

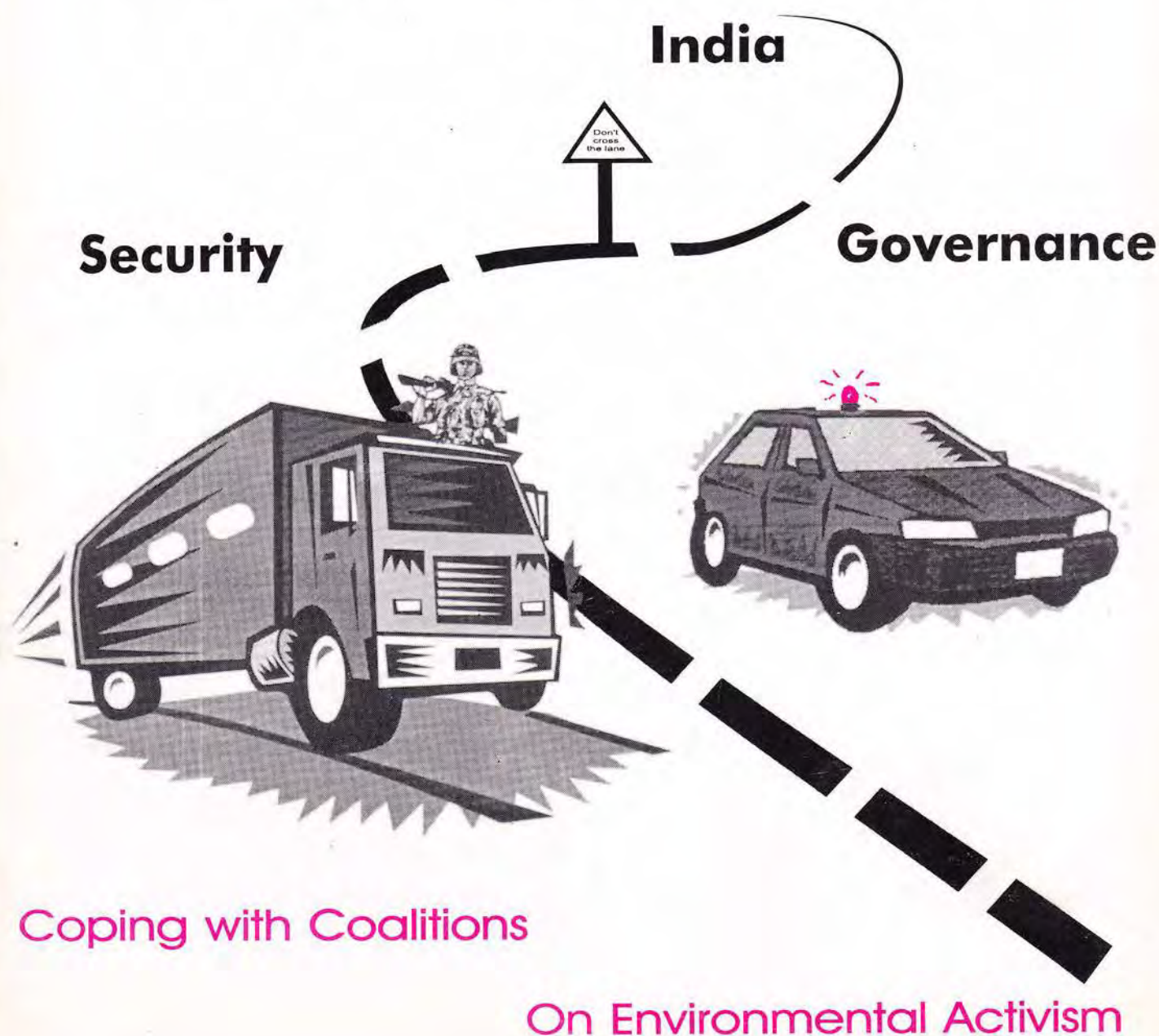
A QUARTERLY OF LIBERAL IDEAS

Freedom First

October-
December 1999
No.443
Rupees Twenty Five

47TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Are the Armed Forces being Politicised ?



Let's Honour The Dead ...



Even a random selection from among the 420 who died in the Kargil war reveals:

They came from many religions and many regions but they all died for India

They were the men of India's Armed Forces. They epitomised India's Secular Democracy

Capt. Jintu Gogoi, Assam • Major Ajay Singh Jasrotia, Jammu • Lt.Col. Vishwanathan, Kerala • Lt. N. Kengurutse, Nagaland • Lt. P. Tomar, Haryana • Sepoy Tsering Wangchuk, Ladakh • Lance Naik N. Pradhan, Darjeeling • Lance Naik Shanker Rajaram Shinde, Pune • Naik Srinivasa Patra, Orissa • Naik R. Kamaraj, Thanjavur • Gunner Udhav Das, Barpeta (Assam) • Sepoy Dinesh Waghela, Kheda (Gujarat) • Subedar Joginder Singh, Punjab • Major Padmapani Acharya, Andhra Pradesh • Capt. Hanifuddin, Delhi • Lt. V. Bhattacharya, West Bengal • Naik Pramod Kumar (Netaji), Bihar • Capt. K. Clifford Nongrom, Meghalaya • Capt. Aditya Mishra, Uttar Pradesh • Subedar Bhanwar Singh, Rajasthan • Major Saravanam, Tiruchi • Major R. S. Adhikari, Himachal Pradesh • Sepoy Liaqat Ali, Jammu and Kashmir.

