Anarchy

Suresh C. Sharma

Democracy in multi-religious, multi-party India is sustained by the freedom of the press, freedom of religion, political freedom, independent judiciary and apolitical armed forces.

Critical though we are of the quality of Indian democracy we can derive some satisfaction with the fact that despite being surrounded by nations in South Asia where democratic governance is either unknown or sporadic at best, we Indians have for the fifteenth time in the last sixty years freely chosen who shall govern us; and 34 states and union territories that form the Indian Union have similarly expressed their wishes whenever called upon to do so. This by itself is no mean accomplishment. I have picked up key words from various articles which quite aptly describe the nature of our neighbours' polity:

Afghanistan - *Non existent*; **Nepal** - *Elusive*;
Bhutan - *By Royal decree*; **Bangladesh** - *Fragile*;
Myanmar - *A sham*; **Sri Lanka** - *Flawed*;
Pakistan - *Hostage to Army and Taliban*;
Maldives - *Nascent*; **India** - *Credible democracy and a functional anarchy.*

Preserving Democracy Amidst Diversity

At the same time it is sobering to remember that we too almost lost our democratic credentials when for a brief period of 18 months Mrs. Indira Gandhi declared an emergency and was dictator. There has also been the occasional dissolution of one or the other state assembly when state governments were weak and the Centre was strong and a single party ruled from Delhi.

But all the changes of government, including the recent one, have been peaceful and the losers have accepted defeat gracefully. Democracy in multi-religious, multi-party India is sustained by the freedom of the press, freedom of religion, political freedom, independent judiciary and apolitical armed forces. The Election Commission has conducted itself well. The sight of millions of people queuing to exercise their voting rights is convincing proof of the vitality of Indian democracy. The electorate showed maturity by unseating Indira Gandhi after the Emergency. The

incumbents have to fight hard to retain power. The growth of small parties creates problems for the power brokers but also strengthens democratic institutions since single party majority breeds arrogance and tempted to undermine 'inconvenient' provisions in the Constitution. The blackmail by regional parties could have led to more powers to the states. It may still happen. In a way, the rise of regional parties is a legitimate expression of local aspirations. The regional leaders have concentrated on sharing power rather than pursuing the economic needs of the people. A welcome change is the clear majority for the UPA. Yet they had to contend with demands of their coalition partners for ministerial berths. Frequent floor crossings and the cash for votes scandal had lowered the prestige of parliament. The rulers and the opposition have a chance to improve their image.

Electoral System

The voting system has flaws. A large number of parties leads to a situation where the successful candidate may get less than 50% votes. A good solution would be a single transferable vote like that in Sri Lanka. The ruling party with majority support can ignore groups based on caste, religion or ethnicity. The president is chosen by a simple majority vote. The voters mark their ballots for a maximum of three candidates in order of preference. If no candidate receives more than fifty percent votes, the two candidates with the highest votes are retained. Votes cast for the third are passed on to the second candidate. This ensures that the successful candidate has more than fifty percent votes. The election to the 225 member parliament is by a modified system of proportional representation. The party getting the highest votes in a district gets a bonus vote. There are no by-elections and the party which carried the seat nominates the successor. Some of these features are worth considering so that Indian voters' popular will is more accurately reflected.

About 400 million out of 714 registered voters exercised their franchise in the 15th general elections to the Lok Sabha held between 16 April to 13 May 09. There were 8070 candidates and 369 parties. The elections were fair and the manner in which the entire exercise was managed is commendable considering the diverse and complex nature of the Indian electorate. The safety of the election staff and voters was ensured by deploying 2.1 million security personnel. In the midst of elections in Orissa, the Air Force evacuated 240 villagers and election staff who were facing an attack by the Naxalites. A booth functioned in Ladakh for only two registered voters. The turnout was around the usual 55%. A welcome feature was the higher turnout in the troubled states of J&K and Eastern India. This is a clear indication of the robust nature of Indian democracy.

There were some negative features like the unresolved issue of voters' identity cards, missing names in the voters' lists, absence of ideological issues and the low level of debate, on occasions abusive. Even though the political parties are required to swear by secularism, the selection of candidates and appeals were based on religion, caste and ethnicity. The Election Commission is unable to check the entry of criminals and the increasing use of unaccountable

money in poll related expenses. These malpractices can be checked only by legislative action which none of the political parties want to enact.

Democratic Culture

The Indian political scene is a paradox of a vibrant democracy in the midst of illiteracy, poverty, corruption, ethnical and religious divide and lack of accountability amongst the MPs. A large majority of the rising middle class who should be concerned with nurturing democratic values and institutions have neglected even to cast their votes. There are frequent outbursts of violence by vested interests on trivial issues. Innocent citizens get killed or severely injured and public property gets damaged. There is no serious attempt by the government to bring the hooligans to justice due to vote bank considerations. In a democratic society, there is ample scope for peaceful demonstrations and violent outbursts are a challenge to the very essence of democracy. We qualify to describe ourselves as a Credible democracy and a functional anarchy.

BRIGADIER S. C. SHARMA (retd.). Adviser to the telecom industry and a freelance journalist. He is a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. Email: brigscs@gmail.com






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The Dynamics and Impact of Elections 2009

– A Liberal Perspective

N. Vittal

The results of the 15th general elections to the Lok Sabha can be examined from two angles. The first is understanding the dynamics of the whole process of this festival of democracy and what makes it tick. The second is to study the impact of the results from the liberal perspective to see to what extent the principles of liberal policies are served.

We can begin with the dynamics.

If elections are the heartbeat of a real democracy, understanding its dynamics provides insights into what makes them tick. With the flood of images and information available through the electronic and print media, each one can have his own take on the situation.

Here is mine.

There are four aspects of the election dynamics this year. The first is the basic reality behind the results. It is true that many observers and psephologists had projected that UPA would be ahead of the NDA. The growing clout of the regional parties and the ambitious regional chieftains of the Third Front created an impression that they would have a decisive role to play in the next Lok Sabha. The results giving a free hand to the Congress and the UPA along with the drubbing of the Third Front and some self-proclaimed aspirants for the PM's post raises a basic question. After all the hoopla and analysis, strategic planning and campaign, when it comes to the final moment of pressing the button on the EVM how does the voter decide?

With 700 million plus voters, perhaps there are as many reasons which prove decisive. In this context, the laws of physics provide an useful insight. As anyone familiar with modern physics knows, the world as we see it is totally different from the world of atoms. Quantum mechanics operates at a level where common sense does not appear to be helpful. The only sure thing is uncertainty, immortalized in Eisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. Applying this understanding of physics to our elections we can say that each voter is like an electron. You can never be certain of its speed and position. Nevertheless at a larger scale of the visible world all physical objects behave according to the well known laws of nature.

With this background we can identify three factors which seemed to have played a major decisive role in the recent elections.

The Role of Money Power

The first is the enormous role and clout of money power. The fact that many candidates claimed to be *crorepatis* was just the beginning. It reflected the reality that democracy in our country which has perhaps the largest population of the poor, has become an exclusive game in which only the rich with tons of money can participate. We have perhaps one of the slowest moving judicial systems in the world. For the poor, justice is very costly. Only the rich can afford our judicial process. The same is true of our politics. Especially in the two critical states of Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh there were a lot of allegations about the flaunting of money power both to bribe the voters and entice those in the opposite camp.

The Role of the Family

The second factor is the role of the family. We are different from the West. Our family values and attachments are strong. Every major party has its dominant family. No wonder the latest government has set a record in terms of the number of political dynasties represented. Some families have more than one member in the ministry. Naturally the only party which claims family in an ideological sense and not the DNA (the Sangh Parivar) seems to have a problem in ensuring the smooth transfer of power and leadership to the next generation. As a feudal society with a claim to modernity, we Indians are very comfortable with dynasties and families.

A New Reality of Indian Politics

The third factor is about a new reality of Indian politics. In the past when the ruling parties got defeated the main reason was voter discontent. This got crystallized into an element of modern

conventional wisdom of Indian politics when it comes to elections – the anti-incumbency factor. Given the stunning success of the UPA, has the anti-incumbency factor become history? Far from it.

In the three key states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra there were ‘spoiler’ parties which took away a chunk of the anti-incumbency vote which should have gone to the established opposition and helped the ruling parties. The Praja Rajyam Party (PRP) in AP hurt the Telugu Desam Party (TDP). Desiya Murpokku Dravida Kazhagam (DMDK) in TN hit the Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (ADMK). Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) in Maharashtra did a similar job on the Shiv Sena-BJP alliance. In UP it is anti-incumbency that helped the revival of the Congress and the BJP.

There is however the reassuring message. The ruling parties in Bihar and Orissa overcame the anti incumbency factor by providing good governance. That is good news for the country. If only the ruling parties read the right signals.

From the Liberal Perspective

We now examine the second aspect. What do the results mean from a liberal perspective? The focus of liberalism is on the individual citizen. He must be able to get good governance. He must be able to make free choices in terms of access to education, employment and realizing his full potential. In the economic context, the test of liberalism will be to see how free is the market and how level is the playing field for competition. Good governance would include:

- i. rule of law
- ii. minimum corruption
- iii. opportunity for every citizen to rise to his full potential
- iv. maximum productivity of human, physical and financial resources or total factor productivity

Human security in all aspects must be the result of liberal policies. Applying these parameters of liberalism, what is the impact of election 2009? Perhaps the most significant development was the thumping success of Congress which has been for long the ruling party. Having inherited the mantle of being the party of the freedom movement it has been by and large a centrist party. After Independence it had a left of centre orientation thanks to Nehru’s

fascination for Fabian socialism. It got pushed further to the left and followed the populist path under Indira Gandhi. It had no place for liberals like Rajaji and Masani. Although from the 80s it moved slightly to the right it was the crisis of 1991 under the first non-Nehru dynasty Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, that the party embraced, reluctantly, market friendly policies.

Economic Reforms

After losing power in 1996 the Congress spent eight years in the opposition. It’s success in 2004 was unexpected. The *aam aadmi* slogan was coined as a reaction to the India Shining campaign of the NDA. The Left had a record number of 60 seats in that election. They played the role of kingmaker with a vengeance. Congress had to bow to the dictates of the Left and put many economic liberalization measures in the back burner. The most encouraging impact of the recent elections from the liberal perspective is that the Congress now has a free hand. The opportunity for resumption of the policies towards ushering a really competitive market is a welcome development.

From the point of view of the individual citizen the two important initiatives taken by the UPA government are the Right to Information Act and National Rural Unemployment Guarantee Act. Effective implementation of these two will be welcomed by every liberal thinker.

Good Governance

Equally important from the liberal point of view is the need for good governance. Rule of law and reduction of corruption are supremely important in this context. The open and brazen display of money power in the recent elections makes one wonder whether this government will be keen to check the growth of corruption and black money which is the oxygen for corruption. The Congress turned a Nelson’s eye to the brazen corruption indulged in the first UPA government by some of its allies, all in the holy name of coalition dharma. The manner by which the UPA government won the trust vote was not exactly an example of political rectitude either. Now that the Congress is free of such threats can we expect a more serious approach to fighting corruption? The track record of the party does not inspire hope unless a TINA situation develops and the government has to act.

In fact one of the issues raised by the Left and the BJP during the elections was about the enormous hoard of unaccounted money in Swiss banks. Thanks to the global economic meltdown the world opinion as reflected in the G-20 London summit has forced Switzerland to relax its banking secrecy regulations. The remarkable lack of enthusiasm shown by the first UPA government on this issue makes one wonder whether any move will at all be taken to bring greater transparency in public life. The manner in which the CBI's arm was twisted to serve political exigencies invited adverse comments of the Supreme Court in the last UPA government. There is very little hope that the situation will improve now that Congress has a thumping majority.

We then come to the issues related to security. Terrorism is not likely to be controlled or eliminated in the near future. Apart from this there is a need to maintain the morale of the army. In this context long standing grievances of the ex-servicemen like one rank – one pay must be removed. Consciously promoting a military industrial complex by reviewing the veil of secrecy in defence matters and aggressively positioning India as an arms exporter are urgently called for. With a minister who has a reputation for honesty this is an area where we can hope for success.

The decimation of the regional and casteist parties in the election is another welcome feature. In fact any liberal minded person looking at the elections since 1996 and the increasing clout of the regional parties may conclude that the national sentiments were getting weakened and the regional parties were gaining. Although the number of seats of the regional parties and the casteist parties have gone down their share of the votes has not gone down. Hence there is a need for conscious effort to nurture the national spirit.

Perhaps a closer analysis will show that the coalition era of politics made the small parties punch much beyond their weight. They became over confident and crossed the *Laxman rekha*. In the process they lost support. Even the much maligned vote bank politics to grab minority votes had brought about a change in the attitude of the minorities.

Whatever the reality at the micro level, at the macro level the results of the election 2009 have many welcome features to cheer the liberal heart.

MR. N. VITTAL, IAS (Retd.) distinguished himself as the Chief Vigilance Commissioner.

A Reluctant Welcome for the Lesser of the Two Evils

The verdict of 2009 Lok Sabha elections is not so much a hearty come back welcome but a reluctant welcome to the lesser of the two evils, though surely it is a resounding rebuff to BJP. Two consecutive results of the same type, the second one louder and stronger, are a total rejection of the Sangh Parivar's mad fascist fantasies. The two results of 2004 and 2009 signal of India's desire for a decent democracy.

The Congress rejected Bapu's advice to convert itself into a Lok Sevak Sangh by leaving the political arena to decent and idealistic democratic forces to play the game of democracy in the genuine cricket sport's spirit. But the Congress thirst hoping for a pulsating democracy for political power even at the cost of the dream of a united India, began the game of democracy in the USA style instead of the English style. The result was that the Congress turned into a den of corruption. Both communalism and fascism (the Sangh Parivar) bred on the dung heap of Congress corruption. The non-congressism of 1947, instead of strengthening the democratic forces, gave birth to the frankenstein of fascism. Indians, in some weak moments of confusion, thought of giving a chance to these two forces, brought them to seats of power, but regretted its momentary weakness and has given a loud, resolute, resounding rebuff to both these forces (who are, in political reality the two faces of the same coin).

Now the task before the democratic forces like the socialists, who have the inspiration of Jayaprakash, Lohia and such other dreamers, the Indian Liberal Group, the Sarvodaya dreamers as also of those who have their inspiration from the revolutionaries of Bhagat Singh school, is to forge forces of democratic ideals of the militant type or the liberal type or may be of some other type. The fascist and communal forces are on the run and the task of democratic forces cited above is to put corruption and indecency on the run and make India a safe democracy and take the country towards prosperity, both material and spiritual.

