

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

- ❖ *Rectitude and Paralysis of Governance*
- ❖ *Hiking Interest Rates to Curb Inflation*
- ❖ *India-Africa Relations*
- ❖ *Terrorism as an Extension of Foreign Policy*
- ❖ *The Putin Era Will Not Come to an End
- for Now*
- ❖ *Revamping Imperial Kannauj*

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Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine – 59th Year of Publication
No.533 November 2011

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Between Ourselves...

The October issue of our magazine has received appreciative comments particularly the many articles on the anti-corruption movement. A couple of them are published on page 2. There were a few more, verbally communicated in person or over the phone. Thank you!

We, had, in the October edition written two things: One, that we hoped to carry an article or a note on the Standing Committee, its composition with particular reference to the Lokpal bills referred to it. This we have not been able to do. We felt that we should take the opportunity to discuss the larger picture: What are Standing Committees, their role in enabling (even disabling) legislation for consideration by members of the legislature concerned. We intend publishing an authoritative article on the subject soon. The other was to carry no further analyses of the Hazare movement but wait to know what the Standing Committee on the Lokpal Bills delivers. Sharad Bailur's article on 'Rectitude and Paralysis of Governance' (page 4) is actually a continuation of the boxed item on the same theme (page 7) of the October issue. Bailur's perspective on some unwanted outcome of any final Lokpal Act is based on ground realities and needs to be discussed. This is not the first time, nor will it be last when *Freedom First* has brought to the notice of our readers contrary views far removed from what is considered to be 'popular' at any given time. Often our fears or scepticism has been vindicated by later events.

Another comment, by more than one reader, on the last issue made us somewhat uneasy. The comment was that they found the articles 'serious' reading. One reader said that normally he reads through the journal in one sitting, whereas the October one and perhaps a few other recent editions had to be kept aside "for later reading". We felt there was need to explain. Our attempt has never been to be 'scholarly' in the academic sense of the term, or provide articles that make 'heavy reading' but to communicate even complex matters in as simple a manner as possible. We continue to adhere to this 'philosophy of communication'; but, occasionally, we get carried away by the 'seriousness' of the events as they have been this past year. For instance the only time we had the spectacle of seeing well-known personalities being thrown into Tihar jail, was during the bogus emergency of Mrs. Indira Gandhi in 1975-76. She was being 'vindictive' for reasons of political 'vengeance'. This time a weak coalition wallowing in corrupt deals, and faced with an opposition formidable in numbers, even if a large percentage of these numbers are of doubtful quality, had to demonstrate that it was doing something; to be less charitable perhaps UPA II was anxious to complete its term of office.

But of one development we are happy. We can no longer gripe that we don't hear enough from readers. Once again Thank You.

Correction: In the article on Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in the October issue (page 27) the year in which Lord Linlithgow received a sum of 100,000 pounds from Sudan was 1941 not 1971 – a printer's devil if there was one, for which our apologies.

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From Our Readers

On *Freedom First*

“The Liberal Magazine” rightly describes your unique publication. It is such a pleasure to see that while you uphold the highest of values and accountability, you are liberal enough to allow widely varying opinions to be aired through FF.

A significant case in point is the Anna Hazare movement. Only in FF I have seen a very wide cross-section of views being published without bias or any vested interest. It has been fascinating to read Mr. Sharad Bailur standing his ground against heavy criticism from other equally eminent writers, and explaining patiently his viewpoints, which are definitely worth pondering over.

It often happens that movements and ideas that are highly commendable often die off because not sufficient manthan (churning of the minds) has been done, and once the initial euphoria dies down, life goes back to ‘normalcy’. Allowing such open debate will ensure that readers are forced to think deeper, and form their own opinions. Only then can true democracy function, and only then can we even begin to tackle serious issues like corruption. Keep it up FF !

Dr. Ali Khwaja, Bangalore.
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Congratulations on bringing out an outstanding issue of FF (.532 October 2011). I have not seen this kind of thoughtful, high-quality debate on the topic anywhere else.

Nitin Pai. nitin.pai@gmail.com

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“Why only Muslims are targeted by Police in Cases of Violence”

The article (*Freedom First* 532 October 2011) oversimplifies a complicated man-management issue. It is true that the lower ranks get influenced by their upbringing and may turn anti-Muslim in extended rioting. When riots become a societal issue and no longer a matter of law and order as in the case of prolonged rioting (Mumbai, Gujarat, UP, Bihar) or the Ayodhya dispute, the problem touches the constabulary as if they are personally involved. It no longer remains their mere duty. The Government has to take care that no police force is made to work long in such contentious situations. There is a built-in safeguard against loss of objectivity. It is the superior police officers who are trained to keep their personal prejudice out and be

objective. They are the ones who control police action overall and take care that the ranks do not get influenced by the prevailing popular mood. Policemen are human beings and not supermen. When the entire society is divided, policemen can falter.

On the reverse side, it is said that politicians cater to vote bank politics and obstruct action against the minorities. This is a common refrain in acts of terror. It is harsh to debunk the police in either event as they are a part of the society and cannot remain free of social bias for long. It is futile to expect the constabulary to rise above their social mores. More and more of officer class have to bear the burden of guiding their subordinates through difficult times.

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A Training Centre for Lawmakers

“Efforts at Indigenization of Christianity in India” by Dan L. Driscoll and the review of the book, “Plato and Arthasastra” are excellent reading (*Freedom First* No.531, September 2011).

I have a suggestion.

Dr. APJ Kalam just before he laid down office said that there is a dearth of noble leaders in India. It means we have ignoble “leaders”. Most of them are having degrees which are a testimony to their examination talent and not to their knowledge they could have acquired. We have nearly 4000 legislators in the states and about 800 in the Parliament of India. All of them require to be educated in concepts like nation, nation-state, common weal, true welfare, governance, perils of populism, taxation, morality in government and a harmonious society.

Freedom First should put a few people together to draw the contents of a course drawing upon the wisdom in the ideas that are contained in Plato’s book, Arthasastra, Mahabharata, Ramayana and in the Upanishads not as lessons in ethics or classics but as *absolutely illuminating literature for legislators of modern times* our law-makers that is, MLAs & MPs.

Maybe we can get the Tirupati Centre to organise this course. That is in the hands of Sri N.Satyanarayana Raju who is doing excellent work in fulfilment of the reason why the Bhavan was founded by so great a seer like K M. Munshi and so wisely counseled by the great Rajaji

and Nani Palkhivala.

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Important Issues *Freedom First* must Take Up

There are several issues that *Freedom First* needs to take up. Among these are

1. Educational system in LPG i.e. in a Liberalised, Privatised, Globalised Economy to ensure lifelong employability for all Indians in the age group 21 to 60. Is this possible?
2. Recent write-up on “Dalit Capitalism” in the Marathi Daily *Lokmat* to promote self employment among Indian Dalits is interesting and needs further discussion.
3. Can an LPG economy ensure permanent institutional protection to the needy, underprivileged and weaker sections. A recent editorial in the *Hindustan Times* (9 August 2011) observes *inter alia* “Capitalism’s latest paroxysm will perversely help Government of India to put out home fires.”
4. Is Gender Justice possible in an open market economy. This has reference to an observation by World Bank President remarking that “Gender Equality is Smart Economics. Countries which create better opportunities and conditions for ladies can raise productivity and improve outcomes for children”.

I started a comparative study of economic systems since 1966 viz. Command economy of the USSR, open market economy of the USA and Western Europe and India’s ‘mixed’ economy in 1991. *Freedom First* must take the initiative to suggest practical solutions to ensure lifelong employability for all Indians in the age group 21-60.

I would also like to suggest that *Freedom First* and its sister organisations which have done remarkable work to stimulate public thinking on current topics should consider publication of booklets and organising seminars and essay competitions on these and other related subjects.

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Brutal Betrayal by Government Authorities in Two States

When pension was denied to me and scarce resources dried up, self and my spouse had to stay in Bangalore with our son for sheer survival. A person who

promised me a job collected from me an a/c payee cheque. He failed to fulfil the promise and refund the amount. I lodged a complaint with the District Consumers Disputes Redressal Forum. It issued an order in my favour, asking the opposite party to refund the amount with 15% interest and with Rs.500 incidental expenses. Many hearings were held. Not even a single one he attended. All the hearings I attended subsequently from Chennai incurring expense more than what was due to me. Within six months of the order, the Forum ought to have ensured the recovery. After the lapse of some years the respondent died. The Forum closed the case stating that due to the demise of the opposite party the recovery was impossible, although the Forum ought to have taken steps to recover the dues from the rich heir of the deceased as per law. I pleaded to the state council, the national council and the then (Karnataka) C.M. H. D. Kumaraswamy to come to my rescue since I was economically backward suffering from the deadly disease dementia. None came to my rescue.

The next disaster I faced was in Tamil Nadu. During my absence from my Chennai home for 15 years someone had planted a sapling at the very base of my compound wall. It grew into a wild tree with huge heavy branches; protruding into my compound ready to fall. The media highlighted this potential danger.. I pleaded with the Corporation Commissioner, the Mayor and the CM repeatedly for a decade to get the tree transplanted to a safer place. My request was ignored. During heavy rain and tempest the militant tree got uprooted and with its army of branches fell on my building, cracking it, demolishing my compound wall and destroying my beautiful garden. Finally I had the damage repaired spending heavily taking a loan at heavy interest. A complaint lodged with the Commissioner has elicited no reply so far.

Our Chief Minister Mr. Karunanidhi stated not so long ago that he was born in a common family and his concern was for the commoner. His son then the administration minister exhorted the people to be “honest in handling papers, sincere and sympathetic to the common man.” We should practice what we preach. My cry for justice has fallen on deaf ears; languishing in anguish facing callousness all around particularly from the cruel government authorities.

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Rectitude and Paralysis of Governance

Laws are for Society, Not for Individuals

Sharad Bailur

As a general rule, any law that has an aspect that adds to the moral stature of individuals in society, is a law that plants the seeds of corruption.

Are the root causes of corruption understood? What is needed is an understanding of, not just the fact that corruption exists at the levels that it has come to inhabit, but also why, and how it has come about, before any attempt is made to look for remedies. The Lokpal/Janlokpal is supposedly a/the remedy from whichever angle one looks at it. But the Lokpal/Janlokpal, as a solution is, at best, bound to fail, and, at worst, can cause a complete general paralysis of governance as a cost of the new rectitude imposed from above.

Paralysis

Here is why: Put yourself in the shoes of a government servant. You have been (reluctantly or inefficiently) doing the work assigned to you lubricated by bribes up to now. Tomorrow a Lokpal (pristine and uncorrupt and a firm devotee of Anna) ensures that your bribe gravy train comes to a dead halt overnight. Will you still do the work? Or will you stop doing the work? On the one hand the 'carrot', the bribe is no longer available; on the other a big stick is now held over every move you make.

There is no clear way to punish a government servant for not doing his work. You cannot get rid of him. His job is secure under a government mandated law. This makes any efficiency on the part of the Lokpal in doing his job a perfect recipe for instant and total paralysis of governance. As it is 'pre-audit' by the CAG for any and all expenditure at governmental level is one such road-block. A 'pre-audit' sought from the Lokpal on each and every action before it is put into effect by every single department all over the country can paralyse the Lokpal within days and bring all governance to a halt in less than a week. If 'Economic Determinism' works, as it must, the Lokpal itself will become the fount of corruption. For the citizen there will be an additional layer of bribing to be done to get his work done. This is quite apart from the constitutional questions and the threat to democracy that the Lokpal poses.

In recent years there is increasing apprehension about stagnation in the procurement of military supplies

for the Indian Armed forces. This problem has had a lot to do with the rectitude imposed from above upon the Defence procurement process by increasing and complicating (often with good intention but without thought to the consequences) the laws that inhibit purchase, if not ban it altogether. The UPA government brought in an unalloyed idol of moral uprightness as the Minister of Defence Mr. A. K Antony. This has unfortunately only added to the problems of procurement. The fighter aircraft deal that continues to hang fire is just one case among a host of others that cannot seem to move forward for no reason other than that it must be carried out in an atmosphere that is completely disinfected, if not totally sterile. In essence the rectitude imposed from the Minister from above upon all concerned is responsible for the paralysis of procurement. As an aside, just substitute 'Lokpal/Janlokpal' for 'Minister'.

Laws are for Society Not for Individuals

As a general rule, any law that has an aspect that adds to the moral stature of individuals in society, is a law that plants the seeds of corruption. Even a law against murder is not a law against an individual because, isolated, he can do nothing, however murderous his thoughts may be. It is for the protection of society and the other individuals who are part of it that the laws against murder are needed. Where this fine distinction has been ignored, the law should be repealed. Before the promulgation of any law therefore, this aspect must first be 'pre-audited'. The problem with the Lokpal/Janlokpal or even Mr Antony is that they seek to control individual behaviour.

It should be obvious to anyone that the clearing away of this vast thicket of laws cannot be allowed to take place to be replaced by uninhibited anarchy. It needs to be replaced by more efficient enforcement of the laws that must remain; those that form the essential bedrock of any civilized society.

Towards the end of more efficient enforcement of existing laws I have the following suggestions to make:

Make all appointments in any government or semi-

government organisation mandatorily dependent upon performance. This should include the Police. This means that the present mandatory protection in service that public servants and employees of government and semi-government owned organizations are entitled to, must cease. In essence all such appointments should be made subject to dismissal from service for non-performance on the same lines that prevail in the private sector. Also, all employees in government or semi-government service and Members of Parliament should be paid on the basis of a concept of 'Cost to the Nation' on the lines of 'Cost to the company' that is used routinely in the private sector.

Amend the Representation of People's Act to add a 'None of the Above' option among those given to voters in an election. Here I agree with the Anna brigade. As for 'Recall' my answer is a qualified Yes. It should apply only for proven incompetence.

Change the laws on election expenses to make them compulsorily transparent and make donations to political parties legal and/or, alternatively, let the government fund all election expenses by reimbursing candidates on the basis of the number of votes polled by them individually.

Make the cost of flouting laws much higher in terms of punishment.

For instance, why can we not get rid of industrial licensing altogether? Or for that matter the Shops and Establishments Act? We can have specific enforcement to prevent abuse in industry or in shops and establishments but there ought to be no need for licensing for factories (only zoning or pollution control rules), restaurants, hotels and bars or private clubs so long as

they obey rules regarding cleanliness, public behaviour, proximity to schools, or for obstruction of traffic. What about the licensing and laws that affect the building industry? Except for zoning rules and rules about water and electric supply that affect people other than those who are constructing or living in the buildings, the rest are superfluous.

Another instance: I would suggest the abolition of the entire licensing system imposed upon the driving public. This may sound radical but if it is backed up by traffic policemen being compelled to perform – or else; and if the cost of infringement is unacceptably high in terms of punishment to those who flout it, the issue of the infringement of road rules can be solved without anyone having to go through the process of securing a licence to drive – thus taking care of a major cause of corruption at the level of the RTO.

The RTO should only be concerned with the danger that vehicles can cause citizens other than their drivers, e.g. overloaded trucks, bald tyres, vehicles without or with inadequate or non-working brakes and lights and so on. The Police should deal with the flouting of road rules that has become increasingly important in view of the murderous chaos on our roads; illiterate drivers unable to interpret road signs and drunken driving – all problems that affect not so much the driver as much as others present on the road.

Let us not try to force pietistic rubbish down the throats of our citizens. That is not the job of the state.

MR. SHARAD BAILUR, retired banker, author, freelance journalist and a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. Sharad.bailur@gmail.com

Power Can Corrupt Rama!

C. Radhakrishnan

Can power corrupt even Rama? Valmiki, the great sage-poet, shows it can. The acid test is when a ruler is forced by circumstances to make a choice between doing what is just and not doing it to continue in power.

The situation arises after Rama's glorious return to Ayodhya after slaying Ravana. When everybody is happy and Sita is about to become a mother, a washerman's gossip is reported to Rama. Sita's chastity is suspected as she has been in Ravana's custody for long!

Rama knew this is nonsense. At the same time, every member of the king's family has to be above board. He had the option to ignore the slander and give up the throne if necessary, or order a probe.

But he is too fascinated by his own image that he

decides to cast her off to the forest. Rama perpetrates this gross injustice not to do his kingdom any good, but to polish his image. He forgets he is duty-bound to protect her. Can any king who fails to do justice even to his immediate family rule any land? If he was just, he could have said, 'The throne of Ayodhya should always be above suspicion. But I know my wife is innocent, so I am leaving the throne.'