... And Help The Living

Major General E. D'souza, A veteran of four wars suggests how we can help our disabled servicemen

"INDIA TODAY has done a great service to our disabled servicemen who have to carry on their lives without hands and feet and because of damage to their spines are confined to wheelchairs. Their disabilities are such that they have to be boarded out of the Army. They need to live in dignity with their disability.

Among the many who need your help are :

Havildar Durg Singh 2 Raj Rif.

He has lost a leg and feels that he can best rehabilitate himself by becoming a data operator.

Sepoy Avozole Angami of the 1 Naga Regiment

He has lost both his hands. His desire is to start a small business in Nagaland.

Rifleman Mohammed Asad of the 18 Garhwal Rifles

He has lost his left hand. He wants to find a bride, marry and raise children.

Havildar Sunil Kumar Libu of 1/11 Gurkha Rifles

He is paralysed waist downwards. He wants to modify his home so that he can move about freely in a wheel chair.

There are many other such cases. To enable these splendid men to live in dignity, this old soldier suggests that monetary help be sent to them directly or to the many infantry units where such soldiers have been disabled."

If you wish to respond to this appeal or for additional information please write to:

Maj Gen. E. D'Souza (Retired), Grosvenor, Flat No.1, 174A, St. Cyril Road, Bandra (West), Mumbai 400 050.

Freedom First

Founder
Minoo Masani

Editor
S. V. Raju

Associate Editor
R. Srinivasan

Advisory Board
Sumant Bankeshwar
Arvind Deshpande
Geeta Doctor
Nissim Ezekiel
Yogesh Kamdar
Jehangir Patel
S. A. A. Pinto
Nitin Raut
Abe Solomon
Ajay Varadachary

Cover & Layout
M. G. Talwadekar

Publishers
Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom*
3rd Floor, Army & Navy Building,
148, Mahatma Gandhi Road,
Mumbai 400 001.
Phone: +91 (22) 284 34 16
E-mail: freedom@vsnl.com

Published by J. R. Patel for the
Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom
and printed by him at
Kaiser-E-Hind Private Ltd.,
300, Perin Nariman Street,
Mumbai 400 001.

Typeset at **Kotak Printers**,
59, Dr. V. B. Gandhi Marg,
Fort, Mumbai 400 001.
Phones : 204 60 18 - 284 26 19.
Telefax : +91 (022) 204 60 18.

Single Copy - Rs.15
Annual - Rs.50
(Add Rs.10 for outstation cheques)

Overseas (Ind Class Air Mail)
Annual \$10 or £7

Cheques to be drawn in favour of
Freedom First and mailed to
the publishers at the address marked *

BETWEEN OURSELVES ...

As announced earlier, the cover story of this issue ought to have been on "The Maturing of Indian Democracy". This has been postponed to the first issue in the year 2000 for two reasons. The first being the poor response to our request for contributions from our readers. The second is the fact that on November 26 the Indian Constitution celebrated its 50th birthday. This presents us with an opportunity to assess the quality of Indian Democracy in the light of the Constitution bequeathed to us by the Constituent Assembly and the numerous amendments that followed, some of which, in the words of Mr. N. A. Palkhivala have defaced and defiled the Constitution. So send in your comments which should not be too long and equally importantly are relevant.

An Invitation

On the other hand if you are too lazy to sit down and pen your thoughts and not too averse to 'wasting' a Saturday morning you might consider participating in a half-day discussion we are organising on Saturday October 18 from 10 am to 1 pm. The subject: 'Fifty years of the Indian Constitution and the Quality of Indian Democracy'. If you are interested please let us know on 267 0610; 267 4453 (Mrs. T. D'Souza, 12 noon to 4 pm Monday to Friday). While doing so please do not forget to give your name, phone and fax numbers.

The cover feature this time is on the Armed Forces. One of the major achievements of which we can be legitimately proud is the fact that our soldiers have kept away from parties and politics. But in recent years there have been signs that the line dividing the two is in real danger of being violated. This must not happen and as Liberals we must take the lead in mobilising public opinion to ensure that this does not happen. During peacetime our soldiers must continue to remain in their barracks coming out only when called upon to lend a helping hand during times of natural calamities like what they are currently doing so splendidly to help the victims of the vicious cyclone that devastated large parts of Orissa and claimed thousands of victims.

Our Next Cover Feature (*Positively!*)

THE MATURING OF INDIAN DEMOCRACY

Last date to receive your contribution: Monday, December 20, 1999

A request: If it is possible please email your contribution at freedom@vsnl.com. If this is not possible then on a diskette (floppy) preferably on MS Word. If this is not possible then typed - double spacing and broad margin. If none of these are possible then in legible handwriting. Thank you.

