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Minoo Masani 90

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A JOURNAL OF LIBERAL IDEAS

EDITOR: M. R. MASANI

THE OPEN SOCIETY

IN 1913, the late Mr. Gopala Krishna Gokhale returned from an extensive tour of Europe and told the members of the Servants of India Society that the people of Europe were living under a strain and predicted an early snap down. Since then men have

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In India, for e ever filled with

BREAD OR FREEDOM?

M. R. Masani

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Rededication

M. R. Masani

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M. R. MASANI

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Mrs. Margaret

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Freedom First that ease to use the politically tain

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IS SOLZHENITSYN RIGHT?

M. R. Masani

REVOKE THE EMERGENCY

Maharashtra Bar Council's Appeal to President

The Bar Council of Maharashtra passed t

following resolution in July 1975:

"The Bar Council of Maharashtra views deep sense of regret the proclamation of gency issued under Article 352 of the on of India proclaimed in the colourab ase of his powers vested in him by the P of India, not for reason germane to Ar. the Constitution, but for reasons

traneous which clearly amount to a vio. road on the Constitutional guarantees of a citizen of India and the Council hereby stro

disapproves the said act with a request

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THE FORTY-SECOND MUST GO

Lock, Stock and Barrel

M. R. Masani

ment pertaining to the items in dispute, some out of eleven of these were upheld by the Court and some have been published in our March issue. Even now, we desist from publishing passages from the Judgement dealing with two items who publication the Court has not permitted since Judgement must be removed from these two

THE LADY AND THE TIG

M. R. Masani

Yitzhak Rabin - The Peacemaker

Yitzhak Rabin, the Prime Minister of Israel, was assassinated on November 4, 1995. He was gunned down by a university student with extremist leanings. "That the assassin was a Jew and an Israeli was beyond the comprehension of the people of Israel" wrote *Israel Today*. When Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu and an Indian, it was equally incomprehensible. Both show up the evil face of religious fundamentalism and why both men died at the hands of religious fanatics.

Yitzhak Rabin was 73 years of age at the time of his assassination. Born to Russian born parents, Rabin volunteered for the Palmah to fight British rule in Palestine. He was a freedom fighter. He participated in several Palmah operations in Israel's war of independence. After independence, he served in the Israeli Army. He led Israel's forces in the Six-Day War in 1967 that ended with Israel's victory and the capture of East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. Yitzhak Rabin left the military in 1968 and was appointed ambassador to the United States. On his return to Israel in 1973, he was elected to Israel's parliament the Knesset, as a member of the Labour Party and was appointed labour minister in Golda Meir's Cabinet.

In 1974, when Israel fared badly in the Yom Kippur War, Golda Meir stepped down and Rabin succeeded her as Prime Minister. In 1977, he resigned as prime minister when a controversy erupted over his wife Leah's illegal US bank account.

Seven years later, he returned to government and served for six years as defence minister in Labour-Likud coalitions. Replacing Shimon Peres as leader of the Labour Party, Rabin led his party to victory and became prime

minister in 1992. Next year, he signed the joint Declaration of Principles at the White House in Washington and, two years later, on October 26, 1994 signed the formal peace treaty along with Arafat and King Hussein of Jordan ending a 46-year state of war. That year, Yitzhak Rabin was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize together with Arafat and Peres.



Prime Minister Rabin was shot and killed from behind as he was about to get into his car after participating in a peace rally at Tel Aviv on November 5. Here are excerpts from his speech at the peace rally:

"I was a soldier for 27 years. I fought as long as there was no prospect of peace. I believe that there is now a chance for peace, a great chance, which must be seized...

"Violence is undermining the foundations of Israeli democracy. It must be rejected and condemned and it must be contained. It is not the way of the State of Israel. Democracy is our way...

"Peace is not just a prayer. It is at first a prayer, but it is also the realistic aspiration of the Jewish people...

"We have found a partner in peace among the Palestinians as well - the PLO which was an enemy and has now forsaken terrorism.. There is no painless way forward for Israel. But the way of peace is preferable to war..."

Freedom First salutes a fighter for freedom. A true Gandhian, who sought the non-violence of the brave and who gave up his life because he believed that "peace is preferable to war."

WITH MANY VOICES

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

A Polish Primer on Reform: Privatize, Commercialize, Temporize.

Leszek Pawlowicz, *Economic Reform Today*,
Number One, 1995.

As Prime Minister Bhutto's speech in Beijing eloquently demonstrated, Pakistan is striving to uphold simultaneously principles of Islam and secular democracy.

Robin L. Raphel, US Assistant Secretary for South Asian Affairs,
US Department of State Dispatch, September 25, 1995.

President Clinton modestly announces that we get but one chance in a hundred years to elect someone of his calibre. Just as well, considering the country's chance of surviving two of him.

National Review, October 23, 1995.

They (Western women) ask for abortion rights; we ask for safe drinking water and basic health care.

Ela Bhatt at the Beijing Conference
on Women, *Time*, September 11.

We don't wish to undermine their (Western women's) causes, but we have far more critical concerns than lesbian rights.

Ayesha Khanam, Bangladesh Women's Council, at the
Beijing Conference on Women, *Time*, September 11.

If Thackeray as a political cartoonist could lampoon a personality, why not a writer?

Vijay Tendulkar referring to the Shiv Sena's and their leader
Thackeray's demand for a ban on Salman Rushdie's
latest book 'The Moor's Last Sigh,'
Time, September 11.

Certainly we have a great deal to gain in our continuing relationship with China, but the cost of that relationship should not be the freedom and security of the Tibetan people - it's unconscionable.

Harrison Ford, *Tibetan Review*, October 1995.

So far the only clear lesson to come out of the U.N. women's conference in Beijing is that China is run by a band of ill-mannered male chauvinist control freaks.

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Time*, September 18.

We have just received an invitation from Delhi (another way of saying HEAVEN) to come for a meeting to understand Technology Absorption from abroad. No technology can be invented or innovated without the white man's approval.

Dr. C. V. Seshadri, *Development Alternatives Newsletter*,
December 1995

The first thing to learn about Switzerland is never to invoke what happens there in an effort to prove any point about any other country.

Wm.F.Buckley Jr., *National Review*, October 9.

I must confess that I found it a lot easier to understand Chandrasekhar and Hoyle than the government of India.

Astrophysicist J. V. Narlikar,
The Times of India, December 13

Courage is the keyword missing from the list of our bureaucratic virtues which includes words like safe, cautious and non-controversial.

Astrophysicist J. V. Narlikar,
The Times of India, December 13

Illiteracy is a women's issue since most of the illiterate are women. But, the sisterhood hasn't got around to thinking about these things because they are too busy gloating over justice done to bottom-slappers. If this is feminism, I am not a feminist, nor do I want to be.

Tavleen Singh, *Indian Express*, December 3.

..we have reached a degree of degradation and corruption when the only way of preserving order is to govern this country through the apex (Supreme) court.

Nani Palkhivala, *The Times of India*, December 3.

The writing is on the wall. No longer is the country's apex court the common man's last resort. Quite often it is the first.

Sabina Saigal Saikia, *The Times of India*, December 3.

When the executive, including the Prime Minister, chief ministers and councils of ministers, abdicate their responsibilities, the only forum left for people is the judiciary.

Former union finance minister, Madhu Dandavate,
The Times of India, December 3

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OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

My Friend Madhu

It was some time in 1952 that I met Madhu Mehta for the first time. I was then working for the correspondent in India for the AFL-CIO's International Free Trade Union News. He was then operating out of the office of the Bombay Pradesh National Trade Union Congress (better known as the BPNTUC) a branch of the Indian National Trade Union Congress or the INTUC. Madhu was working for the BPNTUC and was secretary of some of the unions affiliated to the INTUC.



Madhu and I had a long and close association which lasted for the next twenty years. When the Swatantra Party was founded in August 1959, the Bombay branch of the Party was looking around for a full time Executive Secretary. Both Madhu and I consulted each other and decided to apply on the ground that the selection of either would be as good as the selection of both. After a gruelling series of interviews by such personalities as Mr. A.D. Shroff, Mr. Raja Hutheesingh, Mrs. Dagmar Lynn and finally Mr. Minoo Masani, Madhu was chosen. Both of us were happy. As it turned out, four months later when Mr. Masani was elected General Secretary of the Swatantra Party at the national level, I was asked whether I would be interested in the job. Obviously I was a close second for the earlier position in Bombay!

Madhu who had resigned his full time position after a few years went on to become the President of the Bombay unit of the Swatantra Party. In 1972 he was elected General Secretary of the Party at the national level. As Executive Secretary, he was my chief and I reported to him.

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



Unfortunately, differences arose over the future of the Swatantra Party, which resulted in our being on opposite sides of the fence at a convention of the Swatantra Party in New Delhi in August 1974 convened to decide the party's future. The Convention was of course rigged (though I am sure Madhu had no part in it - I happen to know who was responsible) and a few of us led by Mr. Masani walked out. The Swatantra Party split with one group claiming the party didn't exist and the other to which I belonged insisting it did. The Swatantra party went the way all political parties in India go!

I was deprived the opportunity of being at his funeral when he died on August 27, 1995 as I was confined to bed recuperating from an eye operation. But the news saddened me very much. I had lost a dear friend. Whatever our differences, I shall cherish the memory of this sideburn twirling friend.

Madhu the dreamer and idealist is no more.

Plain English

The editor of the *Swiss Press Review* (SPR) writes on the virtues of writing plain English. I could not agree more, though there have been occasions when I have been guilty of ungrammatical English including the dreaded 'split infinitive'. The qualification "dreaded" is used advisedly. In the many years of my association with Minoo Masani, he has returned drafts of letters or circulars to me admonishing me for falling into the trap of the 'split infinitive' which the American Heritage Dictionary assures me "is not a grammatical error".

This is what SPR's editor writes: "This publication tries to write plain English. Meaning English which is easy to read and understand. That is the criterion for plain English. We prefer short sentences to long ones, and we also prefer short words to long words. Words of Anglo-Saxon origin are usually more effective than those of Latin origin. Often they are shorter too.

"These are preferences not rules. They cannot be followed all the time. There is a great deal of instinct involved: the instinct of the native English speaker. But again not all native English speakers can write plain English. You only have to attempt to understand explanations furnished by the British or American administrations to realise this.

"Non-native speakers do not like this situation. They would like it much better if there were rules which people could learn and then observe. There are some rules, or so we were told when we were at school. Native English speakers often find, however, that the rules depend on where you went to school. Some observe rules that others have never heard of. Now the Oxford University Press would have us believe that even those few rules we did learn should be scrapped. In its latest 'Plain English Guide' most of them are condemned as "schoolroom myths". It is never made clear why this expression applies to the rules of the English language and not, for example, to the rules of mathematics. Perhaps because non-native speakers could check up on the rules of mathematics.

"It is probably rare to find a split infinitive in these pages. Yet the Oxford University Press says these are all right. The Americans have always thought so, and it is true that American expressions have increasingly been brought into the British version of the language. Or the English version of it, as some Brits like to say. Whatever Oxford says, split infinitives will continue to be anathema to these pages. Dictatorial you may say. But living in a non-native country we do not have to ask anyone's permission.

"The Oxford University Press also says that it is now ok to start sentences with 'But'. Regular readers will reply that this has always been the case - here at any rate. The chairlady of the Queen's English Society (in England naturally) does not like sentences beginning with 'But'. However, she added: "But everybody's doing it". Native English speakers think all this is good fun. But non-native speakers hate it. There remains one rule. Do not write anything which sounds ridiculous, whatever other rules you have to break to get the right effect."

Mr. Ian Tickle says that his publication tries to write plain English. Indeed he does. I have found over the ten years that I have been editing *Freedom First* that writing plain English or simple English is not all that easy. Three exponents of writing simple English that come to mind are Mahatma Gandhi, C. Rajagopalachari and Minoo Masani.

While the richness of the English language is due to its capacity to absorb words from other languages which find their way into the pages of the Oxford Dictionary, I am still not able to accept jargon and words that have been torn from their original meaning. When I was told that a dedicated staff has been appointed to work on a task, I assumed that it meant 'devoted' staff. Only later did I learn that it was supposed to mean 'exclusive'.

SVR

The WHO Scam

For a change, it is cheering to turn to the 'global phenomenon'. It appears

that in April 1993, the WHO was found to have laid bare "a series of financial irregularities". An American public relations corporation was given huge payments, obviously not for aid to the Third World. Contracts of a questionable nature were discovered to have been underwritten with a number of companies in which members of the WHO's executive board had a controlling interest.

The Head of Britain's national audit, Sir John Bourne who was the external auditor for the WHO resigned. Ever since his audit had uncovered the contract irregularities, he complained, his staff had faced an increasingly contentious attitude within the WHO recently, ending in a complete withdrawal of dialogue and cooperation. In fact the WHO Secretariat is so angry at Sir John for uncovering irregularities that its members are now refusing to speak to him.

Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, the Director General, has been charged with offering financial inducements to WHO executives before his elections. He has been charged as a racist and attempts have been made to remove him from office.

Of its one billion dollar budget, more than three-fourths find their way to the salaries of its employees. It has been alleged that for every two dollars that is spent on attracting the programme in the field, every eight dollars is spent on administration and printing.

While its outlay on prevention of tropical diseases has been registering a sharp decline, it spent 11 million dollars in its 1994-95 budget for a "smoking prevention programme". It authored a book of 200 pages on an ideal diet - when large part of the population of the third world has access to no diet to speak of. It carried on campaigns of "seat-belt safety" in motor cars in Africa - where the masses trudge and the super rich use cars! For further details see the *Spectator* of 1st May, 1994.

An Encyclopedia on Democracy

Readers of *Freedom First* will be interested in knowing of a new scholarly venture, which of course is not something that every reader will acquire, but will find it always of interest, improvement and edification. This is the Encyclopedia of Democracy in four volumes, brought out by Routledge. Edited by a veteran social scientist who has devoted himself to the study of democracies and authoritarian political systems, S.M. Lipset, it has been helped by a panel of distinguished scholars including Larry Diamond with whose *Journal of Democracy*, many are familiar.

With more than 400 entries, the volumes have lucid and illuminating articles on almost all aspects relating to democratic governance as well as to other related areas. For instance, there are entries on Human Rights, Slavery and Populism; Plato and Ortega & Gasset who had their own reservations on democracy, are covered, as are Gandhi and Nehru. Theoreticians of democracy as different as Lord Bryce and Schumpeter find a place as Sakharov does. New serial developments such as the phenomenon of mass society which has made for us to reformulate our understanding of democracy also merit entries here as do entries on African experiments in this difficult form of governance.

However, do not look for details of election results or of details of political parties and such data which are to be found in Yearbooks and Handbooks. If you get an opportunity to peruse through these volumes, you should not miss it - for it promises hours of instruction and gainfully spent leisure. Curiously, why is it that there are no members on the editorial committee from Third World countries such as India, Malaysia, Japan or Israel. Surely, there are distinguished academicians in these countries who would have contributed to this scholarly venture!

RS

Minoo Masani 90

The task of writing a report on a function held to felicitate Mr. Masani on his 90th birthday was made easy by a report in the Parsiana. Since we cannot improve on that report, we reproduce it in full with our grateful thanks to Mr. Jehangir Patel who, while being the editor of Parsiana, is also the publisher of Freedom First.
- Ed.

The invitation was for 6.30 p.m. but most of the guests started arriving much earlier. At 6.30 on the dot as always, Minoo Masani entered the Royal Bombay Yacht Club hall on November 20, 1995 to celebrate his 90th birthday. As S. V. Raju, editor of *Freedom First*, a journal founded by Masani, jokingly told the gathering of close friends and associates, Masani's insistence on always being on time was not lost on his well-wishers.

Eminent jurist Nani Palkhivala described Masani as "one of the noblest Indians who ever lived" and added that "the country has not recognised the services of a man like Minoo Masani". Palkhivala noted that Masani was probably "the only surviving member of India's constituent assembly". Releasing a volume of essays put together in Masani's honour by K. S. Ven-kateswaran, a former joint editor of *Freedom First*, titled *In the Vanguard of Freedom*, Palkhivala mentioned that contributors to the book like Bernard Levin, Sol Sanders, Soli Sorabjee and others had written "not for money but for Masani".

Palkhivala recalled that Masani

joined the house of Tatas in his 40s as principal secretary to J. R. D. Tata. He said that if Masani had a high regard for a person, he would go all out to assist him. While ending his talk, Palkhivala recited a few oft quoted

devolved the political mantle of Indian liberalism after Masani.

Joshi told the gathering that Masani's book, *Our India* had "made me temporarily a socialist". He said he had been fighting for 15 years "for ideas that are basically those of the Swatantra Party". The Swatantra Party, of which Masani was one of the main architects and its leader in Parliament, advocated economic liberalism at a time when socialism was in favour. "Socialism has been replaced by something worse", lamented Joshi, "the madness of communalism".

Amongst members of the audience who spoke was retired High Court Judge Bakhtavar Lentin who described Masani as a great gentleman and a great fighter who stood by his principles.

A special issue of *Freedom First* titled "Minoo Masani 90" was released by Joshi. The editorial promised "that *Freedom First* which you founded in June 1952 will as long as we are in publication, uphold the liberal traditions and values you cherished and which you

have sought to so tirelessly promote among the Indian people".

Masani thanked the gathering for wishing him on his birthday but said he did not intend to make a speech. And, amidst the singing of Happy Birthday by the assembly, proceeded to cut the birthday cake flanked by his wife Sheela and Palkhivala.



lines that he felt were appropriate for the occasion: "May you live as you want, may you not want as long as you live, and may the happiest days of your youth be the saddest years of your life".

Raju then introduced Sharad Joshi, founder of the Shetkari Sanghatana which has been fighting the cause of the farmers, as the man on whom



Two Fighters for Freedom

Peter Sager & Minoo Masani

During the Cold War, I came across many interesting figures, some of whom have made their mark on history, all of whom did valuable work on behalf of freedom.

I would like to linger for a moment on two of these figures, Minoo Masani and Peter Sager, who were particularly close to me personally. They are both older



than me. Both of them also lived right through the Cold War, which affected them in different periods of their lives than it affected me. I was not in retirement nor indeed about to retire when it ended. We did not believe, as so many others did, that the wealth of experience which we had garnered was no longer needed, that history had come to an end. They had every right to rest on their laurels, and today they are valued elder statesmen. I myself was of an age where I felt very strongly the call to continue the everyday struggle, which explains the crusading element which may be detected in this modest contribution.

Minoo Masani

Minoo Masani devoted the first part of his life to helping obtain India's freedom from Britain which finally came about after the Second World War. This was his formative period. Mahatma Gandhi was his hero. Non-violence was his method. He saw the inside of British prisons three times in the 1930s. But when independence came, he was without resentment. He said later that British rule had its

benevolent aspects for India and identified them as a common language and a common national feeling, together with the rule of law and civil liberties.

Above all, he knew that once freedom had been achieved, Britain was no longer the enemy. It was in nobody's interest to fight yesterday's battle. He said (people who know him imagine they hear him speaking!): "I wanted independence, but after it came, I saw no point in being nationalist any more because its purpose had been served and to be nationalist after freedom means to be a victim of Communist 'neo-colonialist' propaganda', because that is how the communists influence the third world: By making them imagine that their freedom is in danger, which it isn't".

Peter Sager

This is the point where Masani was an influence on Peter Sager and through him on myself. Sager was Swiss, living in a country under constant and real threat from Hitler's Third Reich. Like so many members of his generation, he was determined that what had happened should not be allowed to happen again.

In the same way as Masani was determined to face the undefeated rather than the defeated enemy, these were men who refused to look for nazis under the woodpile after Hitler's Germany had been defeated. It was as clear as crystal that the ruins of the Reichstag contained no present danger; the new



threat was Moscow.

Stalin Replaces Hitler

As one east European country after another fell to communism in the years after the war, there was a fear that in no time at all, Stalin's armies would be on the Atlantic coast, where Hitler's had been such a short time before. Sager's was the youth generation without whose support the statesmen could not have made a success of NATO. Those in favour of containment were of course confronted by others, the dupes of Moscow's propaganda, and this was a battle which was to continue throughout the days of the Cold War. It is still going on in the new era. The truth is that it will never end. Because in its essence, it is the age-old battle between freedom and slavery.