Bharatha and Lakshmana were there. There was no dearth of princely talent. But the lure of power was so great it blinded even Rama!

So what is strange about politicians now ditching the innocent or saving the corrupt to stay in power?

Deccan Chronicle, Kochi, 22nd July 2011,
Contributed by reader **A. Pankajakshan.**

India Hikes Interest Rate to Curb Inflation

Vasant G. Gandhi

In its struggle to curb inflation, which is now around 10 percent, the Reserve Bank of India announced the 12th increase in interest rate by 0.25 percentage point to 8.25 percent on Friday, 16 September 2011. This policy of periodic hike in interest rate, which began 18 months ago, seems to have very little effect.

American Experience

In the USA, when Ronald Reagan took office of President in 1981, inflation was at 13.6 percent and unemployment at 7.1 percent. With Reagan's support, Paul Volcker, then Chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board, began an assault on inflation by letting the interest rate rise to near 20 percent, letting the demand for money to drop, and business activity to slow down. This policy paid off. As time passed, the high interest policy attracted

foreign capital, the dollar became strong, taxes were reduced, and the recovery began. And Reagan was re-elected in 1984.

RBI Policy

In India's case, despite the drop in economic growth to 7.7 percent in the second quarter of this year compared to 8.8 percent during the same period last year, inflation is still ascending. And there are some reasons

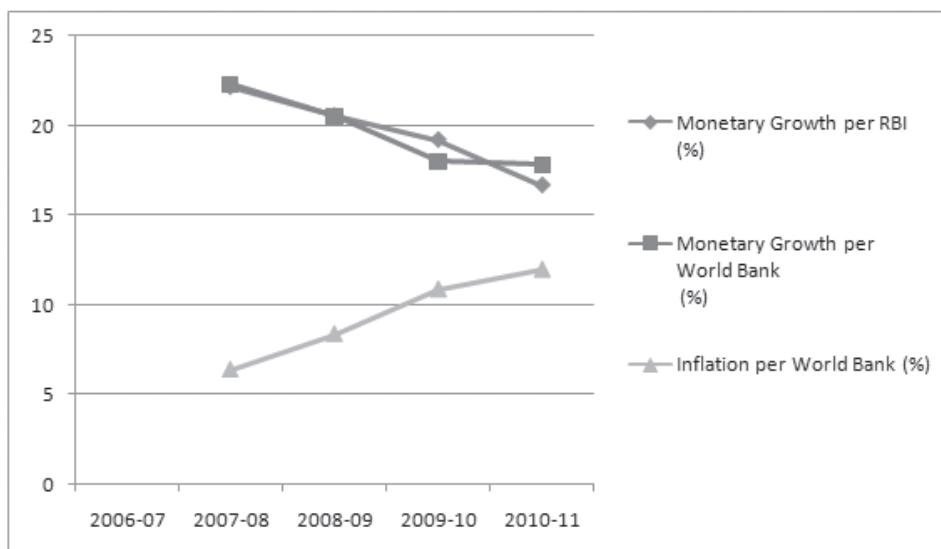


EXHIBIT 1: Monetary Growth and Inflation in India, 2006-10

Year	Money Supply (M ₃) in crore	Increase in Money Supply in crore	Monetary Growth per RBI (%)	Monetary Growth per World Bank (%)	Inflation per World Bank (%)
2006-07	29,50,300				
2007-08	36,03,479	6,53,179	22.14	22.3	6.4
2008-09	43,43,698	7,40,219	20.54	20.5	8.4
2009-10	51,77,905	8,34,207	19.20	18.0	10.9
2010-11	60,40,809	8,62,904	16.67	17.8	12.0

Source: RBI Handbook of Statistics on Indian Economy, Money & Banking Table 45 Avg. Monetary Aggregates & World Bank.

why the Reserve Bank's policy is not working.

First, people think that since inflation is not abating they should buy what they need today because tomorrow things would cost more. This propensity to spend now, not in the future, boosts inflation, and RBI's hike-the-interest-rate policy has no effect.

Second, those people who are holding black money also would like to spend it now before it loses its purchasing power. This, too, further boosts inflation.

Third, as long as inflation remains high, businesses are unlikely to invest in new projects because it is hard to forecast a present value of future cash flow. It is this fear of future inflation that is causing business activity to slow down.

Fourth, RBI's high interest rate policy, in fact, might be causing inflation to increase, rather than decrease, by

fell to 3 percent, some Indian economists predicted that inflation could reach zero! Perhaps, they misinterpreted the data. Exhibit 1 (see previous page) shows that India's official money supply has been swelling at an average rate of 19.64 percent for some years and causing inflation.

Solution

So, how to curb the current inflation? Sell bonds and soak up the excessive money supply, black and white, now floating in the economy. Furthermore, do not ask investors about their sources of fund. Also, in order to reduce demand, governments – central, state, and local – must curtail their expenditures and debt. As both the demand for goods and services and the money in circulation start to recede, inflation would drop; businesses running low on inventories would begin to fill shelves; and economic growth would resume.

EXHIBIT 2: Monetary Growth and Inflation, 2006-10

Countries	2006		2007		2008		2009		2010	
	Money	Infl.	Money	Infl.	Money	Infl.	Money	Infl.	Money	Infl.
	Growth	(%)	Growth	(%)	Growth	(%)	Growth	(%)	Growth	(%)
Japan	-0.7	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.8	1.4	2.0	-1.4	2.0	-0.7
Germany	4.1	1.6	5.4	2.3	4.7	2.6	-1.3	0.3	0.1	1.1

attracting an influx of foreign capital.

Finally, food inflation, felt by rich and poor, is caused by shortages of food grains and vegetables; and the hike in interest rate is unlikely to remedy it. Since the mid 90s, increasing numbers of farms are being sold to make room for new flats and factories; consequently, the farmlands are diminishing and hence food shortage.

Money Supply

Back in February 2009, when inflation temporarily

Examples of Monetary Growth

The nations that have low monetary growth tend to have low inflation. Exhibit 2 shows the data of two such countries.

The money supply in India has been growing at high rate since 2006; late Milton Friedman would argue that therein lies the rub for inflation.

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Law's Transgression in the Functioning of the Government.

Citing a Supreme Court ruling in an RTI-related case, a two-page circular dated September 16, sent by the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), draws attention to the SC observation that the public authority need not be generous in its interpretation of the law.

"...Where the information sought is not a part of the record of a public authority, and where such information is not required to be maintained under any

law or the rules or regulations of the public authority, the Act does not cast an obligation upon the public authority, to collect or collate such non-available information and then furnish it to an applicant," the DoPT circular said quoting the August 2011 judgment in the CBSE vs Aditya Bandopadhyay case.

URL: <http://www.indianexpress.com>
Courtesy: info@karmayog.org

Whose Wealth is it Anyway?

Neelakant Patri

Everyone knows how expensive it is now-a-days to contest an election as no one with less than Rs.1 crore assets who fought the 2009 elections got elected – so much for our democratic set-up!

He has been a lecturer, adviser to the government, governor of the Reserve Bank of India, finance minister and now prime minister of the world's largest democracy and yet after more than half a century of working in high paying jobs, his wealth has not crossed Rs.6 crores! Dr. Manmohan Singh's is certainly a unique case if we go by the present day standards of wealth accumulation set by other people's representatives in our Parliament.

The details of the assets of various colleagues of the prime minister in his council of ministers, which have now been published on the PMO website shows that he has no agricultural or non-agricultural land. He has a house in Chandigarh valued at current market rate of Rs.90 lakh and another in Vasant Kunj area valued at Rs.88.67 lakhs. His wife, Gursharan Kaur has some Rs.11 lakh in her savings account in State Bank of Patiala, Chandigarh. Dr. Singh's own cash savings - all of Rs.3.22 crore are parked in fixed deposits in government-owned banks. He also has a car – a Maruti 800 the country's first cheap car model that was priced originally at Rs.40,000!

That India's prime minister is a man of integrity is well known and that he lives frugally and has no major or minor vices such as consuming liquor or smoking beedis coming out of the factories of one of his cabinet colleagues is also known and commented upon! But what is surprising is the fact that he has scrupulously avoided investing in stocks and shares and has kept at arms length the legion of investment advisers that has cropped up after the economic reforms, whose initiation he is credited with. If the assets that a man possesses were to define the man, Dr. Singh is not someone who would fit into the shoes of the modern, savvy, and go-getting wealth accumulator in a market economy.

It is possible that our prime minister has refrained from entering the stock and commodity market and its innumerable derivatives as he does not want any conflict of interest charge while making government policy. A more plausible explanation is that the noted economist, like so many other retail investors, is supremely ignorant of the way the share market operates and unlike the 'sheep' that are driven by greed to trade recklessly on the market, he has wisely refrained from placing bets with his hard-earned

money! One just needs to recall Dr. Singh's comments as finance minister in Narasimha Rao's cabinet after the bull-run scam perpetrated by rogue trader Harshad Mehta. Dr. Singh then had expressed surprise that anyone should bother about which way the share market moved because it was not the real economy. In response to his remarks, Dr. Singh the finance minister was given unsolicited advice by various stakeholders of the market economy, including the media about the virtues of a lively and dynamic stock market to attract foreign investment. Apparently the lesson has not been learnt, much to the chagrin of the Fund-Bank reformists surrounding him.

Now this raises questions about Dr. Singh's commitment to so-called economic reforms, defined by a free play of market forces including the capital markets. If he is trying to avoid conflict of interest charge because he is holding public office, other colleagues of his certainly have no such qualms!

Mr. Kamal Nath has declared assets in excess of Rs.260 crores as he and his family own not only real estate in multiple cities but have investments in a wide variety of companies and they own many of them. He must be the most honest minister as far as declaring one's assets is concerned because the prime minister's office website provides minute details. He and his family own or have share in such business as the hospitality, business management educational institutions, real estate, finance, etc. The conflict of interest would arise if one can establish that his being a minister in a position of influence, his family businesses would flourish well beyond their actual worth in comparison with those ventures that do not have this kind of backing. But then there are no specific laws to ban ministers having business interests in our country. There are umpteen other ministers who can be faulted about having shares in companies or professional connections which can either flourish or fail due to a government policy.

We do not know why the prime minister insisted that his colleagues declare their assets. Many of them have not fully disclosed their assets, refusing to put a value on landed property in particular. If the disclosure is meant to shame the elected representatives – that their wealth is growing at phenomenal rates while the country's poor

remain in abject misery: then it has achieved the purpose. But what happens next? In the US, President Obama has proposed that the rich pay the same percentage of income tax as other middle-class taxpayers in order to reduce the budget deficit. We do not know if the land of the rich would approve his proposal, backed by such wealthy men as Warren Buffett. We do not see any policy announcements about redistribution of wealth in our country, if that is what the people are expecting from the prime minister. An analysis done by the NGO group ADR of the assets declared at the time of elections in 2009 and in 2011 by the ministers shows that “the average asset value of a minister in the current ministry is Rs.10.6 crores. In 2009, the average asset value of a minister was Rs.7.3 Cr. That means that the current ministers on an average are Rs.3.3 Cr. richer than in 2009. This is, inspite of the fact that 19 ministers in their 2011 declarations to PMO have not given the value of several of their movable and immovable assets”, says the NGO. It says further: “The highest asset increase in rupees has been for Dr. S. Jagathrakshakan of DMK whose assets show an increase of Rs.64.5 crores in two years (from 5.9 crores in 2009 to 70 crores 2011). He is followed by Praful Patel with an increase of Rs.42 crores (from 79.8 crores in 2009 to 122 crores in 2011) and Kamal Nath with an increase of Rs.26 crores (from 14 crores in 2009 to 41 crores in 2011).” The richest Minister is Praful Patel of the Nationalist Congress Party, whose declared assets are worth Rs.122 crores).

Home Minister P. Chidambaram along with his wife have assets to the tune of Rs.23.67 crore, with Chidambaram alone owning assets of Rs.11.14 crore which include fixed deposits and interest thereof to the tune of Rs.1.29 crore in various banks. Among the immovable assets owned by him include a coffee estate in Kodagu worth Rs.28.95 lakh, besides other assets worth Rs.62.26 lakh which includes a Skoda car worth Rs.22.15 lakh, a Volkswagen car worth 16.24 lakh and a Ford Fiesta car worth Rs.7.71 lakh. He also owns a cycle worth Rs.1,239 and a Kinetic Honda worth Rs.27,685.

His wife Nalini Chidambaram, however, owns land and buildings in Managiri, Sukkanenthal village worth Rs.2.66 crore and agricultural land in Muttucaud/Kanathur worth Rs.27.41 lakh and a house in Karaikudi worth Rs.12.68 lakh. She also owns a coffee estate worth Rs.1.18 crore, a house in Sivagangai worth Rs.12 lakh and land in Managiri worth Rs.11.2 lakh. While Chidambaram himself possesses jewellery worth only Rs.65,955, his wife possesses it worth Rs.7.75 lakh. In fairness, it must be noted that Mrs. Chidambaram is a successful lawyer and one cannot accuse her husband of transferring his assets to his wife!

Going by the general impression that the agriculture minister and NCP leader Sharad Pawar has immense wealth because of his extended family’s business interests in real estate and farm product marketing, one would have expected him to rival the wealth of his party colleague Praful Patel. But his declared assets total just around Rs.12 crore! Similarly, eyebrows would surely be raised by the declared assets of external affairs minister S. M. Krishna. He says that his assets are worth only Rs.1.76 crore, with fixed assets worth Rs.56.161akh. His wife owns assets worth Rs.1.10 crore. Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, despite years of being in the councils of ministers, where one hardly needs to spend any money from one’s own pocket, has assets worth only Rs.1.25 crore including a flat each in Munirka in New Delhi and Kolkata. His Munirka flat alone would fetch more than that amount but like so many others, he has valued his real estate at the acquisition price.

Defence Minister A. K. Antony must be one of the poorest in the Cabinet as his total assets are worth only Rs.39.15 lakh jointly owned with his wife. Antony himself does not own any house or property or even a vehicle and has saving fund deposits worth only Rs.1.82 lakh.

Surprisingly, 15 ministers have shown a decrease in their assets as compared with the assets they declared in 2009. One of them is Corporate Affairs Minister M. Veerappa Moily. His cash in hand and bank accounts are worth a just a little over Rs.13.33 lakh in 2011. He must have sold all of his farm land and other real estate that he had declared before the elections in 2009 to clear the debts he must have incurred to fight the 2009 elections! Everyone knows how expensive it is now-a-days to contest in an election as no one with less than Rs.1 crore assets who fought the 2009 elections got elected – so much for our democratic set-up! One would have expected an honest man like Dr. Manmohan Singh to have a cakewalk to the Lok Sabha but he was defeated the only time he stood for an election. He has to come through the indirect route and also register himself as a voter in Assam, where he has no property. He is now in that category of ‘unelected and unelectable’ that the Congress party spokesman Manish Tiwari had so disparagingly remarked about Anna Hazare! Surely, the country needs electoral reforms and Mr. Moily while heading the Administrative Reforms Commission had strongly pleaded for that to happen. That needs an amendment to the Constitution by those who stand to lose from that!

(Excerpted from his editorial in the *Southern Economist* of 1st October 2011)

Courtesy: *Southern Economist*.

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.

Governance by Default

1. UPA II is lurching from crisis to crisis for the last one year or more. Scams after scams have undermined its credibility. CWG scam was accompanied by 2-G scam, to be joined by the resurrected 'cash for vote' scam of 2008. Then came the spat between the Finance Minister and the Home Minister over bugging of the former's offices; if it was denied as a non-event, out came the Finance Ministry note on 2-G spectrum, pointing a finger at the Home Minister. The Finance Minister had to disown his own Ministry to declare that the views expressed in the note were not his; this is a new low in accountability. Which bureaucrat would dare to cast aspersions on another Minister without the approval of his own Minister? The PM watches all this without rectifying matters; in fact the PM has got used to his Ministers shooting their mouths off on all subjects without regard to Government's stand. No wonder, an otherwise stable Government has lost its way and cannot act on corruption, terrorism, inflation, naxalite violence, Afzal Guru, Kasab or anything else.

Death is very likely the simple best invention of life. It is life's change agent. The benefit of death is, not to waste, life living some one else's choices. Don't let the noise of others opinions drown out your own inner voice. And most important, have the courage to follow your heart and intuition.