Editor,

October-December, 1999

No.443

Contents

<i>Many Voices</i>		2
<i>Of Cabbages & Kings</i>		3
Alzheimer in the Nation's Brain	Dr. R. Srinivasan	5
<i>Are the Armed Forces being Politicised?</i>		
A Storm Warning	Major General (Retd.) E. D'Souza	7
Medals of Honour	Brigadier N. B. Grant	10
A Tribute to our Brave Fighting Men	Mr. Prem Vaidya	11
Remembering Pesi Masani	J. B. D'Souza	14
<i>Coping with Coalitions</i>		
A Presidential System is		
Unsuitable for India	Professor S. V. Kogekar	15
A Change in the System is Called for	Mr. Sisir K. Dhar	16
In Search of Stable Governments	Dr. P. R. Dubhashi	18
Constitutional Devices Against		
Unstable Governments	Dr. Gerhart Raichle	21
Minoo Masani as I Knew Him	Mr. K. K. Pathak	23
<i>On Environmental Activism</i>		
Need for a Liberal and Not Dogmatic Activism	Mr. R. V. Saxena	25
Environmentalism - Some Central Issues	Ms. Kusum Chopra	28
An Open Letter to the		
<i>Reflections, Lessons and Livelihoods</i>		
<i>The Rural Perspective</i>	Dr. Janello Lobo Prabhu	31
Be Lean, Not Mean	Mr. Bhanu Pratap Singh	33
<i>Book Reviews</i>	Mr. V. C. Viswanathan	37
		41

WITH MANY VOICES

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

The sphinx has spoken at last. And this time without the aid of a script.

Editorial in *The Times of India*, August 4

Pakistan can serve as an example of a progressive Islamic democracy because it is a link - both economic and political - between the Indian Ocean and Central Asia.

US Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth cited by N. C. Menon, *The Hindustan Times*, October 25

The party (CPI-M) will go down with Jyoti Basu, just as the Congress like Indira Gandhi, bids fair to die in Sonia's lap. If the BJP has enemies like the Congress and the CPI-M who needs friends!

C. R. Irani, *The Statesman*, September 8

Asha Parikh must be the first person in the world who thinks that dead bodies lying naked in a World War II concentration camp have the potential of sexually arousing Indian Audiences.

Prithvi Nandy, *MID-DAY*, August 12

India knows emergency management better than any other as it is used to recurring systems failure. It has a manual option for everything.

Stacey Plemmons, Hewlett-Packard India, *Outlook*, November 1

The Congress in Kerala is now united. We have passed the disease of dissidence on to the Marxists.

Indira Congress leader A. K. Antony, *INDIA TODAY*, August 23

The criticism in Europe about the portrait of Queen Elizabeth I of England. It's now public property.

Comment on the Censor Board finding the work objectionable in Shekhar Kapur's 'ELIZABETH', *Mid-day*, August 23

Should the Planning Commission be allowed to occupy prime property like Yojana Bhawan or should that building not be sold to be converted into a super market.

Sauvik Chakraverti, *The Economic Times*, August 31

The right to vote has become a weapon that the politicians have turned against the people.

Poet and columnist Dom Moraes, *AFTERNOON DESPATCH & COURIER*, September 27

Nothing so became the Chinese communist revolution as the abandonment of its basic principles. Thus, if China has anything to celebrate, it is everything that the original revolution was not.

Gerald Segal, Director, International Institute for Strategic Studies, *THE HINDU*, September 17

When a fired general overthrows a duly-elected civilian head of government, it looks like a coup, it talks like a coup and it walks like a coup, because it is a coup!

U.S. Senator, Gary Ackerman, *OUTLOOK*, October 25

When elections are coming up, you don't work because of the election code of conduct. When you are in power, you don't work because the opposition doesn't let you. The only time you work it seems is if you're in the Opposition when you slog to ensure the government fails at everything so new elections may be held.

C. Y. Gopinath, *OUTLOOK*, November 8

Everyday there is talk about our population reaching the billion mark in the current millennium, possibly this very month. This is a sad commentary on our development: a serious blot which should make us ashamed.

H. D. Shourie, Director, *COMMON CAUSE*, October-December 1999

OF CABBAGES AND KINGS

The VIP Nuisance

A friend in Patna, has sent us this message. He was an eye-witness.

"Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee was in Patna on June 25 and he visited J.P.'s house and the Gandhi Maidan for a 'Rashtra Raksha' Rally. It is amazing how the administration forces people to shut down their establishments when such VIPs come calling. On this occasion the people were even lathi charged for walking on the streets. Prime Ministers without exception just love such trappings of power, don't they?"

Why only Prime Ministers. Leaders of the Opposition are equally prone. Recently, I was in Delhi for a week. I was on my way to dinner when near the Race Course Road roundabout all vehicular traffic came to a standstill. Suddenly with sirens blaring came three white Ambassadors - two of them crowding the third. Discreet inquiries (discreet, because I was told even curiosity could land one in jail in Delhi) revealed that one of the three carried none other than the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi. That the people were inconvenienced is beside the point in the 40-year regime of a socialist/elitist/VIP Raj. Sound bitter? Why not? Here's another reason why.

The Habitat World in Delhi is a conference centre much like the better known India International Centre. On 23rd November I noticed the place was swarming with armed men in uniform. I was waiting outside the main lobby with a carton when I was first asked what was in the carton and then told to move away. When I told them I was waiting for someone I was told I could go and wait somewhere else. Reason: Mrs. Sonia Gandhi. I ought to have known. Because some Indira Gandhi function was on at the Habitat World and ordinary citizens constituted a security risk.