When I left university and came to Switzerland in the 1950s, Sager was in the process of founding the Swiss Eastern Institute, with the objective of contributing to the fight for European freedom at the level of information. He wanted the Institute to have a window on the outside world, and particularly on the third world, which was being confronted with the full force of communist propaganda. It was a period during which Moscow realised it could no longer hope to break through the Iron Curtain into western Europe because NATO was serving its purpose. The only way of making progress towards the aim of world domination was through the third world.

Swiss Press Review

It was with this in mind that Sager asked me, fresh from a post-graduate course in Geneva in which he had been a teacher, to edit an English-language newsletter for the third world, to be called *Swiss Press Review and News Report*.



Minoo Masani 90

It was this which brought together Masani, Sager and myself. The Swiss Eastern Institute has now disappeared, condemned to fail by the victory over communism to which it had contributed, by the retirement of Peter Sager and by its failure to find a new role in the aftermath of the Soviet Union. I am glad to say, however, that *Swiss Press Review and News Report* is still soldiering on, now in its 36th year of publication. I remain its editor as I have been all along, and the evidence shows us every day that the rule of law, civil liberties and human rights are no less in need of defence than they were in the heyday of communism.

Freedom First

Very often I have before me as I write - and I have it before me at this moment - a copy of another periodical which has been an inspiration to me all along the years of struggle. This is *Freedom First*, now in its 43rd

year of publication. It calls itself modestly "A quarterly of liberal ideas". It was founded in Bombay by Minoo Masani in 1952. By 1955, it already had a record of success, and in August of that year, its editorialist penned these words, which I am pleased to echo today: "*Freedom First* has established a tradition of bold and independent thinking and of fearless and dispassionate criticism. From that tradition of which we are proud, there will be no departure. It will be freedom first - and always". I like to hope that these words also apply in some small measure to *Swiss Press Review and News Report*.

A Festschrift for Peter Sager

When Peter Sager retired from leading the Swiss Eastern Institute in 1991, it was my honour as a younger man to edit a *Festschrift* for him. There could be no doubt of the title I would give it. Shameless plagiarism, I am afraid, but there was not doubt at all.

It had to be *Freedom First*. Since this volume is written mostly in German and has virtually no circulation in India, I take the liberty of quoting my foreword here: "The title of this *Festschrift*, *Freedom First*, is intended as a tribute to Minoo Masani, one of the fathers of modern India and a tireless fighter for freedom. Born in 1905, he has been engaged in the struggle for longer than most of us and is still engaged in it. Thirty eight years ago, he founded India's first liberal magazine, *Freedom First*, which has kept the torch blazing through many dark hours. The cause of democracy in India and all over the world owes him a debt which can never be repaid".

This is really true because India was by far the biggest and most populous country in the third world. If it had become a Soviet satellite, this could have had untold consequences for the future. When an enemy has been finally disposed of, it is easy to forget that there were many moments during the struggle when he may have come near to winning. India had a government which had sympathy with communism, and especially during the 1960s Moscow devoted an enormous amount of time and money to trying to subvert the Indian press, which was the traditional method of softening up a country for the day when the communists were ready to take over.

Moscow's Hand in India

This incredible campaign with all its tentacles was outlined with great precision by Peter Sager in his book, '*Moscow's Hand in India*', published in 1966, which I had the privilege of translating into English. Even now it makes fascinating reading, and it is an excellent description of a little known facet of the Cold War. Here is a short extract from its introduction:

"The minimum aim of Soviet propaganda is probably to build up India as a reliable counterweight to

The Much Maligned Anti-Communists

Documents just released in London show the risks that the Labour government was prepared to take to ensure that communism could not take hold in Britain. Clement Attlee, Churchill's successor as prime minister, was facing great danger to the cohesion of his own party. For it contained many communist sympathisers. The Foreign Office set up an Information Research Department, the IRD, whose task was to replace communist propaganda in the British media of the day with the truth about what was taking place in the Soviet Union. It was able to recruit many senior figures of British letters to help in this campaign.

The tone of the Labour government of 1945 was patriotic and freedom-loving, which was not always the case with later Labour governments, especially those of Harold Wilson and James Callaghan. We may compare the reporting of the true picture of life in Russia during those post-war years with Prime Minister Callaghan's refusal in 1977 to meet Vladimir Bukovsky, the courageous Russian dissident who had spent years in prison in the Soviet Union for doing exactly that.

Many of those involved in the Information Research Department are still alive. They

were the up-and-coming politicians and writers of the late 1940s. These are already being condemned in some quarters as anti-communists stooges. There is no truth at all in this. They were the forerunners of many thousands of devoted fighters for freedom across Europe and in many other countries whose work over decades in the field of information did much to undermine the spread of communism.

It is worth mentioning in this connection that August 17, 1945 - almost exactly fifty years ago - was the publication date of George Orwell's '*Animal Farm*', which contained perhaps the most deadly description of communism which has ever been made: "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others". Orwell would never have worked for the government, but the cause was the same.





China in Asia. This is essential work for the Soviet Union if it is to have any success in holding in check its most dangerous competitor in the sphere of international communism ...

"But Soviet propaganda is aiming higher than this. There is also a maximum aim. We find a clear intention to bring India into the Moscow orbit. This is shown not only by the extend of the propaganda effort, but also by its direction - which is not at all that of India's best interests. Soviet propaganda simultaneously brings all its power to bear against India's relations with the non-communist world and urges a type of economic development for which India would in the long run have to pay all too high a price".

At the end of the Second World War, most Indians already realised that their state-to-be would be led by Jawaharlal Nehru, and Masani was fearful for the future because he knew that Nehru, like so many Indians, was an admirer of Stalin. He wrote in the Sager *Festschrift*: "Indian ideas about the Bolshevik Revolution were extremely elementary. Lenin and even Stalin were considered to be idealists, great liberators and lovers of freedom". This was an echo of something he had written in 'Socialism Reconsidered' nearly fifty years earlier when he was mayor of Bombay in 1944: "It is said that in certain parts of the world, when it is still night, the darkness seems to lighten and men are misled into thinking that it is dawn. It turns out, however, that this mysterious light fades again and the night goes on, and it is not till some hours later that the sun actually rises. In time to come, the historian will perhaps describe the Russian Revolution of 1917 as a false dawn ... We live, in Matthew Arnold's phrase,

Between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born".

I like these two lines very much because they seem to speak to our post-Freedom First 8

communist world. We must draw the lessons of history from the Cold War years. This is the purpose of this short attempt to take a stroll among them. In 1945, there was a determined effort throughout the world to ensure that the bad days would not recur, that the mistakes which had made the Second World War possible would never be made again. This effort was successful, and its success was measured by the sudden crumbling of what President Reagan, much maligned at the time but uncannily prescient, called "the evil empire".

New Threats

But it sometimes seems to me that the effort has now come to an end. The will to defend the world against Soviet imperialism was the will to take heed of the lessons of history. Where is that will today? The thirties marked the century's failure to measure up, and it was in the forties that the great decisions were taken which saved the world, first from nazism, then from communism. But if we look at what is happening in ex-Yugoslavia, we see that it is the lessons of the thirties which are being followed, not those of the forties.

The failure of the United Nations to prevent ethnic cleansing, the revival of concentration camps, mass murders and so much of the now traditional paraphernalia of totalitarian dictatorship is not only of local importance, it is a green light for potential tyrants everywhere. It is forgotten that the United Nations Organisation was founded by the allied powers victorious over nazi Germany and militarist Japan. It was not intended to be neutral between good and evil. There seems to be no compatibility at all between what the United Nations is doing in ex-Yugoslavia with the second fundamental aim expressed in the Charter of the United Nations: "To reaffirm faith in fundamental rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person,

in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small". There is a case for saying that if the United Nations is powerless to act, it should not act at all.

Minoo Masani has always swum against the stream. For the simple reason that freedom is rarely a fashionable commodity. I feel I am doing something similar by taking this walk through Cold War days. People do now know about the Cold War. "Communism is dead and buried, we don't want to know. It's old hat". The Swiss Eastern Institute, finding that its goal had been achieved, turned its back on the Cold War and tried to find a role more in keeping with the new order. This was building bridges with the new and upcoming democracies in eastern Europe. It was no doubt a noble aim like so many others, but it had little to do with fighting for freedom. It lacked the breadth of vision of men like Minoo Masani and Peter Sager, who had inspired a generation of thinkers.

The Never-Ending Road

The aim of fighting communism, not defeating it, because we never thought that this would ever come about, in our lifetimes at least, was part of the wider objective of fighting for human rights. Events around the world, throughout the global village, transmitted instantaneously along the information super-highway, show that human rights need as much defending today as they have ever done. The light of freedom does not shine out with the strength which it should have. The job which the Swiss Eastern Institute set out to do, which is still being carried out in some small measure by such publications as *Freedom First* and *Swiss Press Review and News Report*, as well as by many organisations throughout the world, has not yet been completed, will never be completed. The destruction of the Soviet Union, was but a milestone along a never-ending road.

Ian Tickle

October-December 1995



From Marx to Gandhi

What led Masani, a Founder of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP) in February 1934, to join C. Rajagopalachari 25 years later to found the Swatantra Party in August 1959 whose avowed objective was to oppose Pandit Nehru's socialist pattern of society?

The leadership of the CSP was a who's who of India's Socialist leadership - Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan, Yusuf Meherally, Ram Manohar Lohia, Asoka Mehta, S. M. Joshi and Minoo Masani. Interestingly, one more person who claimed to be a socialist but who was not prepared to join the CSP formally was Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who however, blessed the venture. The CSP was, until its conversion soon after independence into the Praja Socialist Party, a pressure group within the Indian National Congress.

Rejects Socialism; Quits CSP

Five years after he helped form the CSP, Masani quit the party and for a while, quit politics until 1942, when he returned to the Indian National Congress and participated in the Quit India struggle. Why did he leave the CSP? He did so because he understood very early the real nature of international Communism directed from Moscow and the tactics of the United Front. But as he was not able to convince his colleagues that the Communists had to be thrown out, he quit the CSP.

Bertram Wolfe, himself a former Communist and author of "Three who Made a Revolution" has, in an article he wrote on Yusuf Meherally, quoted the latter; "Minoo was right of course, although we did not know it then. Some time later when I got out of prison, I discovered that the Communist Party was guilty of double-dealing and had constituted itself as a hostile conspiracy within our movement".

The Stalinist purges of the thirties and the changing attitudes of the Soviet Union to World War II - first when Stalin signed a pact with Hitler, it was an "Imperialist War" and later when Hitler turned on Russia, it became a "Patriotic War" resulted in Masani giving up his admiration for Communism. He may have been the first in India to gain such an understanding of Communism but internationally, he was in the distinguished company of such luminaries as Arthur Koestler, Ignazio Silone and Louis Fischer, who too gave up the "God that failed".

"Socialism Reconsidered"

Masani's rejection of Communism was but the first step in his questioning of some of the basic premises of socialist thought.

Five years after his resignation from the CSP, Masani published an essay entitled "Socialism Reconsidered". He explained, "While World War II and the Quit India campaign were proceeding along their respective paths, I was engaged in intensive rethinking of my own position vis-a-vis the problems of socialism and a free society. Marxism and state Socialism had lost all appeal for me. The question was what philosophy or way of life was to take their place".

He attributed this change of thinking to two factors - "... the failure of the Soviet Revolution to deliver the goods in any sense of the word and the influence of Mahatma Gandhi".

This led him to consider the role of the State in the economy. He was not about to give up the humanitarian aspects of socialism nor look kindly at the exploitative aspects of Capitalism as he then understood it. Introspection led him to the concept of a mixed economy. In a talk at the Bombay University, Masani declared that while

one could not wish away the State, it was possible to give capitalism a human face through practising the Gandhian concept of Trusteeship.

Wrote Masani in his autobiography, *"Bliss Was It in That Dawn..."*

If money power is dangerous, a combination of political and economic power, as in a nationalised economy where the State is the universal employer and the sole producer, will be doubly dangerous to liberty.

He further stated that "the programme of state plus free enterprise is the only practicable programme that any Government of India could adopt".

Masani had completed his travel from Marx to Gandhi; from Socialism to Liberalism. Not long afterwards, Masani was a part of the Liberal International, soon to be its Patron.

Birth of the Swatantra Party

Forty years before the collapse of the Soviet Union, Minoo Masani saw the system as one that had failed though even he could not have predicted the way and speed with which the Soviet Empire broke up. It was fifty years again before the Government of India, no doubt compelled by economic compulsions, gave up statism, aptly labelled by Rajaji as the 'Permit-Licence-Quota Raj'.

Masani realised that his liberal views would need a political vehicle if they were to have a chance of becoming official policy. Rajaji, with whom Masani had earlier crossed swords as a socialist, was his natural ally when the two decided that it was time to give the country a real alternative to the Stalinist system that was leading the country to economic bankruptcy on the one hand and to a system



Minoo Masani 90

where corruption was all pervasive. Thus was the Swatantra Party born.

The rise and fall of the Swatantra Party is a story in itself. Suffice it to say that never before 1962 in free India's Parliament or after 1971 was the liberal point of view so forcefully expressed and recorded. In fact, between 1967 and 1971, the Swatantra Party was the single largest opposition party in the House of the People.

Yet another achievement of the Swatantra Party was that the word Socialism which had become a *mantra* and which nobody dared criticise publicly lost its respectability - long before the Congress party effectively jettisoned the word (even though it continues to disfigure the Preamble of the Constitution of India).

The man responsible for putting Liberalism on the political map of India, more than anyone else, was Masani. It is not given to many to see their predictions come true. Masani is among those fortunate few to see his position vindicated and be around to see it. The only pity is that the party he founded and which championed a free competitive economy is no longer alive at the national level.

Masani's Vision of Liberalism for India

What kind of Liberalism did Masani prescribe for the Indian context?

He felt that Liberalism had come to India after the failure of Socialism and was a fusion of Western Liberalism and Gandhi. In a lecture on 'Liberalism' he observed:

What are these teachings that we graft on to Liberalism or fuse with Liberalism? First, that ends and means are interlinked: that if we want a decent society, our methods must be decent. We cannot create a free and equal

society by expropriation, liquidation, lying, as the Communists claim they can. Secondly, as Gandhiji used to say repeatedly, 'that Government is best which governs the least,' minimum government. The essential thing is to leave the people free. Thirdly, Trusteeship, that those who have the good things of life, those who have wealth must use them for the good of the community. While we have a good time with what we have, we must not be devoid of a social conscience or a sense of social obligation. Gandhiji called it Trusteeship of the rich for the poor. He said: let every rich man use his wealth. Certainly, let him keep it. Nobody should take it away. But let him use it so that he can have a good conscience that he is doing what he can for those around who are not so fortunate.

Last of a Generation

And finally, having been associated with him these last 35 years, I cannot resist concluding this article with out a personal assessment.

Masani quit active party politics in 1971 but continued in public activity till almost 1990 when failing eyesight compelled him to slow down. It is impossible for him to be indifferent when he feels that things in society are not going right. Soon after independence when the communist threat to the country was real and present, he founded the Democratic Research Service which did yeoman work in exposing communist undercover activities. When he was convinced that what the young generation needed was training in citizenship, he started the Leslie Sawhny Programme of training for democracy which is doing excellent work in the furtherance of its objectives. Lately, he got himself into the

middle of a controversy by demanding for the terminally ill their right to ask for withdrawal of life support systems and to die with dignity.

I have often wondered what would have happened if the Swatantra Party had, by some miracle, come to power in Delhi. I am convinced that we would have found Masani, not on the Treasury Benches, but leading the Opposition! Governments compromise and programmes and policies of parties when not in office get considerably diluted when they assume office. In such a situation, Masani might have agreed to a small change here or a minor modification there, but would have refused to compromise on fundamentals and left the Government.

I have yet to see anyone (other than Jayaprakash Narayan) so totally disinterested in office and its perquisites, if it involves sacrificing principles. He proved this by resigning from the Chairmanship of the Minorities Commission when he was convinced that the then Janata government was not serious about the work of the Commission.

Minoo Masani is among the last of a generation of politicians whose passion for integrity and courage of conviction gave politics a meaningful direction. For men like Masani, politics was public service and not a profession. Power to Masani was the means to an end - not an end in itself.

S. V. Raju





The Man Who Saw Tomorrow

Minoo Masani is one person who did not stop fighting for freedom after India got its independence. Mahatma Gandhi's worst fears came true when the Congress government that replaced the British, instead of serving the people, became their masters. His other fear that 'a government is the enemy of the people' also proved true when Jawaharlal Nehru went in for a socialist command economy, which he borrowed from Stalin. This reduced India to bankruptcy and 40 years later the Narasimha Rao government had to finally end the licence-permit-quota raj.

Mr. Masani called it 'liberalisation through bankruptcy' when it happened four years ago. When I met him this time he retorted, "Where is the liberalisation".

Some 10 years ago, while I was still at a school in Darjeeling, and the Queen of the Hills was aflame because of the Gorkhaland agitation, I read an interview of Masani in the 'Imprint' magazine, which said, "Masani has 'swum against the tide'; against the right when he was a socialist, against the communists when he became a liberal, against the British when they governed India, against Nehru, Indira, against the Janata Party and now, against Rajiv's government. At every stage too, Masani has had an alternative in mind, only none of these alternatives has ever been realised".

When I arrived in Bombay for my university education, there was only one person I wanted to meet - Mr. Masani. There were two things that attracted me. One was, of course, the fact that he was the only person, who was in a position to answer the queries that boggled my young mind. Why are the people of the country so poor when India is rich? Why is there such a scarcity

of everything, including railway tickets? Why is there so much violence? The second was the alternative that Mr. Masani had in mind.

Working on a project, I asked him for an interview. Over the phone he asked, "what was the issue? I said, "Economic policies of Jawaharlal Nehru". He replied, "Disastrous".

The next morning at 10 a.m. sharp, I met him at his office at the Army & Navy Building. A small line drawing of C. Rajagopalachari, India's first and last Indian governor general, adorned the wall in his office.

He spoke for more than an hour. It was an education I had not received in all my academic career. As he spoke, the jigsaw fell in place, more so because the Soviet Union was breaking up and the two Germanys were coming together. India was still talking about Mandal and Mandir. Kashmir was in open revolt against the Indian state.

Mr. Masani was a good friend of our first prime minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. Later he became his worst critic. What happened? He replied:

"Till 1948, I was a good friend of Jawaharlal. I used to have breakfast with him every Sunday morning. I thought it was time I educated him about Stalin, so I said, 'I suppose we all need to learn about Stalin'.

Instead of viewing it as something that could be discussed he banged the desk and said 'You think I have no intelligence'?

I said, 'No, Jawaharlal. I know you are intelligent but on this question you are not being intelligent. How can you have a God (Stalin) who is murdering 14 million of his own people. Hitler did not kill as many

Jews. I realised he was unfit to talk to.

I told him, 'you are a nice chap but you are not God'. So it is true that from 1948 to 1963, we never talked to each other, except in parliament."

He said that Nehru got his priorities wrong. "Nehru put heavy industry first, consumer goods second and agriculture last. Soon we began making the most expensive steel in the world".

Despite Mr. Masani's urban background, he has been the only person to speak out against the anti-agriculture economic policies being followed. He quoted Gandhiji, "We will do everything for the villages, except get off their backs".

Mr. Masani said that the sycophants in Delhi called Nehru 'Panditji' and he took this "Panditji to his head". But he also appreciated the finer qualities about Nehru. "Jawaharlal was a democrat. He never took my passport away. By comparison, Indira was horrible".

On the Kashmir issue, Mr. Masani is perhaps the only national leader to admit that the Kashmiris have a right to self-determination. "On August 15, when India got its independence, Kashmir was an independent country. Its accession to India was conditional and Nehru promised a plebiscite".

But he also feels that Nehru was the last person who could have solved the Kashmir problem. "In June '63, President Ayub of Pakistan was coming to India to settle the Kashmir issue permanently. And Nehru died on May 27. I cried not because Nehru died but because he died a month too early".

Along with C. Rajagopalachari,



Minoo Masani 90

India's first governor general, Mr. Masani, founded the Swatantra Party in 1959, which believed in a free market economy for India. It gave the slogan "Farm, Family and Freedom". During the 'sixties, it was this party which helped scuttle the growth of the Jan Sangh, though it recognised their right of existence.