Democracy is not simply a democratic state, but a democratic society.

V. N. Torgal,
Bijapur (Karnataka)

The Independents' Story

Three First-Person Narratives

Freedom First has been organizing post-election discussions since 1991 where we have had speakers to lead the discussions on the conduct of elections, issues that dominated the campaign, an analysis of the outcome and so on. These discussions were extensively covered in Freedom First.

*This time round we felt the need to focus on why a handful of citizens decided to be pro-active and offered themselves as candidates. While most of the independents, other than those that did not enjoy the support of political parties or party dissidents lost, the initiative shown by those whose motive was to help better governance and, as a first step, improve the quality of parliamentary debate and discussion, is an initiative that deserves public support and should be welcomed. Isn't it time that the world's largest democracy also aims to become the world's most mature. We invited three independents to share with us their experiences: Capt. G. R. Gopinath (Bangalore South Constituency), Mrs. Meera Sanyal (Mumbai South Constituency) and Mr. Arun Bhatia (People's Guardian Party - Pune Constituency), to a morning's discussion on Saturday May 30, 2009. Capt. Gopinath was unable to participate due to a last-minute business reason. Mrs. Sanyal and Mr. Bhatia did. The meeting was chaired by Jehangir Patel Freedom First's publisher and member of the journal's Advisory Board. What follows is a condensed report of the discussions.**

In his introductory remarks from the Chair Mr. Jehangir Patel complimenting Meera Sanyal, Arun Bhatia and Captain Gopinath for contesting the 2009 elections to the Lok Sabha as independents said: "I think it takes a lot of courage and a lot of gumption to come forward and do it. Franklin Roosevelt once observed: "There is among you the man who is not bound by party lines. You vote according to your commonsense and your calm judgement after hearing each party set forth its programme. To you, I say that the strength of this independent thought is the greatest contribution of the American political system." Then there was Howard Crosby the American philosopher who wrote: "To let politics become a cesspool and then avoid it because it is a cesspool is a double

crime." This is where Meera Sanyal, Arun Bhatia, Captain Gopinath and a few others took that plunge into a world which normally one would shy away from."

*

Meera Sanyal

One of Mr. Minoo Masani, favourite quotations was from the 'Stanza on Freedom' by James Russell Lowell, to encourage people to treat issues on merit without being worried about being isolated or being in a hopeless minority: "They are slaves who dare not be, in the right with two or three." So throughout this campaign I have been asked whether I was a foolish idealist – as an independent, as a liberal – for what was I really standing for. There is a lot of cynicism about our political system, especially, I think, among people of my generation. Somehow our generation, has become very material, very crass. For people with whom I went to school and college, politics was a dirty word, politicians was a dirtier word. And when I took the step to say that I was contesting this election, other than people who really know me very well as my friends or family, there was widespread shock.

Participants at the Morning Discussion on Perspectives on the General Elections of 2009. May 30, 2009 in Mumbai.

Amitabh ● Parag R. Amladi ● R. N. Bhaskar ● Arun Bhatia ● D. R. Dutt ● Louis D'Silva ● A. V. Gopalakrishnan ● Ernst Fernandes ● G. Hiranandani ● Firoze Hirjikaka ● Akash Jain ● C. A. Kallianpur ● Nagesh N. Kini ● Manjeet Kripalani ● Sheela Masani ● Pravina Mecklai ● Farrokh Mehta ● Padmini Mirchandani ● A. B. Mistry ● Jehangir Patel ● Girdhar Patil ● Dharam Prakash ● S. Ramachandran ● S. V. Raju ● Kashmira Rao ● Sudhir Rao ● Meera Sanyal ● Ashish Sanyal ● Suresh C. Sharma ● R. Srinivasan ● Usha Thakkar ● Abhijat Tumne ● Prachi Tumne ● J. K. Vakeel ● Vincent Fernandes ● Sameer Wagle

* A detailed version (including the discussions) is available – both in hard copy and a soft one (if preferred). Requests for hard copy should be accompanied by a small fee of Rs.50 to take care of mailing and related costs. Payment by MO or cheque drawn in favour of ICCF. For a soft copy email your request to jurasv@gmail.com

I am proud to be an Indian, I am proud to be an inheritor of a democracy which is vibrant. I believe that that democratic tradition allows us to participate in a democratic way.

It was quite interesting for me to know that there was, in the 1950s and 1960s, a group of people who chose even then to stand for independent thought, liberal thought, a truly secular thought and that they actually did succeed in parliament. I sensed, when I stood for the 2009 elections, when people like Capt. Gopinath, Arun Bhatia and Mallika Sarabhai were standing, that there are independents who have stood across the country, not just in Mumbai, Ahmedabad or Bangalore, South Chennai, South Calcutta. It seemed, at the start of this election campaign, that there was the beginning of a political awakening, a political renaissance when people like us, of people who believed that it was possible within the framework of a democratic system decided to stand for what is right and for good governance.

To answer the question why I stood, I have often gone back to this quote of Martin Luther King which I thought really summed it up rather well: He said "On some positions, cowardice asks the question is it safe, experience asks the question is it politic, and vanity comes along and asks the question is it popular, but conscience asks the question is it right. And there comes a time when one must take a position that is neither safe, nor politic, nor popular, but must do it because conscience tells him it is right." At that time I debated with my father, my husband, my family as to why I should do this or not do this, because the consequences were not clear. We are not a political family – my husband and I have always been in the corporate sector, my father has been a naval officer, my brother is a doctor, my friends are all professionals like us. We weren't sure actually what it entailed – would we be safe, would our children be safe, would we be under threat, how would it impact on one's reputation (I am, after all, a banker), we were not quite clear about all this. I recall, when I was discussing this with my husband Ashish, I summed it up very simply for myself that if I were to die tomorrow, and I hadn't done this, I would have regretted it. Someone asked me would I do it again, and the answer is absolutely "yes".

Let me share a little bit about the experience. The first is my team. Lots of friends, lots of family and lots of strangers, people whom I did not know



Meera H. Sanyal, 47, is a banking professional. She is the daughter of Vice Admiral (retd.) G Hiranandani a much decorated and respected Indian Naval Officer.

A professional banker for the past 25 years, Meera is currently the Chairperson and Country Executive for ABN AMRO Bank (now RBS) in India, responsible for over 9,500 staff in 40 locations across 24 cities. She was a student at Loretto Convent, New Delhi and Cathedral School in Mumbai; graduated with a B. Com. Degree from: Sydenham College with Distinction, and did an advanced management programme at the Harvard Business School.

at all before this campaign and who really strengthened the team in a manner that I often reflect that if in my professional life, I could assemble a team of such people, it would be a world class team and they really were. A team of extraordinary people who helped with the research, and the thought processes, many of them are not present here today. To them I owe a deep debt of gratitude. What I have been struck by is that there is such a deep wellspring of goodwill for this kind of effort.

We started by exploring what were the alternatives for good governance, were there any parties which stood for good governance. And we came across Lok Satta, and the Professionals Party of India and we started having a dialogue with them. This was all post 26/11 which certainly for me was the trigger. In our interactions with them, we found that both are actually good parties with good intentions. But they did not have the organization structure for us to be able to draw on their strengths. We decided that we would focus on issues, more importantly, on issues of governance. It would not be personality based.

Standing from South Mumbai, we also decided that I would focus on the issues of Mumbai. We felt that focussing on the issues of Mumbai would be a good one and there was wide open space there. Because whoever you speak to whether they are people who have lived in Mumbai for fifty years, or they have lived in Mumbai for one year, everyone across the board

can see the steady deterioration in the civic and other amenities of the city, in the governance of this city. Taking off from there, we sat down and we prepared a master plan for the city of Mumbai. Once again, nothing unique or original, there are so many reports on this city, a lot of good work has already gone into it, but none of that has been executed. We drew upon all the reports that were prepared and we prepared a master plan, saying that these seemed to be the issues and these seemed to be solutions.

The second was on how to communicate our message – (in retrospect it seems it was a clearer strategy than it appeared to us at that time). There seemed to emerge three clear planks of the strategy. One was through the media, the other was through the electronic means of communication – through the internet, facebook, SMS, and then the third was face-to-face encounters to overcome the barrier that nobody knew who I was. We decided we will not do *rath yatras*, press or TV ads, but we will actually do *padyatras* – just to go on foot to cover the constituency.

Sitting back now and introspecting on it, I realize how little I knew this city. I have grown up here, (since my father was in the Navy, we moved a lot between Bombay and Delhi) but I have spent most of my childhood years in this city. I thought I knew it quite well because most of my professional life has also been spent here. We as a team walked on the streets of the city and covered 95% of the South Mumbai constituency which stretches from Navy Nagar upto Worli on the west and Sewri on the east. I had actually never been so deeply inside any of the slums before, but when I went through the slums, I was struck as to how clean they were.

We would start our *padyatras* between 6.00 a.m. and 7.30 a.m. depending on which area we were and we would always start from a railway station because there you can catch the commuters who are going out. Everyone who lives in these *jhuggis* is working as dhobis, maids, drivers, etc., working in offices, the children go to school or college. So by 10-10.30 a.m., there was nobody at home except the senior citizens. And that in itself was a very wonderful experience because I realized early in the campaign that if you ask for a vote wherever you are, whether you are in a chawl, or in a *jhuggi* or on Malabar Hill, people ask if I vote for you what will you do for me – it is very transactional. I never asked for votes after the first one or two days. I sought support for the agenda. And as we came across senior citizens, we just started

asking for their blessings. It is one of the abiding memories I have – people putting their hands on your head and blessing you. The other thing was the sense of community. There is a great sense of community in the city, though less in the high-rise buildings. When you go into a complex, you are standing there, shouting *naras* (slogans) and whoever is there, may look out of the window, or may turn away. But in the *jhuggis* and in the chawls, especially the children – it was summer holidays and my symbol was a batsman – would come in hordes. We had caps for our volunteers, and when we found lots of little children, we got caps made for them as well. We had a small team of volunteers, but they were always added to by these little kids who would join us. Wherever I went, there was goodwill. People never said they would vote or they wouldn't. But a lot of people were relating to the issues we talked about.

Coming to the results, I got 10,157 votes. There were a total of about 16.5 lac people in this large constituency (South Mumbai was delimited, it became South and South Central) of which about 6.25 lacs voted, so there was much debate whether that was too little or too much. I think statistics don't tell you the full story and it also depends on how you look at it. The hypothesis was that many voters from South Mumbai did not come out to vote. This is hard to judge because in the 2004 elections only 30% voted from South Mumbai. You can view that and say that the percentage went up from 30% to 43% or you can say that South Mumbai plus South Central went down from 46% to 44%. I really don't know the reason. When you enter the electoral process, just as you enter any process, you find out a lot of things. Let me just leave it by saying that a lot of things that one hears about elections are true and a lot of things one hears about them are not true. We experienced it first hand. What I can share is that every rule in the book was broken and the results as they are indicated I do not believe were the true mandate. So when psephologists are confused about the results, I think they have good reason to be so.

Having said this I do believe that the outcome of this election is probably a good one, at least the results as they have been declared, howsoever we got to that point are good for this country. The stable government that the results indicate is an excellent thing, it is good for our economy.

For me the real question is what next which

many people are asking me. Well, as I have said earlier on TV, had I won I would have stepped down from my bank job. I did not win and there is quite a body of work for me to continue doing in the bank. Many people have asked what would be the next step for the independents. People have talked about a political party, about an NGO and many things. For my team and myself what we have planned the next step is based on what the first step was, which was coined 'Ek Kadam'. This for me was just the first step and I believe the next step for people like us who stood as independents is actually to continue on that path to take one more step around good governance, around active citizens' involvement within the framework of parliamentary democracy and to focus on the issues. Just because you are an independent does not mean you are in opposition; being an independent you can truly stand for what you believe in, for what your conscience tells you and not necessarily for what a party high command says.

May I end with a quote also from Mr. Masani. He said: "Why do I do this. I do so because I believe the business of government is to govern and not to be in business. How true that Gujarati proverb – where the king becomes trader, the subjects become beggars." For me I think the mandate is that people like us must work to ensure that our government provides good governance, that neither the government becomes trader nor do our politicians become traders.

*

Arun Bhatia

This is the second election I fought – I got 60,000 votes the last time; this time I got 30,000 votes. There were more contesting candidates this time in terms of both parties and status. We realised that the middle class had let us down and this brought us to the conclusion that the middle class is not interested in removing corruption or poverty. They are happy, comfortable, well ensconced wherever they are, and, it is politically the right thing to do that at cocktails, they bitch about the country, but they are not ready to go out and vote. There are many reasons why they are not ready to go out and vote: just to enumerate a few – one is we are all scared, including me. We are scared not only in terms of the physical confrontation with the goons at the ground level, but also about losing those contacts which are very important in a feudal society. It's a diabolical system. Nobody wants to come out in the open and confront this system.



Arun Bhatia IAS (retd) is a B.A. in History from St. Stephen's College, Delhi and M.A. in Economic History and Political Thought from Cambridge University. He has a three decade long story of attempting to enforce honesty in a corrupt bureaucracy. As he writes in his biographical note: "I paid the price of denial of promotion, frequent transfers (26 transfers in as many years of service in India), numerous charges and enquiries, bad assessment reports, ridicule by peers, seniors and subordinates, lack of support when giant offenders like Glaxo or senior officers and politicians were prosecuted by me, ugly threats from the Bombay land mafia and so on."

We have got to make ourselves seen, we need to be visible. What we need is to combine, to get like-minded people together in the parliament, so that people can feel that we are a force and that we do

HILLA AND DOSI VAKEEL ENDOWMENT

The discussion leading to the article "The Independents' Story" was sponsored by the Hilla and Dosi Vakeel Endowment.

Hilla and Dosi Vakeel were sisters. Hilla, the intellectual, was a journalist while her elder sister Dosi gave tuitions to earn a living. Hilla authored 'The Good Citizen' which was so well received for the type of moral direction it gave that the Bombay Civic Trust went in for a reprint.

On Thursday evenings their home in Bandra was the venue for friends and neighbours to gather for talks and poetry sessions conducted by Raja Rao, Prakash Tandon, Ashok Madgaokar, Mulkraj Anand and Ebrahim Alkazi, among others.