It occurs to me, and this is for the serious consideration of the establishment: When public functions involving such VIPs are involved why not organise them in Tihar Jail. Security will be assured and the VIPs will not be a nuisance to ordinary citizens like us. In fact this is for the consideration of establishments all over the country. While Delhi is the worst case, this



nuisance is present in varying degrees throughout the country. All major cities and town have fairly large jail compounds which could conveniently accommodate such conferences.

There is of course another possibility. Stop inviting VIPs to non-government public functions. Give it a thought.

The Pope's Visit

Without doubt the Indian Constitution does not prevent a person born into one religion from embracing another. And missionaries have the right to seek converts. The grey area is in respect of the inducements offered to persons to persuade them to change their faith.

Not only Christians but even those from other religions and disbelievers were rightly critical of the lunatic fringe among those professing the Hindu religion, which sought to prevent the Pope's visit India. But "Ecclesia in Asia" a document that seeks to promote Roman Catholicism in Asia and which contains inter-alia statements like this one that was signed at a meeting of Bishops presided over by the Pope will now be a convenient handle for this lunatic fringe to keep up their religious frenzy notwithstanding the fine distinction drawn by the Bishops between 'conversion and evangelism':

"Just as in the first millennium the Cross was planted in the soil of Europe, and in the second in that of the Americas and Africa, we can pray that in the third millennium the Cross will be reaped in this vast and vital continent."

Statements like these only fuel mutual suspicions and divide. What is worse it sets at naught the phe-

nomenally good work being done by Christian missionaries particularly in the field of education.

And more's the pity because the Indian Christian community is indeed an integral undistinguishable part of the Indian ethos and culture. Let's not forget the fact that Christianity in India is as old as Christianity itself.

What does it matter what religion one professes as long as it does not intrude on the right of another to practice the religion of his or her choice or the right not to believe in any religion.

We do not question the Pope's right to say what he did but certainly his wisdom.

A New Mercedes for the Governor

Apropos the expenditure of Rs.25,00,000 on a brand new Mercedes for the Maharashtra Governor – a gift of the previous BJP/Shiv Sena government endorsed by its successor Congress/NCP government – the following report in the *Stuttgarter Zeitung* of June 21, 1966 noticed by Rajaji and cited by him, without comment, in his 'Dear Reader' column in the *Swarajya* weekly of July 23, 1966 is both instructive and revealing:

"When the office of the Federal Chancellor of West Germany, Ludwig Erhard, recently indented for a new car to replace the four year old Mercedes, the Federal Audit office rejected the request, saying 'Vehicle 0-2 must complete 200,000 kilometres.'

Regarding the Pakistan Coup

Would readers like digest the following and revert with their comments on what to make of it. The Liberal position is clear but we'll make our views known in this column next quarter.

From: Mr. Ahmed*, Islamabad, Pakistan, November 24, 1999

"The recent changes in Pakistan have, indeed, transformed some basic political definitions of our political and social institutions.

"In the present scenario, I was able to deliver a lecture on 'The Greek Ethics in the present perspective'. This was an attempt on thought provoking as our intelligensia is trying to redefine the role of religion. I tried my best to instill Humanism and Secularism in the new definitions of democracy and liberal form of religion. Earlier I gave a talk on "Buddha - a

voice of reason from the pages of history".

"I hope that our new rulers are able to redefine our society in secular terms, as they promised: 'End of Corruption, Responsible and Accountable form of Democracy modernisation, as well as Equal Opportunities for Women'. Our new Ruler described himself as KAMALIST, raising hopes for limitation of Religion as a private affair between God and Man."

*(Name changed as I haven't obtained the writer's permission to share this communication received by us via the e-mail, with you - Editor)

SVR

The Statesman Cyclone Relief Fund

Within the space of a fortnight, two cyclones-one of them described as a super cyclone - have struck eastern India. Orissa is the worst-affected state.

To help meet the needs of relief, *The Statesman* has set up a cyclone-relief fund with a contribution of Rs.25,000. We invite concerned citizens to contribute generously. Funds raised thus will be channelled to those who really need help through philanthropic organisations with unimpeachable track records. All contributions of more than Rs.500 will be acknowledged in the newspaper. Cheques/drafts payable to 'The Statesman cyclone relief fund' may be sent to any office of *The Statesman* at any of the following addresses given below:

Further, *The Statesman* invites bona fide organisations and groups engaged in collecting relief supplies and material to use its columns to circulate their appeals. Such appeals will be scrutinised and if accepted, will be published free of cost. Please contact Mrs. Neena Biswas, Deputy Marketing Manager at Calcutta (225-7070), with details of the work you are doing and the appeal you wish to make.

Donations are exempt under section 80G of the Income Tax Act 1961.