It is Mr. Masani's transition from socialism to liberalism and Gandhisim that many cannot understand. He writes in his autobiography, "When I was a student in England, I met a Conservative member of parliament, who asked me, 'young man, what are your politics'.

I said, "Sir, I am an ardent socialist".

The old Tory patted me on the back and said: "Very good, my boy. You see, if at 21 you are not a socialist, you have no heart. But if at 41 you are still a socialist, it means you have no head!".

It is interesting to note that by the time Mr. Masani was 41 and the mayor of Bombay, he wrote a book called *Socialism Reconsidered*, in which he renounced socialism and declared his Liberal and Gandhian faith. What Mr. Masani wrote then proved accurate 48 years later when the Soviet Union collapsed. *Socialism Reconsidered* was reprinted in 1988.

He likes writing for children as he considers the present set of leaders

as 'prisoners of the past' and rightly so. In this book, he stresses on India going in for renaissance, a reformation. There is no substitute for character and commitment.

The history of this country would have been entirely different if the likes of him had not existed. As he scribbled his autograph on the book *Socialism Reconsidered*, he said: "You know my eyesight is failing me". And yet he has been able to see what others couldn't.

An interview by Mr. Manuwant K. Choudhary, who is the Chief Reporter of *The Afternoon*. This article first appeared in *The Afternoon on Sunday*, November 26, 1995.

Ninety +

I know that I've got one leg in the grave, yet there are so many things I want to do. So many unfinished tasks, so many memories ..."

A glint of brightness in his glazed look tells you Minoo Masani is a man of many vivid memories. But for the grand old man who turned 90 a few days ago, life still holds a great deal of charm and possibilities.

Befitting, then, a book titled *Minoo Masani 90* was released to pay a tribute to a national hero and founder of *Freedom First*. The book, a compilation of extracts from (among others) Masani's previous two books, *Our India* and *We Indians* gives insight to the persona of a living legend.

Of a man who was a public figure, and a politician to boot, who set an example by personal behaviour despite belonging to the notorious tribe of politicians.

Masani is perhaps best remembered for earning a reputation of probity in public life, who scorned

office if it threatened to compromise his principles and who looked upon public life as an opportunity to serve people and not a term for personal aggrandisement.

If the present generation find these qualities farfetched and somewhat untrue, Masani belongs to a refreshingly different breed of politicians who put public interest above all things else.

Quitting public life in 1940, Masani settled down to write *Our India* which was published by the Oxford University Press. "Mr. Hawkins of Oxford encouraged me and I'm glad he did so," says Masani of his book.

Masani remembers his early years working as a Chief of JRD Tata's Office whom he remembers as a reasonable man always striving for perfection. Chucking a good career, Masani gave it up when Gandhiji launched the Quit India Movement.

"I didn't feel differently from most youth then. Many were thinking the same way. We all wanted to give up

a worldly life and court arrest," reminisces Masani.

He too courted arrest and was taken to Yerawada jail in Pune. The cell was full of bugs, and when he brought this to the notice of the Jail Superintendent Barker, police officer. His protest was met with an icy reply from Barker, "If you didn't want bugs, you shouldn't have come to jail". The bugs, of course, were taken care of and the sentence made Masani more spirited than before.

From jail to the successful day when India won her Independence, the flame for freedom burned brightly in his soul. After 1957, it was a glorious career in Parliament where he opened several debates on foreign policy and the Union Budget.

He was elected general secretary, and later president of the Swatantra Party till he resigned over 25 years ago. The only political portfolio he held since was Chairman of the minorities commission.



Minoo Masani 90

His close interaction with many interesting public figures has made him see them from close quarters. While he names Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan and Asoka Mehta as some of the outstanding men he's ever met, his idol in life is the great Mahatma.

"I was immensely fascinated by Gandhiji and his thinking. Can't say the same for Nehru, because I wasn't too impressed by him. Nehru took to Stalin's policies and Stalin was a brute."

Brave words by a braver man. But, he doesn't think that India's history would have changed much had Nehru not become India's first premier.

A witness to the changing face of his country, Masani has been content with drifting away from the limelight for the past three decades. Like all who have hoped and nurtured a different India, he is somewhat disillusioned at the way things stand today.

"We should be more committed and sincere. People have to change their impersonal attitude towards this great country. We should try and improve our national character and not be so selfish", goes his message to the people of India.

Go one must, and Masani finds death as simple as life itself. Though age prevents him from doing many things he'd like to - he sits by his balcony overlooking the sea and goes back in time. But he laments that he can't continue with his first love - reading, "I can't read at all. Bad eyes", he says pointing towards his dilated pupils.

(An interview by Firdaus Ali in *Sunday Mid-day*, November 26, 1995.)

Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must undergo the fatigue of supporting it.

Thomas Paine

A TRIBUTE TO THE FOUNDER OF *FREEDOM FIRST*



On November 20, 1995, Mr. Minoo Masani, member of the Constituent Assembly, a Parliamentarian par excellence and a doyen of the Liberal Movement in India, completed 90 years of age.

To mark the occasion, *Freedom First*, founded by him, has published a special number entitled *Minoo Masani - 90* as its tribute to his contribution to India's public life.

The special number contains major writings by him in the last 50 years, beginning with extracts from *Our India*, the book that was a runaway success; his rejection of socialism as back as the late 1940s; highlights from some of his speeches in the Lok Sabha in the 1960s; articles of a seminal nature written by him tackling basic issues facing the country and ending with extracts from his last book *We Indians* which, in a way, is a sequel to *Our India*.

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The Last Roman

We are nearing the end of the 20th century. At this time, we have amongst us a thinker-statesman who has been a witness to all the momentous events of the past seventy eight years and who is completing 90 years of his life tomorrow. His name is Minoo Masani.

Minoo Masani's life span is so wide and so eventful that it imposes a limitation on one who writes about him. Masani returned from England to his country in 1940 and he wrote his book "Our India". Like all other leaders, he too plunged into our struggle for freedom. He was Mayor of Bombay in 1943. He was one of the framers of our Constitution. Later, he founded along with Rajaji, the Swatantra Party. Throughout those years, he opposed Pandit Nehru's policies and communism. And today, when the entire world is talking about liberalisation and free economy, it is necessary to remember that Masani has been doing this for the past 30-40 years. His whole life cannot be summarised in a few lines for it has encompassed the socio-political-intellectual history of India.

Early Years

Masani's political and cultural thinking was shaped in his own home. His father, Sir Rustom Masani was a distinguished civil servant, educationist and an intellectual giant in his own right. Minoo Masani was thus born in an illustrious family on November 20, 1905. He was named Minocher.

He started his education first in The Cathedral School, then in Bharda New School and then Elphinstone College. He proceeded to join the London School of Economics and returned to India as Bar-at-Law. He joined F. Colman as a budding lawyer but threw away the black robe soon. His contact and friendship with Yusuf Meherally brought him straight into the non-cooperation campaign of Mahatma Gandhi. This led him to Nasik

jail where he met Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan, Asoka Mehta and others. This changed the course of his life. He became one of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party and was its General Secretary.

'Our India'

His illustrious father however disapproved of Minoo's politics. So, he quietly decided to leave home. He got a job on a meagre salary with the Gujarati daily, "Janmabhoomi". Those were the days of hard life of living on "bun-mask" and tea at Cecil Restaurant on Hughes Road. And those were also the days when Masani wrote "Our India". It is a book that made history. It was the first book in India that had a record sale of over a hundred thousand copies and brought fame and recognition to Masani in the whole country and the offer of a prized post in Tatas.

Many young "socialists" those days used to meet Mahatma Gandhi and express their views. Masani also spent days with Gandhiji and Gandhi's influence probably resulted in his controversial book "Socialism Reconsidered". Most of Masani's socialist colleagues were upset with him.

Ahead of His Time

But that is Masani. He had the honesty and transparency to change his views and accept reality. He was disillusioned with the Soviet regime. He was to tell everyone modestly that he had said in his "Socialism Reconsidered" in 1942 the same thing that Djilas had said in his book, "The New Class" in 1956. Whatever people might say, the fact remains that Masani was almost twenty five years ahead of time. This was proved when he was a member of the Constituent Assembly and when he founded the Swatantra Party. He had recommended adoption of a common civil code as a member of the Constituent Assembly. Pandit

Nehru had praised Masani for his contribution as a member of the sub-committee on fundamental rights and had spoken to JP highly about Masani.

But Pandit Nehru changed his views later. Masani too became a bitter opponent of communism and they drifted apart. Nehru encouraged Krishna Menon and was influenced by him. In fact, it was Masani who introduced Menon to Nehru. Masani has written about this phase.

Opposing Nehru

Masani's firm conviction was that Nehru tilted towards communism and had endangered the emergence of a genuine federation in India. He started *Freedom First* in 1952. It is no wonder that Masani stood by JP during the Emergency days and fought censorship. Yet, it is difficult to understand his bitterness against Nehru-Indira-Rajiv.

Masani's explanation for the Swatantra Party's fading away is very revealing and instructive. He says some leaders in the Party had decided to merge in Charan Singh's Lok Dal. He further says, Swatantra was a "national" party, but Charan Singh was basically a parochial and casteist leader. Later, after many years, Masani, in his late eighties supported Sharad Joshi and his Swatantra Bharat Party but the party has not succeeded.

As a young man, Minoo Masani used to go for a swim at the beach near Versova. He never bothered to heed the warning on the signboard there which said, "it is dangerous to swim here". Even so, Masani did swim there and swim against the current.

Masani's entire life has been one of swimming against the current - from leftist thinking to liberal thinking and this journey from the left to the right is the story of Masani's 90 years.

Prakash Arolkar

(A free translation by Mr. Arvind Deshpande from the Marathi article by Mr. Prakash Arolkar which appeared in the *Maharashtra Times* of November 19, 1995).

Robbing the People

Paresh Vasa

Unfortunately, like many other government initiatives a novel idea is being implemented in a senseless manner.

The Employees Pension Scheme came into force on November 16th. This scheme was originally conceived in the early 90s. Understandably the government is trying to draw mileage from the fact that a third benefit (other than PF and Gratuity) is being offered to the working class. Unfortunately, like many other government initiatives a novel idea is being implemented in a senseless manner. Let us see why?

Hitherto 1.16% of an individual's salary was diverted to a pension fund with matching contributions from the employer and the government and this fund was used to pay pensions to surviving heirs in the event of death of an employee while in service. This fund is known to have been mismanaged. In fact employees find it very difficult to get their money back if they happened to live upto the retirement age. This fund is being replaced with the new scheme to which as much as 8.33% of the PF moneys would be diverted.

A Measly 'Pension'

Under the new scheme the accumulated contribution would be pooled together and would get lost in the corpus. In other words, an individual would not know the amount accumulated in his account. Upon retirement, he would get a pension which would correspond, based on government's own full page advertisements, around 12% of his contribution. In other words, the money that the person would have otherwise got under the current rules, would remain with the government and the individual will get a measly return under the nicely packaged word "pension".

The most unfortunate part of this scheme is that the pension is cut to half the moment an employee dies and further cut to a quarter in case the

employee's spouse is not alive. If there are no dependent children the pension stops and the corpus relevant to an individual is swallowed, I repeat, swallowed by the Government of India. In May 1993, I had estimated that this corpus amounted to Rs.24,00,000 crores (that is twelve zeros after 24). This was a very conservative estimate and perhaps the amount subject to forfeiture when the current generation of employees retire could be as much as Rs.1 crores (that means 14 zeros after 1)!

An Insult to the Working Class

The devious design behind this scheme is exposed when one becomes aware of the fact that the Government of India has failed to contribute its share under the old pension fund for the last four years. The Government has neither the money nor any respect for its commitment. On the other hand the government is trying to justify its new scheme by saying that expertise and knowledge of proper investment/follow up cannot be expected from every person. The bureaucrats claim they can manage our money better than

we can. I put to you: Can there be a bigger insult to the working middle class of India than this arrogant assumption?

Under the old rules, the heirs of an employee would have continued to get the benefits of PF principal and interest till infinity. Under the new scheme, the government has simply to wait for the entire family to die and then appropriate the entire amount. Two cheers for the bureaucrats who have discovered this ingenious way to control the budget deficit for the next generation at the cost of the current generation.

We have been witness to many types of scams ever since this government took over. The most notable ones being the share scam, the sugar scam, a host of railway scams and the telecom scam. All these scams pale into insignificance compared to the family pension scam that the Government of India is trying to rope us into.

MR. PARESH VASA is a company executive and a commentator on current economic affairs.

TWELVE REASONS WHY THE EMPLOYEES' PENSION SCHEME IS DETRIMENTAL TO THE INTERESTS OF ALL WORKERS

To generate an awareness among the working class in the country of the highly detrimental effects of the Family Pension Scheme and the New Employees' Pension Scheme, the Philips Employees' Union has issued the following twelve reasons:

1. It is not the third benefit.
2. The principal amount of the accumulated employers' contribution will never be returned.
3. Interest of 12% paid on the employers' contribution will now never be paid.
4. The Rs.5,000/- crores accumulated in FPF will be swallowed.
5. Government has shirked off its responsibility of contributing 1.17% of employees' salary. It will also stop paying administrative expenses. The contributions (including for Administrative expenses) for Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme, would also be discontinued.
6. Pension is not linked to consumer price index.
7. Bare minimum pension - much less than minimum wages.
8. Will drastically reduce the loan quantum.
9. Workers will not get their normal pension unless they reach the age of 58.
10. Employees will have to depend on monthly pension, that too from a thoroughly inefficient and corrupt administration.
11. The Scheme is blatantly discriminatory.
12. They claim that workers, even after retirement are not mature enough to handle and protect their lifetime provident fund savings, and that the workers indulge in wasteful expenditure.

Philips Employees' Union

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The Reforms and the Poor

Ranga Kota

As long as the poor are viewed as vote banks and as objects useful in political rhetoric, the poor will continue to remain poor. Blaming economic reforms for what is essentially a social malaise only lays bare the all pervasive hypocrisy of Indian society.

As Narasimha Rao's reformist government enters the last year of its tenure*, the simmering discontent within the ruling Congress over the policy of economic reforms seems to have reached the boil. This has had the effect of adding fuel to the chorus of the opposition parties who find opposition to the reforms a convenient common platform. The opposition from within the Congress also has had the effect of obscuring the traditional ideological divide.

Vested Interests Protest

Joining the chorus are 'left' leaning intellectuals and former bureaucrats whose ideological baggage was spurned in recent years and who suddenly find a number of claimants for wares that are no longer considered relevant. The common threat that strings these voices from the past with the present political leadership is no less than that hoary favourite - the Indian poor - who have, over the years faithfully provided a hanger in the ideological wardrobe of a large part of India's political and bureaucratic elite.

The basic proposition of this group is that the economic reforms set in motion by Rao's government have worsened the lot of the poor over the last few years. Their proposition is based on the premise that the reforms are pro-rich and therefore necessarily anti-poor. Such a myopic view is inevitable in a country where the large majority do not consider it necessary to provide evidence to prove their case.

Specifically, the evidence this group marshals is three dimensional: self-reliance, employment and inflation. Let us consider the validity of each one of them.

Self Reliance

The argument runs thus: The indiscriminate opening up of the economy to foreign investment and multinationals will seriously jeopardize their cherished goal of self-reliance. Personally, I find it difficult to link the welfare of the poor to the concept of self-reliance. One could argue that the entry of multinationals could kill domestic industry and leave the Indian populace at the mercy of these multinationals. Assuming for a moment that the argument is valid, how would the replacing of Thums Up with a Pepsi or a Coke affect a large section of poor who in any case are not consumers of soft drinks? Similar is the case with a whole host of goods and services which have no impact on the poor. There is no evidence of this in the past nor is there any evidence that it will be so in the near future. The kind of self-reliance we talk of is of no concern to a large majority of the Indian poor who live in rural India.

Employment

The opponents of reforms state that the reforms would bring in a qualitative change in Indian industry, which will only help large industries prosper at the expense of small and cottage industries that employ more people per unit of investment. The proponents of this argument overlook the generation of indirect employment by big industrial units. A large part of trade, transport, advertising, repair and maintenance services owe their existence to large industry. The number of people employed by these services is substantial. It is doubtful if small and cottage industries can generate so much indirect employment.

The supporters of this argument overlook one more aspect. The wages

paid by small industries are so low that it is difficult to imagine that these wage earners could create demand for a whole range of goods that employ so many people. The multiplier effect of large industry on employment is, in my view, much higher than that of small industry. Thus, the arguments that large industry would reduce employment opportunities is difficult to accept at face value.

The opponents of reforms further argue that the government, in its pursuit of a free market economy, has made the public sector vulnerable to market forces, threatening thereby, the employment of millions of people. There is no gainsaying the fact that the closure of public sector units or their privatisation would affect a large number of jobs. On the other hand, sinking more and more money into loss making and unviable public sector units might save jobs but prevent crucial savings in the economy from more productive investments which will lead to the creation of many new jobs.

While no one will argue against the need for a safety net to take care of the affected employees, there is no case for pre-empting public savings from growth oriented investments. We must also note that a large number of poor are not employed in the organised sector, and the closure or privatisation of various public sector undertakings will not affect them. The bottomline is that, as in the case of self-reliance, the organised employment angle flies in the face of the argument that reforms are anti-poor.

Inflation

Let us look at inflation. I consider this as the one dimension that affects the poor the most. As the wages of the poor are not protected from inflation,

*This was written in May 1995.

Let us yield to the wind of
patriotism and broad-mindedness
and atleast on occasion, rise up.
Let us not be like stagnant water
in a pool. We are not heroes, but
ordinary men. We may sometimes
go down, but let us try to go up
also and maintain an average
standard of patriotism and civic
consciousness.

- Rajaji



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their real wages fall in proportion to the inflation.

The prices of cereals have gone up over 50% in the last four years. That the government has failed to control inflation is not in doubt. But, what is debatable is the cause of inflation. The average rate of inflation in the post-reform period is not dramatically different from that before the reforms. Ever since the disastrous budget of the late Charan Singh in 1979, inflationary pressure has always remained uncomfortably high, irrespective the colour of the ruling party at the Centre. That virtually every government failed to control inflation only suggests that the causes of high inflation do not lie in the current policy of reforming the economy. Blaming reforms for inflation may make political sense but cannot stand rational scrutiny.

Reforms or no reforms, the lot of the poor is linked more to corruption be that of politicians or bureaucrats who systematically intercepted and appropriated to themselves the benefits that ought to have flowed to the poor. It has more to do with the mindset of the privileged lot of this country and less with economic policies. As long as the poor are viewed as vote banks and as objects useful in political rhetoric, the poor will continue to remain poor. Blaming economic reforms for what is essentially a social malaise only lays bare the all pervasive hypocrisy of Indian society.

MR. RANGA KOTA is a company executive and a commentator on business and the economy.



"I don't believe I could bear having such a small lie on my conscience."

Courtesy : National Review.

The New Consumerism

The consumerism of the past never existed in the form it has acquired today. The people of the sub-continent did consume goods and services but this consumption was not a self-conscious affair as it is now. Goods and services consisted of bare necessities for the common man, except those availed of by the nobility and the royal court. Hence there was no price consciousness nor any obsession with the necessities of daily life. Consumerism was a select practice among the elites of ancient India.

However, the roots of contemporary consumerism lay in medieval India. Indian royalty had an insatiable greed for pomp, pageantry and ostentation. The best of artisans, weavers and architects were employed by the elite classes to produce the finest of goods and to render the most exotic of services. Since the possession of wealth was restricted to a few rungs of the social ladder, there were no *quid pro quo* transactions of the modern kind. Goods manufactured by the peasantry were plundered and services forcibly squeezed from artisans.

In contemporary India, however, we are witnessing an entirely new phenomenon of the consumerist culture. While its antecedents are feudal, its pretensions stretch out into the future. The old consumerism was a class affair; the new consumerism is a mass phenomenon. The corrupt consumerism of the rajas was materialistic; the modern version percolating down to the masses is status-oriented. The nobility and royalty of feudal India simply enjoyed their wealth; today's consumer is one by sheer necessity. He wants to avoid pain and harassment at home and in the workplace. While the elite classes of ancient India were greedy and grasping, the poor of today abandon their newly found wealth as soon as the social pressure on them abates.