- Steve Jobs

1. It is not as if the Government never acts; it acts sometimes and acts foolishly. It handled Anna Hazare's agitation mindlessly. It tried to hush up the 'cash for vote' case and when forced to act by the Court, arrested those who exposed the scam. When accused of inefficiency, its standard rejoinder is that the NDA was no good either. NDA's purported misdeeds are not a license for every subsequent Government to do worse. At this rate, the next Government can point to UPA II and race to disaster. On terrorism the PM declares that such attacks will not be tolerated and perpetrators would be brought to book. The Home Minister announces formation of yet another high powered agency. Nothing happens on the ground. There is no light at the end of the tunnel and the PM does not seem to have the strength or the desire to light a candle. That is the tragedy of this country. It is futile to argue that Sonia's absence led to Government's paralysis. It was dysfunctional much before she went for surgery. In spite of many things going for it: economy, democratic institutions, stability and lack of threat from the opposition, the Government does not function; it crawls not by design but is programmed to act as a default mechanism. The country muddles through in spite of the Government and not because of it.

Af-Pak-US-India Quadrangle

2. President Karzai's visit to India (October 5) and the security related strategic pact between India and Afghanistan was long in coming and should be a welcome diplomatic initiative although fraught with danger. India's interests in Afghanistan are vital to protect our neighbourhood. The US, which is preparing to leave Afghanistan by 2014, is concerned about a Taliban take over there with the help of Pakistan. Pakistan is waiting eagerly to increase its strategic depth by having a client state of Afghanistan and to that end would like to keep India out completely. India was shying away from military involvement in a treacherous terrain. Now India has decided to help out the Afghan army without getting involved in any fighting, which is a halfway house but a prudent precaution as military involvement would be prohibitively expensive and strategically un-winnable.

2. One side of the quadrangle (US) is ready to fold up, leaving the field clear to Taliban and Pakistan at the cost of Afghan interests. In the circumstances, Pakistan would surely be upset with the Indo-Af deal. Pakistan would be keen to knock over the second side (India) so that it can deal with Afghanistan through the Kalashnikovs of the Taliban. The future looks foreboding. As it is, the Taliban is running amok in Afghanistan despite NATO presence there. One can imagine what Indian establishments there would face once the US and NATO forces leave. Pakistan through Taliban would try to boot out even civilian Indian establishments. Military training groups would be like red rag to the bull. Can India withstand ferocious and continuous attacks there or would we buckle under and prefer to leave as the IPKF did in Sri Lanka? How far can we go to protect our national interests in hostile conditions? India's move is a gamble but it had to be taken.

National Pride – A Curse?

3. Nationalism is generally applauded as a virtue but in philosophical terms it is an impediment to growth of human brotherhood and wider consciousness. It restricts an individual from developing a broader world view; considerations of national pride tend to obscure the vision of rising above national interests. 'My country' first is the dominating idea. The emergence of "we" and "they" affects the human psyche. There is inevitably an unhealthy competition to be better than the neighbours. This is followed by belligerence. Conflicts are sought to be resolved through use of power rather than human empathy. EM Foster put it succinctly when he said that if he ever had to choose between betraying his friend or his country, he hoped he would have the courage to choose the latter.

We are all more or less accustomed to giving bribes as a very normal affair. But one thing I have not been able to accept is the horribly stinking lavatories at every public place, be it the railway station, bus station or government hospital or any public office. Our tolerance towards corruption is indicative from the unenterable lavatories in every public place, we have been accepting them.

Y. Padmaja

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

An Intellectually Lazy Middle Class

Why has the middle-class India turned Anna Hazare into such a hero?

I believe it is because we are lazy. It is true that we are disgusted by corruption. We are sick of reading about the telecom scandal, the Radia tapes, the Commonwealth games. More than that, corruption has become a virus that plagues our everyday lives, and we're appalled by it. But we're too damn lazy to go out and vote and actually participate in our democracy. We're apathetic, and believe, perhaps correctly, that our feeble middle-class vote won't make a difference. And yet, we want to express our disgust at the way things are, take the moral high ground, and feel like we really are doing something, because hey, that helps our self esteem. Then along comes this venerable activist who wears khadi, lives a spartan life, speaks out against corruption in high places, and goes on a hunger strike to influence the implementation of a bill that aims to tackle corruption. Naturally, we make him the repository of our hopes and our values, speak out in his defence at parties and cafes while hanging out with friends, and even light candles in his support. And there, our job as citizens is ends. The intellectual laziness here is obvious. We make him our hero though we know little else about him, and when his history comes to light, we rationalise it away. We ignore the fact that the Lokpal Bill, which he is fighting for, does nothing to tackle the

3. How is it that the virtue of national pride is simultaneously a drawback? The problem is that dilution of national pride removes the only bond between citizens of a country. The higher motivation of fighting for the betterment of the country is replaced by nothing; there is emptiness. It is like removal of the concept of God from the human mind; very few have some alternative as a Guide and society becomes rudderless. The fear of divine retribution works, although it is the wrong way of making humans moral. However intellectually stimulating the idea of human oneness and universal brotherhood may be, the fulcrum of national pride remains firm. Religions which propound higher consciousness have been unable to transcend national barriers between peoples of the same faith. It is true that global awareness is developing but it is not yet enough to override narrow national interests. It is perhaps the tribal instinct of 'my tribe, my territory', which governs the human mind and not the higher moral parameter. The evolution will take time.

root causes of corruption, and might actually be a step in the wrong direction. We treat attacks on our new hero – if the behaviour of some of his defenders on TV is anything to go by – as personal attacks on us.

We start dealing in absolutes, as if anyone against Hazare must, by default, be a supporter of corruption and the *status quo*.

The Anna Hazare phenomenon is what one could term the Rorschach Effect in Politics. A couple of years ago, Barack Obama wisely pointed out, "I am like a Rorschach test." During his presidential campaign, his supporters saw in him whatever they wanted to: an anti-Bush, a liberal messiah, a pragmatic and non-partisan moderate, and suchlike, some of it without any evidence, some of it contradictory. (Similarly, his opponents projected their fears or fantasies on to him.) Needless to say, when he did come to power, he disappointed many who had voted for him, because hey, he couldn't possibly live up to being everything to everybody.

Opinions – Thu, Apr 21, 2011 11:09 AM IST –
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Terrorism as Extension of Foreign Policy

Pakistan's Young Generation Must Ponder Over

D. B. Shekatkar

It is a simple law of nature and an undisputed fact of human existence that “if you water and nurture the right roots you will get good fruits! If you water the wrong roots, you will get poisonous fruits”! How true this is in the case of misgovernance in Pakistan.

It will be sooner rather than later that the real story and facts about Osama Bin Laden's presence in Pakistan, his activities and that of Al Qaeda in Pakistan, Afghanistan and other parts of the world will be known to people across the world. I have great concern and sympathy for the young generation of Pakistan, especially youth between the age group of 5 and 20 years), who have no say or influence whatsoever in Pakistan's national affairs, governance, foreign policy and so on, but their lives and future are at stake. Will they not be branded as youth citizens of a nation whose governing mechanism has a long and undisputed history of not only creating, promoting, encouraging, sustaining and exporting terrorism but also harbouring, protecting and sustaining the most wanted terrorist in the world for years, and extracting billions of dollars from the governing mechanism of the most powerful nation in the world, on the pretext of locating and destroying the same terrorist whom they were nurturing, watering and protecting! I feel sad, hurt and concerned and it pains me to even think as to what sort of “outlook”, treatment, affection, respect and welcome these young children will get outside Pakistan, especially in the Western world when they go there to study, research, get specialised training and sustenance for their own life and livelihood for their parents? Will they be received with open arms, smiling faces, respect they deserve when they show their passports at the Immigration counters? Or the number of eyes that will be looking at them with suspicion and disrespect? Will they not hear the most hurting remark, “Oh you are from Pakistan! the country that harboured Osama and other terrorists! They are bound to face embarrassing situations and treatment for no fault of theirs.

It is an undisputed fact of human history that any one who has created, nurtured and encouraged evil designs, today's terrorists, has always paid for it. This may be an individual, society or a nation. There is no exception to this unwritten rule in the history of human kind. We are all well aware of *Bhasmasur* who was created by God!

It is also an undisputed fact that women and children have been and will continue to be the worst sufferers and victims of violence, both due to conventional

conflicts like the Iraq-Iran war, Arab-Israel war or violence due to unconventional conflict/war due to revolution, insurgency, terrorism, change of regime across the world. Vietnam, Afghanistan during Soviet occupation, Iraq and Afghanistan post 9/11 and now Libya, Syria and no one knows who will be the next. It is also a fact that unfortunately children, women and innocent people have been the worst sufferers in Islamic countries or muslim nations after World War II, and specially after the Cold War. The first decade of the 21st century has been the most cruel decade for the Arab and Muslim world! Why? Who is responsible for this sad experience? Pakistan is no exception. Wrong ideology, wrong philosophy, wrong policies and hostile perceptions by successive ruling regimes in Pakistan; the uncontrollable activities of the ISI; overconfidence, institutional arrogance of the Pakistan army, and tendency to dominate national governance will continue to invite and inflict unwarranted injuries and death and bleed the young generation of Pakistan in the years to come. I hope and pray that my predictions do not come true.

What was the fault of the young cadets/recruits who were killed or injured at the para-military training centre at Shaboadar on the way to their home? They were killed by Al Qaeda terrorists as reported by Pakistan media! Who created these terrorists, who sustained them, who armed them, who nurtured them? In all probability they were Pakistan citizens, born, brought up, sustained, nurtured and watered in Pakistan itself. Young soldiers were not killed by American drones or by NATO forces. Like Pakistan, it will be highly unlikely that these nations specially the Western nations, who are part of destructive alliances, treaties, strategic partnership and punitive missions will remain unaffected or untouched. Their young generation who had no say or role in the formulation of wrong policies, wrong judgement, wrong initiatives and wrong actions to be able to live in peace. With the killing of Osama, some nations may draw the wrong conclusion that they will be “safer” now. They may feel they are “safer”, but they will not be safe!

Out of the thousands of innocent people who died due to 9/11, how many had any say in the foreign policy

of America? Similarly out of thousands of innocent children, youth, women and citizens who have died in Pakistan due to terrorist violence, drone attacks and so on, how many had any say or influence in the formulation of domestic and foreign policy of Pakistan, the philosophy and concept of the so-called 'Jihad', strategic depth; "we will eat grass but will have a nuclear bomb", "we will bleed India by thousand cuts" and so on ...! Why should people of Pakistan suffer for the wrong policy and actions of their governing mechanism?

Like the concept of terrorism changed after America was hit by 9/11; the concept of counter terrorism and the war against terrorism, the terrorists, and those who harbour and sustain them is bound to change soon. It will not be too long before the governments and nations will be made accountable and unfortunately innocent people will have to pay the price. People of Pakistan must address the "basic roots" ideology of revenge, misuse of religion, fundamentalism, ideology of Jihad and force their government to rethink, retrospect and reform.

Right from the emergence of Pakistan as a new independent nation, those who were responsible for the partition of India and creation of Pakistan, started harbouring evil designs and propagated war against India. Due to events in Afghanistan in the eighties, the concept and language of "holy war" against India, resulted in heavy dependence on China and USA. The philosophy of "holy war" also encouraged the emergence of Islamist fundamentalist groups and terrorists organisations in Pakistan.

The attack on Kashmir in 1947, war against India in 1965, Jihad against India in Kashmir and in the rest of India, the Kargil war, attack on India's Parliament, terrorist attacks across India, conversion of Nepal into a stronghold of the ISI, hijacking of Indian Airlines aircraft to Kandahar, terrorist attack on 26/11 at Mumbai are part of Pakistan's holy war against India as an extension of its foreign policy. Ajmal Kasab and other terrorists had no say in the formulation of foreign policy of Pakistan but became the instrument and extension of its foreign policy.

Is it not a fact and the harsh truth that rivalry against India encouraged terrorists based in Afghanistan and Pakistan, to spread terrorism in India? Is it not a fact that Osama and other terrorist organisations felt so confident and strong that they did what they did on 9/11 in the USA? Is it not a fact that it is 9/11 that provoked and compelled America to first destroy Afghanistan's infrastructure and later establish themselves in Afghanistan? Is it not a fact that it was the wrong policies and perceptions of Pakistan's government that invited America and NATO into Afghanistan? Is it not a fact that harbouring and sheltering

of the Taliban, Al Qaeda, Lashkar-e-Toiba in Pakistan's territory forced the Americans to spread their presence in Pakistan, induct CIA operatives, special forces and conduct drone strikes in Pakistan? Is it not a fact that the rulers of Pakistan and Pakistan's armed forces permitted American forces to enter Pakistan to locate and destroy terrorists (not terrorism)? On the one hand Pakistan claims to locate, neutralise and kill terrorists but on the other, encourages terrorism as part of its philosophy of "bleeding American economy" by extracting billions of dollars and also force America to spend trillions of dollars to combat terrorists? Is it not a fact that Pakistan has been able to tie down large number of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan? Is there a possibility that Pakistan is encouraged to do so as an extension of foreign policy of another power? It suits few countries in the world to force the USA to deploy large numbers of forces and resources in low intensity conflict situations in certain parts of the world. How easy it is to bleed America economically and militarily, and also impact internal politics and governance without entering into a conventional conflict with America! There is an age old philosophy that "the weak have one strong weapon; the errors of those who think they are strong." Terrorist organisations located, identified and exploited the weakness in the internal security mechanism of USA and enacted 9/11. One of the most low cost operations against the most powerful and strong nation!

The intelligentsia, right minded people, academicians, economists, think tanks based in Pakistan and especially the young generation, the students must seriously ponder over and introspect on:

- (a) How many new industries have come up in Pakistan with foreign collaboration in the last 15 years?
- (b) What has been the GDP growth in the last 10 years?
- (c) What has been the volume of foreign investment (not American aid to combat terrorism) in Pakistan in the last 10 years?
- (d) How many industrial and business delegations have visited Pakistan in the last 10 years to explore business and industrial opportunities through joint ventures?
- (e) What has been the increase in Pakistan's youth getting admission for higher education and jobs in the Western world in the last 10 years?
- (f) Since the emergence of Pakistan as a nation, how many rulers, military dictators have enjoyed peaceful life inside Pakistan once they vacated (willingly or unwillingly) the seat of power? How many were forced to flee their own country which they claim to have governed or ruled?
- (g) How many rulers have died unnatural death?
- (h) How many Chiefs of Pakistan's Army who encouraged conflict, violence, with India have enjoyed "playing golf" after their retirement?

If a serious and honest answer to these questions reveal discouraging facts, then the young generation of Pakistan must seriously consider, should Pakistan's rulers continue to fight against India (through different ways, means and mechanisms) and also exercise economy in sharing truth with the Western world about the ground realities, as they have done for the last 60 years without achieving anything except self destruction or should they seriously mend their attitude, ideology and ways to live peacefully, and prosper along with India atleast for the next 600 years!

Ruling regimes of Pakistan and its Army should have no doubt whatsoever that if forced, compelled and provoked India's people and India as a Nation will have no option but to counter Pakistan's designs for the next 100 years if need be, provided Pakistan exists that long in its present shape and size as well as geographical boundaries. In the Western world, some think tanks (who influence governing policies, strategy) and policy formulators have already made designs on drawing boards to redraw new boundaries and dividing lines. It is presumed that think tanks and policy formulators in Pakistan are aware of these studies. One such study concludes that "to combat terrorism successfully, Pakistan must be deprived of its sea coast"! Another thought process is that "Pakistan without sea coast" will be of no use to USA and China"! It is also well known that once the Western world decides on a course of action, they accomplish it sooner or later. Look at the events in the Arab world since the beginning of the 21st century.

Indian think tanks, strategists, policy formulators need to be aware of such designs in the West and be concerned as well as be prepared for such a contingency. It may not be in India's long term strategic interest to see the further disintegration of Pakistan for obvious reasons. If India's governing mechanism has not been very successful in engaging and managing Pakistan since 1947 what is the assurance of engaging a disintegrated Pakistan? It is in the interests of India to have a stable, peaceful and prosperous Pakistan with a desire to co-exist peacefully.

It may be a long, time consuming process but peaceful co-existence is the best way. Shaking hands, smiling faces in front of cameras may give momentary joy but will have no lasting impact. India has gone out of its way to accomodate Pakistan, through cricket matches, bus rides, *aman setu*, *aman ki asha*, etc. Pakistan must remember:

Jism ki baat nahi hai, unke dil tak jana hai; lambi doori tay karne me waqt to lagta hai! It is not a question of the body, but the heart. There's a long way to travel and that takes time.