Following Hilla's untimely demise, Dosi continued with all the activities until she died in her nineties. Within a few years of Hilla's death when their small one-storied bungalow where Dosi was a tenant was sold, and she was offered an ownership flat in exchange, she suddenly became a woman of property worth several lakhs. She made a will gifting her flat to the Tata Institute of Social Sciences. A sum of Rs.1,00,000 was donated to the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF) by the Trust set up by her, to be deposited in a bank and the interest earned to be used for conducting lectures, discussions, seminars and the like.

matter. We can create a lobby, create awareness or start a movement, get space in the media, and in that way make our presence felt. We need to set our egos aside and combine. There are no agendas that I carry, there is no baggage that I carry. I don't want to share the other independent candidate's funding. You take care of your funding, and I take care of mine. But let's combine and let me enter your territory and say what a good person you are, and how bad those guys are and you come over here and say the same thing. When we combine, we get a little more importance in the media. It's a coalition. We can have one or two more meetings like this. It can be done. So first we combine, and two, we condemn. We come out in the open and condemn those who did not support us.

Somebody said we approach the NGOs, but the mandate of many NGOs prohibits them from entering politics, even unofficially. They are so scared that they will not utter a word. No NGO has come and helped us – not even those who are engaged in constitutional battles against the establishment. So let's not be too theatrical about it. The real guys who win the elections live in the *jhopadpattis* and the real guys who analyze the elections are people like us. The ones who live in the *jhopadpattis* are never represented on the TV channels, but it is we who are analyzing and re-analyzing the elections.

There is a political party for people like us in Poona, for example, the PPI (Professionals Party of India) and they made a big song and dance that they will support me, they called me and grilled me for two and a half hours. They said we heard that you are very ham-handed in dealing with encroachers, you are very aggressive and so on. And since my wife had told me, whatever you do, don't lose your cool. I was unbelievably humble. But then the whole thing fell through because they had a Memorandum of Understanding which had absurd things like "You will indemnify us against any actions or words you might utter. You will take members of our party in your committees etc.," I told them let's simplify the whole thing and say that we support each other. It's not a merger, it's just support that we are giving each other. Finally, they did not support me and supported someone called Boke, an ex-police officer who was the head of the MNS in Poona.

The organization that I have now is a very loose one. We have a database of about 3000 people who have worked with us, who are enthusiastic, many

have given donations, we got about Rs.37 lacs as donation. The problem we face is that people don't give their time and it is very difficult to organize volunteers who are unpaid, but are very well meaning, and we ultimately came to the conclusion, a learning process for me, that only two types of people will come – those who are economically independent, i.e. those who do not have salaried posts, because those who have full-time jobs cannot make it. The second is the younger generation, the school and college kids, about whom I was quite skeptical but it is very easy to motivate them regarding governance. We need to have awareness programmes for example to be arranged in schools and colleges.

Meanwhile, let's find a mechanism by which we appear as one and let's start from today.

*

N. S. Venkataraman

The following excerpt from an account received from Mr. N. S. Venkataraman who contested from the South Chennai Parliamentary Constituency as independent candidate nominated by the Desia Padhukaappu Kazhagam was read out at the meeting:

"An Election Campaign Without Money Power and Muscle Power

"I am a Chemical Engineer and Trustee of 'Nandini Voice for The Deprived' a Chennai based NGO.

"I carried out the election campaign without money power and muscle power and with great



N. S. Venkataraman, 63, is a Chemical Engineer by profession and Director of Nandini Consultancy Centre Pvt. Ltd., a renowned firm of Chemical Engineers and Project Consultants based at Chennai, operating internationally. He is the Founder Trustee of Nandini Voice For The Deprived, a Chennai-based NGO, dedicated

to the cause of the deprived and downtrodden. .

For more details visit www.nandinivoice.org

dignity, scrupulously adhering to the guidelines provided by the Election Commission of India. The theme of my campaign was to restore probity in public life and Gandhian standards in the national agenda.

"Apart from others, a number of differently disabled persons and visually impaired persons belonging to the lower income group campaigned for me without expecting any rewards and this is a highly satisfying aspect of my campaign.

"I desire to congratulate the Election Commission and the police for the exemplary manner in which they conducted themselves in organising this election under extremely tough conditions.

"I was allotted the election symbol only on 27th April and I could effectively start the campaign only on 29th April, with the handbills printed with election symbol. Therefore, the candidates of small parties like me and independents were left with hardly thirteen days for effective election campaign.

"The Election Commission banned campaign through SMS which effectively prevented the low cost election campaign method to reach individual voters. I do not understand the logic of banning SMS message during the election campaign. The Election Commission could have exempted the cost towards SMS message in the election expense statement of the candidates. While several candidates and political parties did send SMS messages in defiance of the directive of the Election Commission, I did not do so and might have lost some advantages due to my strict adherence to the directives of the Election Commission in this regard.

"Door to door campaign became extremely difficult for any candidate, since the general public, particularly the middle and the upper income group, appear to be averse to receiving campaigners at their door step, which may be due to security reasons or the image associated with an average politician in the country today.

"The *kalyana mandapams* (marriage halls) and several other meeting halls refused to provide the premises for election campaign for political parties, possibly due to the fear of likely unpleasant happenings. The Election Commission also issued some sort of directives to *kalyana mandapams* not to allow the premises for political meetings. This effectively prevented space for holding campaign

meetings where some sort of interactive discussions could have taken place.

"Several housing complexes refused to allow small campaign meetings in their premises and insisted that the handbills should be delivered only at the gate, possibly due to the poor image of the politicians and political parties. There is no space to hold public meetings in many places due to traffic congestion. Police earmarked specific places for holding public meeting which might not have suited the political parties in several cases.

"Many TV channels are owned by several political parties. Smaller parties and independents who do not own such TV channels were at a great disadvantage. The telecast facilities in Doordarshan and the broadcast facilities in AIR were not provided to the smaller parties and independents.

"Under the circumstances, the options available for me were to spread message by word of mouth, by opening a website, by emails, inserting pamphlets in newspapers and carrying out street campaign and holding small group meetings, wherever possible. Some of the newspapers also insisted that campaign handbills should not be inserted in their newspapers.

"I carried out my election campaign just spending around Rs.2 lakhs. My campaign style was to print 2.5 lakhs handbills and distribute it across the constituency by inserting in newspapers and distributing with the help of supporters. In addition, a website was designed by several software professionals which became very popular.

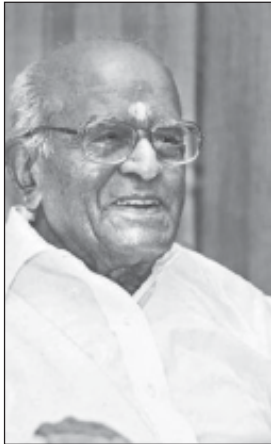
"I addressed several small group meetings in addition to the street campaign for twelve days for a period of four hours each day. I could not meet many voters in person since the effective campaign time available for me was hardly thirteen days. I largely relied on spreading my campaign message through word of mouth and handbills. I relied on the power of truth, which is my election theme, to spread by itself.

"On the whole, I am thoroughly satisfied with the style and quality of my campaign. This style of campaign may look much different from that of other candidates and political parties but this is how it should be."

Mr. Venkataraman received 2,153 votes.

G. K. SUNDARAM, RIP

1914-2009



In the passing of Mr. G. K. Sundaram of Lakshmi Textiles Ltd, in Coimbatore on May 18, we have lost not only a doyen of the textile industry but also an illustrious freedom fighter who was handpicked by C. Rajagopalachari to be one of 'the hundred' in the historic Vedaranyam Salt Satyagraha that

marched from Srirangam on April 13, 1930, and was put in jail by the then British regime for defiance of the infamous "Salt Law" of those days!

Born to G. Kuppuswamy Naidu and Lakshmi Ammal as their second son on October 3, 1914, GKS as he was popularly known, continued his studies after coming out of the British prison, joining the Madras Presidency College and then, finished his Textile Engineering course in the Bolton Municipal College in England. Hockey, Tennis, and Badminton were among his interests in games. Returning home in 1938, GKS gave all his time and energy to the family enterprise, Lakshmi Group of Textiles. All through, he was a model employer – practising the theory of Trusteeship, adumbrated by Mahatma Gandhi and incorporated into the basic tenets of the Swatantra Party in 1959.

As he fought valiantly for India's Independence under Gandhiji's historic leadership, he did not fail to play his part in free India's national politics also – unlike the majority of his fraternity in the business world of 1950s & '60s, he chose to swim against the current and embraced the difficult path of joining Rajaji's Swatantra Party and was naturally a pillar of strength to that national party in the far South. Not only veteran freedom fighters like K. M. Munshi, N. G. Ranga and Minoo Masani but also intellectuals of world eminence like N. A. Palkhivala held him in highest esteem for his qualities of head and heart. N. A.

Palkhivala, in his 'Foreword' to GKS's biography entitled *Sathyam, Santham, Sundaram*, by Mr. A. Anandeswaran, had this to say *inter alia*:

When the permit-quota-licence raj laid its steel claws upon the nation's economy, G.K.S. campaigned fearlessly in support of freedom. During his fateful years in the Rajya Sabha as a Swatantra member, and outside the House, he emphasized and re-emphasized the basic truth that socialism is to social justice what ritual is to religion and dogma to truth. He has consistently championed the cause of fruitful egalitarianism in place of sterile socialism... GKS has touched life at many other points. Sports and games have been a passion with this great industrialist.

The advancement of culture and religion, and the promotion of ethical values, have been equally dear to his heart.

The work is never done, while the power to work remains!"

Though far junior to him in age, GKS treated me always with affectionate courtesy, bordering, embarrassingly, on respect. The way he arranged the annual Rajaji Memorials in Coimbatore was exemplary. Tragedies in family life never swayed him from his stinted devotion to the Paramacharya of Sri Kanchi Kamakoti Sankara Peetam. At 95, he was alert enough to go through the dailies, as was evidenced when he sent a token donation to the noble cause of Kanchi Paramacharya's Satabdhi Manimantapam that is coming up fast on the northern bank of Paalaae river in Oriravuirukkai at Orikkaik village near Kancheepuram, on seeing a colour advertisement carried free of cost in *The Hindu* of May 09, just days before his passing. He chose to send his first token donation to this venture to Sri T. Sadasivamji and Smt. M. S. Subbulakshmi through me, as if to emphasise the intimate nature of the close mutual relationship between the four of us! May his gentle soul rest in peace!

K. Vedamurthy

Hind Swaraj

R. Srinivasan

Gandhiji's *Hind Swaraj* completes a hundred years. *Freedom First* joins the nation in commemorating the book and its message

This slight book encapsulates a defiant Asian mood that was widespread in different parts of the continent; it was a mood that rejected the imperialist agenda in Asia. In different regions it took a variety of forms partly religious, partly political. These expressions were developed independently and spontaneously.

A New Mood

In Egypt and West Asia the call was for a religious resurgence and a purified Islam. Two influential thinkers Al Afghani (1839-1897) and Mohammed Abdul (1849-1905) argued that there was nothing essentially wanting in Islamic culture and alien civilisation. They needed to be revitalised and the pristine religious culture, society and civilisation need to be revived once again. In China, the call was for self-strengthening the country and its civilisation. Armies, military training, steamships all will be necessary to make China to meet the challenge. Again not merely military technology but Western science, laws need to be mastered. But do not give up your basic culture and civilisation. A serious attempt was made to give effect to this, called the Hundred Days of Reform (1890s). But it failed. In Japan there was a wholesale adoption of Western institutions combined with Shintoism, exalting the European civilisation system but not its culture. The thrust was clear – Western civilisation had qualities to be emulated.

If in China and Japan there was a feeling that Western qualities need to be emulated, it was different in India.

Aurobindo Ghosh and Tagore

Exactly a year before the publication of the *Hind Swaraj*, Aurobindo Ghosh saw the Indian society infected by the germ of an occidental malady, a moral disease that had eaten into the vitals of European society such as nihilist anarchism at the one end and Tolstoy's utopianism at the other. To escape from this, India should seek refuge in its own superior civilisation and win *Swadeshi Samaj* and not import an alien article from Europe. The movement for swaraj is expressing itself through an outburst of a swadeshi sentiment. This is against foreign goods no less than foreign habits, foreign dress, foreign manners, foreign education. There was a call for going back to one's own civilisation.

Even earlier than Aurobindo Ghosh, Tagore who was four years younger than Gandhi fired by the Partition of Bengal delivered a series of lectures and these were printed in Bengali and later into English. In these essays he emphasised the importance of *Samaj* rather than of *Rashtra*. The community did not look up to the government for its sustenance but carried on voluntarily many of its social and political objectives. In many aspects both Ghosh and Tagore anticipate Gandhi.

Along with *Hind Swaraj*, many other books expressing views similar to those of Ghosh and Tagore were published. Both Indians and foreigners particularly the British joined in this. They asserted the existence of a distinct Indian civilisation with a hoary past and a continuity. A. K. Coomaraswamy, E. B. Havell, James H. Cousins and Sir John Woodroff were some of them. In fact, Coomaraswamy's *Art and Swadeshi* has essays many of which can be imbricated into the *Hind Swaraj* with no damage to its text. Both culturally and politically a number of thinkers expressed a new dominant mood that was not to be found earlier. In all these expressions, including those of Aurobindo Ghosh, the stress is not on the religious heritage – there is no call for a venerated religious tradition that needs to be revitalised. Surprisingly it is secular as is the *Hind Swaraj* itself.

Sweeping Generalisations on the West

Gandhiji too sees nothing to learn from Western civilisations for we Indians are in no way inferior. He examines Western civilisation and condemns it. His sweeping generalisations appear not to have been the result of careful thinking but a gut reaction reminding of the later D. H. Lawrence. With a few strokes of the pen, he paints the entire edifice of Western civilisation in black and white, most of them black. He identifies civilisation with crowded, dark urban conglomerations, blackened

by the grime of the chimneys and workers exhausted by the unremitting toil and not even sparing women who are compelled to scrap their way searching for employment. Parliament, newspapers are condemned without taking into consideration nuances.

The Parliament central to British politics as well as crystallising half a millenium of political struggle and embodying the principles of political liberalism is dismissed as a whore. Similarly, newspapers who struggled for two hundred years and established themselves as one of the pillars of the liberal government are dismissed in a few words. Imitation of British institutions in India will not result in the descent of heaven on earth. This is a myopic perception and will not stand careful scrutiny. Civilisations are extremely complex entities and these are dismissed in a few pages. One aspect of civilisation, urban industrialisation is identified with the whole of civilisation. If one was to derive our knowledge of civilisation from these pages we will be ill-educated indeed. Many of its beneficent dimensions are ignored.

He posits an earlier Arcadia which has been the stock in trade of many political philosophers.