The new consumerism has also been spawned by the revolutionary

changes in product design and packaging. Japan is in the forefront of packaging technology and has consigned European and American goods to take a back seat. The sophisticated colour and finish of Japanese cars, computers, television sets and other electronic goods have relegated Western products to the status of white elephants. Although north American and European goods are superior in engineering technology and function, they lack aesthetic appeal. Consumers want to own Japanese products because they have glamorous designs and colours.

In fact, some Indian manufactures are superior to Japanese goods in function and durability, but they lack a good finish. No consumer is willing to buy them in spite of their low prices and attractive incentives accompanying them. This lack of aesthetic appeal in Indian goods also deters materialism of the kind consumers feel for Japanese goods.

Finally, the sea change in marketing techniques (mainly in the United States) means that companies actually anticipate consumer demand and requirements long in advance. American manufactures are now tailored to suite consumer needs. As a consequence, such firms stand to gain captive markets for their products. The new marketing techniques are critical for the growth and perpetuation of the modern industrial firm.

The lesson for Indian companies is that they must learn to heed market signals and not rely on expert or devious salesmanship. Some Indian manufactures are cheap and functional and even have the requisite quality, but poor finish and packaging have limited their market penetration. The European Community's quality standard ISO 9000 must be welcomed if India is to take its place among the select group of exporting nations of the world.

Kamal Wadhwa.

A National University for Defectors

S. S. Bankeshwar

Defection is in the highest interests of our country; personal benefits, if any, are incidental.

Aims and Objects

Inspired by satirist Jaspal Bhatti's hilarious street play, 'Hawala Party', it has been decided by his fans and admirers like me to setup a 'National University' in the run-up to the coming general elections. A unique university like this will be a fitting tribute to this great land of defectors indeed!



Emblem

The emblem of this university will be a suitcase with a diary inscribed on it!

Faculty

Among our faculty members will be top leaders from all national parties, who are all specialists in their particular stages of defection and in different fields like 'split', 'dissent', 'dissidence', 'desertion', 'alignment' and realignment of political forces', etc.

This university will work in close collaboration with the Hawala party floated by Jaspal Bhatti, the founder of the 'Nonsense Club'. Jaspal Bhatti, who has already agreed to patronise this university, will be its first Chancellor.

Donations

Only Hawala donations by cheques drawn on the International Hawala Bank, Geneva, will be accepted by this university.

There is a general consensus among our people and among our political parties too that no party will get even a working majority in the next general elections. A hung Parliament seems to be a certainty.

Most of our elected MPs in a hung Parliament will be a purchasable commodity available for sale to the highest bidder in our Free Lok Sabha Market (The rate of MPs for defection, however, will not be quoted in any Stock Exchange of India).

In view of the fear of a hung Parliament, leading to a long period of instability with disastrous results, a national University for Defectors seems to be the need of the hour in the run-up to the next general elections.

Course Contents

The university will hold a two week crash course on defection for prospective and potential defectors soon after the results of the next general elections are officially announced :

1. How defection for personal profit, self-aggrandisement and advancement of political career for achieving one's life's ambition by hook or by crook and satiating one's lust for power etc. should be justified on moral, patriotic, democratic, secular or any other ground, quoting historical and mythological precedents in support of defection.
2. How pure opportunism should be defended as pragmatism, how large-scale floor crossings to and fro should be justified as re-alignment of political forces, etc.
3. How a Trojan horse should be sent out of a political party to destroy it from without (an improvement over Ulysses plan of destroying Troy by introducing a Trojan horse inside Troy - a reverse operation) to achieve one's life's ambition.
4. How to defend ideologies (totally opposed to the ideologies of the party one has just deserted) and then justify the defection on ideological grounds accordingly.
5. How to acquire power by the art of defection; how to encash such power with lightening speed before being ousted from power, and how to get and use the hawala money to ride back to power once again.
6. How to justify one's political somersault in a hung Parliament in the name of social justice, national interests and genuine secularism.

Admission Rules

1. To promote social justice and help the weaker sections of our elected MPs, 49% of the seats are reserved for MPs with a miserable record of defections in their political career and for frustrated MPs who have failed to become ministers, without violating the Supreme Courts order on 'reservation'.

2. MPs with merit, character and integrity with a clean record of selfless service to our country are automatically disqualified, and not eligible for admission.

In view of the limited number of seats available, a screening committee headed by Jaspal Bhatti has been formed to select candidates, strictly on merit.

Only losing candidates condemn defection as opportunism. Defectors should, in fact, be proud of being in the good company of great defectors like Sugriva, Vibhishan of *Ramayana* and Balaram of Mahabharat fame respectively. This, in fact, is their finest hour, as they will have a permanent place in the parliamentary history of India.

Just as God is in mythology known to have appeared in different *avatars* and all roads lead to him ultimately, a defector is in fact a 'god' in a different *avatar* in the *kaliyug*. Split, Dissent, Dissidence, Desertion, Re-alignment etc. are the different '*avatars*' of the god of Defection, but all these roads lead him to his ultimate goal of realising the god of power to serve his people and nation. Defection is in the highest interests of our country; personal benefits, if any, are incidental.



"He wants to speak to his stress counsellor."

Courtesy : National Review.

The Joke is on Democracy

Pushkar

More often than not, the laws of the land do not apply equally to all Indian citizens. An anti-democratic or a less-democratic constitution would be fine, truly in harmony with the realities of the Indian state.

In mid-1975, the late Mrs. Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency, thus inaugurating India's only authoritarian phase that lasted a mere 18 months. This year, the twentieth anniversary of that dark period, has been marked by reminiscences of those days by prominent and common people, either associated with it or those who suffered the rigours of the emergency. Though the popular verdict on Mrs. Gandhi's flirtations with authoritarianism resulted in her being voted out of power, giving way to a non-Congress government in New Delhi for the first time since independence, a large group of admirers and sympathizers remain, mostly because the future of Indian politics seems inextricably tied to the apron strings of one family, whom one not so classy sycophant refers to as *The Family*.

The Indian authoritarian experience during the 'Emergency' is the only *direct expression* of the tendencies of the ruling class to govern the country in an anti-democratic manner. I say *direct* because India today is really a classic example of a country pretending to be a democracy. Soon to celebrate fifty years of independence, the country practices a rather distorted form of democracy, far too distorted, I may add, to claim to be more than a 'limited democracy'. Authoritarian tendencies within the ruling class have not subsided; they have actually flourished in the post-emergency years behind a veil of democracy.

The Moor's Last Sigh

In a recent centre-page article in

The Times of India, Jug Suraiya deliberates on the emerging controversy in Mumbai surrounding Salman Rushdie's new novel, *The Moor's Last Sigh*. Suraiya questions the non-literary issues of the Rushdie book, pointing out to the extreme sensitiveness of the Shiv Sena to criticism and violent reaction when *the Joke is on them*. It appears that Bal Thackeray has not taken kindly to one of the characters in the novel, Raman Fielding, who Rushdie claims, bears only an obvious similarity to the former cartoonist (and his sense of humour) and actually draws from many diverse and varied characters. The book's distributors, Rupa & Co., have not risked the release of the book in Mumbai, fearing reprisal from Shiv Sainiks. Suraiya argues whether any writer or artist "has the right to be courageous at the expense of others who are more vulnerable to the possible backlash". Though I have not read the book in question, yet I would still agree with Suraiya.

What Suraiya is acknowledging is (as do I) that local centres of power flourish in a supposedly modern, democratic India, and the extent or degree of willingness, capability and power of extra-legal actors to take the law into their own hands. Such practices were commonly associated with 'less developed' and 'less civilised' states of India, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and others - and looked at with some scorn, but now it is a 'modern State', a city in fact, that seems to be sliding into the same abyss. This time, *the joke is on them!* Censorship was a tool used by Mrs. Gandhi and the Congress during the 'Emergency';

today, in a democracy, even before legal and ethical issues can be brought up, for the second time in less than a year, a politician's approval is being sought for public access to what technically qualifies as 'art' (remember Mani Ratnam's Bombay?).

Unaccountability of the State

In the not too distant southern state of Tamil Nadu, the chief minister, a self-styled revolutionary leader, indulged in an estimated Rs.100 crore extravaganza for the wedding of her foster son. The occasion was happily graced by the presence of bigwigs of parties hoping to present themselves as an alternative to the Congress(I) and not surprisingly, there were some important Congress(I) functionaries there as well, eager to rope in the AIADMK leader as an ally in the forthcoming national elections of 1996. The Jayalalitha administration represents, at the minimum, a disease wholly antithetical to a democracy - unaccountability of the State and the regime to the people. It is obvious that the Congress(I) *will not* (as opposed to *cannot*) move against Jayalalitha for reasons that have equally to do with its own inconsistencies and contradictions in terms of democratic functioning. *The Joke is (surely) on them!*

The Realities

More often than not, the laws of the land do not apply equally to all Indian citizens. An anti-democratic or a less-democratic constitution would be fine, truly in harmony with the realities of the Indian state. But *there is* a constitution that is more or as much (and not less) democratic as any other

'democratic constitution' anywhere in the world and yet allows several states, regions and individuals, and in no lesser degree, the central government, to function according to a set of unwritten rules, depending on the fanciful flights of those in power.

Take the politics of name-changing that seems to have infected all political parties all across the country. Is there any popular consensus on the exercise? There need not be because those very representatives which we Indians have elected to power have chosen to do so! And what's in a name anyway? But if that be so, why the annoyance among many people that you have a dog named Jawaharlal in Rushdie's new novel? This circular argument leads nowhere and yet hits hard on one vital point - the concerns of ruling governments are more focused on the politics of name/no-name/name-change than to addressing the more immediate and crucial issue of unaccountability in public life. To explain the cause, one must go into a conspiracy theory.

Why So Many Illiterates?

In terms of numbers, we are the largest number of illiterates in the world (in terms of education, who knows?). This 'state of Indian illiteracy' can be seen as a deliberate design of the ruling class (though it may not have initially been when independence was gained) to maintain its hold on political power. For example, popular schemes for primary education must be launched but they need to be sabotaged at the state/region/district/village level by the bureaucracy without any opposition by the political leadership so that ignorance of rights and privileges of citizens as well as their duties is consolidated! Decisions can therefore be taken by the ruling class on behalf of their peoples, because they know best. The 'Emergency' was perhaps an indirect reflection of that condescension of Indira Gandhi and her cronies who remain in positions of influence and by no means can be presumed to have become 'enlightened' in their definition of the relationship between the rulers and the ruled.

Authoritarian Residues

I mentioned earlier that authoritarian tendencies persist in contemporary India and may actually have intensified in the post-Emergency years. Take the case of Thapar-Dupon in Goa, Enron in Maharashtra and the Narmada Dam. That the (de)merit of each one of these cases is politicised is not in doubt but it is equally true that popular resistance to a DuPont or an Enron are the direct consequences of the ready willingness of those in power to take decisions for their own good rather than for people's interests. The scrapping of Enron may be a populist decision, but does that explain popular protests against the project? It may be all right to say that people were misled by vested interests, whether environmentalists or industrialists scared of losing their place in the sun, but one issue must be addressed. *Misled* is a strong word in political dictionaries; that situation is a result of the failure of the state to educate its citizens in the four and half decades since Independence.

I reach a conclusion that perhaps is as debatable as any possible. Borrowing from the jargon that Latin Americanists use frequently to explain uncertainties of democratic rule in the region given the military's call to frequent interventions in the past, I would argue that 'authoritarian residues' flourish in contemporary Indian politics too. The symptoms include the importance given to *The Family*, the increasing number of conflict situations within the country and the utter disregard for human life and dignity. Most parts of India, to use Guillermo O'Donnell's phrase, are "brown" or "green" areas where both the State's territorial and functional presence is extremely low or where there is an appropriate degree of territorial presence, the State carries out its functions in an unequal manner; this inequality contingent upon caste, class, religion and sex!

The Joke is (ultimately) on Indian Democracy!

PUSHKAR is a lecturer in the Centre for Latin American Studies, Goa University, Goa.

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Profiles of Indian Liberals

Tarkatirth Laxmanshastri Joshi



Tarkatirth Laxmanshastri Joshi was one of the few giants that strode the state of Maharashtra for a number of decades. Respectfully called Shastriji by his friends and followers and fondly called Aba by his family members, Tarkatirth because of his glittering personality, interests and work became an institution during his long and fruitful life of 93 years. Well-versed in Indian traditional learning and in Sanskrit, he eagerly pursued modern western knowledge with equal avidity. An erudite intellectual, he took equal interest in the freedom struggle and welcomed his short sojourns in jails which he preferred to the seclusion of cosy ivory towers. His thorough knowledge of Hindu theology notwithstanding he became an undaunted social reformer who championed the cause of the Harijans and justified their right to enter temples. He was fortunate to have the goodwill and company of great Indians like Gandhiji, Vinoba and Ambedkar. Gifted with good health maintained by steady exercise in his early years he was able to play many roles as author, orator, teacher, philosopher, reformer, researcher, organiser, politician, debator, campaigner and humanitarian. His rich and vivid life is candidly revealed by his daughter Prof. Arundhati Khandkar in this biography of Shastriji.

Laxmanshastri was born on 27th Jan. 1901 at Pimpalner, a small village in the Dhule District of Maharashtra. His father Balaji Krishna was a Vedic scholar, family priest and astrologer. When Aba, the youngest son was only 3 years old, his mother Chandrabhaga died leaving behind three surviving children of the eleven born to her. After acquiring a thorough training in the Vedas at Pimplaner from his father, Aba was sent to Wai, a Taluka place in the district of Satara for further education in the Sanskrit classics and Hindu theology. He was admitted to the Pradnya Pathshala, a school which provided free boarding and lodging to deserving students. It was established by an ascetic scholar Narayanshastri Marathe alias Kevalanand Saraswati who imparted education in the Gurukul tradition to his disciples who aspired to become a *Shastri*, a *Pandit* or an *Acharya*.

What was remarkable about this scholar was his intellectual hospitality to unfamiliar and to traditional minds or "defiled" ideas. He acquainted his students with scientific ideas and the modern liberal thought of the West by making them read Marathi translations of English classics. Being himself free from the clutches of age-old customs, rites and rituals, Kevalanand thought of transforming Hindu religion into a new universal religion capable of achieving all-round progress embracing the whole of mankind. Aba was also influenced by the humanitarian outlook of another great teacher Vinoba Bhave who was also staying in Wai to study *Prasthan Trayii*, i.e. *Brahmasutra*, *Shankarabhashya* and the *Upanishads*. Vinoba taught him English. In 1918, Aba went to Varanasi for higher education, passed the examination of Tarkatirth in the first class first at the age of 22 and returned to Wai to teach

at the Pradnya Pathshala.

Aba was impressed by the personality and ideas of Gandhiji when the Mahatma lived in his Ashram for 2 months in 1928. He was imprisoned twice for his active part in Gandhiji's Salt Satyagraha and later in the Civil Disobedience Movement. In jail, he met leaders like Vinoba, Sane Guruji, Jannalal Bajaj, Meherally and V. B. Karnik from whom he imbibed elements of political and social ideologies including communism.

On an invitation from Gandhiji, he played a prominent role in the debate between the orthodox and the reformers on the eradication of untouchability. His main argument was that the *Manu Smriti* and other scriptures define the *chandal* or untouchable as the progeny of a *Shudra* male and a Brahmin woman and as such the so-called untouchable of the present times will never admit that his birth was the result of intermingling of two *varnas* or castes. He also asserted that all occupations of the untouchables were socially useful and it was quite unjust to ostracize them. His views on inter-caste marriage between the brahmin Laxmi Rajagopalachari and vaishya Devdas Gandhi were equally revolutionary. He not only gave a green signal to it but also performed the marriage rites as the main priest on the ground that families having the same religious faith and social values are deemed to belong to equal *varnas*.

Shastriji was compelled to part company with Gandhiji as he disagreed with Bapu's views on some important issues. For instance, he was surprised when a natural calamity like the Bihar earthquake in 1934 was considered by Gandhiji as a nemesis for the sin of untouchability. He could not believe that the Mahatma could defend *varna* or caste differences, oppose widow-remarriage and advocate a

"Tarkatirth, Ek Pradnyapravah" (in Marathi) by Arundhati Khandkar; Shri Vidya Prakashan, 250, Shanivar Peth, Pune 411 030; pp.253; Rs. 270/-; Reviewed by V. C. Phadke.

separate curricula for the boys and girls in schools. He shared the views of M. N. Roy that the Congress should support the British government which was fighting a war against Hitler's Germany.

Associate of M. N. Roy

Being disillusioned with Gandhi's Congress, Aba joined the Radical Democratic Party formed by M. N. Roy in 1940 - and was rewarded with a galaxy of Royist friends like the Karnik brothers, Justice Tarkunde, V. A. Naik, Govardhan and Indumati Parikh, A. B. Shah, and others. He became a close associate of M. N. Roy as both held similar views on Hindu scriptures and Marxism. He took keen interest in the organisation of the party and gave lectures at its study camps. He became the founder trustee and member of the 'Indian Renaissance Institute' started by Justice Tarkunde and 'The Centre for the Study of Social Change' established by Parikh. He frequently contributed to the weekly '*Independent India*', later renamed '*The Radical Humanist*'. As he became aware of the shortcomings of Marxism, he became a follower of the new ideology of Roy, 'New Humanism' with its emphasis on the 'Primacy and Importance of Man' i.e. 'First Man, then Society and then Nation'. When Roy and Shastriji realised the failure of both communism and parliamentary democracy due to the politics of opportunism, they disbanded their party in December 1948 and concentrated on a constructive programme of promoting science, scientific methods and a science-inspired intellectual culture.

Interpreting Hinduism

When Tarkatirth met Dr. Ambedkar in 1943 both of them found that they held similar views on the *Varna* system of the Hindus. He interpreted Ambedkar's action of publicly burning the *Manu Smriti* as a symbolic protest against the obstacles in the movement for social revolution. When the Maharashtra government published the writings of Dr. Ambedkar in 1989, there was great uproar, in a section of the press against his "Riddles in Hinduism". In an interview given to Prof. M. P. Rege and published in

the Marathi Daily '*Loksatta*', Aba clarified that some riddles are complete or partly solved. He pointed out that (1) Hindu society founded on birth-based caste system is disintegrating because of inter-caste and inter-varna marriages which are being recognised by law and society. (2) Even Jaimini and Badrayan did not agree with the contention that the Vedas were created by some non-human agencies. (3) The New Hindu Code had rejected all the family laws mentioned in the *Manu Smriti* and other scriptures. (4) The Indian Constitution had abolished untouchability. (5) Dr. Ambedkar did not realise that the Hindu religion lasted for thousands of years because it continuously adapted itself to changing conditions and never remained a closed religious system or society.

Literary Pursuits

The late Yeshwantrao Chavan who was also a Royist and who preferred to remain in the Congress Party was close to Shastriji. This made many mock Laxmanshastri as a political guru of Chavan. However, his friendship with Yeshwantrao proved very fruitful for the enrichment of Marathi literature, and society. Immediately after the inception of Maharashtra State, a Literature and Cultural Board was established by the State government in 1960 under the chairmanship of Shastriji. During a span of 20 years this Board published nearly 100 books out of which 68 were Marathi translations of some classical books of abiding value. The Board also gave financial help to some magazines in Marathi like *Naubharat*, *Sadhana*, *Yugwani*, etc. as these periodicals were not financially viable despite their remarkable achievements in the field of Marathi literature.

Shastriji, will, however, be remembered ever for his gigantic project of publishing the Marathi Encyclopedia, '*Vishwakosh*'. He was appointed Chairman of the Vishwakosh Creation Board. Both these Boards which were separated in 1980, initially worked together under the joint responsibility of Shastriji. During his lifetime, he managed to publish 14 volumes. He himself contributed 127 long and short entries on such subjects like religion, ethics, politics

and philosophy.

The author of 11 books published in Marathi and Sanskrit and innumerable scholarly articles, Laxmanshastri won many awards and laurels like Padmabhushan, Padmavibhushan, Rastrabhushan of the Fi Foundation, L.L.D. of Bombay University, etc. He was also honoured by the Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, the Asiatic Society, the Sanskrit Academic of Madhya Pradesh, etc.