Cheques/drafts payable to 'The Statesman Cyclone Relief Fund' may be sent to any office of *The Statesman* at any of the following addresses given below:

Head Office: Statesman House, 4, Chowringhee Square, Calcutta - 700 001

Delhi Office: Statesman House, 148, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi - 110 001

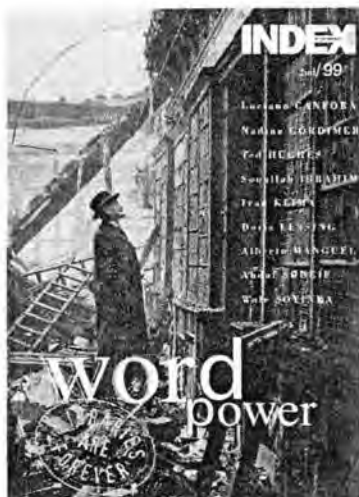
Mumbai Office: Plat No.5, Kasturji Buildings, Jamshedji

Donations to be made by 31st December 1999

Chennai Office: Fagun Mansion, 26, Ethirai Road, Chennai - 600 105

Alzheimer in the Nation's Brain

R. Srinivasan



The Preservers

One of the minor but significant aspects of civilisations is the fostering of libraries. Evidence has emerged from the archaeological remains of Mesopotamia as well as of Egypt of attempts at building libraries – of tablets eagerly garnered by those who could afford the expense of collecting them. Those cultures that were pre-literature too ensured their own unique ways of developing – only they were living human libraries, men uncommonly endowed with public memories or having developed them. They had, on the tips of their tongues, the histories of lineages, battles and significant happenings in the community. The *Iliad* was preserved by these. In traditional Africa, they had their own honoured place and their narrative fidelity to historical happenings (when circumstantially checked with historical records) has been one of the surprises of the modern age. In the West, the written record has been the mainstay of history. In the East, the human memory. Our own tradition honours the *Sutas*, the caste which recorded history and parts of the

*Where any nation starts awake
Books are the memory. And it's plain
Decay of libraries is like
Alzheimer in the nation's brain.*

- Ted Hughes

Mahabharata are seen as narration by these remarkable people. Anthropologists in the 1950s have recorded similar groups of people fulfilling the same tasks in Gujarat.

The Destroyers

The urge to preserve one's past, immediate and remote, obviously is one that is irresistible. Equally significant has been the contrary urge of consciously and deliberately destroying the past. Human history has recorded this too. The 'honour' of the earliest of such attempts goes to the Chinese when in BC 221 Shih Huang Ti destroyed the Imperial Library to wipe out the memory of the past and to establish himself as the first king of a vast empire. Since then there have been sedulous attempts to repeat the feat of the Chinese emperor and the record has had been unfortunately very successful indeed. Instances of these are aplenty. Religious fanaticism, inexplicable hatred and, more recently, political ideological shifts have been the greatest antagonists to libraries, the custodians of public memory.

The Restorers

Yet the urge to reassemble the lost treasures has been equally a movement in the unchangeable spirit of Man. The Chinese, who experienced these several times, assiduously rebuilt libraries, each

more grand than the earlier lost one. Periodically, and in bursts of bibliothec cleansing, libraries were destroyed and equally patiently efforts were made to rebuild these again. The vastness of the land, the highly decentralised society and the presence of numerous monasteries and ardent scholars preserved many of these. In the first millenium a cave library in Central Asia had carefully collected and fostered innumerable Buddhist records, the earliest printed book of the world, the *Diamond Sutra* being one of them. The correct title is *Vajra Sutra*, the original *vajra* or diamond.

Wars and Natural Calamities

Wars, the bibliothec material itself, floods and civil disturbances have been the greatest enemies of libraries. The civil war in Guinea-Bissau in June 1998 destroyed not only thousands of lives and displaced people, but equally wiped out a magnificent research centre which had collected for fifteen years details of all aspects of life in that land and many of these have been lost to posterity for ever.

Our century has perhaps seen more libraries destroyed as a matter of policy than due to uncontrollable factors as in earlier times. Wars, bombing, revolution have all played a part. The medal for the wilful destruction of libraries has

to be shared by both the Nazis and the Soviets. It is heartening to note that India does not figure in the ignoble record of destruction of libraries. On the other hand, there has been a benign neglect of the existing ones and a gradual euthanasia of the libraries due to want of public funds.

The Users

We know very little of how widely libraries are used. "Ten times more people go to libraries than to the league football matches, yet local authorities (in Britain) are closing scores of them".

There are 600 village libraries spread out in mountainous Peru and a basic literacy programme fuelled the hunger for reading. The passion for reading was evident and the villagers are served by barefoot librarians who walk for 15 hours a day with bundles of books

to be given to distant centres. A new life has dawned for these people. The authorities were eager to instal television sets in each village but not support the cheaper libraries which they knew rejects abject obedience and develops critical attitudes. In far-off Zimbabwe mud huts with a single shelf, lodge libraries. The "village may have no electricity, no telephone, running water, but they beg for books from every visitor" a letter observes with eloquence adding "People cannot live without water. Books are our water and we drink from this spring."

The occasion for celebrating the role of libraries is the proposal, well on its way, to the building of a monumental library in Alexandria which would be international in its scope and perhaps meet, in a limited way, what the famous ancient library in that very spot did for

earlier centuries and memories of which haunt the pages of classical and historical writings of Europe. In its own time, it was considered one of the wonders of the world. In spite of the fire during the times of Julius Caesar which destroyed a great part of this library, it continued to be of service to scholars of the later centuries and was regarded as one of the glories of the civilized world. When it was set afire in 642 AD, Caliph Umar is credited with the statement "If the contents of these books agree with the Holy Book, then they are redundant. If it disagrees, then they are undesirable. In either case, they should be consigned to the flames" – a sentiment with which many modern tyrants with their own specific Holy Books would be in sympathy.

DR. R. SRINIVASAN is Associate Editor, *Freedom First*.