He turns to India and holds that it had its own distinct civilisation and the country was not sunk in anarchy before the British colonised us. There was law and order and people lived their lives their own way. The so-called benefits such as railways and the courts are condemned as in no way contributing to the welfare of the land. The British did not weld the country into one unit. We had our own distinct cultural sense

of unity through our religious centres, a sense of contentment spread uniformly in the country.

His condemnation of Western civilisation as promoting immorality, godlessness in contrast to Indian civilisation which is based on a belief in God; atheism has taken a hold on the people of Europe and those that are there appear half mad. These sharp contrasts do justice to neither civilisation. If this was true, the West would be swarming with atheists breaking all the commandments. And every Indian would be a God fearing model of a man.

Liberal Disquiet

Many Liberals were not taken in by the book and Sankaran Nair's attack has yet to be conclusively answered. In the 1940s when India was on the verge of independence, Gandhi wanted the Congress Working Committee to consider the adoption of the proposals made in the book for the entire country. Nehru politely and firmly rejected the proposal. He rejected the proposition that non-violence can issue from the simplicity of the villages and in the adoption of the spinning wheel. He rejected the view of Gandhi that in the villages there would be no darkness but people would live in freedom and that there would be no plague, no cholera, no small pox.

India after independence did not adopt Gandhism but efforts were made to bring in Community Development and Panchayati Raj. It must be admitted that the villages were no sluggish backwaters but had their own life and this was due to the inspiration of Gandhi himself. Raja Rao's novel *Kanthapura* chronicles a village bestirring itself. In the past few years, we have witnessed villages gradually shed-

ding their lethargy.

This could be regarded as the first book of political science for a liberated India. The earlier books such as Dadabhai's were critiques. Here he has proposals for the regeneration of the country. He touches upon all aspects of nationalist struggle and more importantly breathes a sense of optimism about the future. While commending the Liberals for their pioneering contribution to Indian nationalism he yet totally rejects the early Liberals welcoming British rule as providential and that the country in earlier times was sunk in darkness. Instead he regards it as a curse and needed to be exorcised. After *Hind Swaraj* none dared mouth the liberal slogan of the British association as providential.

A Few Generalisations on the Book

Though he talks of Indian civilisation, there is no trace of any reference to Hindu religious revivalism, in spite of his interests in the Theosophists. The entire book is free of religious resonances and is both secular and pluralist in outlook. There are references to the Muslim question and ways of settling the problem. Of course he was tragically proved wrong but we are writing from the hindsight of history. There are no glaring references to Vivekananda who had put Hinduism on the world map. Considering that religion mattered to him deeply, this is indeed surprising.

Gandhiji's life was contemporaneous with the populist movements in the U.S. and Russia. In Russia, the populist movement was rejected by the peasants and was crushed by the government. In the U.S. the populist programmes were absorbed in the American

party system. In India, Gandhi's populism contributed to the nationalist movement and the Congress party's strength was due to its being backed by the farming interests. It contributed greatly to the attainment of freedom.

British Reactions

In 1938 a few intellectuals in England wrote of their impressions of the book. Among them was G. D. H. Cole, the eminent social thinker. While some were sceptical, others were struck by the book and its message. Europe was then swept by Nazism, Fascism and Bolshevism. The machine age, the large metropolises, the political structures contributed in no small measure to promote dictatorial tendencies. Unbridled industrialism had brought in its wake a destruction of Western values. In this context, it appeared as though Hind Swaraj had a message for the *anomie* that was spreading in Europe.

The great contribution of the book has had been to delegitimise British rule and he reiterates a refreshing confidence in the Indian people. He has a complete

programme of action, picking up earlier methods of non-cooperation, and boycott and adds to them. British rule had to be ended and ended immediately. In forty years since the writing of the book, India became free. Since forty years in the lifetime of a country is indeed brief, this prescience of the book is indeed striking.

He captures an anguished quest for a sense of the community that had been almost irretrievably lost because of the forces of modernisation. The sense of belonging to a larger group with widely shared festivals, celebrations and a culturally rich life was giving way to a contractual relationship, where everything is done according to the rules, where the clock determines one's behaviour where people's lives are regulated by factory sirens where older emotional bonds have dried up. The emerging society is qualitatively different and the sense of warmth, deep abiding give and take have all vanished beyond hope of recovery.

A Wider Colonial Message

Finally, is the book specifi-

cally addressed to an Indian audience or is it aimed at a wider public? Ostensibly it is an answer and an attempt at persuading the Indian extremists and convincing them of the futility of the cult of violence. Its total absence of a glorious Hindu past, to Kings and dynasties, or to its hallowed religion but highlighting the self-sufficiency of the community, of the invasive presence of industrialisation seems to have a wider audience in mind. An imaginary Nigerian or a Kenyan would immediately respond to the sentiments expressed in the book for he too has experienced the very things and suffered the pain of an alien "civilised" intrusion which disrupted traditional ways of living. "For God's sake get out and leave us to manage our affairs our way" would be seen as the central message – as relevant to colonial Africa as to colonial India or Southeast Asia. It could be regarded as an anguished cry of a subject people under the iron hand of an imperial power having echoes in many parts of the third world.

Dr. R. Srinivasan is retired professor of Political Science, Bombay University, and Associate Editor of *Freedom First*.

On *Freedom First*

I am writing to say how honoured I feel over your including the text of my luncheon toast to Martin Luther King III in *Freedom First*. The journal comes to me regularly and revives my memories of an era of grace.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi, Governor of West Bengal, Kolkata

*

Freedom First issue of June 2009 was especially good with several thought provoking articles. Since I have been a bit familiar with the subject, I found a good deal of fresh breeze in the articles on: 1. Global Tax Haven; 2. The Politics of Black Money and 3. Our Politicians have No Option but to be Corrupt. The article on Madarsaas was very readable too. Congratulations to you and to the authors

D. R. Pendse, eminent economist, Mumbai.

*

You and your team deserve high praise for the 500th issue of *Freedom First*. It looks refreshingly good; the paper and printing and design are very pleasing. I know the content will be more than a match to the get up because you have selected the best pieces out of a large pool of thoughtful pieces by advocates of liberalism. I am happily surprised to find that I had the privilege of knowing many of the editors of our journal.

Dr. Ramesh Babu, Political Scientist & specialist in International Relations, Hyderabad

Self-reliance : the keynote of our independence

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Self-reliance is both a means and an end.

For Godrej it is the essence of independence.



Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

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

Election Results

1) Despite apprehensions of a fractured verdict, there was a clear winner in this election. The Congress won hands down, without winning a clear majority. It decimated all its rivals so effectively that there were no challengers left; the sundry parties had no option but to offer unconditional support. The Left which usually has an argument to offer to debunk its rivals was left to contemplate its existential calculus. After all these years, we have a Government that can function unhindered by outside pulls and pressures. This is a welcome change for the country.

So long as men worship the Caesars and Napoleons, Caesars and Napoleons will duly arise and make them miserable.

Aldous Huxley

Cited in *Open Democracy*, 6 June 2009

1) There are some dangers in the helplessness of the opposition. Not having any clout in the Parliament, the opposition may tend to take recourse to other ways to browbeat the Government and underline its existence; street agitations and so-called mass movements may replace parliamentary debates. Nothing is achieved through these agitations except disturbing normal life. The people have to see through this gambit and refuse to get involved in such actions. The opposition, mainly the BJP, has to accept that it should for once play the role of a constructive opposition party and set a precedent for the future. The Left cannot be expected to come out of its dogma. On the other hand, the Government must learn to respect the opposition and carry it along even if its opinion is insignificant. The ruling party is often tempted to crush the opposition when it is down.

US Foreign Policy Shifts

2) A new President is expected to chalk out a new foreign policy for the US and in Obama's case, he got elected on the promise of undoing the wrongs of the Bush administration. It was understood that many of his election promises would turn out to be empty rhetoric once he faced the reality of office. His resolve to shift focus from Iraq to Afghanistan was a much awaited course correction. However, there is confusion in his Afpak policy. His acceptance of genuineness of Pakistan's desire to crush Al Qaeda/Taliban flies in the face of US experience with the smooth-talking Musharraf. The General duped the US for 8 years and it was understandable when Obama declared that Pakistan would have to account for every penny it receives from the US. However, Obama has now accepted Zardari's argument that Pakistan should not be humiliated in this fashion in view of its yeomen service in the fight against terror. Apart from the need to defeat Al Qaeda, the major US concern now is the very survival of Pakistan. No wonder Obama is changing track to help Pakistan.

2) US Foreign Secretary Hillary Clinton has in fact bent backwards to do some self-flagellation, admitting that the US itself was guilty of helping the Al Qaeda rise; true statement of fact but a wrong time to say it because this was the time to push Pakistan to act decisively against the Taliban. Pakistan's present offensive against the Pak Taliban may appear satisfactory but it is not known if it will end up destroying the monster. Pakistan is known to go half way and keep the fundamentalists happy by not completing the job. India is witness to this strategy after 26/11 and has been insisting that Pakistan should be judged not on its words but by its actions. Clinton's confession is obviously aimed at her Congressmen who are clamouring for accountability from Pakistan before disbursing additional instalments of aid. The US now wants to put all its eggs in the Pak basket in the hope that this grand strategy would allow it to pull out of Afghanistan; the second arm of this strategy is to get India to ease pressure on Pakistan. That would be a hard pill to swallow for India although India too does not want Pakistan to fail as a state

The 26/11 Report

3) The Pradhan Report into the 26/11 Mumbai attack has stirred a hornets' nest. The immediate media comments that the report had given a clean chit to Mumbai Police, invited bitter criticism from security experts and even from the wife of one of the martyrs. Pradhan had only commented that the Mumbai Police had shown great courage in fighting the terrorists; he had given no clean chit to any body. He was factually right as no policeman, howsoever poorly equipped, had run away from the call of duty and many faced death. Appreciation of their bravery and sacrifice was their due. What the report says about the system and absence of Intelligence would be another matter. Since the Committee had no access to central agencies like the IB, RAW, Coast Guard and the National Security Guards (NSG), which were the core organisations dealing with the terrorist attack, it would be interesting to see how the Committee managed to arrive at the facts of the attack.

3) The irony is that none of the critics had obviously read the report as it would not be available in the public domain till it is presented to the Assembly. The haste of the media in its craze for instant reporting and show of expertise is a danger that the media must keep in mind. People were rightly agitated that the great trauma Mumbai went through for over 60 hours and nearly 200 deaths was considered nobody's responsibility. This was all due to a silly headline in a newspaper. The reporter should be hauled up, not the two Committee members. The report may be condemned or lauded but at least it deserves to be read before coming to a judgment. R. D. Pradhan and V. Balchandran are persons of integrity and cannot be influenced by anybody. Let us show them the courtesy of reading what they have said. As usual the report may produce no tangible result as Governments are known to bury even useful recommendations under the guise of getting them examined by another body of experts and appoint a third body to examine how it can be implemented. Such reports end up in archives for next generation scholars.

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

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Come On, Liberals: Let's Change India!

Educating Our Children: A Free Market in Schools

Sanjeev Sabhlok

In this article I outline how we can successfully deliver high quality school education at a relatively modest cost to the taxpayer

In the May 2009 issue of *Freedom First* I suggested that in addition to ensuring defence, internal security and justice, the free society must commit to equality of opportunity (EO). Delivering EO requires removing discriminatory obstacles to achieving public office, ensuring a good universal school education system, and guaranteeing a social minimum.

School Education as a Key Element of Equal Opportunity

No child's future should be jeopardized because its parents happen to be poor. We must guarantee good school education (including vocational training, where appropriate) to all children who want to study to year 12 (or age 18). Twelve years of education has now become a minimum given the complexity of technology that must be mastered in order to become a productive member of society. Such education will generate an enormous economic dividend for India through positive externalities including social capital formation.

In this article I outline how we can successfully deliver high quality school education at a relatively modest cost to the taxpayer (details are available in my book, *Breaking Free of Nehru*, Anthem Press, 2008).

A fully privatised school system

Children from rural areas or

slums cannot even dream of equal opportunity today. These luckless children are destined for a lifetime of failure by the inefficiencies and corruption entrenched in our government school sector. The best these children can hope for is to get some patchy education in government schools where such schools exist (many government schools are found only on paper, or teachers are paid without attending school).

But why does a government need to operate schools? Managing a school is a hands-on exercise, much like managing a business, and governments are terrible at managing anything that must deliver value. Government officials and teachers have little or no incentive to deliver world-class education at the lowest possible cost. In comparison, the private sector can only survive if it delivers value for money. Therefore, parents who can afford it, prefer to send their children to private schools.

Governments are also unusually soft on their own failures. A Director of School Education in a state government will demand stringent standards from private schools even as he ignores the shoddy education provided by the government's own schools. Governments should therefore not directly manage schools. However, they could regulate school standards, noting that self-regulation by a body of

experts is the preferred way for such a task.

As a first step, our governments should stop building, owning, and maintaining schools. That would include an end to the appointment of lakhs of school teachers, an activity that is a source of great corruption and favouritism. School assets (bundled with a long-term lease on the school's land) should be auctioned to educational consortiums that are at least partially owned by local teachers and residents. I have suggested a transitional mechanism for this in my book that will protect existing teachers.

This will immediately ensure that the incentives of school managers are better aligned to the needs of the local community. Further, the lands and buildings belonging to schools will also be much better maintained and utilised.

Customised Vouchers for Each Child

Privatisation is only the first part of this model. Parental choice is the other part. School education vouchers would be issued by the government for each child and mailed out to parents. Children of poor parents would be issued high-value vouchers. Rich parents will not get any vouchers. The lower economic classes may get vouchers, depending on how much it costs to deliver good education.

All parents would thus be empowered to send their children to almost any school they want to. All they would need to do is to pay a top-up amount over and above the value of the voucher.

Under the current model, government schools receive funds unrelated to the size or nature of their enrolment or educational outcome. In the new model, they would get money based on a reimbursement of vouchers. They would therefore need to enrol as many children as they can. They will have to go out and literally beg the poorer parents – such as the parents of child labourers – to send their children to school. Where necessary, schools would provide a breakfast for these children: anything to ensure that parents agree to send their children to school. Enrolment rates would therefore shoot through the roof.

Second, schools would need to ensure that the children they have enrolled achieve the required educational standards. Only then will they be able to invoice the government against these vouchers. The more the number of children these schools enrol and pass out at an agreed, independently tested standard, the more the money they will receive.

Note that through high-value vouchers for poor parents, schools in economically backward areas will be able to afford high salaries for teachers and potentially attract even better teachers than schools in wealthy urban areas. Good schools would thus emerge in rural areas and slums for the first time in India's history. This would dramatically increase both the quality of education and competition in the school market. Very little central planning or quality control will be needed as

the market will sort out good schools from the bad. (A self-regulating body of school experts would help.)