Although brought up in a very orthodox family, his wife Sati never followed blindly auspicious or inauspicious customs or practices. She considered fasting only as an opportunity for a change in food! She abandoned the celebration of Satyanarayan Puja which required no small courage those days. She gave up numerous religious rites generally followed by Brahmin women.

Aba relished living life to the full and was a gourmet, admitting that his disciplining of his senses stopped short of the palate! He relished all types of dishes and regretted in not having mastered the culinary arts. Although his forthright views and blunt opinions on controversial issues like temple-entry, the Mandal Commission Report, Dalit literature, etc. made him a target of public anger, his theory of life was "*Akrodhen Jayet Krodham*" i.e. to conquer anger by non-anger. However, his habits were strangely not consistent with his lofty thoughts and noble deeds. His addiction to smoking of cigarettes lasted for 42 long years and he ultimately gave it up only because of pressure from his grandson Ajay. Similarly, he was not averse to having a few pegs in the company of his Royist friends. Always in quest of new knowledge he regretted his inability to grasp the Theory of Relativity and Quantum Mechanics. A lover of books and human beings his house was crammed with both, and his very presence was a tonic to one and all, his sense of joviality making for delightful companionship. Death came peacefully to this '*Anandiyatri*' on 26th May, 1994.

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Gedhun Choekyi Nyima

The World's Youngest Political Prisoner

Born in 1938 to a peasant family in the Kokonor region of Amdo, north-eastern Tibet. He was recognised by His Holiness the Dalai Lama as the 10th Panchen Lama in 1951 and formally enthroned as Jetsun Tenzin Trinley Jigme Choekyi Wangchuk Pal-Sangpo in 1952.

The Dalai Lama fled into exile in 1959, along with thousands of his followers after an abortive uprising against the Chinese annexation of Tibet. The Panchen Lama is the highest Tibetan Buddhist leader to have remained back in Tibet. The Panchen Rinpoche's political role began to be vigorously highlighted by the Chinese. Starting from the vice-chairmanship of the preparatory committee for the so-called "Autonomous Region" of Tibet in 1956 he was given many other titles, the highest being the vice chairman of the National People's Congress.

After he had pledged support for Tibetan Independence, he was beaten, insulted and tortured and put in prison for 10 years during which he spent most of the time in solitary confinement. In fact, he disappeared from the public eye for 14 years and was believed to be dead until he re-emerged in 1978. In 1982, he was permitted to return to Tibet for the first time since 1964.

The 10th Panchen Lama passed away on January 28, 1989, at his seat Tashi Lhunpo in Shigatse, Tibet, under mysterious circumstances.

Reincarnation

On May 14, 1995, following extensive selection procedures according to strict Tibetan traditions and religious practices, His Holiness the Dalai Lama formally recognised six year old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima from Lhari, Nagchu, Tibet, as the true reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Rinpoche.



The search for the late Panchen Lama's reincarnation is a religious process. In the case of the Panchen Lamas, this process traditionally involves a final selection by the Dalai Lama. The unique historical and traditional relationship between the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama began in the 17th century. All the successive Dalai Lamas and Panchen Lamas have maintained a special teacher-disciple relationship. They are both responsible for recognising each other's reincarnation, depending on who is the elder one at the time. This is a fact which cannot be obliterated from history.

The Fake Panchen Lama

Following Gedhun Choekyi Nyima's announcement, the Communist government of China unnecessarily raised a hue and cry over the matter and rejected the six year old boy named by the Dalai Lama as the new incarnated Panchen Lama, reiterating the claim that only the "Central Government" has the right to approve the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama.

The final drive to find a Chinese-sanctioned Panchen Lama began in earnest on November 8, when 75 Tibetan lamas and officials were called to Beijing for a closed-door conclave that included

a meeting with Communist Party chief Jiang zemin.

"Gyaincain Norbu, a six-year old boy from Lhari country in Nagchu prefecture in Tibet, was the lucky number in a drawing lot and thus was chosen as the reincarnated boy for the 10th Panchen Erdeni," a report said.

The announcement of a rival Panchen Lama is the first time ever that a Chinese government has directly assumed total control over the process of the recognition of a Tibetan Lama's reincarnation.

The choice of Peking as the venue of the selection meeting is significant. Traditionally, any ceremony involved with the issue is held on Tibetan soil. By holding the selection in Peking, China is uprooting this ancient tradition, establishing a precedent asserting ultimate control over the ritual. China's own historian Ya Hanzhang in his official biography of the Panchen Lamas said, "By Tibetan tradition, the confirmation of the Panchen could not be religiously legal without the Dalai's recognition and the same was the case with the Dalai Lama".

Thus the Chinese government hopes to control the spiritual lineage of Tibet. Furthermore, the Panchen Lama is the key in deciding the next Dalai Lama. So in this way, China will ultimately control the selection of the next Dalai Lama.

To the Tibetans, China's interference in their religious life affects them equally if not more than the physical occupation of Tibet.

The serious concern depicted by the Chinese officials for Tibetan Buddhism and its rituals baffle some China watchers because of the contradiction that China is officially an atheist state. But the reason behind this new found

love for Tibetan Buddhism is not confusing at all because the Communist rulers, by installing the Panchen Lama of their choice, have given a loud and clear message to the Tibetans and all those provinces in China which may have nationalist aspirations.

A source in Tibet reported that just a week after His Holiness's announcement of the new incarnation of the Panchen Lama, the Chinese authorities in Tibet held meetings in Shigatse, Lhasa and Nagchu and announced a ban on meetings of more than three people, hence public discussions on this issue were forbidden. The monks of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery openly defied the Chinese authorities during forced meetings despite bribery attempts. Further demonstration by the monks were contained with repressive measures and the monastery was virtually put under martial law. A loud and clear message to the world: China will not relent on its human rights violations and the Chinese government will continue to control all aspects of Tibetan life.

As a show of power, the atheist Chinese government imposed their Panchen Lama, crowning one of Beijing's most aggressive and comprehensive political campaigns ever, to counter the influence of the Dalai Lama. In a major move to isolate the Dalai Lama, Beijing barred the exiled spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet from any role in the recognition process, something which has never occurred in Tibetan history. "Lhasa is placid on the outside, but its heart is not at ease," a Lhasa factory worker said over the telephone. "I am reluctant to believe in the state's selection. I believe in the Dalai Lama. I support the child chosen by the Dalai Lama."

Where is Gedhun Choekyi Nyima?

In July last year, the six year old Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, the true incarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama recognised by His Holiness, was abducted by the Chinese authorities along with his family members and reportedly taken to Beijing.

Despite China's official denial, it

has now been confirmed by various sources that his parents and 20 year old elder brother have been taken away by the Chinese authorities to Beijing from their village in Tibet. Earlier the abbot of Tashi Lhunpo Monastery the seat of the Panchen Lama along with several senior monks connected with the Chinese official search committee were abducted to Beijing for allegedly sharing information about the young Panchen Lama with the Dalai Lama.

Officials have declined to say what has happened to Gedhun Choekyi Nyima, who is likely to command the strong allegiance of Dalai Lama loyalists in Tibet and abroad, despite a torrent of propaganda defending China's actions.

Until recently, Gedhun Choekyi Nyima was said by some unofficial sources to have been held at a guest house in Beijing. But there has been no official acknowledgement of any kind regarding this. *Gedhun Choekyi Nyima remains the youngest known political prisoner in the world.*

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The United Nations at Fifty

Adi H. Doctor

The termination of the cold war, it was firmly believed, would usher in an era of global co-operation and peace. Although this has not happened, one of the most significant trends that has emerged after the end of the cold war era, has been the growing willingness of the international community to address, rather than ignore, emergencies that have arisen within the borders of national states.

These emergencies have been of two kinds. First, the emergency which arose because of the collapse of the State as in the case of Somalia, Afghanistan or Bosnia. Analysts describe these as the failed states. Second, an emergency which arose because of massive human rights abuses by a government, necessitating UN intervention in the internal affairs of that state in the name of the higher principle of humanitarianism as in the case of UN assistance to the Kurds in Iraq.

Altered Character

These new emergencies have radically altered the character and functions of the UN peacekeeping forces. In the first place, these emergencies have required the UN to increase manifold the number of its peace-keeping forces. For example, from a stable level of 10,000 troops in the 1970s when the cold war had just ended, the number of troops has jumped to over 80,000. The upkeep of these troops alone is costing the UN a staggering four billion dollars.

Secondly, these new emergencies have affected the very nature of peace-keeping. In the early decades of the UN's existence, peace-keeping meant that UN's troops were mainly required to enforce a cease-fire already agreed upon by the warring parties as in Kashmir in the 1950s. The situation has completely changed since then, and in the last ten years, we find that UN

troops are required to maintain peace between combating sides unable to agree on a ceasefire, as in Bosnia or Croatia today. This new kind of peace-keeping among combatants, unable to agree on a ceasefire, is something that had never been foreseen by the framers of the UN Charter.

Extended Peace-Keeping

As a consequence of this new development, UN forces today, are required to act not only as soldiers enforcing the peace, but also as negotiators in the battlefield, who would be able to negotiate a new ceasefire, everytime the old ceasefire broke down, so that at least the killing and the carnage can be immediately halted. Now, knowing the ugliness and the intensity of internal conflicts in places like Bosnia, Croatia and Rwanda, negotiating ceasefires has not proved an easy task. In order to distinguish between the relatively simple peace-keeping of the old and the comparatively more difficult peace-keeping of today, analysts have coined new terms such as "extended" peace-keeping or "aggravated" peace-keeping.

Highly Interventionist

As a consequence of the growing willingness of the international community to address emergencies than to ignore them, the UN may be said to have become highly

interventionist in the last five to ten years. UN intervention today ranges from making telephone calls to Heads of States to despatching military forces. Further, UN intervention today is not only military (for enforcing a ceasefire) but also humanitarian. Humanitarian intervention by the UN may be to avoid starvation as in Angola, or to halt genocide and massive abuse of human rights as in Rwanda.

The increasing instances of UN intervention has been criticised on many grounds. Some say it is destroying State sovereignty. Others say it is messy. Still others claim that UN intervention is nothing but selective bullying.

However, the plain truth is that since the end of the cold war, military and humanitarian intervention have been increasing and has come to stay.

The increased level of UN intervention in the affairs of individual states has of course, raised its own set of new problems. On the purely technical side, communication and co-ordination have become enormously

difficult because of multiple languages, procedures and even equipment; while on the political front, communication and coordination have become difficult because of the multiple chains of command, civil and military. UN forces are made up of national contingents drawn from different countries, and these often insist on consulting their own national governments rather than



the UN High Command, whenever dangers threaten UN operations, thereby making for delay and aggravating the problems of co-ordination. These difficulties will have to be resolved if the UN has to become a more effective force in peace-keeping.

Future Role

As we try and look into the future of the UN, on the occasion of its 50th birth anniversary, one thing is clear. The UN is going to be called upon to play new and unprecedented roles. In the first place, the UN will have to ready itself to face the problem of "failed" or "inadequate" states; that is to say, states that have failed to perform their functions of maintaining law and order and protecting life and property, within their borders. The failed states are those where, instead of civil government and orderly life, we find civil war raging. Such failed states include Afghanistan, Bosnia, Croatia, Rwanda, and to a lesser extent, Uganda, Syria, and Namibia. The UN needs to analyse the factors that make for inadequate states and examine what it can do to tackle the problem of such states. Perhaps, the UN could consider reviving the old UN system of trusteeship government. After the end of the Second World War, many erstwhile colonies of Germany and Italy were placed under UN governance or trusteeship, since they were deemed to be not yet fit for self-government. Perhaps, the time has once again come for us to call upon the UN to assume temporary governorship of inadequate states like Bosnia, Herzegovina?

Secondly, the UN will have to take steps to remove its present military inadequacies, if it has to survive in the future. Today, the UN has difficulties raising adequate troops from member-nations and paying for their upkeep. One way, perhaps, for the UN to overcome its military inadequacy would be for it to consider subcontracting the function of peace-keeping to one or more major powers. Such a solution may appear rather simplistic, but then a step towards finding a solution to the UN's problem of military inadequacy will have to be taken sooner rather than later.

The Security Council

Finally, the UN of the future will have to re-structure its principal body, the Security Council, to make it reflect the changed world realities. The Security Council membership has, since its inception, stayed frozen at five permanent veto-wielding members. Today, when the UN membership has more than trebled (from 54 to near 180) and when the old power equations no longer exist, the Security Council is no longer representative enough to discharge its onerous responsibilities. Not much debate is required to decide on the inclusion of Germany and Japan in the Security Council as its new permanent members. Germany and Japan are the richest nations today and must be on the Security Council since they have the capacity to pay a large portion of the UN's peace-keeping budget.

At the same time, India, Egypt and Brazil deserve serious consideration for inclusion as

permanent members of the Security Council, both on grounds of geographical consideration and also because these countries represent the recently emerged significant middle range powers. Such a re-organized Security Council must be democratised. This means discarding the veto-privilege, the so-called Big Five (now no longer so 'Big') enjoy today. The veto privilege has till date enabled any of the Big Five powers to paralyse UN operations by vetoing any measure the big power concerned dislikes.

If the UN's functioning has to be democratised and the newly emergent powers are to be given a voice in the UN's decision making processes, then the veto privilege must be replaced by the principle of decision making by a majority of 2/3rds of the Security Council members present and voting.

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Love and Pride

Love is distinct from pride. A mother may love her son, who is a crook, but she will certainly not be proud of him.

I love my country and am proud of our heritage, but certainly not proud of our present India.

If our country has made any progress today, it is because of our brilliant scientists, engineers, technocrats, doctors, a few enterprising industrialists and entrepreneurs. And this progress is in spite of our politicians, our privileged parasites, and not because of them.

What is there that we should be proud of in our country today? Our underworld 'dons', terrorists, militants, extortionists or their gang wars in pursuit of power and pelf? Our scandal-mongers, scamsters, smugglers, drugs and heroin traffickers and gangsters? Our irresponsible and rapacious trade union leaders who enrich themselves (by exploiting both our gullible workers

and spineless industrialists) and who resort to illegal strikes and shut down factories, or who force our managements to declare lockouts? Our spineless and power-hungry politicians? Or 'Godmen' like Chandraswamy who have multiplied our woes!

Barring a few honourable exceptions like Manmohan Singh, Madhu Dandavate and Atal Behari Vajpayee, most of our politicians are corrupt, scamsters, upstarts, turncoats, escapists, tall talkers, cranks, clowns, jokers, procrastinators, hero-worshippers, sycophants, rabble-rousers, free loaders (the list is endless). Should we be proud of such a band of politicians? Finally, should we be proud of our general masses, most of whom are lazy, shirkers, gossip and rumour-mongers, sycophants and hero worshippers?

Mrs. Shanta Bankeshwar,
Bombay.

European Integration

Santishree DNB Pandit

In the final analysis, the Maastricht Treaty is the best that the member states could achieve in the circumstances after thirty four years of efforts at European integration.

The euphoria which accompanied the signing of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union in December 1991 has considerably evaporated. Instead scepticism over the future of Europe as a single entity has surfaced. The reasons are the deep economic recession, the European monetary crisis, the ethnic genocide in former Yugoslavia and the problems encountered during the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty.

The basis of European integration is the Maastricht Treaty. It is necessary to know what this treaty is, its advantages, consequences and implications on the international system.

How the Process Began

The attempt at integration started in 1950. At that time, the objective was market integration more than political and security integration. There was a desire to preserve their national freedom in the political sphere. It was the initiative of President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl for political union and the ensuing decision of the twelve member states in June 1990 to convene a second inter-governmental Conference (IGC) alongside monetary union that started the Maastricht process.

The Inter-governmental Conference on political union, (December 1990 to December 1991) covered almost all policy areas. On the agenda was the introduction of European citizenship, social policies, consumer protection, development and immigration policies.

The main actors in this round of negotiations on the question of political union were France, Britain and Germany. France and Britain were in disagreement from the beginning. Germany

was close to the French position but also tried to balance the interests towards both Washington and Paris.

Two Groups

In this round of negotiating a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) there were two groups. Britain the leader of the first group adopted a rather restrictive stance towards European defence in order to prevent any undermining of NATO preferring practical reforms of the European Political Conference (EPC). In the British view, defence remains with NATO and the security policies of the twelve member states closely co-ordinated with the Alliance. The British view was supported by the Netherlands and Portugal.

The second group, led by France and Germany was in favour of establishing a common foreign and security policy with the idea of a common defence written into the treaty, in the future union. Belgium, Luxembourg, Italy, Greece and Spain backed the Franco-German position.

France wanted European security to be an internal matter, a European affair. This implied a reduced role for NATO and the United States and for the new Germany to be controlled by deeper integration. France's experience in the Gulf War also led it to conclude that US-British patronage was not acceptable. Germany's interests in an European Union went far beyond assuring its neighbours, notably France, that Germany would remain firmly anchored to Western institutional structures. Although the German view of a federal Europe conflicted with French views, Bonn accepted the guiding role of the

European Council and, finally also the Inter-governmental nature of the CFSP. The strengthening of Franco-German relations was the German *leitmotif* in the Maastricht processes.

The second round started in July 1991 and was completed in December 1991. The Dutch Presidency produced a new draft treaty which was more integrated in nature. In this draft the European Council and not the European Union, was to define and implement a CFSP, complementing the role of a Western European Union (WEU) and NATO. This was neither acceptable to France and Germany because it devalued the role of the European Council. Britain also did not accept the draft because it brought foreign and security policy under the auspices the European Council. Due to lack of significant support for the Dutch draft treaty among member states, negotiations then returned to the basic ideas of the Luxembourg draft treaty.

Anglo-Italian Initiative

The Anglo-Italian initiative was the "Declaration on European Security and Defence". It proposed to found a union that would gradually develop a common foreign and security policy in the long term perspective. This also brought the strengthening of Franco-German military co-operation as well as the creation of a "European Corps" which could include forces of other Western European Union member-states.

The final weeks before the Maastricht summit were marked by intense consultations at various levels. France neither wanted to be reintegrated into NATO through the back door, nor

to grant the U.S.A. a right of control over European military activities. Instead, France wanted more independent European defence arrangements only loosely tied to the U.S. Germany, not wishing to antagonise the U.S., declared that the forces it assigned to the Eurocorps would remain in NATO, but also agreed with France that only European Union members could join the Western European Union.

A Compromise Document

The Treaty on European Union as agreed by the 12 member states in Maastricht on 9-10 December, 1991, is a document of compromise, but one which represents an important landmark in the process of European integration.

The Maastricht Treaty underlines the evolutionary character of an "ever closer union" based on three pillars :

- (1) The amended ECC Treaty establishing an European Community including monetary union;
- (2) the provisions for a CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy); and
- (3) the co-operation of member-states in domestic, judicial and police affairs.

The Declarations, are not legally binding, but express the political will of governments.

The Treaty does not lay the foundation for a United States of Europe, even though there is now what one can call European citizenship. It increases the complexity of policy making in order to protect national sovereignty as far as possible. On the whole this strengthens the process of European integration which was already discernible before the Maastricht process started. The important characteristics are:

- (1) The extension of the scope of common policies resulting from the magnetic pull of the European Community, accompanied by the transfer of competencies to common institutions;

- (2) The fact that the same institutions have to play a dual role in both the European Community affairs and Inter-governmental co-operation. This can be interpreted as "communitarisation", or as undermining supranational structures;
- (3) The growth in exception rules for certain member-states, thus leading to a more multi-layered structure or phased or multiple-speed integration. Instances include Britains opting out of the social chapter, the special rules for Britain and Denmark regarding monetary union, and the general stipulation that the final stage of monetary integration can begin even if not all member-states meet the necessary economic pre-conditions to participate.

In the final analysis, the Maastricht Treaty is the best that the member states could achieve in the circumstances after thirty four years of efforts at European integration. In the short and mid-term, much of the Treaty's implementation will depend on the goodwill of its member-governments. At its worst, the ambiguity of many of the Treaty provisions could prevent the European Union from becoming an efficient actor in international affairs, particularly when the interests of member-states do not coincide. At its best, the European Union is evolutionary in character and the closer ties between the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the European Community link the Twelve member states foreign and security policy with the traditionally more dynamic aspects of European Community integration.