Only the young generation in Pakistan can bring positive changes for good. India is always ready with one step forward as our Prime Minister exhibited at Mohali (Chandigarh).

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The Army Needs A Voice Of Its Own

Furdoon S. B. Mehta

What is forgotten is that a top soldier is a citizen first and a soldier second, and that troops under his command are an instrument of the people's will.

George Fernandes, our former Defence Minister had termed the divide, which exists between the defence bureaucracy and the armed forces as very unfortunate. He had asked the three Service Chiefs to submit proposals for restructuring the defence ministry to remove this unpleasant situation, most of which is related to attitudes.

To say that the strategic landscape remains unsettled would be an understatement.

Ever since Independence, the Indian military has fought three major wars, performed numerous 'non traditional' humanitarian missions, struggled to adjust to a variety of social demands such as the full integration of women in the officer ranks. What is more, the armed services have been asked to do all this within the worst budgetary environment in sixty four years. As a result, the Indian military faces a dilemma; how to respond to the uncertainties of the new domestic and strategic landscapes, maintain a healthy relationship with Indian civil society, and yet retain its core *raison d'être*, which is to deter or win war against the nation's enemies.

In a Quandary

For a brief time after World War II, since Independence, the Indian military has been facing this dilemma, following the 1962 Chinese debacle, the two inconclusive wars with Pakistan and the 1984 Sri Lanka fiasco. At least one lesson clearly emerged from those experiences; the military profession dare not withdraw into an ethical cocoon and taken on a defensive posture. Instead, it must make a prudent and positive response to the travails imposed on it and not shrink from articulating its views in the public square. In short, senior military officers must reshape the very notion of military professionalism by candidly admitting the impact of politics on the military's ability to do its job and daring to practice constructive political engagement. But only through constructive political engagement can military professionals legitimise their role in policy debates, provide a clear boundary between defence policy and merely partisan politics, and provide the Indian public with a clearer understanding of military life and culture. Nor are

constructive political engagement and loyalty to the country, civilian leadership and the Constituion in any way incongruous.

Indeed, such constructive political engagement, far from threatening to make the military an independent actor, pre-supposes that the military is dependent upon a variety of political actors and the public at large. It is because the Indian military is under such tight civilian control that it needs to make its voice heard in civilian councils.

Grave Issues

The two most critical are the so-called 'democratisation' of the military and the problematical utility of military force in the foreign policy contingencies in the 21st century. Nothing makes the point more eloquently than the Sri Lanka episode, the mismanagement of which forced military professionals, especially in the army, to go through an agonising reappraisal of the meaning of the military profession. Years ago, the role of the chiefs of staff in the decision to go to war in Sri Lanka and its conduct has been studied and found wanting, precisely because these 'three silent men' did not give voice to their professional doubts – lack of moral courage.

What is forgotten is that a top soldier is a citizen first and a soldier second, and that troops under his command are an instrument of the people's will. The Indian army is really a people's Army in the sense that it belongs to the Indian people who must take a jealous proprietary interest in its involvement.

Need for Volubility

The Indian Army is not so much an arm of the executive Branch as it is as an arm of the Indian people. Therefore, as military professionals we must speak out, we must counsel our political leaders and alert the Indian public that there is no such thing as a war fought on the cheap. The Army must make the price of involvement clear before we get involved, so that the country can weigh the probable costs of involvement against the degree on non-involvement.

It now seems clear that the Indian military belongs to the Indian people, and military professionals have the

duty to ensure that the people and the leaders are alerted to the necessities of military life. This cannot be done by adhering to a notion of the military profession as a silent order of monks, isolated from the political realm.

Most importantly, the military brass should feel no hesitation about providing the President, who is also the Commander-in-Chief, with its specific and clear opinion on important military issues. Disagreements that arise among the military, the President, and members of Parliament should not be stifled, but should be aired honestly.

Nor should the armed forces wait until a debate occurs before presenting its perspective and objections to a given policy line. Military professionals ought to be as free to make known their technical judgements without conjuring fears that they are trying to escape civilian control. The alternative is to perpetuate the timidity and fear of criticism that pervades the military today and which could land us in military disaster.

A Healthy Solution

The wide range of civil-military contacts enumerated

above would seem to be a basis for challenging the notion of a widening gap between the military and society in India.

To ensure that the needed equilibrium between the military and society is not thrown out of balance, military professionals must engage the political process. Such engagement would lead to a clear civilian understanding of military culture and help to correct the distorted views and images that currently threaten the effectiveness of the military.

To conclude, let our army speak out in order to institutionalise decision making in the country. We cannot afford insecurity driven policies.

Former Pakistan Army Chief, Gen. Jehangir Karamat went public and resigned on this very issue. Unless that is done, the existing divide between the defence bureaucracy and the armed forces will still remain.

Based on extracts from the Military Papers left behind by the late Brig. Noshir Grant, an eminent Military Engineer, with permission of his widow, Mrs. Minnie Grant.

Emerging Poverty and Inequality in India

The greatest development paradox of the post-globalisation scenario is that despite the fact that the average growth rate of the economy in the last five years is 8.5 per cent, every third poor man of the world is an Indian. Further, out of 5 Indian youth, one is unemployed and of every 4 Indian farmers, one is in utter poverty. Moreover 50 per cent of Indians are not able to contribute anything to the economic productivity. About 20 per cent of India's population are enjoying more than 50 per cent of India's national income and the lowest 20 per cent of the country's population gets about 7 per cent of the gross income.

The impressive growth rates on the one hand, and the misery of the poor on the other hand resemble an interesting analogy. The Doctor prescribes powerful antibiotic to cure the main disease of the patient. However, the nature of side-effects that arise as a result of such prescription give rise to another major health disorder that is equally alarming and disturbing. Economic reforms have definitely contributed to the national growth rate but at the same time, it cannot be denied; that it could not

address the issues of poverty and inequality.

The recently concluded study by Arjun Sengupta, K. P. Kannan and G. Raveendran reveals some facts about the economic deprivation of millions of people living in India. It has classified poor into extremely poor, poor, margin and the study estimates that these constitute about 41 per cent of the total sample who survive on an average expenditure of less than Rs.15 per day. Thus, these four groups of population constitute about 77 per cent of the population and most of them are living with an average Daily Per Capita Expenditure (DPCE) below the international level of poverty of dollars 2 per day. This is a strong indication to suggest that these are the people who have been by-passed in the high growth performance in the post-globalisation period.

Neelakant Patri

(Excerpted from his editorial in the *Southern Economist* of 15th September 2011)

Courtesy: *Southern Economist*.

Pope Narendra I

Firoze Hirjikaka

If India were to ever have a Pope, the Chief Minister of Gujarat, Narendra Modi would fit the role perfectly. This was the overarching impression I got after witnessing his bravura performance during the farcical fast meant to put him on the fast track to the Premiership of India. Not only did he sermonize with a beatific smile permanently plastered on his visage, every word was uttered with a cadence that was meant to convey a blessing on all those fortunate enough to bask in his aura.

Modi is a master of manipulating words and phrases to produce the maximum impact. Consider this Zen moment during the 3-day extravaganza. Stretching out his arm with Stalinesque *hauteur*, he solemnly admitted that he had done nothing for the minority. Just as a rapt audience – including several thousand television viewers - waited in rapt attention for the long awaited apology, he delivered the punch line. He had done nothing for the majority community either. All his munificence was for the 6 crore Gujaratis of his state. In that one moment, he proclaimed his sainthood. It was theatre at its most magnificent.

What Modi enacted was not so much a fast as a superbly managed coronation. Hence you saw the BJP Cardinals dutifully lined up at his side on the stage with suitably overawed expressions on their faces. Even political colleagues with Prime Ministerial ambitions had been impressively outmaneuvered and beholden to publicly acknowledge that the Crown Prince had already been anointed – by himself. The turbaned king is all but dead. Long live the King!

More evidence of inspired stage management was provided by the presence of a few dozen token Muslims, including some beaming Bohri ladies, who had been transported to the venue with the promise of free food and were content to play along. Hey, they were going to sit in air-conditioned comfort and be on television too: all in all, not a bad deal. And don't forget the grand finale where Modi broke his fast by accepting mini-sips of lemon juice from representatives of multiple communities. Did you notice Modi's demeanour? It was that of an emperor accepting homage from his subjects. Honestly, the man scares me.

He scares me not because he is demonic or ruthless, but because he is a megalomaniac and an accomplished actor who is willing to play any role to reach his ultimate objective. I am afraid of what will result when he does achieve absolute power: when the mask is finally discarded. You may argue that no individual can achieve ultimate

power in a democracy? Really? What is happening in Gujarat? The only protestors are Muslims, who are powerless and can therefore be dismissed as a necessary nuisance. For sure, there are crusaders like Teesta Setalvad and Mallika Sarabhai who have been appealing to the conscience of ordinary Gujaratis for the past ten years, but they have met with almost negligible success. The people of Gujarat, particularly the Hindus, love their Narendrabhai. He builds splendid roads; he provides employment and puts more money in their pockets. It is the same contract that the recent leaders of totalitarian China have made with their citizens. We will keep you well stocked with *roti, kapda and makaan*. In return, you are expected to just enjoy it and don't make a noise about democracy, people power and such nonsense.

There is no doubt that Modi's USP is the development agenda; and that he is streets above his rivals on this issue. He is so successful not because he is a management genius, but because he is personally incorruptible, or appears to be. This is where he scores over most of his ministerial colleagues. Gujarat has achieved impressive growth because Modi has slashed the licences and permissions required to award government contracts or set up new industries. His counterparts in other states are unwilling or unable to emulate him because, after all, the kickbacks emanating from granting licences and permits are their chief source of unaccounted wealth.

This is all very well, but I cannot help comparing Modi to Mussolini or Hitler. Early in their career, they were greatly admired by their citizens for bring order out of chaos in their respective countries. Trains ran on time, autobahns were built and the hitherto rampant inflation was brought under control. But then they acquired absolute power; and we all know the aftermath. Not that Modi has any inclination to unleash a holocaust, but he has a similar autocratic bent. There is not a trace of humility or compassion in that man. He rules his state with an iron fist; and he gets away with it because he is the undisputed boss of the single party that has power in Gujarat. Modi has always hankered after the Prime Minister's post and

there is a very real probability that he may attain his ambition. The rest of the nation may not share the adulation Gujaratis profess for their Narendrabhai, but after two and a half years of indecisive and vacillating “leadership”, there is a longing for a strongman that may well propel Modi – despite the revulsion of Godhra – to the top job.

Not that having a strongman as your leader is an unmitigated blessing, of course. Modi has proved time and again that those who have the temerity to cross him will be given no quarter. The latest instance is that of the IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt who dared to virtually call Modi a liar by debunking the myth that the CM had no role in the Godhra riots. He has not only been arrested on an obscure charge – very strategically timed – but threatened

with life imprisonment. Bhatt’s wife is justifiably terrified that her husband will be eliminated in a staged “encounter”. It won’t be the first time.

What will happen if and when Modi becomes Prime Minister? India will probably prosper even more, economically and developmentally. But what will the people have to give up in exchange? I cannot help but feel apprehensive.

MR. FIROZE HIRJIKAKA familiar to *Freedom First* readers for his column “Cornucopia” is a retired civil engineer, a blogger and a freelance writer. He is a member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. Email: leonardo8_99@yahoo.com

On India’s Judicial System

These are quotes from an outstanding speech by Dr. Justice Dhananjaya Chandrachud, of the Bombay High Court, the youngest judge ever elevated to the bench, culled from his speech to the Rotary Club of Bombay on “Judicial Activism, how far can it be spread.”

“As judges you have to judge others, but it is a very thin, though clear, line that when you judge others you nonetheless are not judgmental about the lives that others lead.

“Take the gay rights case. A large number of people in society do feel that the mainstream thought is that to be gay is an affliction. A large number of people I have spoken to after the judgement of the Delhi High Court in the Naaz Foundation case, have criticised the judgment, saying how can you condone something that the mainstream in society refuses to accept.

“The important thing about these judgements is an effort by the judge to judge but not to be judgemental... to not be judgemental in terms of assessing the merits of the way of life which others lead. Far more important than assessing the way of life that others lead is to respect the right of others to lead the way of life that they want to lead.”

*

Will the Indian Judicial System Survive?

“The very function of the judge is not to be popular but to hold close and hold dear, values which our society stands for and which must continue to subsist year after year and generation after generation.”

*

“The danger that we face as an institution today is that unless we have the right kind of men and

women who come and man this system, how will the system survive? If we don’t have the right kind of people who are encouraged to join the judiciary, how will the system survive?”

*

“I think the great frustration of our system is that although we have a society that is full of the most talented individuals, they are all turning away from governance; and I dare say that the judiciary is no exception. That’s one of the great laments that I have, that’s one of the great fears that I have for our judicial system.”

*

On Granting of Bail and Trial by Media

Answering a question “Were some judges using the non-granting of bail as a method of punishing those whom they would not be able to punish ultimately in the future because of the weakness of the system? Justice Chandrachud insisted that bail was a basic human right. Even Justice Krishna Iyer had made a pithy statement, “Bail, no jail”. What he had meant was that bail was a matter of right and jail a matter of exception.

The speaker did not think that judges were denying bail because they wanted to incarcerate people right now, fearful that there could be loopholes in the case.

“But what has also happened and which is

Cont’d. on pg.26

Aspects of a Novel

The Writing of “Blossom Showers”

Giselle Mehta

(My novel “Blossom Showers” was released at Landmark in Mumbai on 14 September 2011. I thank those ILG members/FF subscribers who attended the event in response to my invitation. My address on the occasion is shared below for the many who wrote in to congratulate me and express their goodwill. – GM)

To write a novel is to announce oneself as a new literary voice. Some may regard this as audacious when so much of great quality and import has been written down the millennia. Amidst this rich abundance, an author is confident that everyone comes with a unique experience of life, both in encounters with external circumstances and inner make up, making possible distinctive literary products.

I had a schoolgirl dream of being a novelist, because as a voracious reader a novel was a literary form I particularly related to. I understood even then that a novel represents a very substantial literary product, providing an entry into an alternative world, where readers temporarily suspend their own reality for a constructed one. To write a novel is challenging because it must engage a reader amidst life’s myriad schedules and repeatedly beckon one from competing demands.

Real life obscured youthful dreams as more practical demands took over. As I moved on from the structured life of bureaucracy, the novelist of my girlhood dreams would form the core of a redefined self. I proceeded with the assumption that what works for one as a reader should work for one as a writer. When I pick up a book for reading, I hope to enhance my awareness, either by way of interesting knowledge or renewed sensitivity. My debut novel, “*Blossom Showers*” seeks to reconcile the challenges of simultaneously informing and involving a reader. On the one hand the reader’s horizons of understanding are sought to be expanded, by conjuring up the interesting worlds of not one but two lesser known sub-cultures, those of the pioneering years of coffee planting in South India and that of an affluent coastal Christian community with its own distinctive history, culture and attitudes. On the other hand I seek to tell an engrossing story - one that will engage the reader’s emotions.

My protagonists and many other supporting characters strive for personal equilibrium amidst the roller coaster of life. So many of the great classics are inextricably woven in identity with their unforgettable characters. My own reading experiences convinced me that enduring books are those whose characters grip you with their intensity or intrigue you with their complexity. A fascination with human psychology animates my work.

A novel is a holistic experience, where the serious blends with the seemingly trivial to evoke an authentic picture of life. It’s equally important to be right on the historical aspects or business cycles that affect the fortunes of one’s characters, as it is to get the timing right for a prevailing mode of fashion, a particular song, dance or style of social celebration.

The title “*Blossom Showers*” is derived from a particular phenomenon in coffee planting that serves as a recurring symbol and motif in the lives of the three protagonists whose narrations propel the novel forward between 1902-2010. The internal titles “*Sturdy Seed*”, “*Bewitching Bloom*” and “*Heavy Harvest*” that correspond to the narrations of each protagonist are drawn from the plantation cycle.

As one moves from Part I to III, a reader is taken into progressively greater depths of the protagonists’ inner life. “*Sturdy Seed*” is equally poised between the inner world of Rex, and the adventurous, exterior challenges of coffee planting. “*Bewitching Bloom*” captures the emotional life of Anjalika amidst the idiosyncrasies of a conservative and pious society. By the time you arrive at “*Heavy Harvest*”, the writing acquires a certain distance from its socio-cultural moorings, revealing the growing reach of a globalized lifestyle. The language accordingly evolves from a classical tone to youthful contemporaneity, reflecting the march of time and the persona of each narrating protagonist. A reader may also discern the influence of a liberal philosophy from the stress on individuality, enterprise, social responsibility and the limits of ghetto consciousness.