Above all, the preferences of parents in selecting the right school for their children will be honoured, and who can be a greater well wisher of a child than its parents?

Raising Money for the Vouchers

It is true that defence, police, and justice must take first priority for any government. However, universal high quality school education must receive a high priority as well. The system outlined above will not cost too much because the current funds allocated to tertiary education would be shifted entirely to school education. In the tertiary education sector, students would be asked to pay their fees through loans issued by the government (I'll talk more about this topic in a separate article).

Second, funds needed beyond that could be raised through capital markets as a long-term investment loan. This should be easy, given that there is nothing in any society that yields higher returns on investment than good

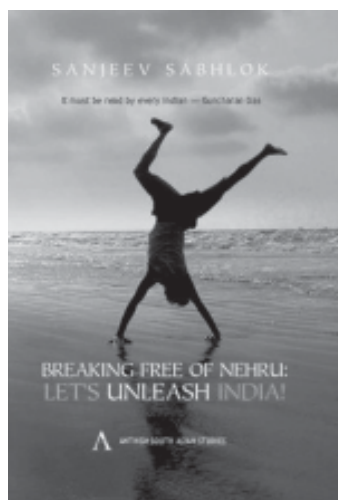
school education. Third, schools will be permitted to use their land and buildings for commercial purposes after school hours, thus using their assets more productively and keeping the fees in check.

A free market in schools of the sort described above is guaranteed to deliver high quality education – as guaranteed to succeed as India's current socialist method is guaranteed to fail. There is an open and shut case for change.

Freedom Team of India

Sadly, this simple and effective model will remain a pipedream since ruling politicians in India currently use the school education system almost purely to 'mint money' for themselves. Education is simply not their goal. Money making is. To implement such a system liberals will need a mandate from the people of India to form an ethical, liberal government. The Freedom Team of India (<http://freedomteam.in>) is pushing ahead in that direction. I would encourage you to find out more about the Team.

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



Sanjeev Sabhlok's

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of 'India Unbound'**

Youthful Memories of Muslims in India and the Implications for Britain

Christie Davies

In India even the past gets rewritten lest the truth annoy the Muslims and give comfort to Hindu communalists.

It was in 1974 that I first really became aware of the Muslims. I was in Delhi as a “younger scientists” visiting scholar and went to listen to a public lecture on the nature of Indian society by D. N. Srinivas, that most distinguished of Indian anthropologists. There was a large audience of the English speaking Delhi upper middle classes. It was a very bad lecture indeed, a great disappointment coming from such a noted scholar. A shrewd and cheerful Indian in a wheelchair was equally unimpressed. He asked Srinivas bluntly what it was that held India together. Srinivas replied fatuously that it was loyalty to the Indian constitution. The questioner then asked somewhat sardonically whether the solidarity that everyone had felt during the recent, 1971, war with Pakistan had been based on devotion to the constitution. Srinivas was stuck. He had been caught out expressing a politically correct platitude that no one in the audience believed and which one of them had had the confidence to deny.

At this point Srinivas was saved by a Muslim who jumped to his feet and shouted ‘I wasn’t part of it. I wanted Pakistan to win’. The audience of urbane Hindus lit up by the colour of bright saris and of prosperous Sikhs in designer turbans laughed. This annoyed the Muslim even more and he ranted at them with less and less

coherence. More laughter. Collapse of mad party. The chairman asked for the next question. Srinivas looked relieved at getting off the hook. I was surprised by the Muslim’s reckless willingness to provoke; I would not be surprised today.

It was disgraceful for anyone in Delhi to shout support for Pakistan in relation to the 1971 war which had begun with an attempt to stamp out Bengali demands in East Pakistan for autonomy by means of mass murder and rape by an army composed of troops from West Pakistan. The number of Muslim civilians murdered and the number of Muslim women defiled was very high. But the perpetrators were Muslims, so that’s all right then. Ten million refugees fled across the frontier into India to escape the depredations of the Pakistani army. It was close to genocide because half of those who fled were Hindus even though the Bengali Hindus were only a tenth of the population. It was a kind of double racism. All Bengalis were to be persecuted but the Hindu ones were to be treated worst.

The Indian government, faced with an influx of millions of refugees trying to escape from very real, not mere human-rights lawyer invented, persecution gave support to the Bengali freedom fighters, the Mukti Bahini. In December 1971 the

Pakistani air force which had already been attacking Mukti Bahini bases in India made a pre-emptive strike against Indian air force bases and set off a war. Within two weeks the Indians had overrun East Pakistan and taken 93,000 prisoners. Bangladesh was free and independent, courtesy of its secular and plural neighbour. Whereas the Pakistani Generals were all Muslims appointed through political influence, the leading Indian generals in the war included General Sam Manekshaw, M.C. awarded by Britain in World War II, the army chief, Parsi; Lt. General K. P. Candeth an Anglo-Indian (Western Command); Lt. General J. S. Aurora, a Sikh (Eastern Command) and General J. F. R. Jacob, who was Jewish. The leadership was a proof of the open and tolerant qualities of secular India. There were no Muslims. The Mukti Bahini though were largely Muslim and it was their help with transport and intelligence that had made it possible to inflict such a quick and humiliating defeat on the wretched Pakistanis.

It was this that had enraged the uncontrolled Muslim who erupted in Srinivas’ lecture in 1974, the year that Pakistan finally accepted the independence of Bangladesh. What mattered to him was not that the genocide, murder and rape in Bangladesh had been brought to an end, but that a proud

Muslim army had been defeated. It had meant the end of the world's most important specifically Islamic state. Bangladesh remained a Muslim country but its people had defined themselves as Bengalis, as against them, the Punjabi Muslims who, though less numerous than the Bangladeshis had controlled all political power and used it to oppress them. What was left as Pakistan, was a territorial state. The farcical idea that there should be a Muslim version of India in two parts one to the West and one in East Bengal was at an end. Indian Muslims would now have to seriously consider integrating themselves into secular India.

I now came to perceive differently the periodic communal clashes between Hindus and Muslims which always ended with many people being killed, a majority of the dead usually being Muslims. We never see other people's conflicts in the way we see our own, for we are disinterested but uninterested and in consequence ignorant of both detail and consequence. In countries such as Britain where the media has a strong liberal bias communal clashes tend to be reported in such a way as to exculpate the minority, the side that suffered the greater casualties, from all blame. The status of 'victim' had been automatically conferred upon them without reference to the facts and it carries with it a requirement of uncritical sympathy. Hence the Hindus become labelled the bad guys. It was reinforced by two factors. First, India is an open and democratic society in comparison with Muslim societies generally. There are barriers to reporting the persecution of non-Muslims in Muslim countries whether by governments or by mob violence. In India it is easy to find out the scale, if not the details, of an incident and

the losers can, and will talk to foreign reporters. Second and more important, the Congress Party has controlled the central government in India for most of the time since India became independent and for reasons of both myth and expediency it has not wanted the blame for any failures of secular harmony in India to fall on the Muslims.

The most important reason for Congress' attitude was and is ideological. The ideology of the Nehru dynasty was and is similar to that of liberal leftists in western countries. In such an ideology it is forbidden to relate the problems of a troublesome or unsuccessful minority to its own essential cultural characteristics. Accordingly Muslim disloyalty and disaffection in India was blamed first on India's former British 'divide and rulers' and later on the Muslims' fears of Hindu communalism. In fact the division between Hindus and Muslims before independence really dates back to the Moplah rebellion of the 1920s when the Muslims both rebelled against the British and mounted communal attacks against the Hindus.

The chief division between the Muslims was between those who wanted partition and a separate Muslim state (which emerged as Pakistan) and those who wanted a mixture of religious apartheid and local cantons based on religion throughout India. Today it is their willingness to place their loyalty to the general community of Muslims in the world before their loyalty to the country, India, in which they live and whose citizenship they hold that is the problem not their fear of the Hindus. But you can hardly expect the Congress leftists to admit that.

One indication of the Muslims' incurable intransigence in the 1960s and early 1970s was their persistent willingness to provoke the Hindus even in areas where they were outnumbered, where the Hindus controlled the state and local governments and the police and where communal tensions were high.

Riots would start because the Muslims would decide that Hindu religious processions with their idols, graven images and icons of innumerable gods were passing too close to their mosque. They would fortify the mosque, take up their weapons, sally forth and break up the procession, injuring the participants and destroying the Hindus' sacred works of art ; an alternative was for the Muslims to sacrifice or pretend to sacrifice a cow for Id, a festival at which it is more usual to sacrifice a sheep or a goat and to inform the Hindus of their intention. This part of the story would either not be reported in the left wing English language press or else denied.

What would be reported and would also in consequence make the foreign press was the sequel, when the defeated Hindus would retire, regroup, be joined by hot headed communalists and storm the mosque or even attack an entire Muslim community. The story would then be reported as far afield as Britain where the liberals would conclude that the Hindus were a ferocious persecuting majority and the Muslims innocent and downtrodden. The Congress central government of India would then make moral noises intended to appease foreign Muslims who might turn nasty and British leftists whose approval they still court.

I had no doubt at that time

but that the Hindus' revenge was excessive and the inaction or worse of the forces of law and order in some states and localities was disgraceful but these are widespread failings in most Asian countries. The difference is that substantial numbers of Muslims, knowing from experience that their actions would bring down ruin on those of their innocent co-religionists who merely wanted a quiet life, still went ahead and set off a conflict.

Indian Muslims are also apt to seek conflicts with other non-Hindu groups. In Kashmir at this time the Muslims were in such a frenzy over some incident in Israel that they burned down a Christian church because they had got it into their heads that it was a synagogue. I often wonder whether Muslim attacks on churches in Britain proceed from the same cause, though in fairness they are more likely to attack a British Hindu temple. In Uttar Pradesh the orthodox Sunni majority was apt to attack the Shiites.

The Congress Party had other reasons for not wanting to tell the truth about the Indian Muslims. It needed them to vote for Congress in elections rather than for one of the Muslim parties. The Hindus could be taken for granted rather in the way the British Labour Party regards the members of the English working classes as a reactionary nuisance who will vote for it anyway but the Muslims had to be both courted and frightened with tales of what would happen if they upset the progressive appletart.

The real carrot, though, was the provision to the Muslims of a share of government jobs and contracts in the corrupt, statist world of Nehru dynasty socialism. Muslims in India can only succeed

through government patronage because their thoroughly backward attitudes to the modern market place, to secular education and to the autonomy of women preclude their winning in open competition. Other minorities such as the Parsis, the Sikhs and the Christians are successful because they understand and practice entrepreneurship, modern knowledge and birth control. The Parsi women were already commuting to work for salaries in offices in Bombay in the late nineteenth century in garments no more impractical than those worn in London. The Parsis are not an indigenous Indian group but descendants of the wise men of Persia driven out by Muslim invasion and oppression. They have come to the forefront in every branch of Indian life; they are living proof that Muslim failure is not a product of Hindu discrimination but of the innate backwardness of India's Muslim communities.

As with all such groups the Indian Muslims seek compensation for their failure from government handouts in the form of jobs, contracts and educational places and this was the basis of their symbiotic relationship with Congress, the party of hand-out socialism and vote banks.

The Congress Party also pursued a pro-Muslim policy abroad partly lest the foreign Muslims support Pakistan over Kashmir and intensify Islamic terrorism there and partly to placate the discontented Muslims within India who are perverse enough to tie their very sense of their own worth and identity to the fortunes of some distant group with whom they have nothing in common but a sense of Islamic superiority. This is why many Congress Hindus will denounce Israel at any international opportunity and seek to

get India recognized as being a Muslim state simply because its Muslim minority numbers a hundred and twenty million.

It is an old and disreputable trick. After the first world war the largely Hindu Congress party backed the Muslim Khilafat movement who were concerned lest the defeat of Turkey should bring to an end the role of the sultan as Caliph, as leader of the pan-Islamic world. Congress ignored the fact that the Khilafat movement had begun in order to support Turkish Muslim colonialism in the Christian Balkans in the nineteenth century. The attainment of self-government by the Serbs, Bulgars and Greeks was seen by the followers of the Prophet in India as a Christian war against Muslims. Congress which was seeking the same kind of national independence as the peoples of the Balkans expediently gave its support to the Khilafat movement's wars of religion view of the world in the vain hope of attaching the Muslims to its own programme for a united secular India. How Kemal Atatürk must have laughed.

In India even the past gets rewritten lest the truth annoy the Muslims and give comfort to Hindu communalists. The history of medieval India is one of Muslim invasions, the slaughter of Hindus on a genocidal scale, forced conversions to Islam of Buddhists as well as Hindus and the savage destruction of their temples and art treasures. It is a story of relentless conflict with tactical intervals of tolerance on the part of Muslim rulers. Yet the official version glosses over this so that the Empress Victoria becomes a more oppressive figure than the Islamic fanatic the Emperor Aurangzeb. I can see what the official classes are afraid of given the slaughter at the

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time of Partition and the recent resurgence of militant Hinduism. However, the consequence of living out such a lie is that the Muslims refuse to integrate and cling to a false picture of themselves as an unfairly displaced benign elite.

The other unmentionable topic in the 1970s was the higher fertility of Muslims relative to Hindus such that they become an ever increasing proportion of the population. Everybody knew this and the statistics are publicly available but it fell to me the foreigner who was neither Hindu nor Muslim to write about it. During the time of the British Empire the Muslims rose from being 20% of the population in 1891 to being 23.8% in 1941. In independent India they were 9.9% in 1951 but 11.2% of the population in 1971.

In the earlier period it was the inability of the Hindu widow to remarry that reduced Hindu fertility but in modern times it is the lower status of the Muslim woman that is crucial. If a Muslim husband wishes to boost his importance and influence and that of his community by competitive breeding, her wishes in the matter are of little importance. I published my findings in a secular journal in India in 1976. Since then the gap in the fertility of the two religious communities in India has probably remained and the size of the Muslim minority will also have been increased by both legal and illegal migration from Bangladesh as Muslim Bengalis pour into Assam much to the discontent of the local people. In Calcutta illegal Muslim Bengali immigrants even have the impudence to pretend to be resident Hindus. It is sure to lead to a worsening of communal tensions.

One thing that the figures on

relative numbers undoubtedly show is that the Muslims in India have not been the victims of any kind of Holocaust. There have been conflicts and killings on both sides much as there have been in Palestine but in either case the Muslim population has steadily increased in absolute numbers and proportionately. That Muslims employ the word at all is one more indication of their self-centred insensitivity. Can they really be so crass as not to understand what it means when six million Jews are systematically murdered in an attempt to wipe out an entire people?