Source: INDEX ON CENSORSHIP 2nd/99.

Gateways to Knowledge

The following, on the duties of libraries and librarians, is extracted from a folder entitled 'Libraries and Intellectual Freedom' received along with *INDEX ON CENSORSHIP 5th/99*. The folder calls on libraries and library staff to join the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). ILFA's objective says the folder is to "defend and promote intellectual freedom rights". We shall have more about this in a later issue of *Freedom First*.

Freedom of access to information through public institutions such as libraries intends to guarantee the individual full opportunities to encounter free expression. Good quality library services form an essential component of the universal access.

A commitment to intellectual freedom is a core responsibility for the library and information profession. Libraries and library staff should therefore adhere to the principles of intellectual freedom, uninhibited access to information and freedom of expression and recognize the privacy of the library user.

- Libraries provide access to information, ideas and works of imagination. They serve as gateways to knowledge, thought and culture.
- Libraries provide essential support for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development for both individuals and groups.
- Libraries contribute to the development and maintenance of intellectual freedom and help to safeguard basic democratic values and universal civil rights.

Libraries have a responsibility both to guarantee and to facilitate access to expressions of knowledge and intellectual activity. To this end, libraries shall acquire, preserve and make

available the widest variety of materials, reflecting the plurality and diversity of society.

- Libraries shall ensure that the selection and availability of library materials and services is governed by professional considerations and not by political, moral and religious views.
- Libraries shall acquire, organize and disseminate information freely and oppose any form of censorship.
- Libraries shall make materials, facilities and services equally accessible to all users. There shall be no discrimination due to race, creed, gender, age or for any other reason.
- Library users shall have the right to personal privacy and anonymity. Librarians and other library staff shall not disclose the identity of users of the materials they use to a third party.
- Libraries funded from public sources and to which the public have access shall uphold the principle of intellectual freedom.

Librarians and other employees in such libraries have a duty to uphold those principles.

Libraries have responsibilities both to their employer and to their users. In cases of conflict between those responsibilities, the duty towards the user shall take precedence.

Are the Armed Forces Being Politicised?

A Storm Warning

E. D'Souza

If we do not sit up and take note, whichever ruling dispensation is in power, we may descend to depths of no return if this last bastion of dependability and reliability becomes politically tainted.

In the last one year what has been happening in the Services is not only unnerving but needs to be nipped in the bud by the next government voted into power, if our hitherto apolitical military establishment is to continue in the mode crafted by the late Field Marshal Cariappa, India's first Commander-in-Chief. If we do not, sit up and take note, whichever ruling dispensation is in power, we may descend to depths of no return if this last bastion of dependability and reliability becomes politically tainted. To imagine that such a situation is becoming manifest can only mean that political mileage and not the nation's security is the name of the game. This paper proposes to examine this situation in an unbiased manner based on an ongoing association with the Armed Forces and especially the Army since 1942. For the first time ever, as will emerge subsequently, the Government and the Army is bending over backward to prove that the Armed Forces are *not* being politicized.

The Genesis

India's first C-in-C General Cariappa realized that the Armed Forces at the time of partition could be held together only by insisting that it continued to be apolitical and secular as it had been during British days. It was the impartial conduct of the Boundary Force during the traumatic days following the Partition of India that restricted the

mayhem that ensued, from assuming gigantic proportions.

In an effort to maintain its secular character, General Cariappa was responsible for raising mixed class units like the Brigade of the Guards without in any way interfering with certain old one class regiments like the Rajputs, Garhwalis, Madras, Maratha, Mahar, Sikh, Jat Regiments *et al* on the ground that it would be an exercise in futility to toy about with the system. His aim was clear – to ensure that the Armed Forces and in particular the Army, remained secular and apolitical. Thanks to his vision, the Armed Forces continued to remain in this mould through troubled times. This loyal son of India also ensured that the military functioned under the civil authority.

The first glimmerings of an attempt to politicize the Army appeared in 1962 thanks to an attempt to interfere with its functioning in the heyday of Krishna Menon, egged on by a senior Army General who was anything but a field soldier. This attempt to interfere in service matters was possible because of the close relationship between Pandit Nehru and Krishna Menon and became manifest when the Army suffered a major reverse in the disastrous conflict with China in 1962. The then Chief General P. N. Thapar resigned owning responsibility and rightly so. It is well documented that thanks to the

promptings of this ambitious Lieutenant General the Army was directed to hold indefensible positions which could only end in disaster. This "credulity and negligence" has been described with pathological clarity by Prem Vaidya, eminent film maker who was *au fait* with the establishment then, in the July-September '99 issue of *Freedom First*. As a result of this dangerous bureaucratic interference egged on by an ambitious senior Army Officer, which he was not prepared to accept, General Thimayya the new Chief tendered his resignation; he was not prepared to tolerate such uncalled for and ill advised interference. The charismatic and experienced leader that he was, he had the backing of the Army. It was unfortunate that Panditji persuaded him to withdraw his resignation. Unfortunate because had he not, the rest is history. The Lieutenant General who hoped to gain through hob-nobbing with the political establishment faded away. The Army was saved from an unhappy position.