It’s true my novel is centered on two picturesque locations, the Western Ghats and the West Coast of India, but the real locales, you will discover are the tantalizing terrain of human personality and the surrounding social landscape. I hope there will be some of you making that intriguing journey with my characters. May you enjoy reading *Blossom Showers* as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Giselle Mehta, www.gisellemehta.com

“*Blossom Showers*” is available in outlets of Reliance Time Out, Landmark, Oxford & Strand in Mumbai. The author’s website www.gisellemehta.com also provides online ordering options.

Stephen Spender

by Nissim Ezekiel

Spender's literary career has always been closely related to his political interests. In his autobiography, he has explained the Christian background of his basic philosophy. The roots of his later socialist ideals which, for a time, yielded to communism, were deep in the gospels rather than in any modern ideology. At Oxford, affected by the general climate of opinion, he adhered to the doctrine of art for art's sake, while retaining a profound but perpetually puzzled interest in political questions. In the company of Auden and C. Day Lewis, his poetry began to flourish, and gradually took on that marked political complexion which is a characteristic sign of literature in the thirties.

A correspondent in a recent issue of the *New Statesman and Nation* sneers at the fact that Spender, the revolutionary poet of the thirties, had become in his middle age the editor of a journal sponsored by the Congress for Cultural Freedom. The truth is that Spender's present politics is motivated by the same honest human urges, fundamentally ethical, which inspired the revolutionary poetry of his youth. His first *Poems* were published in 1933. Tracing his development from these, to the great flowering of his genius in *The Still Centre* and his outstanding collection, *Ruins and Visions*, one finds an obstinate poetic sincerity which triumphs over the exigencies of a rapidly changing era.

N O T E S

Head Hunting in Nefa

The Nagas have been very much in the news recently. A few days ago there was a report in the press which said that the Political Department of Nefa by its benevolent and persuasive methods, abolished Head Hunting among the Naga tribes. This colourful pursuit has been prevalent for centuries and is intimately connected with the philosophy and social customs of the Manipur hill people. The simplest and most obvious form of Head Hunting is associated with the blood feud "where the duty of vengeance remains unsatiated until the tally of heads is numerically equal." The head of a woman or a child was in some cases valued even more than the head of an adult man; and for very good reason: the man who brought the head of a woman or a child from a hostile village, was deemed to have done a very heroic deed, because in such

times the women never ventured far from their fields, and their slaughter proved that the brave man had penetrated right into the enemy's stronghold. No young man could persuade a girl to marry him unless he had qualified by having taken a head, and won the right of a warrior's kilt, or of the necklace of bears tusks and the wrist band of cowries. As a matter of fact unless a Naga has a head to his credit (apart from the one on his shoulders) he is not supposed to have crossed the stage of adolescence and is denied the privilege of marriage or the right to inheritance. The Political Department cannot be blamed for attempting to abolish head hunting; but let us hope that they will introduce an equally adventurous, though a more humane test, for winning a lady's hand.

Teachers and their Condition

An international team appointed by the Government of India and sponsored by the Ford Foundation has made valuable recommendations regarding the treatment to be accorded to teachers. Having come to the conclusion that the salaries paid to the teachers are "intolerably low" the team has recommended the levelling up of those salaries to bring them in line with emoluments received by similarly qualified persons in other spheres and professions.

The team has also insisted upon giving teachers security of service. It has recommended that after confirmation a teacher should normally be continued in service till the age of retirement. At present teachers hardly enjoy any security of service. There was a deplorable case in Bombay some months back when a capable University teacher, with eight years service to his credit, was dismissed from service only because he happened to incur the wrath of the chairman of the society conducting the institution.

The team has appropriately pointed out that the most effective way of improving the social status of teachers is to give them "proper economic and working conditions" and to recognise "the importance and the creative nature" of the profession of teaching.

Public education is the very foundation of democracy. That foundation will not be truly laid unless those to whom the task is entrusted are enabled to perform it in conditions of reasonable comfort.

With Many Voices

There are more toadies to the square mile in New Delhi today than at any other place in our poor India.

- Mr. H. V. Kamath, *The Current*,
October 6, 1954.



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjikaka

Snippets

And so another month has gone by with its customary quota of political shenanigans, fawning toadies, vote bank pandering, official arrogance and public callousness.

- The BJP is making a big noise about the imminent fall of the Congress government; and exhorting its cadres to be prepared for a mid-term poll. In my opinion, this is mere posturing designed to panic the ruling party into committing even greater *faux pas*. I don't believe the rank and file of the BJP is keen for a general election at this juncture. Even if the leadership does manage to convince its followers, it will have a Herculean task in getting its NDA allies to agree to a mid-term poll. This is mere grandstanding and, in fact, it would be a bold and revolutionary move on the part of the Congress to call the BJP's bluff and offer to quit. Then see the fun and games that would ensue.
 - It is ridiculous how our politicians bend over backwards to grant special privileges to celebrities in a democracy where everyone is presumed equal. In the case of Sachin Tendulkar, the excessive adulation borders on the bizarre. Recently, the government asked the BMC to waive the penalty owed by him for moving into his new bungalow before obtaining an Occupation Certificate. I recall that a few years ago, he was granted duty exemption on a Ferrari he had received as an award. Taking into account that it was well within his financial means to do so, he would have earned my admiration by not even asking for an exemption, let alone brazenly accepting it. There is even a clamour to award him the Bharat Ratna, for heaven's sake. There is no doubt that Tendulkar has brought glory to the country by his cricketering accomplishments, but he has been more than amply rewarded for his efforts by earning hundreds of crores in prizes and product endorsements. There is nothing altruistic about it. There is nothing surprising about our venal politicians displaying hypocritical generosity for cheap publicity, but for Tendulkar to accept it as his due leaves a bad taste in the mouth.
 - Because of the approaching civic elections, the BMC and other government agencies are in a frantic rush to inaugurate gardens and sundry infrastructure works. This fetish for inaugurating public projects is unique to Indian politicians. They are so hungry for publicity that they will shamelessly discover any opportunity to get their pictures in newspapers or their grinning visages on television. It is immaterial to them that these "inaugurations" serve no practical purpose and, in fact, often end up inconveniencing the general public. Even this may perhaps be overlooked as a manifestation of their immaturity. What is particularly inexcusable is that often fully completed infrastructure projects are not opened to the public for weeks, merely because some worthy could not find the time to inaugurate it.
 - An Inspector General (IG) of police got his father in-law admitted to a high-end private hospital. Nothing wrong with that, except he deputed 15 policemen full time to the hospital to cater to the needs of his relative. This incident is typical of the arrogance and self-importance exhibited by our public officials, particularly those holding senior positions. Providing police protection, at state's expense, to the IG's father in-law, who is a private citizen and under no apparent threat, is not only grossly unethical but perhaps illegal as well. On top of that the policemen were demeaned by being forced to perform menial tasks normally done by ward boys. Not that this technicality would have bothered the IG.
- Both these illustrate the tragedy of Indians - that we have never won true Independence. We have merely replaced our former white colonial masters with these brown *burra sahibs*.
- The festival season is upon us; and the inevitable aftermath is the wanton mishandling of public property. Who pays for the sheer disregard and wanton destruction of infrastructure and public property that has become a routine feature after every major festival in this country. Well, the short answer is: nobody pays and even worse, nobody takes responsibility. It has now become painfully apparent that the average Indian is woefully lacking in civic sense and responsibility. He regards it almost as his birthright to do as he pleases with complete abandon and lack of fear of consequences; all in the name of some deity or another. He does this because he has never regarded roads,

Cont'd. on pg.24



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“A Stream of Correspondence”

with C. Rajagopalachari - 6

K. K. Pathak

The author is an educationist (since retired) with the Rajasthan College in Agra. He enjoyed a unique relationship with the late C.Rajagopalachari, CR or Rajaji as he was more popularly known. This resulted in a “stream of correspondence” between the two that lasted for over 15 years. Mr.Pathak decided to publish these letters and chose the Rajaji Foundation to be the publisher. He agreed to our suggestion to serialise in FF excerpts from the proposed publication. We began serialising in June 2011(No.528). In this, the sixth part, we continue with excerpts from Chapter 2 “The Fruitful Exchanges” continuing from where we left off – on matters relating to The Swatantra Party. This part – his letters in 1965 Pathak

considers “the most precious part of the stream of correspondence with CR.” - Editor

I have left out a good number of letters he wrote me in 1964 for one reason or another. Before I pass on to his letters written in 1965 I should like to say that the year 1964 was a season of flowering. The bud in me was so well nourished by him that its culmination was the comment he made on my article on education for citizenship, published in *Swarajya* of 25 July 1964 and commented upon by him in his *Dear Reader* column in the same issue. My long article became meaningless because of a few lines he wrote by way of his appreciation of my article. He said:

“(Sri) Pathak’s article on education for citizenship deals at full length with the need of a reformed educational system with the clear goal of good citizenship before it. But whatever may be the kind of school and college education what the grown-ups do in the world outside has its effect on the youth which often totally cancels out what is solemnly taught in the school and college in the reading they do there. Education is not merely a school and college business; the adults outside are also silently teaching good or ill according as they are good or bad.”

These words of caution written by CR within weeks of passing away of Nehru are very significant and their importance has enhanced over these 46 years as they are all the more relevant than they were when written in the first half of the sixties of the previous century. Around 1991 I sent a copy of my article on education for citizenship to my good friend the late Nani Palkhivala who, after going through it, said that the article was more relevant than when it was written some 27 years ago. I have included this article in the small book on my writings to be published by the Rajaji Foundation, Mumbai. The reader is advised to go in for this small book for further reading.

I now pass on to CR’s letters written in 1965. They are to be read with due care and interest by the reader. I consider these letters the most precious part of the stream of correspondence with CR. Some are hand-written and I have got some of his letters scanned and appended as an appendix (in the forthcoming book) for the sake of the reader’s entertainment. I trust he will enjoy going through the scanned material with more interest than he might take in reading this brief account of CR’s letters on current national issues whose relevance has not diminished a bit over these five decades. Instead, they are more relevant in the present situation obtaining in the country. It is the leadership that has failed the country by letting loose all evils that prevail in all walks of life of our national life.

Way back in 1963 I wrote in *Swarajya* on the need of a moral revolution in the country. CR had already started working as the Head of the revolution. Unfortunately enough, the educated masses, the Hands of the revolution, failed to respond and the call CR gave did not bear the desired fruit in his lifetime. But I am quite optimistic that the day is not far off when there would be an uprising from below wiping out the rot at the top and cleanse the Augean stable for good, though emergence of a soul like Mahatma Gandhi seems quite remote today. Quite naturally, we have to rely on a full circle of Head, Heart and Hands. The seed sown by CR from 1955 to 1972 will not go waste. The purpose of my writing all this is to carry forward the task undertaken by CR in his old age. I too am old and more handicapped than CR. However, I am quite confident that no labour goes waste, done with a missionary zeal and selfless dedication to a cause close to one’s heart.

My correspondence with CR throughout the year 1965 was very personal and intimate. I had preferred a

teacher's place in life to anything else because I was convinced that teachers alone made Germany a great nation of industrious people who were exploited by Hitler for the same reasons which motivated Mohammad Ali Jinnah to exploit his *Qaum*, demanding partition of India, though Jinnah was no Hitler in any other way than I have mentioned over here. The off-the-mark remarks are instinctive as the need of the hour is to re-educate the so called educated people in the country. I have been holding this view over the past five decades without feeling any need of any modification, whatever. Things have gone from bad to worse with no signs of improvement. I hold the view that abject poverty with sound national character is far better than affluence without any moral scruples. Mahatma Gandhi stood for it. CR carried forward Mahatma's work by pleading for maximum freedom and minimum control. He was dead against State regimentation to which Nehru subjected the nation; for bringing a paradise of socialism in the sub-continent without providing wealth, creating employment in the State and swelling the size of administrative system were the worst things Nehru resorted to. It led to financial deficit with inflationary pressure mounting as an intolerable burden. CR was against this ruinous policy of Nehru and did everything to educate the citizens of the pitfalls into which Nehru was leading the nation.

Throughout the year 1965 we drew closer and closer to each other. The basis of this closeness was our thinking alike on almost every matter of national importance. It was the year when I changed three places of work. When I left the Mussorie job only because no vegetarian food was served in the mess, CR got annoyed. From there I came to J. S. Degree College, Secundeabad. When I left the place and joined B. S. A. College, Mathura, as a lecturer in English, CR was a little disturbed. He even wrote to K. K. Birla to give me a job as a teacher at Pilani. When the offer came I rejected it as I did not want to go to a place so far away from Agra, my home town. This time CR really got much annoyed and wrote me a letter, expressing his deep concern for me. He used to take care of me after the fashion of a fond parent. I enjoyed his unbounded love and affection without losing my head. I should like to give a chronological account of his letters to me, explaining the context as far as I remember them today. There may be some missing links. I wish I could help it. Since I did not keep copies of my letters to him, I am not in a position to give a much detailed account of circumstances and situations in which he wrote me his letters in 1965. I have made a selection of his letters to be included here, leaving out many more than I have selected. I wish I could include some more letters of CR, but it is not possible for the reason that the small book I intend to write would turn

into a tome which the reader may find difficult to read or cope with.

I wanted CR to come to Mathura, the place of my work in 1965. It was my hearty desire to take him to Vrindavan and Govadhan. I extended an invitation, or rather implored him to take the pilgrimage. On 8 January 1965 he wrote back:

“Please save me from the pilgrimage to Mathura.”

CR used a walking stick which I hardly liked. I purchased a Kashmiri cane and got rubber sole fixed at the base to make it more comfortable and safe. I sent the walking stick along with the Agra stuff, *Dalmuth* and *Petha*, through the Scout Commissioner, Tamil Nadu, whom I met at the fourth National Jamboree of Bharat Scouts and Guides in the first week of January 1965 where I had gone to attend it as Press and Information Incharge. When the stick was delivered to him CR wrote me:

“Your letter of January 18. The stick is perfect and no change of angle is called for. The *Morabba* (*Petha*) was excellent. There was no difficulty in eating them.”

- to be concluded

Cornucopia (cont'd. from pg.21)

foothpaths etc. as belonging to him too, as is the case in most civilized countries. He does not realize that public amenities are for his benefit, after all; and if he does not own up responsibility for taking care of them, who will? In fact, one resident of the affected areas has remarked that when devotees crowd and damage public property, it is the responsibility of the authorities concerned to restore it to its original condition. That is where he is wrong. The authorities concerned did not cause the damage and subsequent inconvenience to fellow citizens; the devotees did. Why then should they expect someone else to repair and pay for what they themselves have wrought? I'm sure their god would not sanction such irresponsible behaviour. In fact, god helps those who help themselves, doesn't he? It never even occurs to the same devotees who gladly shower crores of rupees and other precious offerings to their god, to make good the damage that was preventable in the first place. India will never become a First World country because no matter how impressive our economic growth figures, our mindset remains fixed in the Third World.

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India-Africa Relations

S. C. Sharma

In the 1950s, India wrongly assumed itself to be the guiding star of independence movements in Africa. They did take inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi but the Indian diaspora kept aloof from the independence movements which were often violent.

A summit of 14 countries of Africa in New Delhi in April 2008 and the visit of Prime Minister Dr Man Mohan Singh to Africa in May 2011 highlights the growing importance of Africa. It is surprising that the emergence of independent South Sudan on 9 July 2011 did not get the space it deserved in the Indian media. India had a flourishing trade with Africa even in the pre-colonial era. During the British rule, a large number of labourers and a few professionals were taken to Africa and they settled down there. The business community followed and prospered. More than 2 million Indians living there create a demand for Indian goods and entertain industry. They well understand the needs of the market there. Trade has increased from UK£62 million in 2001 to UK£ 28.5 billion in 2010 and is likely to touch UK£43 billion in 2012. In comparison, Africa's trade with China was UK£ 127 in 2010.

Africa is rich in mineral resources and lacks financial and technological resources to exploit them. It was foreseen that the African countries will seek help from all sources – the West, China and India. China has gone ahead with an investment of USD 4 billion in oil venture and has executed impressive projects in the construction industry. China has the advantage of deep pockets and determination to become a world power in the military and economic fields.