Going to India in the 1970s was for me an ideal training for what Britain was to become, a country with an intransigent Muslim population containing a substantial faction whose loyalties lay not with the country where they had settled and whose citizenship they held but with an alien international religion. When the crude manufacturing industries in which they had been employed closed down they were unable to adapt and looked to the state for handouts. The contrast with the remarkable success of Britain's Hindus, Sikhs, and Parsis could not be greater.

The pressures of political correctness imposed by the left-wing holders of power meant, though, that there could be no

plain speaking; the brave and truthful Ray Hunniford was ousted by a conspiracy of Muslims and Trotskyites. To criticise the Muslims' bigotry, their anti-Semitism, their hatred of 'kafirs' and gays, their construction of religious apartheid, their sinking into unemployment and crime and their excessive birth rate, was racism. Brawls between them and the local working class youths in West Yorkshire and Lancashire were always described as 'white racism'; I had one demented colleague at the seedy University of Bradford who never used that noun without the adjective white in front of it. Similar brawls between Muslims and Sikhs simply did not get reported. Politically correct school teachers never mentioned the Muslim invasions of Europe nor the suppression of the Muslim slave trade by Britain's Royal Navy, even though they were obsessed by colonialism and the slave trade.

That was the other thing I learned in India – the mendacity and the closed minds of multi-cultural leftists everywhere. It gave me a sense of common-feeling with the Indians that has remained with me ever since.

CHRISTIE DAVIES is a journalist based in London. He was attached to and lectured at a number of Indian Universities in 1973-4 and published his work in India. For over twenty years he taught undergraduates at a British university a course on Hindus and Sikhs.

We No Longer Cast Our Vote – We Vote Our Caste

Has our democracy become a dynastic democracy? From a sociological point of view, there is nothing surprising about this development. After all, we are basically a feudal society. Our family connections and attachments are strong. Caste is nothing but an extended family. It has become a cliché to say that we no longer cast our vote – we vote our caste.

**Former Chief Vigilance Commissioner N. Vittal,
Mumbai Mirror, June 15, 2009**



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjikaka

Racist Bias Against Indians

This raises the question: why are Indians receiving “special treatment” so often?

During the past month, random attacks on Indian students in Australia have made news headlines. The inference was clearly that the attacks were racially motivated. One of the participants on a panel discussion, G. Parthasarthy, a former Indian High Commissioner to Australia, wondered why Indians were being specifically targeted. After all, Australia has thousands of students from China and South East Asian countries. Yet one rarely hears of racial attacks on them. Over the past few months, a number of Indian students in the United States have been the victims of hate crimes, some resulting in fatalities.

A few days ago, a group of Indian passengers on an Air France flight back to India complained about being accorded shabby treatment during a forced layover at Paris airport. The incident received a lot of negative publicity for Air France in the press. Normally, international airlines are very conscious of their public image and would have been scurrying about to rectify the damage. However, Air France deemed it sufficient to offer a rather tame apology and, later, non-refundable flight coupons to the affected passengers. They are apparently not too worried about possible repercussions.

This raises the question: why are Indians receiving “special treatment” so often? In today’s world the old stereotype of racism no longer applies. It used to be that the white races considered themselves superior to everyone else; and were not afraid to demonstrate that fact. Possibly, in their minds, the whites still do consider themselves superior, but they are a lot more circumspect about it.

One probable reason is that Indians are treated shabbily because many nations believe they can get away with it. A significant percentage of the population in these countries have as much disdain for yellow and olive skins as they do for brown ones. One remembers the old adage about all Chinamen looking alike. Yet one rarely hears of a Chinaman being attacked, or a Korean, or an Indonesian.

Why is that? Probably because the overall

perception is that the Indian government, apart from making a feeble protest, will not retaliate. It is ironical that despite being recognized as an emerging economic superpower – and the country with the world’s third largest military – India is generally not afforded its due importance in the global arena. When Indian citizens abroad come to grief, foreign government pay lip sympathy, but do not seem to be unduly perturbed.

And why should they be perturbed? The impression popularly generated by the Indian establishment’s wishy washy response is that the government is almost embarrassed to protest too loudly – especially if the offender is a “white” nation. It is more that six decades that India achieved its independence. It’s about time we Indians got over our colonial hangover.

Another side of the same coin, however, is that this whole “racist attack” scenario in Australia has been blown a bit out of proportion by our print and television media. Recently, it was reported in some sections of the media that our Bollywood producers have declared that they will boycott film shoots in Australia.

The numerous protestations of super patriotism by our film fraternity no doubt makes good copy, but I frankly find it hypocritical and even a bit nauseating. To start with, this whole “racist attack” scenario has been blown completely out of proportion by our print and television media; and these sort of jingoistic and self-serving statements - generated mainly out of a desire for publicity only fan the flames of intolerance and retaliation.

It is being purported that all these attacks are racist because they were perpetrated by white Australians on innocent Indian students. I happen to be acquainted with some people who are intimately connected with the student community in Australia; and it turns out that some of the attacks have been reported without any independent verification. For example, it is strongly suspected that the incident where a petrol bomb was thrown inside a student’s residence was carried out by some Lebanese youth.

Another attack involved a group of black hooligans. If the perpetrators were themselves non-white, the attacks do not qualify as racist, in the terms of reference that we recognize it.

As for the Bollywood producers, it is to be seen how long their patriotic zeal lasts. It is well known

that they prefer to shoot in foreign locations, partly because of the exotic locales and partly to escape typical Indian red tapism. Shooting in Switzerland and other countries in Europe is very expensive; and America is only slightly cheaper. Australia is definitely a more economical alternative. At the end of the day, it is all about money, honey.

Sheetal Dethroned

To her credit – and our disappointment – Ms. Mafatlal has not performed true to stereotype ...

There is something about celebrities that evokes the Jekyll and Hyde in us common folk. Most of us – including the hypocrites who sanctimoniously declare that money is not important to them – would trade places with them in a flash, if given the opportunity. It is one thing to criticize the lifestyles of the rich and famous; and affect contempt for their artificial vanities like air kissing and party hopping, but almost all of us would grab that very same lifestyle if offered to us.

In short, someone like Sheetal Mafatlal engenders feelings of envy and aspiration in all of us. Conversely, when a socialite like her is brought down – as yesterday when she was arrested for evading customs duties – we feel a quiet satisfaction in the spectacle of one of them getting her comeuppance for the habitual arrogance and condescension displayed towards the less privileged. Let the *grande dame* know, we say to ourselves, how it feels to muck in the dirt alongside the denizens who scamper aboard the 5:32 Borivli Fast.

To her credit – and our disappointment – Ms. Mafatlal has not performed true to stereotype by not wailing hysterically or throwing tantrums while in custody. If newspaper reports are to be believed, she has behaved with quiet decorum by not shedding any tears nor demanding any special privileges in her jail cell. Apparently, she has not even asked for home food – as many of our pampered politicians are wont to do when they get into trouble. And somehow I don't think she will follow their sterling example by feigning chest pain.

This has naturally deprived us of the anticipated vicarious thrills, but we have to bear it with equanimity. Given that Mafatlal has engaged one of those high powered lawyers who seem to come as an appendage to all celebrities (who else can afford their astronomical fees?); it is quite possible that by

the time this column appears in print, she will be back in her luxurious Altamount Road apartment. Still. We should be grateful to her for giving us the satisfaction of realizing – for one brief shining moment - that, at a fundamental level, one of them is no different from one of us.

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

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Children in 150 million households without electricity

60 million children under six below poverty line

56% in age group 5-9 in school

30 million children never in school

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90% Adivasi girls drop out before class 10

Source: CRY's Children's Manifesto 2009 cited in *Education World* May 2009.

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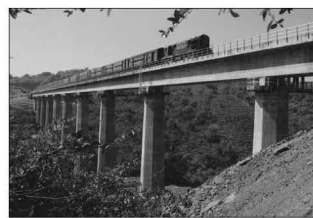
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Obama Jiggles US Strategy in Central Asia

Tabasum Firdous

No drastic change is expected in US strategy on Central Asia under Obama's administration.

The basic parameters of a country's foreign policy do not absorb radical or jerky changes with regime change. In reality, the foreign policy of a country is the extension of her domestic policy. But the contemporary world is too complex for anything to function in isolation. In the first place, no drastic change is expected in US strategy on Central Asia under Obama's administration. At the best there will be reappraisal and re-assessment of prevalent and emerging situations from time to time, thereby bringing more recent developments under the scanner and conceiving new options and approaches to tackle them.

In the on-going scenario, Washington's Central Asian strategy is dovetailed to the ground situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan on the one hand, and US-Iran relations on the other. Within these parameters, there are readjustments and realignments. Therefore any assumption and analysis of US Central Asian policy will be lopsided if the Afghan-Pakistan-Iran factor is left out. At the moment, Obama's administration follows two benchmarks in Central Asian strategy: the status and role of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO),

and Central Asia as an alternative nuclear energy source.

US Concerns over SCO

In regard to the first,



Central Asian Republics

Washington looks at SCO with much suspicion. In the US opinion, the SCO's main aim is to keep US out of the sphere of influence in Central Asia. However, Washington knows that within that organization, there is a clash of interest between two Asian giants, namely China and Russia. Hence Washington's strategy would be twofold; wean away the more important Central Asian actors like Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, and develop mistrust between the two major Asian partners. US would want to build Afghanistan as a bridge between Central and South Asia, thereby opening the Central Asian mind to new political environs and

economic developments. In doing so, India as a big developing democracy finds a role in the eyes of the US. At the same time centrality of Pakistan to any cognizable change remains steadfast. From here we find the search in Washington's think tanks for re-structuring of relations between Afghanistan, Pakistan and India primarily with the motive of bringing in India as an actor in Central Asian and South Asian strategies.

India's Concerns

This great Central Asian Strategy, as has been called in US political circles, created a lurking apprehension in Indian political circles that conscious of Washington's earnestness to forge a cooperation of sorts would be to balance the SCO, and at the same time, could be considered Washington's covert support for the resolution of the Kashmir issue, a condition which Islamabad has stated in no ambiguous terms.

US senior diplomats, including Robert Holbrooke, who was recently on an official visit to Islamabad and New Delhi, said in a press conference in New Delhi that Washington was not mediating on Kashmir. Will New Delhi take the cue and consider time on her side to re-open talks on bilat-

eral affairs including Kashmir? It has raised hopes in some political circles in Srinagar that a reasonable solution could be contemplated. The US is bogged with the fear that Afghan President Karzai may have to be replaced by a person who can perform better. This idea appears to have propped up as a result of American intensive interaction with Islamabad. May be Islamabad's intention is that it would assuage anti-US sentiment among the Taliban groups. However, both India and Russia are firmly opposed to dislodging Hamid Karzai.

Although the SCO does not favour giving direct affront to the US in Central Asia possibly because of many other reasons, the SCO came out with a vehement denunciation of US criticism of Uzbekistan in regard to the Andijan episode. It was SCO's disapproval that resulted in Uzbek President asking the US to wind up its air force base at Karsi Khanabad in Uzbekistan. Pentagon had to find the alternative in Kyrgyzstan. It happened because both Russia and China were apprehensive of this air base in Central Asia. Obama's administration has not made any attempt to re-negotiate a deal with Tashkent. The same was true of the Tulip Revolution in Kyrgyzstan when an urgent meeting of SCO was called in Astana in 2006.

Thus one aspect of Washington's strategy in Central Asia is to keep an eye on the growing influence of SCO. Although India was invited as an observer, as events unfolded subsequently, India demonstrated the policy of benign negligence and New Delhi itself chartered a course of non-relevance in SCO, something which China welcomed and Russia was non-committal about. However, the

warming up of relations with the US under the Manmohan Singh government had many ramifications, one being Washington's prompting to New Delhi to become an active actor in SCO. Observers believe that one important reason for the Bush administration wooing India was to make her an active partner in SCO so that another Asian giant could be built as a counterweight to China and a moderator to Russia.

India and the SCO

This is the reason why India took active part in the 27 March 2009 SCO summit in Moscow although prior to it India had sent a junior cabinet minister to represent her at the Shanghai meet in 2006. At the same time, Washington has been subtly hinting at India's importance to NATO implying that India should be involved in NATO's strategies in Central and South Asia. Washington eyes several benefits from this move. One is to rope in a big Asian giant into the NATO fold and thus drag India out of the web of non-alignment. Secondly, India as a partner in NATO would ease the embarrassment of Pakistani leaders with its civil society by arguing that in order to underplay India's role in NATO, Pakistan needs to be with NATO and the US.

Global Nuclear Supply Bank

The second benchmark indicated above is of nuclear strategy and Central Asia. This is a significant development in the region. There has been a talk of establishing a global nuclear fuel supply bank. The idea emerged after the US-Iran standoff on the nuclear issue. Nuclear planners have taken a serious view of what Iranian President Ahmadinejad said in Astana during his meeting with Nur Sultan Nazarbayev. He said

that enriching uranium for making nuclear weapons is one thing and enriching uranium for civilian use is another. One school of thought in the US is that it may no more be possible for the US and the UN to prevent countries from making nuclear technology capable enough to produce weapons. After all the sabre rattling of the US including the conduit of Security Council's sanctions on Iran, all efforts flatly failed. And only recently, the Iranian President publicly announced further steps taken towards enrichment of uranium.

Kazakhstan As Supplier

US think tanks have come to the conclusion that establishing a global nuclear fuel supply bank could be an alternative to stopping aspirant countries from producing enriched uranium for making the bomb. The idea must have been discussed with Kazakhstan. The Kazakh President came out with a statement that his country was willing to be the nuclear fuel supplier bank on a global level. This marked a new development in Central Asian and world strategies. Obviously Nazarbayev would not have made the statement without a green signal from Washington. Moscow has remained non-committal so far, nonetheless it has not reacted adversely. Kazakhstan has large deposits of uranium and is prepared to reserve half of the total deposits that form over 19 per cent of world total of uranium deposits known so far for exploitation and supply to genuine buyers. In all Kazakhstan is said to have 1.5 million metric tons of uranium. In 2007 Astana exported 8.521 metric tons of uranium and in 2009 it may go up to 11.300 metric tons.