There were two other incidents which may well have led to a repeat of this unwanted situation. The first was the Government's decision not to appoint the outspoken and strong Lieutenant General P. S. Bhagat, VC, a thoroughbred professional much admired and respected by All Ranks. The second was the appointment of General Vaidya, a double Maha Vir Chakra

Are the Armed Forces Being Politicised?

awardee as the Army Chief over Lieutenant General S. K. Sinha, at present Governor of Assam. Better sense prevailed and the Army continued to remain apolitical.

There were noises being made by interested politicians egged on by bureaucrats to do away with regimental messes and one class regiments but the Services stood firm. Be that as it may, the hand of the bureaucrat was discernible in trying to keep the Services in place on the specious plea that any thoughts of a Services take over had to be resisted strongly. Any aspirations of the Service Heads concerned to play a more significant role in good governance were effectively squashed by the politico-bureaucratic nexus. This came to the fore when an Army Chief, since retired, spoke on the need for good governance!!

The Bhagwat Affair

This sordid issue is too well known to be repeated. But its timing is significant and it happened under the NDA Government. It marked yet another attempt to keep the Service Chiefs in place on a tight rein. The game plan was to divide and rule. Vishnu Bhagwat has the reputation of being a cerebral Chief, well read and informed, expressive both verbally and on paper and one who did not hesitate to air his views. His integrity was unquestionable and the security of the nation was very dear to his heart. He painstakingly brought the three Chiefs together on issues affecting the fabric of the Armed Forces and this act of 'defiance' was considered to be a threat to the political/bureaucratic nexus. What is more he was a committed secularist as is manifest in his writings. His ques-

tioning attitude did not find favour with the dispensation in power. Using political clout every attempt was made to break this threatening trend. And the opportunity came when one of the triumvirate capitulated for whatever reason. This split, according to a responsible and well informed journalist, was exploited to the hilt at a critical time when the Lahore Declaration was being negotiated.

To deflect public attention from what was going on across the LOC which was allegedly known to the Government, Admiral Vishnu Bhagwat, PVSM, AVSM was unceremoniously removed without even the benefit of a show cause notice or an investigation. The Government was so keen to get rid of a Naval Chief of the fourth largest Navy in the world and certainly the largest in Asia, that he was dubbed a national security risk after 40 years of distinguished service! It is being alleged in responsible circles that the Government was aware of the Kargil intrusions but it was so keen to tell the people of India of the success of the Lahore Declaration that it kept this important information under wraps. But at what cost? The security of the nation appeared to be inconsequential. Political survival was more important. Then we are faced with the appointment of a bureaucrat in the PMO as the National Security Adviser. Could anything be more ludicrous? Here we have a bureaucrat close to the centre of power who is all things to all men – head of the PMO, adviser on foreign affairs, and to add to this list, *National Security Adviser*. Can any experience in such matters and this is readily manifest in his inane utterances on defence matters. Can

a bureaucrat wear three hats at the expense of national security? What major policy statement or contribution has he or the NSC made before, during and after the Kargil intrusions to justify his appointment? One cannot believe that there are no other competent people in the country to hold such a position, like for instance, General K. V. K. Krishna Rao, former Chief and former Governor of two of the most sensitive States in the country.

The Kargil Issue

Whatever the Government and its minions may say, there can be little doubt that the Kargil intrusion was either a massive intelligence failure or an unexplained reason that the information was with the Government which did not bother to disseminate it to the field troops. The knee jerk reaction cost the Army and to a lesser extent the Air Force far too many casualties, 500 precious lives lost and over 1000 wounded some very seriously. Some of the decisions taken by the Government are beyond the realms of comprehension: offering safe passage to the intruders, exonerating Nawaz Sharif and the notorious ISI, and then extending the deadline for the withdrawal. As it had become an election issue, the Government decided to pontificate that it was *not* an intelligence failure and that it had no knowledge of this intrusion until the first week of May. To add credence to this stand it is now trying to pass the buck to the Army and the pliant Army top brass appears to have acquiesced in passing the buck down the line to an unfortunate Brigadier, of which more anon. There is little doubt that the younger element in the Army in particular are unhappy over this state of affairs knowing full well

Are the Armed Forces Being Politicised?

who did what. It is most unfortunate that some senior officers have obliged for whatever reason and this smacks of politicization.

Other Disquieting Pointers

Never, but never, in one's long association with the Army, has one ever faced the sad publication of an interview in the widely read *India Today*, given by a serving Major General expressing his views regarding a serving Brigadier, his subordinate, on a subject which should be *sub judice*. Who gave permission for such an interview against all established norms in the Armed Forces? It could only have been with the concurrence of the Ministry of Defence through Army HQ. If this does not smack of politicization what is? Already there are rumours that this Major General whose track record is under scrutiny because of steps taken by him in Leh in regard to the setting up of a mini zoo, reported in the *Asian Age*, is regarded to be a political appointee. Whatever be the actions of the Brigadier under scrutiny, the powers that be had no business to permit such an "exclusive" interview to be published in the media. What effect will such a misguided step have on the junior lot of Officers? Why did the Army Chief agree to such a step assuming he was consulted? If this is not politicisation, what is? This looks like a repeat of the Bhagwat issue. The name of the game appears to be to ensure that the Government is not held responsible for the intelligence, or the non-dissemination of vital information, failure at any cost, even that of a sacrificial lamb who happens to be a Service officer.