India has no geo-political interests in the region and does not have the capability to become a world power in the foreseeable future. India can effectively use its soft power.

In the 1950s, India wrongly assumed itself to be the guiding star of independence movements in Africa. They did take inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi but the Indian diaspora kept aloof from the independence movements which were often violent. Personal friendship between Nehru and Kenyatta did not impact state activities. On the occasion of Kenya's independence, India presented a chair for the Speaker of the Kenyan parliament. Members of the parliament thanked India for presenting the Chair even though India is so poor ! Some of them

criticized Indians for absence of mixed marriages. When one of the members was asked whether he wanted an Indian wife, the member retorted "Who wants an Indian wife? Look at her hands which are so clean because she does no work." What hurt them was the choice of a large number of Indians to opt for UK citizenship. Even Kenyatta advised Indians to quit. Idi Amin's treatment of Indians in Uganda was brutal.

This view about Indians is changing due to the efforts of the Indian business community. The early start by China is not a serious handicap to India since the African market is quite large. India has made significant inroads by investing USD 2 billion in the oil venture and has a 25% stake in the Greater Nile Oil Company for exploration in the Abgyei region. In May 2004, India acquired approximately 24% interest in Block 5A and Block 5B and a contract for building a 741 kms pipeline. India already imports 25% of its oil requirements from Africa and is keen to increase it further. The Prime Minister announced preferential access to 53 African countries and has donated USD 1 billion for an e-network connecting 53 countries. Line of credit of USD 5 billion offered during this visit will further boost trade.

The major effort in developing relations with African countries has been made by the private sector. Mr Rama Krishna Kasturi from Bangalore is growing roses in Kenya and Ethiopia. His turnover is USD 150 million. He has acquired 300,000 acres of fertile land for growing wheat and rice. Airtel and Reliance Petrol Distribution Companies are the leaders in their fields. In the 1960s, diamonds were discovered in Botswana and they invited skilled Indians to help them. Their work has impressed the government. Indians have interest in 80 companies and have an advantage over Chinese companies, who do not understand price competition. Generic drug producers have invested heavily in the continent. Being used to serve millions of poor in India, they know what to expect in Africa. As the economies of African countries grow, Indian firms stand to prosper. Another advantage is that Indian companies are better integrated by employing local

personnel in managerial jobs; something the Chinese companies are reluctant to do. Tanzania has banned Chinese peddlers.

India has done well in building institutions: healthcare, education and agriculture. Instructors and civil servants who went on deputation established a good name for themselves. 5000 students from Africa are studying in India. Germany and France give scholarships to African students. During their studies, they become familiar with German or French equipment and are likely to favour those equipments when they join Government or company service. We could derive similar advantage. There is need for the Indian diplomatic corps to be dynamic. The *Economist* comments that India has shown mouse-like diplomatic clout. Even today, our Foreign Service remains woefully understaffed. Even smaller countries like Singapore and New Zealand, have more serving diplomats. [*Economist* 28 May 2011]. A handful of Indian diplomats in Mozambique struggle to speak Portuguese. China's African embassies are large and well staffed.

The Indian Army has built up a good reputation and could be utilized for promoting Indian interests like the USA is doing. For instance USA had obtained bases and overflight rights in Central Asia after the September 2001 attack. The relations soured in 2005 due to human rights violation in Uzbekistan. This led to the eviction of US troops from their bases. In 2008 Admiral Williams Fallon undertook a visit to improve relations. An agreement was reached with Kazakhstan in 2012 for transit rights. General James Mattis, Commander US Central Command made five

visits to Pakistan in eleven months in 2011 to push Pakistan. In Egypt, their Army has been more concerned about ensuring the continued flow of arms aid from USA than about the movement for democracy and therefore compelled to maintain friendly relations with the US.

India could also make use of the Armed Forces as a diplomatic tool. It will be more effective in violence-ridden Africa where the military is the only guarantor of peace. India contributed instructors to Nigeria and Ethiopia for their military academies. Officers from Africa come to Indian military training establishments regularly. Indian armed forces who have always acted under a UN mandate in Africa are held in high regard for their commitment and valour and absence of imperial ambitions. The civil war in Sudan had a strong religious undertone between the Muslim North and the Christian South. The Indian Army with its background of secularism and multiculturalism had the confidence of both sides. Lt.General Jasbir Liddar UYSM, AVSM headed the UN mission in 2009. He had facilitated relations between the Sudan Armed Forces [SAF] and Sudan People's Liberation Army [SPLA]. It is an acknowledgement of his fine work that after retirement, he has been appointed Deputy Special Representative for Sudan by the UN Secretary General. The professional and non-partisan attitude of the Indian Army has been appreciated by both parties. India would do well by making use of the armed forces as a diplomatic tool.

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On India's Judicial System (Cont'd. from pg.18)

an issue of grave concern – is that there is a great element of media hype on everything. Today, if you grant bail, the media will paint you as a dishonest judge. You can imagine the situation in smaller districts where a solitary judge is dealing with an issue of bail

“You have the media virtually holding a trial *in absentia*, telling the society that this person is guilty – losing sight of the fact that guilt has to be established according to a system based on the rule of law, on the basis of some legal procedures and legal principles.

“I am very fearful...with the kind of media involvement in the administration of the criminal justice system, you cannot rule out a derailment of the cause of justice. That's what judicial training is all about, you can't possibly allow a human being to languish in jail conscious of the fact that the case

is not going to end in a conviction.”

On the question of backlog of cases pending before courts of law Justice Chandrachud observed that like all statistics, even those pertaining to the judicial backlog did not tell the whole truth. It was claimed that it took 20 years for a suit to be decided and that the current backlog would only be cleared in 300 years.

Yet, on an average, in Maharashtra it did not take more than three years for a suit to be decided. In the case of the Bombay High Court, in British times it was given Original Jurisdiction; as a result, one judge tried all the suits that came before it, so that the Bombay High Court had a huge backlog of suits.

Excerpted from *The Gateway*, The Bulletin of the Rotary Club of Bombay Vol. 53 Issue No.8. Courtesy: The Rotary Club of Bombay.

India's Bright Nuclear Future and the Foreign Doubters

Christie Davies

What was most disgraceful about the reporting of the nuclear difficulties in Japan was the way fear was stirred up, particularly in Europe, by both the popular and by the 'progressive' press.

The rational case for India building more nuclear power plants has already been admirably made in *Freedom First* by Dr Bal Phondke and Dr R.C.A. Godbole. Here I will merely stress that India has three key assets for achieving this goal: scientific brainpower, experience in running over twenty existing plants and large deposits of thorium, a likely fuel for the future. India also has a pressing need for them, for energy both to maintain a high rate of growth and to provide reliable supplies of electricity for those who live in the countryside. It can no longer come from coal. Should global warming happen it would make much of India unbearably hot and rising sea levels would devastate a country many of whose great cities lie on the coast and many of whose people live along the lower reaches of the Ganges.

Global warming is not certain but it is more probable than not and it is hardly worth risking Mother Ganga becoming a mere arm of the sea. Renewables may make a small contribution in the countryside, windmills for the intermittent pumping of water, solar panels for both heating water and refrigeration, the basis of better rural health care but they are inadequate and uncertain for the greater tasks facing India and the mass use of lead-acid batteries to store electricity causes pollution. Nuclear is the obvious and only solution. I cannot better the comment of that great Cambridge physicist Homi Jehangir Bhabha, FRS, that there is "no energy more expensive than no energy."

Yet opposition has increased worldwide after the problems with the Fukushima reactor in Japan. In fact Japan's recent calamities had little to do with nuclear power but were the result of an act of that deadly and unpredictable entity – Nature. The vast majority of those who died in Japan died not of radiation but were drowned or buried by the tsunami, a huge tidal wave from one of the biggest earthquakes ever recorded in or close to Japan.

As Hindus have always known, nature necessarily destroys what it has created and the destruction is part of the creation. Were there no earthquakes, there would have been no Japan. Japan's mountains and its deep surrounding seas are, like its earthquakes, a product of the shifting of the tectonic plates that make up the thin

outer layer of the earth. We live inevitably in this uncertain world of the creator, the maintainer, the destroyer. If anything, Indians should take the view that if the Fukushima accident involving a very old reactor in a dangerous earthquake zone is the worst that can happen to a nuclear power station, then it is now safe rapidly to construct many new ones and to expedite the entire process of doing so.

What was most disgraceful about the reporting of the nuclear difficulties in Japan was the way fear was stirred up, particularly in Europe, by both the popular and by the 'progressive' press. The former did so because fear sells copies, the latter because fear might help to drive the world to drop nuclear power. Whenever ultra-sensitive detectors recorded that radioactive particles from Japan had reached a distant country, it was headline news. Only in the small print were the scientists reported as saying that the amounts were trivial and the effects on the people non-existent. One headline read 'Tens of millions live in nuclear "danger zone"'. All the headline meant was that that this was the number of people worldwide who live less than twenty miles from a nuclear power plant, the size of the zone around Fukushima from which people were evacuated, and that half a billion people live within a fifty mile radius. It was all in marked contrast to the disciplined stoicism with which the Japanese people coped with the disaster. The rational bravery of the Japanese in contrast to the panicking Europeans and Californians was shown when elderly retired nuclear plant workers in Japan volunteered to replace their younger colleagues in the cleaning up of leaked radioactive materials. They knew that even if this tended to increase the risk of cancer decades later, by then they would have already died from some other cause.

The panic peaked when the Japanese accident was placed in the top 'danger category' alongside Chernobyl. But such a category is merely subjective and on an ordinal scale, not a true measurement. There have been and will be some fatalities and a degree of contamination from Fukushima but they will be far lower than those associated with Chernobyl. No doubt they will be exaggerated by agitators but then so were the consequences of Chernobyl.

People drew the wrong conclusion from Chernobyl and assumed that nuclear power was intrinsically unsafe. Nuclear power was not the problem there. The problem was communism. Communism is unsafe. It is a system that has no concern for the safety and welfare of ordinary individuals. All is subordinated to the grand plan of creating a new, ever more perfect society and if millions die on the way, that is merely unfortunate; for true communists it is not even that. At Chernobyl only fifty people died directly from the accident, far less than in a bad methane explosion in a coal-mine, and in the years that followed and will follow, perhaps four thousand will have died before their time, mainly in Ukraine and Belarus.

In terms of the human losses that the supply of energy in a communist economy can entail, these numbers are very small. A quarter of a million Chinese drowned or died of hunger and disease when the Banquía dam, originally built with Soviet advice, broke in 1975. The amount of power generating capacity wiped out in this catastrophe was equal to a third of the entire peak demand of the United Kingdom. The communist government dam builders had ignored the advice of their own chief hydrologist Chen Xing and did not install the safety features that he knew were vital. He continued to speak out and was purged as a “right-wing opportunist”. Chen Xing has since been rehabilitated. Under communism ideology always trumps rationality. Political imperatives are more important than the operating rules and regulations provided by the scientists and, as at both Chernobyl and Banquía, the latter can be ignored and discarded in the interests of speed and power. There are no free and independent institutions outside the political monolith that can provide independent comment. The actual mode of energy supply is irrelevant since safety is ignored everywhere. Corners are cut. Disaster follows. Sometimes ‘wreckers’ are falsely accused of sabotage. The Banquía dam was a marvel of renewable energy depending only on Nature’s bountiful rain. One day it rained much more bountifully than the planners had bargained for and far, far more people were killed than after Chernobyl. Also with the loss of electric power all the lights went out for many millions of people.

The panic after the Fukushima leaks threatens to have the same effect as the Chernobyl disaster, which led to the ending of programmes for constructing nuclear power stations in many European countries. Only the counter panic over climate change had led these countries to consider returning to nuclear power in the first place. The rational argument in favour of the rapid expansion of nuclear power was won long ago in Europe as well as India. What then is the basis of the Europeans’ phobia about it? The answer to this question must, and indeed

can only, be sought by comparing the differing attitudes towards nuclear power to be found in the various countries of that continent. The Finns, the French, the Slovaks are happy to depend on nuclear energy but in the German speaking countries we find an unbalanced and irrational politics of risk.

These fears are strongest in Austria, which voted in 1978 against having nuclear power stations at all. Not content with this, the Austrians even libel and try to interfere in the nuclear policies and programmes of their Slovak and Czech neighbours, whom they still seem to see as mere inferior colonial subjects of the old Austrian empire, as racially inferior Slavs. In 2008 the Czech ambassador made a strong official protest about a film on Austrian state television denigrating his ‘mendacious’ government’s response to an utterly fictitious accident in the Czech nuclear reactor in Dukovany near the Austrian border. Imagine the indignation in India if the BBC were to have made such a doom-laden programme about the nuclear power plant at Kakrapar in Gujarat, particularly if the story were then taken up in Pakistan.

In the cold January of 2010 the Russians cut off gas supplies to the Slovaks and they urgently needed to start up a nuclear plant that had international but not EU approval. The Austrians strongly opposed this, taking the view that the wretched Slavs could freeze. The Austrian paranoia about radiation is all the more odd because many of them go to relax and inhale in the ‘Curative Tunnel’ in the spas of the Gastein valley near Salzburg, an old deep mine working full of radon, a radioactive gas. No doubt it is one more proof that a short exposure to low-levels of radiation is harmless and even beneficial but these same Austrians panicked when low levels of post-Chernobyl radiation were found in wild-boar meat in a supermarket. If they were to eat huge Teutonic helpings of it four times a day for a hundred and fifty years, it just might do them some harm. Their keenness to inhale ‘nature’s good radon’ underground is the clue to their irrationality, which is rooted in a dichotomy between an ignorant almost animist nature worship and a fear of the modern, the artificial, and indeed in the past ‘the Jewish’. Nature’s radioactivity is good but man’s is harmful even at the same dose level. How absurd can you get?

The same primitive nature worship is to be found in Germany, even manifesting itself in a love of nudist camps and the absurd Karlsruher Nacktradeltour (naked cycle tour), where the sun provides skin cancer for people far paler skinned than any sky-clad *digambara*. The obsession with the metaphysical superiority of the natural in Germany came out in their highly politicized outrage and panic in the 1980s about the *Waldsterben*, the imagined

‘dying of the forests’ in Germany due to evil industrial pollution. Nothing of the sort had ever happened. When forests develop, the trees that grow taller deprive the stragglers of light and they die. Nature green in tooth and claw. The growth of the trees in Central Europe is in fact stronger than ever before. Their current panic about nuclear power has the same unthinking basis.

What, though, has this to do with India? The problem after Fukushima is that the Germans and the Austrians are once again in irrational fear of contamination mode; this will lead them to try to thwart the building of nuclear power stations in other countries, including India, much as they have already done for some time in the poor countries of Eastern Europe. They will try to tie India into international agreements that strangle its nuclear programme and restrict its imports. The trouble-makers in Germany who long before had tried to destroy the German nuclear power industry by direct action and in particular by halting the transport of nuclear materials will now transfer their disruptive activities to other countries including India. They will sneak in as prosperous tourists or pretended adherents of Indian philosophy, then disappear and become foreign agitators in villages near new or proposed nuclear plants. The main problems will stem from

the Germans’ decision not to build any new nuclear plants and to phase out the existing ones and this in a Germany pledged to reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases such as common dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels. There is no way of doing both but in the attempt the Germans, a people singularly adept at constructing machines with moving parts, will create huge new plants for the manufacture of windmills. The entire enterprise will be heavily subsidized by the German tax-payer but this will in turn produce pressure for the manufacturers to sell windmills in other countries such as India. The German salesmen and the politicians behind them will denigrate the Indian nuclear power industry, and pay local journalists to run scare stories. They will try to bribe local politicians so as to influence policy against nuclear and in favour of windmill energy. They will offer soft loans with a distant repayment date. Never trust those whose ideological fervour means that even they cannot recognise when their own actions are self-interested. I am sure a stalwart India will resist.

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Return of Monies Stashed in Swiss Banks

Nagesh Kini

A report from Vienna on October 6, 2011 quotes a Ministry of External Affairs Secretary – “The new tax information exchange treaty is ratified by the Swiss Parliament paving way for obtaining data on black money stashed in Switzerland. It will take effect from January 1, 2012 for Switzerland and April 1, 2012 in India, the respective fiscal year commencements. Now that an official mechanism is in place, it is all the more reason that Indian authorities go out rigorously ferreting out the tax evaders.