Washington sees several

plus points in conceding Kazakhstan the status of global nuclear fuel supplier. In the first place, China and Russia would be denied the opportunity of grabbing the monopoly of handling Kazakhstan's vast nuclear deposits and exploiting it to their political advantage. Secondly, a nuclear fuel supply bank would discourage rogue states like Iran from enriching uranium to develop nuclear weapons. After all, the US has not succeeded in containing aspiring countries from developing nuclear technology. Thirdly, the US and her western allies could become partners in a global nuclear supplying bank with a voice. All these factors have prompted the US to re-design her policy and strategy for Iran and Central Asia.

Repairing US Relations with Iran

The Iran-US standoff is meeting with some thaw and President Ahmadinejad has given indications that a dialogue with the US is possible on terms of equality. Some progress has been made in this direction, and backdoor powwows are going on. Washington believes that it would not be unwise to accept Iran's assurance, and let her be enabled to access nuclear fuel. It would hold her back from enriching uranium. Therefore, here is a trial. Given the debacle in their war against Taliban, Washington would like to stop sword-rattling against Iran and use Iran's goodwill in negotiating a deal with the Afghan Taliban. Obama's recent visit to Turkey, impending visit to Kazakhstan and if possible serious dialogue with Iran are all indications that Bush administration's Central Asian policy must undergo a change in the fashion of realpolitik; and sooner this is done the better. The olive branch to the Islamic world extended by Obama

from the portals of Cairo university is a transparent message in this direction.

The Kashmir Issue

In the process, New Delhi needs to understand the compulsions of Pakistan as sandwiched between the Taliban terror and US expectations. It is heartening to see that there are people at the highest levels in New Delhi who understand that a stable and peaceful Pakistan will be in the interest of India. Pakistan's contention of non-state actors muddying waters and sabotaging Indo-Pak dialogue has to be understood positively. Kashmir's centrality to the entire strategic matrix cannot be underestimated. Particularly the Swat Valley enjoying autonomy granted to it by the Federal government of Pakistan should have a lurking message for India too.

This then appears to be the contours of Great Central Asian Strategy that has been the watchword at policy planning levels in the United States. Definitely Kazakhstan is the emerging leader in the Great Steppes. Importance is shifting from hydrocarbon strategy to nuclear fuel supply strategy. This will radically alter the very matrix of

energy security in Eurasia and may do away with the contentious issue of pipeline diplomacy in Central Asia and Caspian basin.

DR. TABASUM FIRDOUS is Sr. Assistant Professor (International Relations), Center of Central Asian Studies, University of Kashmir, Hazratbal, Srinagar.
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Zinc, Zn	5.78	mg
Copper, Cu	2.195	mg
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Selenium, Se	19.9	mcg

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Thiamin	0.423	mg
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BAD MEN DO WHAT GOOD MEN DREAM by Robert I. Simon, M.D ● Published by Byword Books Pvt.Ltd., GF-15, Virat Bhavan, Mukherjee Nagar, Commercial Complex, New Delhi 110009 ● 2008 ● Pages 320 ● Price Rs.450.

Reviewed by Sharad Bailur, author, freelance journalist, and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. Email: sharad.bailur@gmail.com

I was the Branch Manager of a bank branch in which the wife of a famous actor held a bank locker. One day she came and handed over the keys to me and said that she did not need the locker. My assistant and I told her that she should open the locker and confirm that it was empty before we could take possession of it. She assured me it was and said she did not have the time to open it to verify but she was sure. My assistant opened the locker to find that it contained foreign exchange in pound sterling currency notes worth about Rs. 80,000. It was then a substantial amount and foreign exchange could not be had for love or even money and enjoyed a thriving black market.

My assistant could have simply pocketed the currency – it had quite clearly been kept there illegally. There was no recourse in law since she had given up the locker asserting that it was empty. Trembling with apprehension he brought it to me. We took the accountant into confidence, placed the currency in a large thick cloth-bound envelope. All three of us signed and sealed it with bees wax and the bank's seal. It was then ceremoniously placed in the bank's safe, of which each of us held one key. We then wrote to the lady requesting her to come and collect her ill-gotten gains, without referring

to the currency. She was delighted that her money had been safely returned to her and that the police had got not a hint of it. The offer of a reward was politely turned down by all. All of us then righteously claimed with heads held high that the thought of taking the money had never even entered our heads. Why then the three keys, one with each of us? Had it? In the darkness of the night? None of us is to this day willing to confess. Three men may have dreamed. They did not put their dream into action, even though they could have, with perfect impunity. This, in essence, is what this book is all about.

Ranging over various aspects of aberrant behaviour Dr. Robert Simon, a forensic psychiatrist illustrating the darker side of human behaviour, deals with the psychology of evil, of rape, of suicide, of messianic behaviour, to serial sexual killings. To think that any one of us, who consider ourselves epitomes of sanity and normality could conceivably be involved in any, or all of them is not just deeply unsettling; it is extremely difficult to digest. And yet Dr. Simon demonstrates why this can and does happen so frequently among people who appear to have not a hint of difference in mind-sets from the rest of us.

It is also a deeply disturbing book. Especially because it forces the reader to examine his

own mind and motivations. Simply put, what Dr. Simon asserts is that human nature is bad. Most of us do not act out our badness for various reasons. We only dream of doing so. Those who do, are most often just as "sane" as the rest of us. Badness is one end of a continuum that shades imperceptibly into goodness. It is therefore impossible to say that a particular act is completely good or completely bad for it can have motivations that can be at the opposite end of this spectrum.

Dr. Simon quotes a number of famous cases. Among suicides he names Marilyn Monroe and Robert Maxwell, the famous press baron. Both were found dead under circumstances that, to this day, are faced with a question mark. Were they suicides? In neither case was conclusive corroborative evidence available to show that they were. In the Monroe case he suspects it was a suicidal gesture, gone wrong. Or it could have been negligence. The Maxwell case is even more mysterious. The autopsy showed a freshly eaten banana in the stomach contents after the body was pulled out of the waters off the Grand Tenerife, off the coast of West Africa. One forensic expert theorised that Maxwell ate the banana and slipped on the banana peel and fell off his yacht in the darkness. In both cases there appeared to be no reasons for a planned attempt to take one's own life. In such cases the forensic psy-

chiatrist is often called upon to conduct a "psychological autopsy" to assess if the death was a suicide or a murder masquerading as a suicide.

Dr. Simon traces the various forms of what we normal men and women call "mental instability" - multiple personality disorder. It comes as a revelation that people who suffer from MPD harbour anything between six and thirty different personalities of which a few can be partial personalities. In the famous Hitchcock film "Psycho" the protagonist played to perfection by Anthony Perkins suffers from just two - his own and that of his dead mother. Fact it appears is stranger than fiction.

The most dangerous people can be those living quietly next door leading quiet respectable lives, attending PTA meetings for their children, going regularly to church on Sundays, who are regarded with approval by others in the community in which they live. It is from such innocuous and obviously normal backgrounds that serial murderers and rapists have come. Rarely do such people go elsewhere to carry out their grisly tasks. Most often it is within the community in which they live. The Nithari killings are an obvious Indian connection in this context.

Dr. Simon also discusses Messianic madness. Unfortunately he is so taken up with cultism in the United States that he only makes a passing reference to Al Qaida. Al Qaida is not a cult. It is part of a mainstream religion followed by billions the world over. All it does is to follow the Quran to the letter. That does not make its adherents crazy or mentally unstable. Other than that, the Al Qaida exhibits all the psychological symptoms of cultism taken to

the extreme, including the encouragement of suicides in support of Jihad.

I was in Houston when the David Koresh incident, discussed by Dr. Simon, occurred at Waco in Texas. When I asked a US Air Force Colonel why a Green Beret battalion could not be sent against the Branch Davidians to rescue the people inside the compound of Apocalypse, he said "But the soldiers could get killed!" I was astounded by the response. Another is of the 900 people who were forced to commit suicide in Jonestown in Guyana in November 1978. In both cases followers were asked by obviously crazed leaders to commit suicide. And they did. Mass hypnosis? Nobody is sure.

Familiar as Dr Simon is with western and book religion practices, he barely touches upon eastern cults or religious practices. He would be astounded by the sheer variety of the "bhoot-preth" business to be seen in India and the kind of awful things that the sants and babas make ordinary folk do. "Religious rape" is common and thriving in India, going by recent news reports. It should be fascinating if someone did a forensic psychiatric study of, say, Satya Sai Baba with his ash production. Even Baba Ramdev and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar are suspect, not because they have caused much harm, but because they pander to human weakness. These are the obvious candidates. There are hundreds of such people in the villages and the practices they preach are bewildering. The Muslim holy man tells you about Djinns and such and goes into paroxysms of violent dancing at Sufi gatherings encouraging followers to, well, follow. Drugging among sadhus and their followers is common and accepted

as part of ritual.

There are a number of other issues that I wish Dr. Simon had dealt with. Perhaps it was not possible within the limitations of such a book. Unfortunately Dr Simon is so centred upon the universe that he is familiar with - the United States of America, that he ignores the role of culture across the rest of the world - even across the Atlantic. India China and the east in general are completely ignored.

On my first visit to the US in 1983 I observed with dawning comprehension and horror from my sister's third floor flat, a group of young hoodlums setting upon an old "bag lady" (a beggar with a bag rummaging through a garbage bin) and beating her up - just for kicks. This "Just for kicks" phenomenon is not uncommon in the US and should have been dealt with in the book. In mentioning motivations he does not discuss the issue of kleptomania versus deliberate and motivated thieving.

There are other subtler forms of deliberate harm that people do to others including to their own spouses. Among them I know at least one case of a particularly sane man who was responsible for intentional harm by deliberate negligence towards his own wife. When she died of what turned out to be a violent allergic reaction to a particular drug, he was hauled up in court. The court could not convict him only because negligence cannot be construed as murder when criminality cannot be established. It asked him some tough questions and let him go. Here was a case of 'Bad Men don't do what good men would'.

Also there is the pathology

of psychological manipulation and pressure through argument. In the Indian context misplaced familial loyalty can be a huge source of distress to those who face such pressure. It can result in redirected aggression towards the self and only a few can sublimate it

through productive pastimes like writing, cooking or painting. Often the best writing, painting and even music is the result of such pressures. Others succumb and hurt themselves, or at worst commit suicide. Such situations cannot even be classified within the ambit

of this book because the cultural contexts they happen in most often do not exist in western societies, especially in the US.

A thoroughly enjoyable book if one has the mental strength to face one's own personal ghosts.



STOLEN INDIAN WEALTH ABROAD: HOW TO BRING IT BACK? ● Published by Swadeshi Jagaran Manch, Tamil Nadu ● Pages 112 ● May 2009 ● Rs.50/-. For copies, contact K75, 14th Street, Annanagar (East), Chennai 600 102. Phone:9444835513

Reviewed by V. Krishna Moorthy, CEO, Parivartan, Mysore, and, formerly, Deputy General Manager, State Bank of Mysore. Email contact: moorthy_vk@rediffmail.com

The last two decades have given to our vocabulary some interesting new words and phrases like Scam, Tsunami, Bushfire, etc. An interesting addition has been "Tax Haven" which has gained greater circulation in recent times. The Swiss neighbour, Lichtenstein, that tiny country on the Alpine hills, not familiar to even knowledgeable people, unless they are students of political geography, has become such a familiar one in recent months even amongst common men, who, I am sure, would have looked up the Atlas for that tiny land. This was not the case some years ago, and not many knew that a country like that ever existed in Europe!

I recall my short visit to Lichtenstein about two decades earlier. After attending the three-week long International Banking Summer School at Trinity, Dublin in August 1989, I took a fortnight-long European trip by road through Thomas Cook Tours, London. After a short journey by steamer to Brussels, the rest of the bus-journey took us also to Vaduz, the capital of Lichtenstein, a small Principality covering not more than 150 square kms with a population of less than 30,000 at that time. I

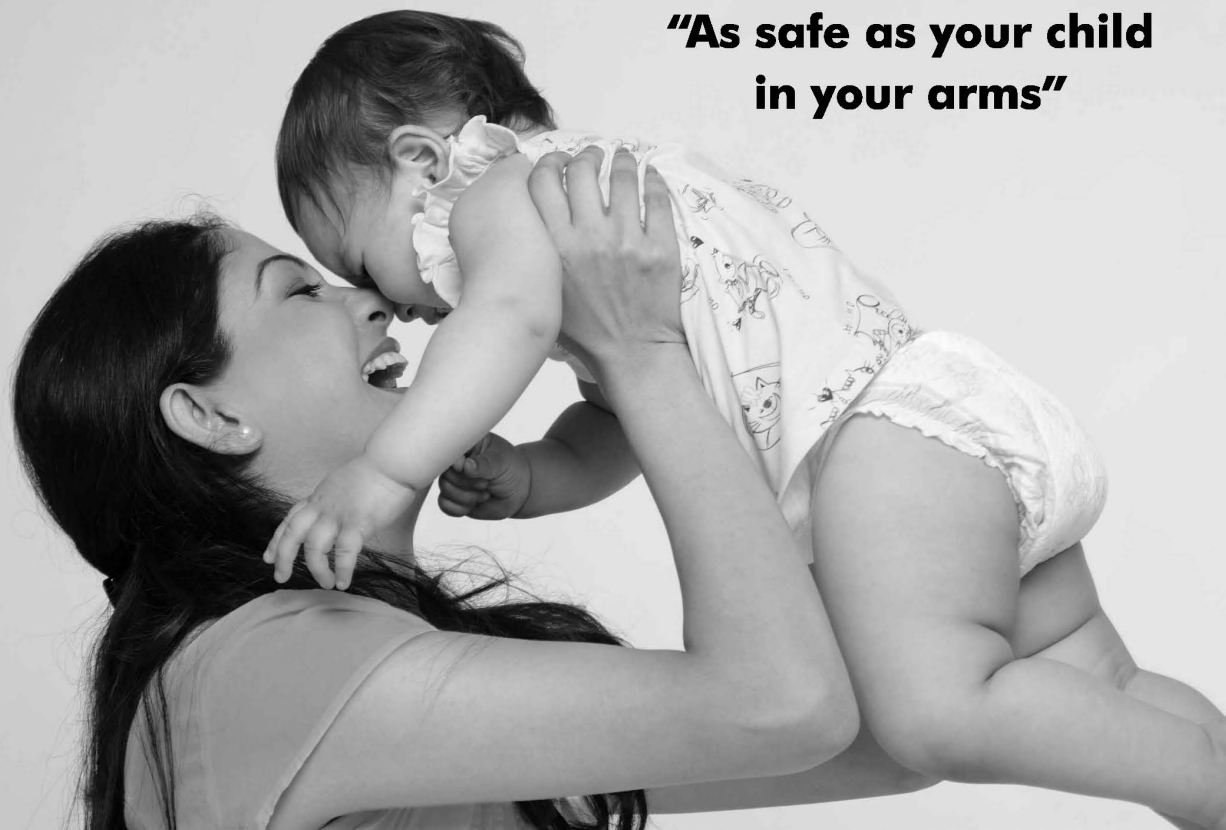
remember visiting the Vaduz branch of LGT Bank as an inquisitive banker to know how things work there, and to cash some dollars as an excuse. Possibly, the LGT Bank – owned by the Crown Prince family, had not acquired such notoriety as a 'tax haven' by then. I could notice the King's Palace uphill, not very far off from there.