With the Maastricht Treaty now in force western security policies have to be coordinated by three bodies: NATO, Western European Union and the European Union. NATO's security monopoly has definitely ceased to exist.

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Peace and Security in South Asia

P. M. Kamath

The level of peace and security in South Asia is in direct proportion to the nature of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan.

The south Asian region, with a population of 1.13 billion, constitutes about 21.4 per cent of the world's population¹. Like people everywhere, the people of this region crave peace and security, not merely as absence of war but as a positive condition for human development and progress, and security, not merely in terms of narrow physical security but in terms of social and economic security as well. However, the two major actors in the region - India and Pakistan - are carrying on their regional cold war unabated. The level of peace and security in South Asia is in direct proportion to the nature of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. Unfortunately, in this arena, there are no signs of our neighbour, Pakistan, wanting to improve relations with India; though there were some signs of thaw during the eighth SAARC summit held in May last year in New Delhi.

Security Challenges

In the post Cold War period, South Asia faces a number of security challenges to peace in the region. These challenges may be considered as conventional and non-conventional threats to peace and security. The main distinction between conventional and non-conventional threats is that conventional threats are universally perceived as such and there are constant global efforts to reduce or contain such threats. Non-conventional threats have greater potential to disturb the peace but are not universally perceived to be so.

Conventional Threats

In the course of traditional international relations, nations have always treated war as the ultimate

instrument to ensure peace and security. India, imbued by Mahatma Gandhi's commitment to non-violence, had ignored the old principle that a nation can only speak of peace from a position of strength. India has been a victim of aggression by China in 1962 and has fought three wars with Pakistan between 1947 and 1971. As a theocratic state, Pakistan perceives secular India as a security threat. Pakistan's alliance with the US led India to secure the support of the Soviet Union. Since the end of the cold war, the two conventional threats India faces are Pakistan's militarisation and her acquisition of nuclear technology.

Militarisation of Pakistan

Since its birth in 1947, Pakistan has been ruled either by the military or by civilian governments under the shadow of the military. Even after electoral democracy was restored in Pakistan in 1989, the military continues to be an important component of the power structure.

The military dictatorship under Zia in Pakistan found the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in 1979 a golden opportunity to increase its international acceptability and acquire a huge arsenal of weapons. The US considered Pakistan as a frontline state in the US's global confrontation with the Soviet Union. The period saw increased expenditure by Pakistan under two US military and economic aid packages totalling \$3.2 billion (1982-87) and \$4.2 billion (1987-92)². With US military aid, Pakistan narrowed the gap in her military strength vis-a-vis India from 1.5 in 1971 to 1.3 by 1988. Pakistan's increased defence expenditure led India in turn to raise

its military expenditure. However, in relative terms, India's defence expenditure and the strength of her armed forces have declined over the years while Pakistan has continued to build up its armed forces. The following figures corroborate the above statement³.

	Troops per 1000 population		Troop levels (in '000s)		Military spending (in million dollars)	
	1987	1991	1987	1991	1987	1991
India	1.9	1.4	1,502	1,200	8,090	7,189
Pakistan	6.1	6.8	645	803	2,342	2,672

Nuclear Weapons:

The US justified its economic and military aid to Pakistan in the 1980s on the ground that it would create a sense of security amongst the rulers of Pakistan, who would desist from going nuclear. But this did not happen because Pakistan continued with its clandestine nuclear programme. According to recent revelations by the CIA, Pakistan has assembled five nuclear bombs.⁴

Pakistan has very skillfully linked its nuclear programme with its claim to Kashmir on the ground of common Islamic religion. Pakistan's military have also spoken of using nuclear weapons for a quick grab of Kashmir. This has generated an exaggerated fear of a likely nuclear war in South Asia among the US policy makers. This however has not prevented the US from supplying F-16s to Pakistan.

Non-Conventional Security

However, the greater threat to peace and security in South Asia is posed by non-conventional challenges because of their potential to cause political and

social unrest and conditions of destabilisation. In terms of their relevance to India, they are: International terrorism, secessionist movements, religious fundamentalism and population explosion.

International Terrorism

What is international terrorism?

Terrorism has been described by Yoram Alexander, Director of the Institute for Studies in International Terrorism at the State University of New York as "threatened and actual resort to ideological and political violence by non-state groups for the purpose of achieving limited or extensive goals..."⁵ Whenever such terrorists, who are highly motivated and indoctrinated individuals, receive training, funding, weapons, sanctuary, moral and diplomatic support from across borders or from foreign governments and/or if these groups operate against targets outside the state to which they belong, it can rightly be called international terrorism.

International terrorism has become India's number one security threat. Pakistan's promotion of across the border terrorism in Kashmir has been well documented.⁶ These terrorists are well armed and financed by Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence (ISI). It also uses resources generated by trading in drugs. According to a conservative estimate, between 1989 and 1992, 4571 civilians lost their lives in terrorist attacks in Jammu & Kashmir. In 1994 alone, 820 civilians, 200 security men and 1670 terrorists were killed.⁷

Can a terrorist group attack civilians and then claim violation of their own human rights by the security forces while performing their task of protecting national security? Can their international patrons claim to speak for the human rights of terrorists? This is not to condone any deliberate acts of violation of human rights by security forces, but to place allegations of violations of human rights in the correct perspective. While Indian security forces perform their tasks of safeguarding national borders, foreign mercenaries or externally brainwashed internal terrorists, are likely to lose

their lives or get maimed. The process of protection of human rights becomes particularly difficult when security forces deal with an enemy without uniform.

Secessionist Movements

International terrorism in India and in some other states like Sri Lanka in the region, is justified by the terrorist groups and their promoters on grounds of national self-determination. But is it a valid principle in application to an ethnic or religious minority within an independent state on the grounds of it being different ethnically or religiously from the mainstream in a multi-ethnic or a multi-religious state? National self-determination was a valid principle when the vast majority of the people in Afro-Asian societies were under western colonial rule. For a variety of reasons, including colonial rule, many of these societies have become states with multi-nationalities. Any claim by an ethnic or a religious group of the right to self-determination on the grounds of its being different from the mainstream can only lead to the total disturbance of social and political peace.

Islamic Fundamentalism

Has Islamic fundamentalism emerged as a major threat to world peace or has it merely replaced communism as an enemy in the perception of the West and particularly the US, is a question being widely discussed by scholars all over the world. But in South Asia, the growing influence of Islamic fundamentalism is a fact of life. Often the nature of the threat from religious fundamentalism is misunderstood by commentators and journalists. If by fundamentalism, we mean going back to the roots of religion to understand one's religion better, it is a harmless activity. Fundamentalism becomes dangerous when fundamentalists try to impose their views on others. As a British foreign minister said: "We have no quarrel with Islam nor are we opposed to Islamic revival. What we are opposed to is terrorism dressed as religion".

Population Explosion

The gravest threat to security and

peace in the region arises from its high population growth rate and consequent increase in poverty. A UN survey of world health states poverty as the number one killer.⁹ It is also a number one threat to global security; more so in South Asia as more than half of these global poor live in South Asia. Also the population growth rate in South Asia is uneven. While India has a growth rate of 2% next only to Sri Lanka's 1.5%, others have a higher growth rate - Pakistan 3% and Bangladesh 2.4%.¹⁰ This has become a major problem for India as large numbers of Bangladeshis infiltrate India's eastern states in large numbers, causing social and political tensions.

Since the end of the cold war, security in South Asia has to be seen in its broader context. The SAARC summit in Delhi committed itself to eradicating poverty preferably by 2000 AD and declared 1995 as the "SAARC Year of Poverty Eradication". Towards this end, the SAARC countries also established a Regional Food Security Reserve.¹¹

India launched its programme of economic liberalisation in June 1991. Its progress has been hampered by conventional and non-conventional threats to peace and security. India, therefore, has to simultaneously look to the West for understanding and constructive cooperation not only in its programme of economic liberalisation, but in its endeavour to build a humane, multi-linguistic, multi-religious and multi-ethnic society.

Terrorists are No Freedom Fighters

Such cooperation is essential in fighting terrorism on a global basis. For a long time, the US was spared the problem of international terrorism on its soil though American citizens and property abroad faced terrorists' threats. Americans as well as others without experience of international terrorism on their soil tried to make the fallacious distinction between terrorists and freedom fighters. Thus, for instance, President Reagan described the Contras fighting the Sandinista government in Nicaragua as freedom fighters. Similarly, at the

ninth UN Congress on Crime Prevention, held in Cairo in March 1995, Iran and Sudan, sought to make a distinction between "freedom fighters and those who fight in the defence of their country and against occupation and terrorists. But terrorists as defined earlier are terrorists. They cannot be called by any other name.

However, Americans have after the tragedy at the World Trade Centre and the Oklahoma truck bombing in April this year, come to realise this harsh truth. Recently, in the context of the arrest of Ramzi Ahmed Yusuf for bombing the World Trade Centre, President Clinton said: "Terrorism will not pay; terrorists will pay."¹² One hopes it is applicable to every part of the world and not only to terrorism on American soil.

Americans as well as others who shape the policies of the world, must realise that international terrorism promoted by Pakistan is a crime against humanity. In South Asia, India has learnt of the menacing nature of international terrorism, when two of her Prime Ministers became its victims. Sri Lanka learnt it when President Premadasa was assassinated by the LTTE, though he had collaborated with them against the Indian Peace Keeping Force, by providing the LTTE with weapons and money.¹³ Pakistan is currently facing uncontrolled ethnic violence and terrorism in Karachi in which more than 1000 lives have been lost. The roots of terrorism in Karachi go to the time when Pakistan played host to the American-armed Afghan guerillas' Kalishnikov culture. In fact, two American consulate officials were victims of terrorism in Karachi.

The Region State

By the turn of this century, with the spread of knowledge, the shrinking of distances and the rapid globalisation of national economies, there is a growing feeling that the nation-state has to pave the way for a new concept: The Region State. South Asia cannot be an exception. While the emergence of a region state will take its time, the people of the nations of the region must learn to live

in peaceful co-existence; and religious tolerance, not ethnic or religious cleansing is the answer to multi-ethnic or multi-religious states if they wish to live in peace with security in South Asia.

DR. P. M. KAMATH is Professor of Politics and Civics in the University of Bombay.

- ¹. Figures are borrowed from Ramesh Thakur, *The Politics and Economics of India's Foreign Policy* (Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1994), p.177.
- ². However, all military and economic aid was suspended by President George Bush in October 1990 since, as required under the Pressler Amendment of 1985, he could not certify that Pakistan is no longer involved in active pursuit of a nuclear weapons programme.
- ³. Figures are borrowed from a study mission sponsored by the Asia Society, *South Asia and the United States After the Cold War* (New York: The Asia Society, 1994); p.46.
- ⁴. In an interview to the *Washington Times*, Larry Pressler said that he attended a CIA briefing which convinced him that "Pakistan has about five weapons..." *The Times of India*, (Bombay, April 14, 1995).
- ⁵. "Some Perspectives on Terrorism and the Soviet Union", in Walter Laqueur and Yonah Alexander (eds.), *The Terrorism Reader: A Historical Anthology* (New York, Meridian and Nal Books, 1987), p.363.
- ⁶. See Shekhar Gupta, "Pan Islamic Fundamentalism: Exporting Terror", *India Today*, May 15, 1994; pp.44-51.
- ⁷. See the *Hindustan Times* (New Delhi), December 28, 1994. Also see the *Times of India* (Bombay), January 6, 1995.
- ⁸. Leon I. Hadar, "What Green Peril?" and Judith Miller, "The Challenge of Radical Islam", in *Foreign Affairs* (Spring 1993); pp.27-56.
- ⁹. "Poverty Main Killer, says UN Report", *The Times of India* (Bombay), May 3, 1995.
- ¹⁰. Figures are borrowed from *South Asia and the United States*, n.5, p.21.
- ¹¹. Prakash Nanda, "Will SAARC's 'dal-bhaat' concept bring food?", *The Times of India* (Bombay), May 10, 1995.
- ¹². "Clinton says Yusuf Arrest shows 'Terrorism' will not pay", official text, February 10, 1995, USIS, Bombay.
- ¹³. Sri Lankan President, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunge said in an interview: "Premadasa's hatred of India was more than his hatred of the LTTE. And he thought he could manipulate the Tigers to get the Indians out and manipulate Prabhakaran with arms ... and Rs.200 million from the treasury out of secret funds which do not have to be accounted for." *India Today*, May 15, 1995, p.54.

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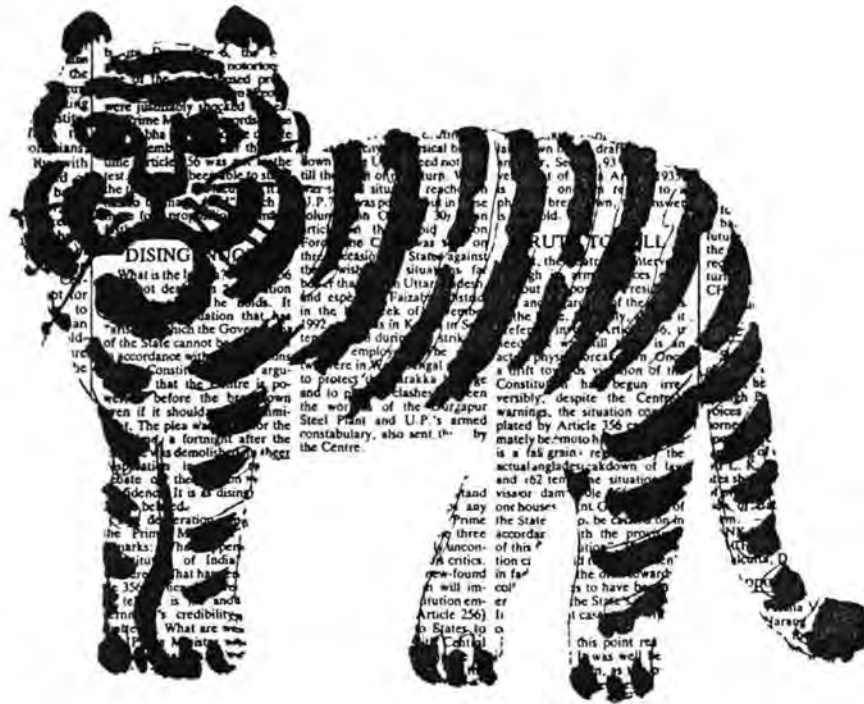
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With Love from Sudan

Henry Peters

As well as treading under foot the rights of its own people, the Islamic fundamentalist regime in Khartoum is today threatening both its neighbours and other countries in the region.

The Islamic Project

According to the Americans, Iran and Sudan are working together in this respect, these being two of the only countries in the world openly supporting Hamas, the Palestinian terrorist organisation responsible for recent acts of murder in Israel. "We have an Islamic project", said Mounir Said, the Hamas representative in the Sudanese capital recently; "Sudan has the same project, and we are going to carry this out in all Islamic countries". The project is to bring into being Islamic governments in countries where it is asserted that the number of Muslims is rising. It covers African countries to the south and west which have not traditionally been considered as Muslim. In its megalomaniac folly it also covers European countries and the United States, where the number of Muslims is indeed increasing. Proselytisation is forbidden in almost all Islamic countries, but the same does not apply in the free societies of the west.

Sudan is ideally placed to carry out a policy of Islamic expansion. Apart from being the biggest country in Africa, with a land area slightly more than one-quarter that of the United States, it has frontiers with no less than nine African countries, ranging from Egypt in the north to Kenya, Uganda and Zaire in the south, from Eritrea and

Ethiopia in the east to Libya, Chad and the Central African Republic in the west. It has official territorial disputes with only Egypt and Kenya, where the actual frontiers are not recognised by Sudan, but it has been accused of interference and subversion by every one of its neighbours since the present Islamic fundamentalist government took over in a military coup in 1989. Although the military officially handed over to civilians in 1993, nothing changed in reality. The military junta remains in power, with its head, Lieutenant General Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir as president and Major General al-Zubayr Muhammad Salih as vice president and heir apparent. Most civilian members

of the government come from the Islamic National Front, a fundamentalist political party which branched away from the Muslim Brotherhood in 1986, under the democratic government of Sadiq al-Mahdi, who is now in jail.

The head of the Islamic National Front

is not a member of the government, but he is nevertheless the power behind the throne. His name is Hasan Al-Turabi, and he is generally regarded

as controlling all the country's domestic and foreign policies - leaving actual military repression and the war in the south to the military. His aim is to be a mirror image of the late Ayatollah Khomeini, who masterminded and led the Islamic Revolution in Iran.

The Power Behind the Throne.

This being the case, present Sudanese policies can hardly be understood without considering Al-Turabi's own statements. Usually these are a mixture of wild fundamentalist assertions and abuse of the United States, which is determined that the world should know what Sudan is doing. In a recent interview with Jane Kokan of Britain's *Guardian* newspaper, Al-Turabi said: "Sudan is leading the Islamic world and is definitely going to be the centre of influence in the world order". His attitude is perhaps best summed up by the fact that he works from an office in the headquarters of a pseudo international organisation set up by the Sudanese government, the Popular Arab and Islamic Conference. Jane Kokan was amongst Islamists from many countries waiting to see the man they call "the great one". She was told by a visitor from Nigeria who had waited for ten hours: "He has the answers, you'll see. Through the righteous implementation of Islam, we will end poverty and put an end to all the corrupt regimes in Africa". In actively opposing corruption in Nigeria and supporting the Bosnian Muslims, Al-Turabi has a couple of good points, even in the eyes of the vigilant westerners.

Al-Turabi should not be underestimated. Unlike most of his colleagues in Sudan's fundamentalist elite he is an intellectual with a sound west European education. He calls himself doctor and is well entitled to so, since



he has a Ph.D from the Sorbonne following a law degree in Britain. He is regarded as one of the world's leading intellectuals of fundamentalist Islam by people who are well able to make such a judgement. I quote from Jane Kokan's article: "He has a growing, cult-like following. His books, audio cassettes and video tapes are available in Islamic institutes from Atlanta to Algiers. His words are recited by Islamists locked up in Cairo prisons for attacks on foreign tourists and by students at the African International University in Khartoum, which attracts people from Bosnia to Tajikistan".

The fundamentalist leader laughs out loud about American accusations of terrorism and training camps run by Iranians in Sudan. "Most of these charges by the American are stupid", he says. "There isn't a single Iranian inside this country besides the embassy staff. Some Americans simply confuse Sudan with Iran. They think being Islamic it must be the same model. We have more in common with other European countries even Scandinavian countries than with Iran. As for human rights, in neighbouring countries there are a thousand times more detainees than in Sudan. In Sudan there are normally tens of detainees, and none are prominent people". Then suddenly he goes wild: "Reports of human rights abuses are invented by the Americans. Hamas here in Sudan? Hamas is not based here. The central studies of Hamas and the publications of Hamas are based in many parts of the US. Hizbollah? There is no Hizbollah here. Those poor Americans, even their ambassadors don't know what Hizbollah means".

Targeting Neighbours

I have already quoted Mounir Said of Hamas. He freely admits to being the Hamas representative: "Here I am able to coordinate activities with other Muslim brothers, so that one day soon we will be able to achieve our goals". It is thought that not only Hamas and Hizbollah but also the Abu Nidal Group and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine have representatives in Khartoum. They often meet there to coordinate their activities. As in the case of Nigeria and Bosnia, however,

the Sudanese try to cash in on causes which can find support in the west. Deputy Foreign Minister Ghazi Salah el Din Atabani claims to be proud that reactionary governments are offended: "It's affecting our relations with other Islamic countries adversely, at least in terms of relations with governments. For example, Saudi Arabia is a corrupt system which corrupts Islam. It's decadent, it represses women and can't accept our changing, modernist ideas. At the same time it is not providing an Islamic government. It's a dictatorship that's hereditary". Yet the Foreign Minister himself, Ali Osman Taha, has been to Saudi Arabia twice this year, and his most recent visit to the Gulf region also included Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. Only Kuwait refused to receive him.