With the fall in the values of world currencies, most jittery Indians with monies abroad must be itching to get their hoarded monies to safer conditions back home at any cost. This is the right time for the Government of India to cash in on the opportunity to arms twist the offenders using the carrot and stick approach. This ought to be a last one time ‘*amnesty*’ to be kicked in by imposing penalties strong enough to deter future wrongful acts of violations of tax and exchange laws by conveying a strong message that such acts will result in dire consequences. The final offer should come at a cost that must be severe enough to hurt - the price for legitimizing their long past tax evasion criminal acts.

The UK Treasury envisages *bulk deals* involving flat 50% levy on assets as retrospective fees on unpaid taxes to legitimize the Swiss accounts by calling on the Swiss to tax the bank accounts of British nationals and pass on the money so collected to the UK Treasury without disclosure of names.

The French demanded and collected data from the

offshore banking headquarters of HSBC in Germany. This data was to be made use of in the French Revenue initiative is expected to garner additional revenue of GBP 500mn from approximately GBP 300bn repatriated to France.

The Italians are reported to have disclosed GBP 95bn held in previously undeclared assets under recent amnesties, over 98% was repatriated from assets held offshore that included works of art, sculpture, jewellery, cars and yachts.

The Dutch voluntary disclosure initiative for undisclosed foreign accounts reportedly netted in disclosures of GBP 1bn.

The Indian CBDT ought to draw from the experiences listed above and from other countries to kick in effective measures to forestall further tax evasion and avoidance, subject incomes and wealth to intense scrutiny to reduce tax haven attractiveness.

On the flip side, summing up in his column the Second Opinion for *The Times of India*, entitled *The dollar delusion*, Jug Saraiya asks “Even scarier thought is what happens if – or should that be when? – Mr. *Diwana* (Uncle Sam) officially declares bankruptcy and becomes Mr. *Diwala*? Who then picks up the IOUs, the dollars that are not worth the paper they’re printed on? Mr. *Diwana* is living not only on borrowed money but also on borrowed time. And thanks to him so are we.” (<http://blogs.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/jugglebandhi>).

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The Putin Era Will Not Come to an End – for Now

R. G. Gidadhubli

Presidential election in Russia is scheduled for March 2012. Speculations as to who will be the next president was put to rest with the announcement by the current President Dmitri Medvedev himself at a meeting of the Democratic Party held in the last week of September 2011 of the candidature of Vladimir Putin currently prime minister. Putin in turn supported Medvedev's candidature as the next prime minister – a swapping of chairs!

Leaders of several opposition political parties including the Communist Party, the Yabloko Party and the Just Russia Party who might also contest the presidential election and some civil rights groups and intellectuals have described this arrangement as a mere show by Putin to demonstrate that he is a strong leader, and will remain in power for years to come. Equally important is the fact that he has proved his critics both in Russia and the West wrong who predicted that the Putin era will end.

In this context it is worth understanding current views prevailing in Russia about Putin and Medvedev and specifically the speculation over the leadership issue, and the impact of Putin's policies over the last twelve years he has been in power. Firstly Igor Yrugens of the Institute of Contemporary Development and Yevgeny Gonthankher of the Institute of Global Economy in their article in the Moscow journal *Vedomosti* of July 2011 have argued that Russia would face a massive crisis and social tensions if prime minister Vladimir Putin returned to the Kremlin as president. In their article they have appealed to President Dmitri Medvedev, to declare his intention to seek re-election. Secondly Russia analyst Brian Whitmore in his blog in July opined that Putin was looking for a job as Medvedev would continue as president for the second term. Thirdly, during the last few months there were conjectures to the effect that the Putin-Medvedev tandem, which has been ruling Russia in the last three plus years had developed cracks. This was partly based on reports of disagreements between Putin and Medvedev on some vital issues including economic policies, the independence of the judiciary, the democratic system in Russia, human rights situation, and the role of foreign companies in the Russian economy. In an article in the Moscow paper *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* of 28th July 2011, Gleb Pavlovsky of the Effective Politics Foundation pointed out the tensions that existed between the teams of the two leaders that had surfaced in recent months and the impatience it had generated in Russian society. There is also a prevailing view that a section of opposition party leaders, elite and the intelligentsia seem to be getting restless about the present state of affairs.

In this connection it is worth noting that while Putin's popularity has suffered that of Medvedev has increased partly due to certain initiatives taken by him. As president of Russia Medvedev has offered policy directives on certain domestic and foreign policy issues which appeal to some Russian political groups. For instance, Medvedev has favoured the relaxation of restrictions on certain political parties, sections of the media and human right organizations that Putin had imposed.

It is worth recalling Mikhail Gorbachev's remarks in his interview to *The Guardian* in August 2011. He accused Putin of castrating democracy in Russia and obstructing Medvedev's program of modernization. On the economic front Medvedev has emphasized the need for diversification and modernization of the economy as against the over-emphasis on the energy sector by Putin and lack of economic diversification. On the foreign policy front Medvedev has succeeded in improving political and economic ties with the West and with the USA which had suffered at the hands of Putin.

Despite these shortcomings, Putin who is a powerful leader has fought back for his career objectives. Despite some of the accusations by critics, Putin has his justification for policy decisions he had taken from time to time. Moreover, he has also taken several measures as prime minister in the last three years which clearly show that he is still holding the fort. Firstly, on allegations of strong policy measures he adopted about a decade back, Putin undertook his policies for the stability of the country, which was his utmost priority when Russia's stability was threatened by conflicts in Chechnya and in other parts of the country. Putin did not hesitate to take authoritarian measures a decade earlier to fight against forces of regional separatism to stabilise Russian society. Similarly, he has been frank in his statement that strong economic policies were necessary including state control over the economy since some oligarchs were ripping the country of its natural resources. At the same time Putin proved to critics that he abided by the rule of law and that he did not violate constitutional provisions when, at the height of his popularity, he stepped down as president in 2008. This

was unlike in many post-Soviet states where presidents changed their constitutions to continue as presidents.

Putin has been shrewd in his reactions to Medvedev's policy initiatives and has supported the need for modernization and diversification of the economy. Russia's defense industry sector has been strengthened in the last couple of years with huge investments in modern technology. His social measures include enhancement of the salaries of workers and state employees to partly compensate for the rising cost of living due to current levels of inflation. While exerting strong control over the bureaucracy he has severely criticized it for corruption that is rampant in the country. Putin, apart from his hold on defense and security agencies, has also managed to bring into his fold a section of oligarchs including Abramovich of Sibneft Oil Company,

Thirdly, on the issue of the effectiveness of the 'Putin-Medvedev Tandem', it needs to be noted that there are two camps among the ruling class in Russia one is the Kremlin camp loyal to president Medvedev and the other one loyal to prime minister Putin. Both the camps play crucial role in policy making in contemporary Russia. According to some political analysts, the Kremlin Camp has stalwarts such as economic advisor Arkady Dvorkovich, finance minister Kudrin and some technocrats while the other camp has deputy prime minister Igor Sechin and a group of Siloviki (pushers) loyal to Putin. There are differences between the two camps on various issues including perceptions on social-political developments in the country, path of economic development and so on. In fact speculation about rifts and differences in the 'Tandem' have emanated more from the two camps rather than directly from either Medvedev or Putin. It is quite possible that these views are expressed not without the consent or knowledge of their bosses. In fact even in the midst of speculation by critics, Putin surprised the media in August 2011 declaring that the 'Tandem' was intact. Medvedev fully supported Putin's statement dismissing speculation about rivalry between them. At the same time Putin openly admitted that he had differences with Medvedev on certain issues, which are resolved in a competitive spirit and differences have been overcome which have strengthened their long relationship. In fact what is operating in Russia is 'Managed Pluralism' through Putin-Medvedev 'Tandem'.

Differences in perceptions and approaches between Putin and Medvedev are understandable considering the fact that they come from different backgrounds. Putin is from the Security Services; he served in the KGB before the breakup of the Soviet Union while Medvedev is from the class of intellectuals. But both studied in the same institute in former Leningrad (now St. Petersburg). Though

Medvedev is younger than Putin by a decade they were former colleagues. In fact it was Putin who inducted Medvedev in his Team. It is also worth noting a report by RIA in April 2011 indicating Putin's statement that both Putin himself and Medvedev could be candidates in the race for presidency which led to so much speculation. Putin's dominant role is also evident from the fact that he made Medvedev sack one of his Kremlin officials who made a premature announcement in June 2011 that Medvedev would contest the presidential election in March 2012.

Fourthly, as a damage control exercise Putin has undertaken several measures to prop up his image and popularity. This is evident from the fact that in July 2011 Putin floated the Popular Front (PF) to reach out to civil society, human rights groups and a wider section of Russian society. It is too early to conclude how far Putin will succeed in his efforts to get the support of the Russian people at large for his PF. While it is intended to be a liberal platform, there is vagueness as to how it operates in the prevailing political structure. Putin can certainly count on his United Russia party which is the largest party in the *Duma*.

Fifthly, a large section of Russians are aware that Putin deserves the credit for pulling Russia out of political uncertainties and economic crises within two or three years of his taking office from Yeltsin in 1999. Russia underwent a decade of crises under Yeltsin's presidency when there was lack of coherence and consistency. They were also not against Putin's assertive policy measures targeting the group of oligarchs who became super-rich in the 1990's by ripping Russia's natural resources. Hence a large section of the Russian population including the middle and lower class might support Putin as a strong leader since social and political conditions both in Russia and the neighborhood states are not totally normal and stable.

In view of what is stated in the foregoing Putin does face several challenges to ensure that his strategy and policies succeed in reasserting Russia as a major power. He has abundantly demonstrated that he is a strong leader who will win the next presidential election which means that the Putin era will not come to an end. At the same time he has declared that he will support Medvedev as the future prime minister and ensure that the 'Tandem' will continue to rule Russia in the years to come.

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Revamping Imperial Kannauj

As an Aromatic Destination

Jyoti Marwah

Aromatic(s) is as old as human civilization. In a fragrant environment the human mind experiences heavenly bliss with psychological, physiological and physical comfort. Use of aromatic substances began with the application of pastes of flowers, leaves and barks for healing. This gradually led to understanding the medicinal value of plants for varied applications.

Even before the Aryans laid down written records the people of the Indus Valley Civilization had developed the art of distillation. This has been revealed by archaeological studies carried out in the Sindh province of Pakistan.

The development of perfumery and aromatics continued during the Vedic period. The classic literature of Ayurveda mentions attar of Rose and calamus. This indicates that distillation of rose and other attars was known in the Vedic Period.

The art of making 'attars' and 'floral waters' had become well established, particularly during the Gupta period. Kannauj¹ became the biggest centre and has gone down in history as its ruler Harshawardhan for the first time imposed a tax on vetiver grass (*khus*).

Under the Mughals, centres developed at Ghazipur, Jaunpur and particularly Kannauj. Today, Kannauj is compared to Grasse in France. Also, during the Mughal period, attar manufactured at the 'Gandhian mohalla' of Kannauj, used to be sent to Delhi for the Emperor's use. Under Jahangir, an official was appointed named as 'khushbu-daroga' who would supervise and arrange for the proper use of attar.

The art of making 'attar' revolves around fixing the aroma of flowers on sandalwood oil. Attars are manufactured in 'degs' in which the plant charge is placed. These are direct fire-heated stills and their capacities can range from 10 to 160 kilos of floral or herbal material and the lid of the still is called 'sarpos' which is made up of copper having opening for one or two receivers. The receiver is called 'bhapka', which acts as a condenser. This receiver is built of copper², is round in shape and has a long neck. The still and the 'bhapka' are connected with a 'chonga' which is a hollow bamboo pipe³ wrapped with twine for insulation. The receiver contains the base material on which the aromas are fixed and is kept in a small water tank for condensation. The mouth of the

receiver is sealed with a coarse cloth. The still is heated from below by lighting a fire and the temperature and speed of distillation is controlled by regulating the fire. Managing the still is a highly skilled job and the operator called 'dighaa' by experience can match the boiling in the still and condensation in the receiver. When the desired quantity of vapours has condensed, the technique involved requires the use of a wet cloth around the body of the still for temporary pause in distillation. Traditionally, leather bottles were used for storage because by the principle of osmosis, moisture would evaporate from the leather membrane leaving behind a clear liquid. The 'attar' industry survives till today in Kannauj.

Thus heritage and culture do not exist in a vacuum but are a part of the environment where people live, work, and develop new infrastructure. Many a time this threatens the cultural resources which have had a long existence and are intertwined with culture. The ancient aromatic culture of attars or *ittarz* was once associated with the ruling and royal classes who were the elite. It was the prized preserve of kings, queens and the aristocracy. The Common man had no access to it as it was a very expensive commodity and a prerogative of those in power.

Today, India is one of the largest producers of essential oils and has a well established position internationally. However, the threat is to the heritage industry of attar, which is struggling to survive under the threat of modernization, urbanization and globalisation. Attars (an ancient cousin of essential oils) are original perfumes created through the process of distillation. Today, it is a fading culture. IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) laws are a constant threat to tradition knowledge and culture; if not fiercely protected.

The city of Kannauj has had a long history of aromatic culture, being rooted in the family business for generations. Each family had a unique formula which was maintained as a well-guarded secret. However in the face of growing technical advances and urbanization there is

a growing threat to this culture. Inversely, the fading heritage is affecting the unique fabric of the city of Kannauj. The city lies abandoned and forlorn.

Today it is a lost art forgotten with the passage of time.. Plant material is in short supply, tissue culture and hybrid cultivars are a direct threat to the medicinal attributes of attars. Land has become the most sought after commodity and fast growing infrastructures will soon obviate the existence of such valuable and vulnerable cultures of the past.

Also, there is a diminishing demand due to a declining market, as those who patronized attars may have found other alternatives and substitutes. Inversely falling standards in quality produce so as to make it a common mans product and enlarge the market could also be the reason for the declining market. Aerosols have proved to be a popular mass product despite its anti-sustainable properties. Those in the business may have also moved to better and more profitable options. Therefore the need has arisen to document the status of the industry today very urgently.

In spite of the pursuance of the millennium development goals the worst affected are such traditional

industries which are dependent on local expertise and availability of greens as the major raw material ingredient.

Government intervention for providing a safety net and provisions for promoting and expanding the economic value of this valuable resource is a must, along with the revival of the grandeur of Imperial Kannauj. If done well India's Kannauj could become the coveted Grasse of the East and a major tourist destination.

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(Footnotes)

- ¹ The oldest known name of Kannuj is 'Mahodaya Shri' because of its grandeur and prosperity. The city was also known as Gandhipur, Kushahasthali, Kanyakubja, Kusumpur, Shahabad and Zafrabad during later periods.
- ² Copper was used as the main structural material because it is malleable and easy to repair, it is a good conductor of heat and no specialized welding equipment is required to repair worn-out or damaged copper vessels.
- ³ As there is no fixed distance between the still and the receiver, bamboo pipes were used to connect them. The bamboo pipe could be shortened and was cheap and easily replaceable.

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BOOK REVIEWS



RATIONALIST SPEAKS ... by Justice R. A. Jahagirdar (Retd.)* ● Rationalist Foundation, C/o. T. B. Khilare, RH\$, Raj vimal Terrace, Ramnagar Colony, Bavdhan, Pune 411021 ● 2010 ● pp 208 ● Not for sale.

Reviewed by Prabhakar Nanawaty, President of the Rationalist Foundation and editor of Thought & Action, an e-magazine, the official journal of the Maharashtra Andhshraddha Nirmoolan Samittee, India. Email: pkn.ans@gmail.com

As brought out in his introduction to the book Dr. Narendra Dabholkar says humanity is inundated by religiosity and the sane voice is almost unheard within the maddening din and clamour generated by *irrationalism*,

about rationalism, tracing the historical aspects right from the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle to Charles Darwin in the 19th century. He emphasizes how religion and superstition went hand in hand suppressing Reason throughout known history. He illustrates the role played by Reason with reference to Galileo, Copernicus, Edward Jenner, Charles Darwin among others. He refutes claims made by astrologers. He describes in a nutshell about the charges made against rationalism like rationalism alone cannot solve all the material problems, rationalists lack imagination, lack morality, lack emotions and so on. This article is an eye opener to any one who has a false image of rationalism.

fundamentalism, and religiosity. However the author Justice R. A. Jahagirdar (Retd.) was not discouraged by the polity of government, media and social environment which are contributing to this madness at times verging on fanaticism.