Yet, the subject of 'Tax Havens' has drawn the attention of G-20 leaders at their London summit recently, in the background of German authorities acquiring from LGT Bank, the names and other details of accountholders of different nationalities who have stashed away their ill-gotten wealth. It is the announcement of German authorities in April 2008, offering to share the information freely with interested countries, that has stirred the hornet's nest, resulting in a great debate and discussion on the evil effect of the 'tax havens' on the national financial systems of the world. India is no exception to such a debate in the country, particularly since the Bofors scandal and Rs.64 Cr. payoff and kickbacks to those in high places in the Quattrocchi affair came to light over two decades ago, rock-

ing the government headed by Rajiv Gandhi in the 1989 general elections. The scandal has been returning to haunt the Congress intermittently, resulting debate and discussion in the media since then, the latest being, as a result of the removal of the Red Corner Notice (RCN) by Interpol in October 2008 at the instance of the Indian Government, by which action Quattrocchi is off the hook, saving embarrassment to the current Gandhi family.

Arising out of such debate and discussion, some academicians and columnists have written at length on the subject in the press, more recently since the German disclosure became public a year back. For the benefit of the inquisitive reader and to acquaint him/her with full details and the exact nature of the danger that tax havens pose and its implications on our economy, the Tamil Nadu Chapter of the Swadeshi Jagaran Manch has compiled and brought out a handy book of 100 pages on the subject, appropriately titled: ****Stolen INDIAN WEALTH Abroad: How to bring it back?** The principal authors of the pieces are: Prof. R. Vaidyanathan of IIM(B), S. Gurusamy, and M. R.

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Venkatesh, a chartered accountant, who discusses at length on the evil effects of Participatory Notes in the creation of black wealth and its recycling. Besides, the interim summary recommendations of the Task Force set up by L. K. Advani, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament and NDA's Prime Ministerial candidate, it also contains a piece by Arun Shourie, who in his own inimitable and analytical style, answers a few critical questions, in reply to the responses of the Congress spokespersons on the matter, in the process demolishing their viewpoints. There is also a lengthy interview of S. Gurumurthy, answering some interesting questions from Mrs. Shoba Warriar.

The Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM), the publishers of the book, came into being in the wake of opening up of the Indian economy during the foreign exchange crisis in 1991, when Dr. Manmohan Singh, was the Finance Minister, under Prime Minister, Sri P. V. Narasimha Rao. The mission of SJM was to project a third alternative – as opposed to capitalism in the name of globalization and the almost dead communism, but a more humane, non-exploitative, holistic and spiritually elevating alternative, recognizing the uniqueness and sacredness of the cultures, living models and other distinguishing values, which constitute the diversity of the current-day world. The moving spirit behind the Movement is S. Gurumurthy, the All-India Co-Convenor of SJM, one of the four contributors to the book and, a bitter critic of the Congress Establishment.

The book starts with a lengthy article by Prof. R. Vaidyanathan, that appeared in the April 2009 issue of New Delhi-

based *Eternal India*, which in fact has led to the great debate on the subject in the sensitive election platforms of General Elections 2009 reaching the man on the street. Taking a global view on the subject of tax havens and its adverse impact on the developed economies duly supported by facts and figures and the recent court cases in the US, he focuses attention in particular on the impact of tax havens on the Indian economy. While bemoaning the failures of elite in past history, who helped in the plunder and devastation of this once rich country, taking a *dharmaic* view, the professor has a dig at the elite of this country in the fields of politics, business, media, bureaucracy, arts etc. for their utter silence in a matter that is so critical to the nation's well being and its cherished heritage.

Sri Gurumurthy, regularly voices his views on current affairs through his signed articles in *The New Indian Express* and occasionally in the *Hindu Business Line*. His four pieces contained in this volume on illicit money stashed away in tax havens, which incidentally appeared earlier in *Express*, besides rebutting the opposition charges for raising the issue at this point of time by L. K. Advani, his views are logical, measured, data-based and with constructive suggestions for initiating action. It also contains a lengthy interview given by the author to Mrs. Shoba Warriar answering several critical questions on the subject.

The young and energetic M. R. Venkatesh, a practicing Chartered Accountant by profession and a visiting faculty and academic, has varied interests in as diverse areas, such as working of Multi-national Accounting Firms, Dollar and Global imbalances, and Farm

Sector in the context of Doha round of WTO. He appears to have done a thorough study of the subject of Participatory Notes and its ill effects on the capital markets and the economy. His four pieces contained in the book are proof of his approach to the subject and the conclusions he draws. It is to be remembered that M. Damodaran, the then SEBI Chief had taken a strong view on PNs, and was fairly successful in imposing certain discipline, though there was opposition to his stance from certain powerful quarters.

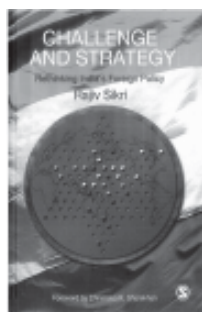
All the noise that has been produced during the election time by the Opposition, particularly the way in which the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. L. K. Advani, articulated the issue in his election speeches appears to have had some effect on the establishment. This could be seen in the Presidential address to the joint session of Parliament, wherein it has been categorically mentioned that the new government is fully seized of the issue of illegal money of Indian citizens outside the country in secret bank accounts and it will vigorously pursue and necessary steps in coordination with the countries concerned would be taken. This is an indirect acknowledgement by the government for the first time, the existence of such secret accounts. This has, naturally, raised high expectations among the people that the new government would fulfill the promises in this regard. Now, we have to wait for the Finance Minister's forthcoming Budget speech for some concrete evidence in actionable terms.

All in all, the book brought out by the SJM, TN with high production values, interspersed with catchy photos and diagrams is timely and they need to be con-

gratulated. I am sure, for people who had not read the articles of Gurumurthy in *Indian Express* and others will have an opportunity to

have a detailed and holistic view on the subject to facilitate proper and stimulating debate and discussion unlike the sound bites we hear

at the election platforms and the business-like discussion fora on the national channels – be they business channels or otherwise.



CHALLENGE AND STRATEGY: RETHINKING INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY by Rajiv Sikri ● Sage Publications, B11 -1, Mohan Cooperative Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110044 ● 2009 ● Pages 317 ● Price Rs.595

Reviewed by Dr. Ramesh Babu, a specialist in International Relations and American politics and public affairs. He was formerly the Sir Pherozeshah Mehta Professor of Civics and Politics, University of Bombay.

Change is the law of life and a constant companion of man on earth. Coping with change and struggling to stay on top of it are the eternal challenges confronting mankind. However, nations and their leaders invariably lag behind in coming up with altered policies and new perspectives designed to meet the changing and changed world around them. How much of the old is to be given up and which new approaches are to be tried out is not an easy rubric to cross. It is obvious that since the end of the cold war the world is going through a phenomenal transformation in all walks of life, including international relations. The five decade old bipolar world ended with the demise of the Soviet Union and the collapse of communism. The global strategic and ideological scenario has undergone a paradigm shift.

Liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation swept the world for about two decades since the mid-1980s. With the global economic meltdown staring us in the face and the unilateral American overreach in disarray in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan, the early euphoria of globalisation has eroded; the free market myth has exploded; and the 'unipolar moment' of USA is yielding place to

a multi-polar world.

In the light of such cataclysmic changes in the global arena, the book under review issues a clarion call to "rethink" our country's foreign policy – to revamp and retool it to meet the challenges of the new global dispensation unfolding since the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

The current international scene is similar to the situation in Europe after the French Revolution of 1789, according to Rajiv Sikri, a distinguished Indian Foreign Service Officer. He sees a few prominent trends in the contemporary flux: (a) World is not willing to accept "perpetual US global leadership." (b) Globalisation as a euphemism for the Americanisation of the world has proved to be untrue. (c) "Unipolar" world is gradually yielding place to a multipolar world. (d) Multi-ethnic large tolerant states are the answer for the present and future.

In his opinion our foreign policy is bogged down with the unipolar world of yester years. His comprehensive and insightful survey of India's foreign policy and relations region wise and issue wise is a persuasive plea for a bold departure from the past. However, the book is long on diagnosis, but short on the cure. He does not offer a cogent outcome of his elaborate

"rethink" on the new policies and perspectives called for to meet the challenges confronting the nation in the emerging global denouement.

However, Sikri offers a number of ideas which are at variance with the prevalent policies and approaches in our external relations. For example, he questions the wisdom of the US-India Nuclear Deal and the recent rush to move so very close to the US. He sees the Deal as a part of the US strategy to make India's foreign policy "congruent" to American objectives in the region and across the world. He rightly points out that "inter operability" of the armed forces between nations should follow strategic convergence, and not precede it. He sees the new fangled proximity to the US as a development at the expense of the time tested friendship with Russia (and the former Soviet Union). He points out that we are energy deficient, where as Russia is an energy surplus country. He adds that Russia is still our most important and dependable weapon supplier.

Sikri enthusiastically endorses the fundamental validity of India's enduring goal of a multipolar world and a more democratic and egalitarian world order. From this perspective he emphasises the need to work for a countervailing centre of power comprising India,

Russia, China, Brazil, South Africa and other like-minded third world countries. This is the nearest that the book comes to offering a path to the future for our foreign policy.

The book contains sixteen chapters with focus on geographical regions (starting with South Asia) and selected major issues (like energy security, economic diplomacy and defense diplomacy). The final chapters discuss "traditions and institutions" and "Rise of India" in brief.

Sikri discusses at some length the shared cultural identity of the people of South Asia – the commonality of dress, food habits, marriage and social customs, the way of thinking and love for cricket, etc. He points out that this cultural unity is mainly Hindu and is shared by all other religious groups including Muslims. There is caste system in all of them and hence there are 'Dalit Muslims' and 'Dalit Christians.' India should devote more attention and time to its immediate neighbours and be more generous to them, Sikri suggests. Unless India becomes a true regional leader, he argues, it cannot become a force to be reckoned with in the global arena.

Pakistan has always been a difficult neighbour and its unrelenting hostility has become even more potent with the addition of fundamentalism. While jihad has become an area of common interest, Sikri is rightly skeptical of things moving forward on this front. He suggests that India should use its leverage in the Indus Water Treaty to its advantage. However, he has nothing specific to offer by way of his plea for "rethinking" either in relation to Pakistan or South Asia. He advocates a reassertion of our interests in Afghanistan. Looking into the future, he says that once the US leaves Afghanistan (as it

must one day), the country will become the common problem of India and Pakistan, leading to co-operation between the two historic adversaries, Sikri says rather unconvincingly.

In a review of this kind it is not necessary (nor possible) to cover all the regions Sikri discusses in his book. An effort is made here to highlight a few of the more interesting observations he makes as he goes along with his analysis. For example, he rightly asserts that Tibet is the key to our relations with China. He advocates a more proactive policy of making counter claims for Mansarovar and Kailash on grounds of shared culture. Interestingly, he suggests a propaganda initiative by India to ridicule the so called 'Middle Kingdom' syndrome of China and expose its claims of the so called 'peaceful rise'. While acknowledging shared common interests (especially on the economic front) of the two countries vis-à-vis the industrially advanced western countries, Sikri rightly insists that we should, above all, shed our diffidence in dealing with China.

In the chapter on traditions and institutions, he says that the Nehruvian legacy of a "personalised" approach to diplomacy is continued by Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, and Sonia Gandhi. He is not at all happy with

it because it undermined the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and other key institutions in the realm of foreign policy formulation and implementation. Finally, Sikri says that the relative decline of the US, revival of Russia, and the rise of several other centres of power (including India) is the global reality. Therefore, overt alignment with the US is not in the long term interests of India, he asserts. We can become a major power in the 21st century only on our own strength. India should preserve its strategic autonomy and not become a status quo power, he urges. He concludes by saying that in its own neighbourhood India should define the new goal posts and non-negotiable national interests.

Sikri's spirited analysis is a welcome addition to the growing literature on our foreign policy and relations. Coming from someone so closely and intimately involved with the making and implementation of our country's foreign policy for long years and especially someone who quit the sanctuary in protest, the book is particularly enlightening to those who are familiar with the scene, as they say. He should now write an essay offering a cogent and comprehensive "rethink" to meet the challenges confronting our foreign policy now and in the near future. That will indeed be an icing on the cake!

Of Corruption and Jumbo Ministries

One of the biggest causes of corruption in India is the sheer size of government. We are not talking here about the number of employees in government service, but the number of ministries in Delhi and the states. There are simply too many of them. The Manmohan Singh cabinet has 79 ministers, including the PM himself, and they have been distributed across more than 40-and-odd ministries in various combos. Some make no sense at all: Salman Khurshid will run minority and corporate affairs. How are the two connected? Prithviraj Chavan will run five different departments, from earth sciences to public grievances. What's the synergy.

Almost every third UPA member of Parliament is a minister of some kind. We need so many of them like a hole in the head. If 18 years of deregulation and delicensing have not reduced corruption we should thank jumbo sized cabinets for them. To get a power plant going you need dozens of permissions and clearances. This means paying speed money at every stage to politicians and babus in various ministries and regulatory bodies. Little wonder, we are always short of power.

R. Jagannathan in *DNA* June 1, 2009

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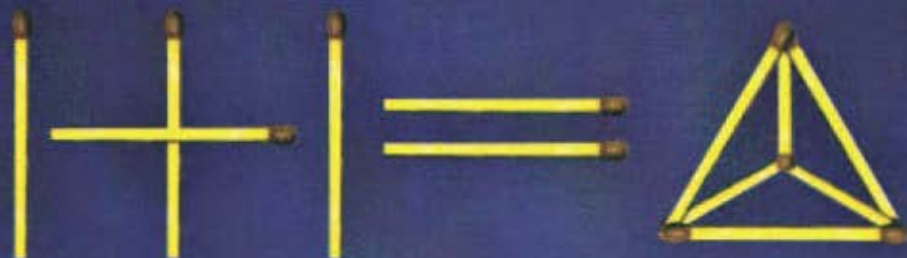
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