Mohamed Ahmed Abdelgadir Al-Arabab was a minister until he defected last March. He was recently interviewed by Mark Huband of Britain's *Observer* Sunday newspaper. "The National Islamic Front has a long-term plan which will mean that all ministers, state officials and soldiers will be Front members by 2002.", he said. "It intends to be the leader of the Islamic world by then. It has targeted ten African countries for military action by fundamentalist groups, which are being trained at eight different camps in Sudan". He names some of the countries as Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Zaire, the Central African Republic and Chad, all neighbours, as well as Djibouti. Together they have a population of over 200 million. Egypt has blamed the recent assassination attempt on President Mubarak in Addis Ababa on Sudanese intrigues, and it also believes that the campaign against foreign tourists in Egypt has been orchestrated from Khartoum.

According to this defector, Uganda and Eritrea are the Sudanese regime's immediate targets. Partly as a result of these revelations, both countries have recently broken off diplomatic relations with Khartoum. Uganda claims that Sudan is giving active support to the Lord's Resistance Army, led by Joseph Kony, an old enemy of Uganda's presi-

dent, Yowerri Museveni, the man who has done such a lot to help Uganda recover from the wounds inflicted by Islamist former president Idi Amin. Khartoum denies knowledge of this, but Kampala claims it has incontrovertible evidence. Uganda's Minister of Security, Colonel Kahinda Otufire, told Mark Huband: "Sudan has provided uniforms, mines, mortars, light machine guns and bases around Torit and Nimulay in southern Sudan. It has been preparing Ugandan groups for Islamisation". Ironically the Lord's Resistance Army claims to be a militant Christian group!

All the World's Terrorists

It is the same story in Eritrea. The authorities in Asmara claim that Sudan is training as many as 500,000 Eritrean Islamic fundamentalists. Khartoum denies this too, but Mark Huband went to several refugee camps and found inmates prepared to be perfectly frank about the situation. One of their leaders, Idriss Mohammed Idriss, said: "Our Jihad Islamic Movement was established among the refugees in 1990 - it's now very powerful inside Eritrea. Another, Sheikh Mohamed Ismail Ali, added: "Because Sudan is ruled by an Islamic government we feel secure and that Islam has a new life here. That's why there will have to be Islamic rule in Eritrea when people go back from the camps in Sudan". The Jihad Islamic Movement was invited to Al-Turabi's Popular Arab and Islamic Conference in 1993 and has been there ever since. Eritrea's deputy foreign minister, Saleh Kekia, said recently in Asmara: "Sudan is a gathering place for all the world's terrorists, and they are going to destabilise us by any means. They have intentions for the whole region".

The Americans are not such fools as Al-Turabi thinks. In spite of ample straws in the wind, Saddam Hussein's conquest of Kuwait came out of a clear blue sky. The evidence was there all right, but the west did not want to know. The US State Department is determined to see that Sudan does not develop into a new Iraq, with a military force strong enough to attack and swallow up neighbouring countries. It recognises a streak of megalomania

which is also reminiscent of Saddam. Already ruling the biggest African country, Sudan's present government shows an unbridled appetite for extending its influence. The United States believes that every east African country must frame its defence policies with the threat from Sudan in the forefront of its concerns. Eritrea and Ethiopia in particular are taking western advice seriously and are thinking of following the example of Mozambique and Cameroon in asking for admittance to the Commonwealth - formerly the British Commonwealth of Nations. This would not provide any formal guarantees but would bind these countries more firmly into the international community. Mark Huband quotes a western diplomat in the region whom he understandably does not want to name: "Something has to be done to change the course of Sudan's policies. If they don't change their internal policies, their human rights policies, they're digging their own grave. This is just one step short of saying we will provide the bullet".

As usual Amnesty International has taken a lead in documenting human rights abuses in Sudan. Al-Turabi dismisses it as being in the pay of British intelligence. This is more likely to harm his credit than that of Amnesty. Many of them are associated and are indeed part of the civil war, but not all. The Sudanese government neglects human rights all over the country and oppresses minorities which have nothing to do with the civil war, often hundreds of miles away from the area of hostilities. "Since coming to power the Sudanese fundamentalist government has made torture and the detention of suspected opponents in so-called 'ghost houses' - the security forces' secret detention centres - standard practice throughout the country as it crushes political opposition and attempts to mould society to its own version of a radical Islamic agenda". This is quoted from an Amnesty International communique published in January and Secretary General Pierre Sane said at that time: "The president of Sudan still denies that 'ghost houses' exist, but the torture scars and the testimonies of

hundreds of people cannot be ignored".

Human Rights Violations

It is standard practice in Sudan for government spokesmen to deny everything automatically. But such blanket denials are not convincing, and they are often accompanied by groundless accusations, like Al-Turabi's aspersions on Amnesty International. The government does not allow human rights monitors into the country, and this indeed was one of Secretary General Sane's main demands in his report: "Having international monitors on the ground would make it more difficult for government and opposition forces to get away with the killings, torture and arbitrary detentions that have fractured Sudanese society and deepened political hatreds over the past five years". These are the five years, I would add, that have elapsed since the extinction of democracy in Sudan. "The UN provides relief aid at vast expense to deal with the consequences of war and human rights abuse, but this is not enough, said Amnesty's Secretary General.

Some feel it anomalous that any relief aid should be sent at all in these circumstances. There is indeed a contradiction, but it is hard to see what else should be done. The suffering of the people of Sudan cannot be ignored by the international community. On July 13, the European Parliament in Strasbourg passed a resolution condemning the Sudanese government for its appalling human rights record. It urged the European Union to exert pressure for UN sanctions, including an international arms embargo. It said the aim of the sanctions should be to "bring pressure to bear on the Sudanese government to stop the massacre of its southern population and respect human rights throughout the entire country".

At the same time, however, the European Commission has approved a grant of 9 million ECU, or US \$ 11.7 million, for humanitarian aid to Sudan. The money will be given to non-governmental organisations to help with programmes directed to people displaced from their homes due to the

civil war, both in northern and southern Sudan. The grant will also support health care programmes for the displaced and refugees.

Obstructing the Providers of Aid

This is perhaps not as contradictory as it seems, for in fact those who are engaged in distributing aid are the only foreigners in the country outside the capital and one of the only sources through which we can learn what is going on. There is no other way in which evidence about human rights violations can be brought to the attention of the outside world.

It is not altogether surprising in these circumstances that they are hampered in their work to some considerable degree. The situation is in many ways similar to that in Ethiopia under the Mengistu regime. Famine was of such breathtaking dimensions then that the international community could not refuse to help, but much of the help they did give was brought to nothing by the government of the very people they were trying to assist.

In a recent article in the *Daily Telegraph* in London Louise Turnbridge reported from Khartoum in these words: "Persistent government obstruction is hampering the delivery of the help to tens of thousands of needy people, according to frustrated international aid workers in Sudan. 'I would like to scream from the rooftops, but at the same time if I scream then I'm out', said one aid worker". The situation is quite unbelievable and ought to be publicised much more than it is. "Aid agencies complain of being denied access to targeted areas or groups of people. Permits are needed for any travel, but they are regularly refused or delayed for months or years. Relations between the repressive Islamic regime and foreign aid agencies are characterised by suspicion and mistrust. Many aid workers tell of being vilified in the press, followed by security officers, harassed, arrested and detained".

Blatant Religious Discrimination

All aid activities are subject to government vetting. Labour ministry



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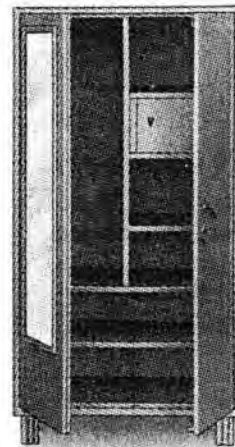
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officials interfere in the recruitment of national staff to foreign agencies, screening all applications and imposing a contentious scoring system at the interview stage. United Nations sources say the best candidates are often rejected in favour of those suspected of being security agents.

Religious Discrimination

In addition, there is blatant religious discrimination. Foreign agencies are encouraged to channel their funds through Sudanese partners, the most insistent of which are Islamic groups. However, UN sources confirm that the achievement record of such partners is poor. The largest, Dawa al-Islamiya, discriminates against Christians in the provision of humanitarian assistance. Christian churches have been told to submit to the Missionary Act, which bans public meetings and prevents any other unauthorised activity. Observers say the government regularly wields its power to deny food and support to non-Muslims. Whenever aid agencies take the least step to remedy this situation they are accused of using aid money to convert people to Christianity.

The War Against the Nuba

The civil war in the south is a subject in itself and outside the scope of this article. I have already said that within the context of the civil war Amnesty International regards the two main insurgent armies in the south - the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) led by John Garang and the South Sudan Independence Army (SSIA) led by Riek Machar Teny-Dhurgon - as co-guilty with the government of committing gross abuses of human rights.

I would, however, like to conclude by giving some account of the war against the Nuba, a black African people who live in the Baggara Arab-ruled mountainous regions of the centre and north of Sudan and who are stubbornly resisting Khartoum's attempt to transform a heterogeneous multicultural country to an extremist Islamist state. Some Nuba are Christians, but most are Muslim. Islam has been present in the mountains since at least 13th cen-

tury, and a majority there speak Arabic. I draw largely on an article written by Julie Flint of the *Guardian* newspaper after visiting the area.

The normal response of the Sudanese government to human rights abuses backed up by evidence and eyewitness reports is simply to say that those involved are lying. It is unlikely that anyone believes such assertions, but it should be said that Julie Flint's report was countered by a letter from the Sudanese ambassador in London, Omer Y Bireedo, couched in these terms: "Julie Flint's article is biased and out of date. ...

Julie Flint

This said, it must be admitted that Ambassador Bireedo was bound to react, if only because of the enormity of the human rights violations documented by Julie Flint and described in her article. Her account was confirmed by Roger Winter, head of the US Committee for Refugees, who was in the Nuba mountains even more recently: "Among the amazing realities I encountered were the destructions of mosques and the killing of Muslim clerics by the government, recounted to me by Nuba Muslim leaders. I was able to travel and talk freely to civilians about their experience of government violence against noncombatants".

Julie Flint's article is depressing in the extreme, cataloguing one instance of cruelty after another perpetrated by government soldiers against a helpless people. But apart from the isolated incidents which taken together make a horrifying picture, she found convincing evidence of a genocide almost as thorough as that seen in Rwanda, and a particularly vile aspect of this is the assertion of the principle that to be a Muslim you have to be an Arab.

Religious Tolerance Versus Fanaticism

A characteristic of the Nuba from time immemorial has been religious tolerance. Julie Flint describes celebrations she attended to mark the Muslim festival of Eid el-Adha. The day began as rebel leader Yousif Kuwa, himself a Muslim, attended Islamic prayers

with two of his commanders, one a Muslim and the other a Christian, and then visited a nearby church to pay his respects to Christian leaders. Mosque and church alike had been built by the same man, a Nuba priest. The tolerance exhibited in the Nuba mountains is the mirror image of Khartoum's intolerance - and all the more remarkable in that there is no gallery to which to play. When signs of religious tension surfaced a few months ago, fomented by Khartoum's propaganda, religious leaders called a conference to iron out the differences. Their decisions were a triumph of Nuba pragmatism, giving the seal of approval to intermarriage, dancing and the consumption of alcohol.

The result of this has been the persecution of Nuba Muslims by the Khartoum government as confirmed by Roger Winter. Government troops are now systematically desecrating mosques, empowered by a 1992 *fatwa* declaring that 'an insurgent who was previously a Muslim is now an apostate, a non-Muslim is a nonbeliever standing as a bulwark against the spread of Islam, and Islam has granted the freedom of killing both of them'. Julie Flint quotes Adam Tutu Atrun, a senior Islamic leader in Nuba mountains: "They told the people: this is not a real mosque. If you want to say your prayers go to a real mosque. They took everything they could carry - Islamic books, Korans and prayer mats - and burned the rest. Khartoum is saying only Arabs are Muslims. But we are black and we will remain black and Muslim. Those of the government are not Muslims: Islam does not allow Muslims to believe this".

That is certainly a sentiment shared by millions of Muslims all over the world, many hundreds of thousands of whom are in fact black. One wonders what the Nigerian who sat waiting for ten whole hours to spend five minutes in the hold presence of Dr. Al-Turabi would think of the doctrine of genocide being preached in the Nuba mountains of central Sudan, if he should ever read this article.

Courtesy : *Swiss Press Review*.

Dealing with VIP Law-breakers

VIPs illegally occupying huge government tenements and refusing to pay market rent is not a new phenomenon. This has been going on for years.

There are two remedies:

First, the Election Commission should, in the forthcoming elections, disqualify candidates who owe monies to government. In the corporate sector, directors are automatically disqualified if they avail of unauthorised loans from their company. Their purchase transactions with their company are to be recorded in a separate register, and approved by the Board. Since the State is analogous to a corporate entity, and elected officers are in the nature of trustees of public interest, the same rule should hold good.

Second, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, who is responsible for proper utilisation of government property should recommend proceedings for recovery of dues through the Revenue Code Procedure. Although the executive may refuse to take action, CAG's recommendations will attract public attention, and either public interest groups or political rivals may then move the High Court for a writ of mandamus to recover the dues.

Ultimately, unruly politicians, wily bureaucrats and big time criminals will all be brought to book by public opinion in a democracy. As Jayaprakash Narayan once said: "There is no public issue which remains unresolved when it is put in the court of public opinion".

M. R. Pai,
Bombay.

Reunification of the Sub-Continent

Reunification of the sub-continent is most desirable. The fact perhaps most overlooked is that Jinnah did not really want Pakistan and was using it as a bargaining chip. Or else, why would he have accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan which emphasised the essential unity of India. Not only Maulana Azad in his revelations but many scholars have recorded the fact. Leonard Mosley in his *"The Last Days of the British Raj"* said: "The influence of Jinnah was all powerful. What he said was law with the members of his working committee; and he told them that the Mission Plan was the nearest to Pakistan that the Muslims could hope to get".

You may also refer to V. B. Kulkarni's book on Pakistan, where it is mentioned that Sri Prakasa, India's first High Commissioner to Pakistan, who was friendly with Jinnah, had written in the *Hindustan Times*: "The greatest shock of Jinnah's life was the conceding and establishment of Pakistan". However, this being all part history, it would be wise to reconsider the possibility of a reunification of a kind. There is the article in the *Swarajya* Annual Number 1966 on the subject by none other than the late Pothan Joseph. The title of the article says: "Settled Facts Can Be Resettled". He wrote: "If we have vision enough to contemplate federation of India and Pakistan, joint leadership will realise that Pakistan can be undone. Settled facts can be resettled. The dictates of geo-politics demand that course. M. V. Kamath, the well known journalist, much later, in an article in the *Indian Express* suggested a similar course.

C. A. Reddi,
Madras.

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BOOK REVIEWS

INDIAN SOCIALISTS : SEARCH FOR IDENTITY by Sonal Shah, Popular Prakashan, Bombay; 1994; pp.212; Rs.250.



Reviewed by
Dr. Ashok Chousikar

The socialist movement in India was continually plagued by splits and divisions. Since the movement's establishment in 1948; it has experienced four major splits and got itself politically destroyed. Dr. Sonal Shah has narrated the story of these splits and divisions.

In his foreword, veteran Janata leader Mr. Madhu Dandavate maintains that the most essential feature of socialism is pluralism but the socialists tried to put forward their ideology in a rigid mould. He acknowledges the contributions made by Jayprakash Narayan and Dr. Lohia. The former provided the moral foundation and ideology while the latter pleaded for immediacy in struggle and organisation so that they complimented each other. He notes that one of the disturbing factors that emerges from this study is the lack of will in the movement to maintain organisational cohesiveness amidst these differences.

In the first chapter, Dr. Shah discusses the nature and scope of a modern political party to provide a

broad perspective within which the specific problems of the socialist party in India can be meaningfully examined.

In the second chapter, while discussing the genesis of the socialist party in India, Dr. Shah points out that after the failure of the civil disobedience movement there was dejection and disappointment in the minds of radical Congressmen. Since 1931 socialists groups were formed at regional levels in the different states which were unified into the Congress Socialist party in 1934. They played an important role in the Quit India Movement of 1942 and they came out of the Congress to form the Socialist Party under the leadership of Jayprakash Narayan. It became a mass-based party and contested the first general elections with great expectations. But the party lost heavily and it could never overcome the trauma of defeat.

Merger and Splits

The socialists decided to merge their party with the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party of Acharya Kripalani and a new party - The Praja Socialist Party (PSP) was formed. But immediately after the merger, differences developed between Dr. Lohia and Asoka Mehta. Mehta argued that in a backward country like India with its inescapable compulsion of economic backwardness, one had to extend limited co-operation to the ruling party. On the other hand, Dr. Lohia opposed all major policies of the Nehru government. An incident of police firing in Kerala which was then ruled by a socialist government was responsible for the first split in the socialist party. In 1955, Dr. Lohia established the Socialist Party and carried one-third of the PSP members along with him. It can be said that Lohia's style of functioning had a great bearing on the split in the party. The PSP was never to become the same after this split.

The second split in the party took

place in 1964 when Asoka Mehta finally decided to join the Congress. During the period between 1955 and 1964 Acharya Narendra Deva passed away. Jayprakash Narayan joined the Bhoodan Movement and Acharya Kripalani resigned from the party. The Socialist party under Dr. Lohia launched many movements but PSP leaders just drifted. Asoka Mehta got time to consolidate his position and was able to take away a large number of PSP members with him into the Congress. One of the important causes of differences within the socialist movement was the question of the party's relations with the Congress and the Communists. In the 'sixties, Dr. Lohia began advocating a policy of non-Congressism that allowed him to forge an alliance with the Communists.

After the departure of Mehta, the PSP and the SP leaders decided to come together and form a united party. They came together and established the Samyukta Socialist Party (SSP) under the Chairmanship of Mr. S. M. Joshi. However, the non-cooperation of Dr. Lohia and bitter verbal wars divided the party even as it was consolidating itself. Raj Narain sought to impose Dr. Lohia's policies and programs on the SSP. Hence, at the time of the foundation conference of the SSP, former PSP leaders led by Mr. N. G. Goray decided to revive the PSP and in 1965 the socialist movement got divided a third time.

Personality Clashes

According to Dr. Shah, personality clashes, temperamental incompatibility and the unruly behaviour of Raj Narain caused the third split in the party. The split damaged the socialist movement yet again. This was unfortunate. During that period, anti-Congress feelings were running high and a united SSP could have emerged as the second largest party in India. The splits in the socialist party and the communist parties provided the rightist parties the opportunity to occupy opposition space in Indian politics.

Both the SSP and the PSP did well in the general elections of 1967. Unfortunately Dr. Lohia passed away in 1967 after his election to the Lok Sabha. The SSP joined the coalition government in UP, Bihar and Kerala.

Raj Narain's persistent efforts to force Chief Minister Charan Singh to resign; his unsuccessful attempts to woo the non-Indira Congress, the attempt to create a new Socialist Party and the final extinction of the socialist party when it merged with the Janata Party in 1977 are indeed very confusing events but are narrated by the author lucidly and clearly.

In the seventh chapter, Dr. Shah takes an overview of the nature and causes of the four splits that destroyed the socialist movement in India. She is of the view that with the departure of Jayaprakash, the party lacked a leader who could hold it together. Also, the socialist party's merger with the KMPP was a mistake because it reduced the cohesiveness of the party. Due to the differing ideological perspectives of the leaders regarding re-

lations with the Congress and the Communists, the party could never develop a coherent and consistent ideology. Dr. Shah is of the view that the major cause of all the four splits was personality based clashes and barring the first split of 1955, there was no major ideological reason for the splits. She rightly points out that among the top socialist leaders it was Lohia alone who launched new movements and brought new recruits to the party. By taking up issues of caste and language, he widened the appeal of the socialist party among the backward castes in North India. Dr. Shah is candid in admitting that the anti-Congressism of Dr. Lohia remained the only logical line for the opposition parties to follow if they wanted to achieve political power. Most of the non-Congress secular parties including the Janata party and the Janata Dal also got divided and Dr. Shah is of the opinion that unless serious efforts are made to strengthen the cohesive forces that keep parties united, splits and mergers are likely to be a continuing feature of opposition parties.

Readable Book

It is to be noted that all the splits and divisions that plagued Indian Socialists were not the result of their restlessness and search for identity. A perusal of the account given by Dr. Shah gives the impression that the splits were not engineered to clear ideological confusion or to remove black sheep but were essentially centered around personality clashes and power politics within the party. In fact, leaders like Raj Narain, George Fernandes, Madhu Limaye and Mulayam Singh Yadav continued to wreck parties right upto the nineties.