Rationalist Speaks... is an anthology of articles written by Justice R. A. Jahagirdar (Retd.) on subjects like social progress, right to know, death sentence, controversial topics like Burkha, Talaq, polygamy, uniform civil code. As a rationalist, the author makes us realize that the issues under discussion have multifaceted dimensions. There are no straight answers to the issues involved. But considering the present circumstances, the solutions suggested by the author appears to be rational and reasonable.

The author explains in lucid terms what rationalism means while addressing a gathering of public school students. He refers to the definition by the Rationalist Association of UK which defines Rationalism as 'a mental attitude which unreservedly accepts the supremacy of Reason and aims at establishing a system of philosophy and ethics verifiable by experience independent of arbitrary assumptions or authority.' So a scientist, being (almost) a rationalist discovers the truth for the benefit of humankind. Most of the articles in the book have an undercurrent explaining various aspects of rationalism and scientific philosophy.

The very first article 'Rationalism and Social Progress' takes us through the various schools of thought

The anthology contains brief biographies of Buddha, Socrates, Galileo, Ingersoll, Annie Besant, Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar, John Stewart Mill, R. D. Karve, and H. Narasimhaiah, Rather than mundane biographical details the author examines their rationalist views, their courage to swim against the current and expose inequality, orthodoxy, the inhuman treatment of women and the downtrodden, and their opposition to basic social reforms.

While describing Buddhism, the author points out that 'Buddhism in one sense is not a religion. Every religion in the world has a god or gods and believes in some super being. but Buddhism has none... Basically or essentially Buddhism is a guide to an individual though it encourages *Sanghas*.' The author points out that different countries have different kinds of Buddhism and wonders why not one for India based upon Ambedkar's book on Buddhism?

Justice Jahagirdar tells us that Vidyasagar, in great mental agony once cried and said "Oh Hindu woman, why were you born in this wretched country?" On the wall of the office of H Narasimhaiah one could see these words of Einstein "Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds". While commenting in his article 'Mill on Liberty' the author advises the present generation of students, professors and politicians to read and remember the teachings of Mill in their daily personal and public life.

* Justice Jahagirdar passed away on 23rd February 2011. *Freedom First* paid tribute to this outstanding humanist in its issue of April 2011.

Raghunath Dhondo Karve, a pioneer on sex education in India and a hard core rationalist is the son of the legendary Dhondo Keshav Karve, the activist fighting for women's education, widow marriage etc. It is surprising that this father and son duo are not much known outside Maharashtra. R. D. Karve was prosecuted number of times for articles which appeared in his Marathi magazine *Samaj Swasthya* where he used to write on topics like family planning, sex education, necessity of abortion, prostitution and sexual hygiene. R. D. Karve was also the editor of the English magazine *Reason*, (published between 1934 and 1941) the official journal of the Rationalist Association of India based in Mumbai. The author feels that it is unfortunate that no serious and in-depth study of R. D. Karve's writings has been made. R. D. Karve has left behind a wealth of writings and correspondence which display a keen interest in rationalism while handling the innumerable subjects dealt by him. In fact Justice Jahagirdar feels that R. D. Karve is the only true heir of Gopal Ganesh Agarkar, a contemporary of Lokmanya Tilak and editor of the Marathi magazine '*Sudharak*'.

Dr. Hosur Narasimhaiah, scientist, educationist and a rationalist, was a good friend of the author. He regrets the fact that 'HN' confined his activities to Karnataka. Had he moved to the national scene, it would have benefited the cause of rationalism and scientific attitude throughout the country.

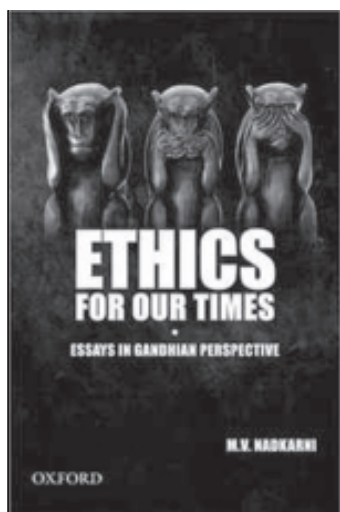
As a studious scholar of Muslim religion and society, the author omments on issues like polygamy among Muslims, the tradition of Burkha, the method of divorce Talaq, Talaq...According to him there are several misconceptions about the many marriages of Prophet

Muhammad. If one goes strictly through the verses of the Quran and interprets them properly, one may find the verses are in fact pro monogamy. The Prophet was famous for his honesty and fairness. Muhammad did not marry because of carnal desire. On the contrary he was very faithful to his first wife Khadija who supported him when he was mentally disturbed. Muhammad was grieved by her death. The author explains the Prophet's later marriages, after the death of Khadija, many with war widows. According to him the Burkha for Muslim women is not a religious mandate as claimed by the fundamentalist Mullahs and Moulvis. Referring to the social practices of many Muslim countries he asserts that there is no uniform practice of wearing Burkhas.

Subjects like human rights, minority rights, are very dear to the author. His articles on Minority Rights, Uniform Civil Code and Article 370 are thought provoking.

While discussing corruption in India the author comments on how the ancient India of Rishis and saints has become the most corrupt nation of the world. According to author "Right to know" in the broader sense is the right to acquire knowledge and no impediments should be placed in the way of that right. He discusses in detail how the law relating to official secrets is being misused by the bureaucracy to prevent the flow of information.

As a retired Judge the author is fully aware of the mindset of judges and as such he comments on fraudulent behaviour of some of the judges in the article "Judging the Judges".



ETHICS FOR OUR TIMES - ESSAYS IN GANDHIAN PERSPECTIVE by M. V. Nadkarni ● Published by Oxford University Press. <http://www.oup.com> ● 2011 ● Pp.288 ● Hardback ● Price.Rs.650. (The book is available on Flipkart, E-bay and several other websites in India and abroad).

Reviewed by: Gopinath Mavinkurve, freelance writer occasionally contributing to newspapers - usually *The Times of India* humour column in the edit page and middles of newspapers like *The New Indian Express* and some magazines. He blogs at <http://whatnonsanz.blogspot.com/>

The author Mangesh V. Nadkarni is an Honorary Visiting Professor, Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru - a former ICSSR National Fellow and Former Vice-Chancellor, Gulbarga University. Author of several books

including "Hinduism: A Gandhian Perspective" ; "Social Science Research In India."

The book is an analytical treatise containing essays delving into the relevance of Gandhian thought in negotiating with contemporary dilemmas. Critically examining conventional notions of good and bad, it presents a comprehensive analysis of ethics as a conceptual framework and guide to the problems of rapidly

Chancellor, Gulbarga University. Author of several books

globalizing societies. The author explores issues related to economic development, social environment, humanism, culture and religion in the context of modern ethical aspects like social justice, equity, and harmony across different sections in societies. He stresses the need for a holistic approach to resolve moral questions in everyday life. In these scholarly dissertations presented in 9 essays, the author cites several thinkers from ancient philosophers to contemporary commentators of repute such as Amartya Sen, Ramachandra Guha, Gurcharan Das, Vandana Shiva and several others of international repute, to support the arguments put forth. Balancing Western notions of the ethical and the Hindu notions of Dharma, the author analyses Gandhi, the thinker, activist, and philosopher. He presents an engaging connection between three systems of thought – ethics, Gandhian principles, and the Hindu scriptures.

This book presents deep insights into the principles that the Mahatma stood for and lived by. To quote V. M. Rao, who has written the Foreword to this book: “This book makes an admirable attempt to explore the building blocks needed to construct such a wide agenda. He is uniquely qualified for this task as a leading ecological economist, who has worked extensively and in-depth on the developmental issues relating to the poor and marginalized subsisting in locations with degraded resources and vulnerable to frequent disasters such as droughts and floods.... Nadkarni pursues these dicta to their roots, going deep into Gandhian thought and vision for mankind. What distinguishes his approach is that he is a social scientist turning to Gandhi for guidance and not a Gandhian, who is usually prone to accepting Gandhi as an authority on all issues and problems.” V. M. Rao concludes with this recommendation: “I recommend the book to all those who are worried about ‘Today’ and wish for a peaceful and prosperous ‘Tomorrow’. Gandhi can help if and only when we are willing and even eager, to help ourselves.

In the essay titled “Ethics, Environment and culture”, the author discusses different approaches to the environmental problems like climate change, pollution of air, water and soil, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, shortage of vital resources like water and energy in the light of rapid industrialization and our tilted sense of ‘development’ which is construed to mean building dams, power plants, quoting Vandana Shiva’s deep feelings for the need for protection of natural resources and water bodies. Nadkarni balances the inevitable advancements of industrialized infrastructure projects, by suggesting two approaches – one, by using technology to reduce pollution per every unit of produce from the intended project and

two, the Gandhian way of reducing wants, particularly of the type which consume large amounts of energy. But ground realities are far from these noble intentions, industries are known to turn on their effluent treatment plants upon sighting Pollution Control Board officials, while surreptitiously letting untreated waste into our rivers – even the Holy Ganga is not spared, although on an auspicious day one may bow reverently before it! Such is the paradox - our teachings and our thoughtless worldly behaviour! Nadkarni steers clear of vindictive attacks on the functioning (or otherwise) of government bodies, while subtly bringing out this dichotomous behaviour, in his inimitable style.

Apart from the stated Gandhian perspective, the author also presents a couple of essays delving deep into the foundations of Hinduism and how ethical behaviour had been a predominant part of early Hindu thought as is evident from the scriptures – The Bhagwad Gita, the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana, the Puranas, the Vedas and the Upanishads. Our actions, thoughts, knowledge, acts of philanthropy – each of these can be either *satvik*, *rajasik* or *tamasik* as has been amply demonstrated in the essays presented in this book. A donation made without any expectation with due respect and regard to the receiver is *satvik*, one made for the sake of gaining importance or popularity in society is considered *rajasik*, while one given grudgingly and with contempt to the receiver is *tamasik*, as has been mentioned in the ancient Hindu scriptures. This very tenet of life shows how purity of mind and thought is necessary although all these are acts that may be perceived to be acts of kindness in society.

I am sure that the subjects covered in this book will appeal to readers of *Freedom First*. The essays have carefully avoided being preachy or suggestive of wanting to change the world or even to influence the reader to change for the better – what I intend to convey is that it is not a self-help book, but merely presents various teachings from writings of yore that stand the test of time and become relevant to readers even to this day. A truly well-researched study on the subject, presented in a lucid language, for those readers interested in such analytical essays on moral philosophy. The book has global appeal, having been published in 2011 - the current times being of moral turbulence and depravity. Can we not find the relevance of this topic in such times, when societies in several parts of the world are sinking lower in their credibility, dependability and reliability leading to a crisis of morality with its awful social and financial behaviour in public life every passing day?

Freedom First

Digitisation Project

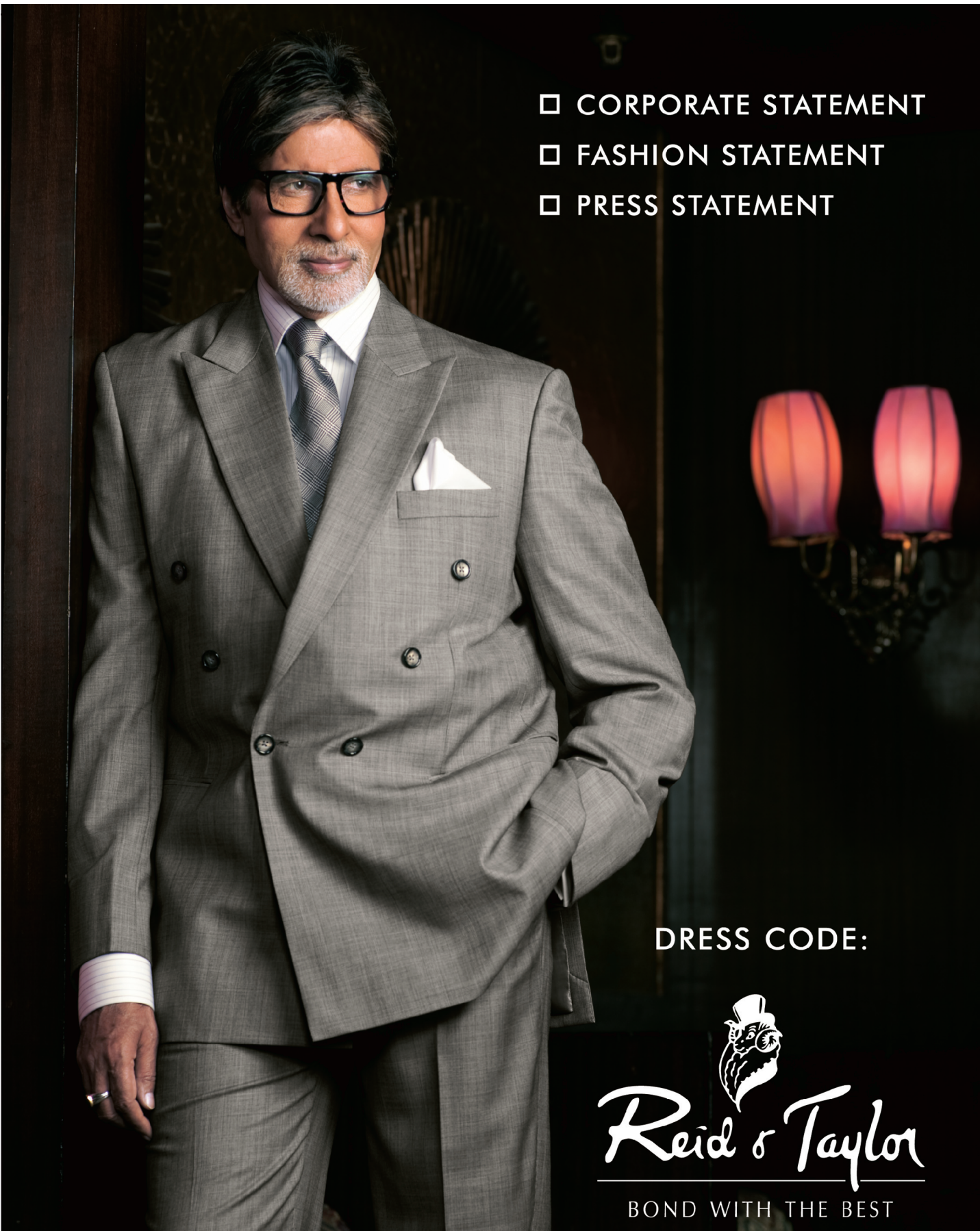
Freedom First, which began publication 59 years ago, was founded by the late Minoo Masani, author and MP, at a time when free India was just five years old, World War II had ended and the Cold War had begun. As a participant in India's freedom struggle he shared the vision of the leaders who had led us to freedom that, with independence, our country would launch towards the winning of a new world - the creation of a new society, secular in its foundation, ensuring liberty of thought, belief and action and the realization of economic and social justice for all the citizens of the free republic.

This vision ***Freedom First***, has steadfastly adhered to, even when it was politically incorrect or 'unpopular' to speak up for liberal values not to mention liberal economics. Our primary aim has been and continues to be to inform, analyse and educate our readers whether in the context of the not so recent past be it on the real nature of Soviet Communism, its inhuman treatment of dissent; of the fifth column that it created in the form of communist parties organised internationally including India; issues of governance; the onset of corruption as the licence-permit-quota-raj tightened its stranglehold on the economy; the Planning Commission which was patterned on the Soviet Gosplan and which inevitably led to wrong priorities e.g. the emphasis on heavy industry to the neglect of rural India in general and agriculture in particular; a lopsided foreign policy in the guise of non-alignment; and the growing trend towards too much government and too little citizenship. The list can go on.

We propose to digitise the entire set of 530-plus copies of ***Freedom First*** (1952 -2011) reflecting the times they were written by men known for their integrity and competence. We are also digitising ***Quest***, a bi-monthly journal of enquiry, criticism and ideas, which was also published by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF) between the years 1956 and 1976. Outstanding litterateurs, poets, writers and academics were its editors and contributors. ***Quest*** had to shut down in 1976 during the 'Emergency' due to difficulties with the Censors. Between the two, digitising involves over 19,000 printed pages of ***Freedom First*** and 2000 pages of ***Quest***.

We look forward to your support in the funding of this project. Cheques made out in favour of "ICCF" will be gratefully accepted. Our address: The Hon. Secretary, Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001. Phone: 022 22843416, 022 66396366. Cell: Hon. Secretary- 9820016392; email: freedom@vsnl.com.

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