Dr. Sonal Shah should be congratulated for writing such a readable book. She has a firm grasp over details which makes her account readable. With this book, Dr. Shah is well qualified to write an authentic history of the socialist movement in India - a theme larger than splits in the socialist party.

DR. ASHOK CHOUSALKAR is Reader, Department of Political Science, Shivaji University, Kolhapur.

Why did you bother to point out the Great Bear in the sky?
 Why did you worry if I played in the rain too long?
 Why did you love my poems, my awful poems?
 Why did you take me for long walks?
 Why did you tell me not to run after money?
 Why did my successes make you proud?
 Why did you teach me to gamble on myself, and not on cards?
 When I become a father, maybe I'll know why.
 And I hope I'll be a father like you.

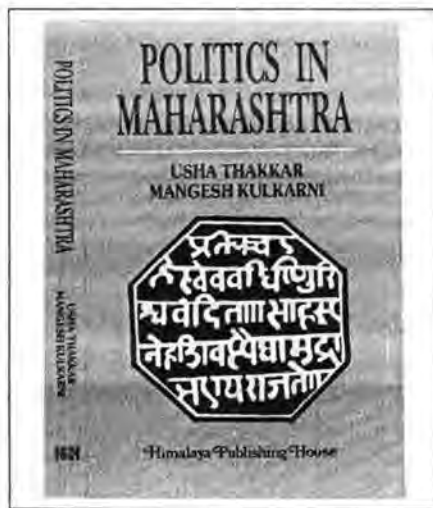
Papa, pal, the complete man.



Raymond
 SINCE 1925

NEXUS EQUITY 1550 J

POLITICS IN MAHARASHTRA
edited by Usha Thakkar and Mangesh Kulkarni; Himalaya Publishing House, Bombay; 1995; pp.248; Rs.350.



Reviewed by
P. M. Bandivadekar

Since the sixties, political scientists have started taking increasing interest in the politics of the States comprising the Indian Union although full-fledged studies dealing with individual states is a recent phenomenon. The growth of regionalism, the rise of separatist and militant movements, the decline of the Congress party, the emergence of regional political parties and the perplexing, but enchanting diversity of Indian politics have compelled students of the Indian political system to take a closer look at the kaleidoscopic changes taking place in State politics. This is necessary to comprehend the undercurrents of the political reality in India and to explore the cementing forces and the common features binding our body politic.

Assorted research papers and studies concerning certain aspects of politics in Maharashtra have been appearing from time to time during the last two decades. A comprehensive work on the politics of Maharashtra has, however, been a long felt need, which is partially met by the book under review. It covers different aspects of politics in Maharashtra.

Ram Joshi's Overview

The first article in this volume written by Dr. Ram Joshi presents a broad overview of the politics of Maharashtra and provides an appropriate setting for the various themes selected by other contributors. His essay may be considered as a continuation of his earlier excellent article, the first of its kind, included in 'State Politics in India' edited by Myron Weiner, (Princeton, 1968). The essay in this volume was probably written in 1989 and has not been updated. In spite of this, some of the conclusions drawn by the author about Congress factionalism, regional discontent and non-party mobilisation are valid even today.

The Influence of MPs

Dr. Usha Thakkar and Mr. Gautam Vora examine the role played by MPs in the State. They conclude that despite the aura of being MPs, they do not seem to wield much power as compared to the MLAs. Some MPs are more influential than others because of their access to the Prime Minister's Office, but most of them are faceless except during elections and most of them invisible to the public at large. Although, the conclusions drawn by the authors regarding the decline in the status of MPs may be true, it should be remembered that most political activities take place behind the scenes. Some MPs apparently do not hold any position of power, but they continue to exercise tremendous influence in matters of political succession, struggle for power within the party, grant of concessions and relaxation of rules.

The Sugar Lobby

Politics in Maharashtra is dominated by elites in the co-operative sector. Dr. Ashok S. Chausalkar examines the tactics of the sugar lobby and the government to influence each other and the efforts of the central leaders to reduce the influence of the sugar lobby in the state's politics. The sugar lobby, according to him, essentially functions as a pressure group, but it cannot openly challenge the ruling party as such, because the sugar barons are not sure of winning

elections by themselves despite their vast resources. The author has drawn attention to the widely acknowledged problems facing sugar co-operatives like bad management, corruption, and the ostentatious life style of the leaders of the co-operatives. But he has ignored the contribution of the sugar co-operatives to social and economic development in Western Maharashtra. He has also not taken into consideration the caste factor and its role in the formation and management of sugar and other co-operatives. A minor inaccuracy may be noted in passing. It is mentioned that after 1972 several powerful co-operatives leaders such as Mr. A. A. Patil, Mr. Y. J. Mohite, Mr. D. S. Desai, Mr. Sharad Pawar became ministers. Both Mr. Y. J. Mohite and Mr. D. S. Desai were inducted into the cabinet much earlier.

The Dalit Movement

Dr. Maneesha Tikekar gives a lucid account of the Dalit movement and its leadership in Maharashtra. She has identified three stages of the Dalit movement - reformative, transformative and consolidatory. On the whole, she makes a balanced evaluation of the Dalit movement, when she points out that internal dissensions within the community have sharpened due to politics; and the rivalry between the Mahars, Mangs and Chambhars have alienated the non-Mahar groups from the Dalit movement. Under such circumstances it is rather difficult to agree with her conclusion that 'Dalits appear to be accommodated rather than liberated in the 'killing kindness' of the status quo' as their leadership is itself largely responsible for the present plight of the community. The author has not mentioned the full names of caste Hindu reformers such as Bhopatkar, Mate and Shinde. This leads to some confusion as one of the Bhopatkar brothers was a staunch conservative.

Women Leaders

In an informative article on the political leadership of women in Maharashtra, Dr. Rohini Gawankar has discussed the role of women leaders from all political parties in the State. In her opinion our patriarchal family

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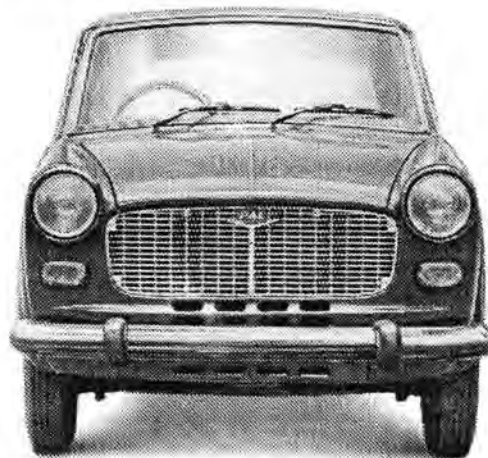
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system is a severe obstacle to socio-political activists as it comes in the way of their career. Women are the weakest contenders for power and are always politically marginalised. One important contribution of the essay is that it has highlighted the role of Dalit, tribal and peasant women leaders. It is rather surprising how the writer has missed Godavari Parulekar in her account, whose work in the tribal area has become a legend.

Non-Party Organisation

In her article on non-party political elites in Maharashtra, Dr. Nawas Mody examines the role of two prominent non-party political organisations - Shramik Sanghathana and Bhoomi Sena. These movements according to her reflect the action of indigenous democratic politics.

Panchayati Raj

V. B. Mandlekar, in his article, has described the organisation and future of Panchayati Raj in Maharashtra. In his view it is an erroneous impression that Panchayati Raj is like a 'God that failed'. In spite of some deficiencies in the system, the achievements of Panchayati Raj are significant. After reviewing the changes in Panchayati Raj since its inception, he pleads for greater co-operation between the urban and rural local self-government institutions.

Municipal Politics

While examining the politics of Municipal government, S. G. Gadkari has drawn certain conclusions about the political aspects of municipal administration. The author has questioned the usefulness of the democratic model chosen for municipal government, based on universal adult franchise and single-member constituency. However, few in this democratic age would agree with the suggestion that in the case of municipal elections 25-30 percent representation be given to the more enlightened sections of the society.

Communalism

The problem of communalism in Maharashtra has been analysed by

Abdul Kadar Mukadam. He considers Maharashtra as pioneering communalism in the country and blames Lokmanya Tilak for giving a communal turn to politics. It is very difficult to accept this generalised statement as according to his own admission Tilak tried to settle the problem of the Hindus and Muslims on the basis of parity. Recent writings have exposed the shallowness of such one-sided and prejudiced criticism of Lokmanya Tilak. Besides the writer has totally ignored the historical and sociological factors responsible for the communal divide in India. The article includes a good case-study of the major riots in Maharashtra during the last decade. It is surprising that the author should not have mentioned the constructive role played by Hamid Dalwai in strengthening the secular forces in the State. He has not mentioned the names of Muslim communal organisations in his study and does not say anything about the role of Muslims in the recent Bombay riots. In spite of its commitment to secular values the article deals more with Hindu communalism rather than the problem of communalism in Maharashtra in general and therefore the analysis is lopsided.

Rise of the Shiv Sena

Rajdeep Sardesai gives a good account of the rise and growth of the Shiv Sena which according to him is the new *Avatar* of Marathi chauvinism and Hindu communalism. He clearly brings home the point that the Sena has misrepresented Maharashtrian culture by promoting religious bigotry and by resorting to violence. In the opinion of the writer, while the social reform movement has a long history in Maharashtra dating back to the *Bhakti* movement, a trend towards militant and parochial politics has always run parallel to it, right from the time of Shivaji, through the Peshwas and the nationalist movement. This is a sweeping statement and anybody having some knowledge of Shivaji's vision and impartial role would not subscribe to this. On the whole Mr. Sardesai has made a good assessment of Shiv Sena's role in the politics

of Maharashtra but has failed to notice how increasing urbanisation has greatly facilitated its growth in recent times.

Role of Action Groups

One of the best articles in this collection is by Mangesh Kulkarni and it may be considered as a significant contribution to the theoretical discussion on the role of action groups in the country. According to him action groups play a limited but significant and fundamentally progressive role in the modernisation of a fractured civil society in the ongoing capitalist transformation in India.

Development Boards

Regional imbalances are one of the knotty problems that the State of Maharashtra has been facing since its inception. M. S. Kashikar and V. S. Deshpande have examined the feasibility of constituting a Development Board for Vidharbha in the context of the economic backlog of the region. According to the writers, formation of autonomous competently administered and financially strong Boards is the need of the hour. Development Boards have been established since then, but their working so far does not justify the optimism of the writers in this respect. Drought is a recurring phenomenon in Maharashtra. Veena Deosthale has evaluated the overall irrigation policy of the State with special reference to a few experiments like Ralegan Siddhi, Naigaon and Adgaon regarding watershed development in the State and their salient features.

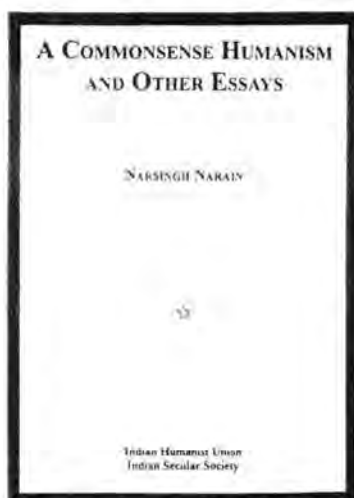
The last essay in this collection inquires into the politics of protecting the poor. One of the most important interests of politicians during economic adjustment is to retain discretionary control over resource distribution at the local level. This is described as the politics of accommodation. Robert Jenkins feels that a new and qualitatively different form of political accommodation may emerge in Maharashtra in the near future.

The editors have, by and large, done a commendable job in the compilation of the volume. They are well

aware that several significant aspects of the politics of Maharashtra have not been covered in the book. It would have been better however, if the editors had bridged the gap by attempting a more comprehensive theoretical analysis of continuity and change in the politics of Maharashtra in the introduction. The select bibliography given at the end adds value to the book.

P. M. BANDIVADEKAR, is Vice Principal, Ramnarain Ruia College, Matunga, Bombay.

A COMMONSENSE HUMANISM AND OTHER ESSAYS by Narsingh Narain; edited by A. Solomon; Indian Secular Society; 850/A, Shivajinagar, Pune 411004; pp.72; Rs.45; (Post free)



**Reviewed by
Dr. R. Srinivasan**

The Indian Humanist Union and the Indian Secular Society have brought together a number of essays written on different occasions by the late Narsingh Narain to make an attractively produced little book of seventy odd pages. This will introduce the varieties of a humanist's attitude towards life, religion and society. Almost all these essays have India as their background and two of them are written with specific reference to the beliefs of Gandhi and the humanism of Nehru.

The author effortlessly points out

to the attempts made by the Mahatma to interpret traditional Hindu beliefs in terms of what he regarded to be the quintessence of Hinduism. In doing this, Gandhi took a humanist position and, in the process, he distorted Hinduism as it was generally understood and interpreted. The humanist ideals that Gandhi valued in the deepest sense of the term were often overlaid with his inherited *sanatanist* Hindu religious values. Man and his life were greater than his ideas - "the nobility and greatness of a man's life are not dependent on the merits of the theology to which he subscribes." In contrast to Gandhi, Nehru is seen as one who "never sought the security of comforting beliefs which in his view would not stand the test of free enquiry".

Unlike the free thinkers of an earlier century Narain does not dismiss all religious attitudes as necessarily contradictory to a humanist attitude. He would like Humanism not to be the preserve of an elite but would want it to be spread to the widest number of people. He sees the perennial appeal of religion to most people and finds in the position of most Humanists the pervading of a religious attitude. A constellation of attitudes, optimism and a deep concern for larger issues characterise the New Humanism - "an identity with all humanity, and beyond humanity with all life beyond life, with soil, water, air and sunlight, in the vast ecology of nature". In this, the contemporary Humanists reiterate the traditional wisdom of ages in many traditional societies so well captured by the letter of Chief Seattle during the last century. But traditional religions have had their own quota of cruelty; they have not always been sensitive to social suffering. It was the concern of an alien government (for instance in India) that put an end to extremely reprehensible and barbarous customs.

That all religions teach the same values is one of those nostrums that Narain attacks and another charge that he makes is that the west is not necessarily materialistic and India spiritual. "The fact that progress in science and technology in the west has

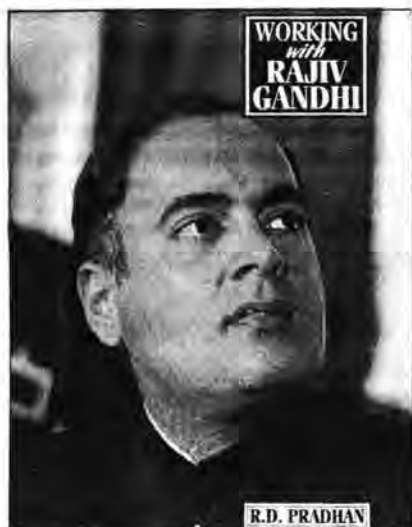
not meant any progress in moral and spiritual terms does not confer any advantage on us. Progress in this field will not be achieved by adopting the essentially escapist philosophies and attitudes of the past, whether eastern or western, but by making the individual more community-minded and world-minded. It is a matter of education which must begin from childhood and which can be imparted on a purely non-sectarian basis.

The case for secularism in Europe began with a denial of the validity of the truths of Christian religion and the "verities" contained in Christianity and the Bible. The principles of rationality and science were posited as against that religion. It developed in a climate of opinion that preceded sociology and psychology as intellectual pursuits. Recent developments have modified the earlier optimistic and necessarily simplistic understanding of religion and religious appeals. The greater dangers of secular ideologies in the smothering of individuality, free opinion and the perpetration of cruelties even of genocide has made for a shift of interests of the rationalists to see the need for postulating an alternative approach. Humanism stressing the value of the individual has been increasingly emphasised from the 1950s. Rationalism and free thought have transformed themselves into a Humanist movement.

The present book reflects this updated view of secular humanism. The author practised the tenets of his creed with rare passion and devotion though it was detrimental to his official advancement and remained one who was in every sense a true and dedicated humanist. The lucidity of presentation makes this book an admirable gift for college-going students as well as for thoughtful citizens. One should congratulate the publishers on the excellence of the production of this little book and its reasonable pricing.

DR. R. SRINIVASAN is Professor of Politics (Retd.), Bombay University and Associate Editor, *Freedom First*.

WORKING WITH RAJIV GANDHI
by R. D. Pradhan; Indus-Harper
Collins India, New Delhi; 1995; pp.245;
Rs.295.



Reviewed by
Prof. Nagindas Sanghavi

A book, like a woman, needs an indescribable charm to attract and hold attention from those who come in touch with it. One would seek it in vain in this matter of fact chronicle, covering a period of about twenty months when the author and the Prime Minister were in close contact, though Shri Pradhan hardly ever worked under Shri Rajiv Gandhi, much less with him. The first eighteen months when Pradhan was the Chief Secretary: Home Ministry, he worked directly under Mr. S. B. Chavan, Mr. Buta Singh and Mr. Arun Nehru: he was often assigned important jobs by the Prime Minister himself.

This was a period of momentous happenings when an inexperienced but well meaning leader of the Republic was trying to find his moorings after being catapulted into the highest seat of power by circumstances which were accidental and tragic. The new Prime Minister proved himself to be boisterous and mercurial in his style of functioning; but managed to retain his image as an innovative and good natured Mr. Clean. During the next three years, Shri Pradhan was cooling his heels in the most lonely

State (Mizoram) in India as a Governor, a post he says he accepted as 'a national interest' post, though he does not seem to have performed anything important there. It was during these three years, which Pradhan passes over in a few short paragraphs that Rajiv lost everything - his face, his friends and the election, committing a series of blunders which makes him the most foolish Prime Minister we ever have had. Bofors, reversal of the Shahbano judgement, intervention in Sri Lanka - the last was to cost him his life - are some of the events which were the despair of his friends and the delight of his enemies. Shri Pradhan turns a Nelson's eye to such happenings and hardly notices them. Sitting in Itanagar, he was probably unaware of what was happening in India.

The camera, again zooms into focus, when for nearly two months Pradhan was invited to join a small group which managed the non-political logistics of the electoral campaign which ended in tragedy. It was a floor manager's job, hardly requiring anything more than common sense and a couple of telephones. Pradhan seems to have done it admirably well.

Since this is a self-confessed portrayal of a cult figure, it would be unreasonable to either expect or demand an objective view of men and matters; but a seasoned bureaucrat like Pradhan could have avoided a lot of trivia about who sat where and the vehicles travelled in. Such details only add to our boredom. He must have come across lots more of interesting trifle - some juicy, some hilarious. But he shares with us very, very few of them - Rajiv snatching away the car keys of his security staff when they were discharging their duties, or Gandhi's insistence on personally escorting him after a late night consultation; B. K. Nehru's outburst against Madhavsingh Solanki the then Chief Minister of Gujarat; Arun Nehru stealing away all copies of confidential documents of the Thakkar Commission's report; Sharad Pawar opening the dialogue with Badal; the tragic plight of Governor Sattarwalla after being replaced by Arjun Singh.

But he chooses to clam up on many more of them which would have made the book more interesting and more useful.

His admiration for Rajiv Gandhi blinds him to several warts and moles on the face of his idol: at times, the narration degenerates into panegyric more worthy of the court poets of bye-gone ages. A more substantive analysis of Shri Pradhan's memorabilia would expose the professional sickness of the bureaucracy. Every retired official lives in a world of make believe in which he alone does the most important things and he always does them right. But then it would be futile to hope for truth and nothing but the truth in an egocentric heliography.

PROF. NAGINDAS SANGHAVI is a retired professor of political science and a widely read political commentator in Gujarati.

The Game of Politics

Politics is a dirty game,
played between two rival teams,
It is a game played
without any umpires!

Politics is a game of chess
where one tries to checkmate the other
each party tries to win,
by fair or foul means!

It is brain-warfare
between two desperate groups
It is a brutal game
played by the meanest of the mean!

If one side wins, dance and celebrate
in joy at the others's failure.
This game is played by professionals
no chance for amateurs!

In politics, every move is planned,
in politics "honesty" is banner!
rulers rule with an Iron hand
in politics, "truth" never stands!

To enter this drastic game
is mere "tomfoolery"
politics is nothing short
of "skulduggery"

K. R. Thadani,
Bombay.

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