But this is not all. On what authority was Giriraj Kishore of the

Viswa Hindu Parishad (VHP), an avowedly communal organization, permitted to visit the Base Hospital in Delhi Cantonment so that a Param Vir Chakra awardee during *Operation Vijay*, admitted in that Hospital, was made to touch the feet of this VHP person? Why was the VHP, permitted to distribute copies of *Ramcharitmanas* to our secular troops when we have committed religious teachers of all denominations to cater to their spiritual needs? Why were boxes of rakhis with the logo of a party that is part of the Sangh Pariwar attempted to be given to Army HQ for distribution to our troops? Raksha Bandan is celebrated by all denominations in the Armed Forces so why this subtle attempt at politicization? Do the perpetrators of such actions fail to understand what they are doing to the very fabric of our Armed Forces? The response at Army HQ to counter these moves can best be described as lukewarm. This is not an individual view. The edit page of the *Times Of India* of September 16, 1999 carries similar fears of retired Wing Commander Nandlal Jotwani.

The chancre now seems to be spreading to the Air Force as well or else how does one explain the sudden transfer of Air Marshal Patney, the successful AOC-in-C Western Air Command and his SASO Air Marshal MacMahon, when the threat has certainly not yet receded? Could not the powers that be have waited till after the passes close in J&K? And why this move to a less important Command? Let us not forget that Air Marshal Patney is not only the second officer in the country to be awarded the Sarvottam Vishist Seva Medal for the splendid conduct of

the recent air operations along the threatened LOC? Why did two other Air Marshals, one a Deputy Chief of Air Staff, ask for premature retirement? There cannot be no smoke without fire and ugly politicization appears to be the reason. Is this another attempt by the dispensation in power to kick a VIP upstairs who knows more than he should, to keep him quiet? Why was the Head of RAW suddenly moved out and given a Governorship?

The Last Word

The message comes out loud and clear and is addressed to the politician, bureaucrat and the top brass of the three Services – *please* but *please* do not permit the politicization of our splendid Armed Forces nor threaten its secular character. All one needs to do is to go back to *Operation Vijay* where Naga, Ladakhi, Sikh, Bihari Adivasi, Jat, Rajasthani, Malayalee, Tamil, Gujarati, Assamese, Maratha, Manipuri, Himachali, Punjabi, Kashmiri Mussalman, Arunachali, Gurkha, Kannadiga *et al* fought side by side with utmost gallantry and sacrifice to drive the unwanted intruders from our soil.

These fears of an old soldier are best reflected in what Wing Commander Nandlal Jotwani says in his article "A Different Battle Keep Army Out of Politics": "*The entire world recognizes the apolitical and secular nature of our armed forces. We perform our task with equal commitment under different Governments, unmindful of the politics of the day. If we are now dragged into electoral politics, it will be a sad day for the country.*" Too true. And to those of the Armed Forces who are in positions of

Are the Armed Forces Being Politicised?

power, one can only draw their attention to those stirring words enshrined in letters of gold in the Chetwode Hall of the Indian Military Academy: "The Safety, Honour

and Welfare of your Country come first always and every time. Yours..... come last". Which when paraphrased would mean not to sacrifice the edifice of the Armed

Forces for your own advancement or good or personal ends!

MAJ.GEN. E. D'SOUZA, PVSM (Retd.), is a regular contributor to *Freedom First*.

Medals of Honour

N. B. Grant

In our exuberance, as is usual with us, we went over board with our medals, and started attaching monetary values to the different gallantry awards, completely forgetting their intrinsic values.

58 gallantry awards, including 4 Param Vir Chakras (PVC) were dished out in a matter of 15 days during the Kargil battle. Neither in the 1947, 62, 65, 71 or the Sri Lanka wars, were so many medals issued in such a short period. This would be a fit case for the Guinness Book of Records. The fact that three of these awards were declared posthumously when the recipients were alive, is yet a different story. Only one explanation for these hurried awards is plausible, namely, for the Prime Minister to announce it from the Red Fort on August 15, Independence Day.

A lot of coverage was given in the media, and by politicians through their election speeches, describing in great detail how the soldier died for Bharat. Any military man who has been in any war or a battle, will confirm to the politician or the civilian gentry at large that, in no army in the world, a soldier has ever died for his country. At the crucial moment when faced with certain death, the only reason why he died without blinking an eye, he was so precious the image of the army and the izzat of his regiment. If this were not so, then how does one account for the

fact that, in World War II, India had suffered 1,06,843 killed and wounded, and had received the highest percentage of gallantry awards won by any Commonwealth country. Surely the Indian soldiers did not die for Bharat, he certainly did not die for Britain; he only died for the honour of his regiment.

Monetary Value to Medals

In our exuberance, as is usual with us, we went over board with our medals, and started attaching monetary values to the different gallantry awards, completely forgetting their intrinsic values. Take for example the Victoria Cross, the highest gallantry award of the British Indian army. The medal was struck from the metal of the guns in the Crimean War made famous in the Charge of the Light Brigade. The monetary value of this medal is not even 50 paise, but its intrinsic value has no price, as will be seen from the following incident.

During the victory in Europe (VE) Day commemoration ceremonies at Hyde Park, London, the Prime Minister, Mr. Clement Attlee, of the British Labour Party, paid our Indian Subedar (Hon. Capt.) Umarao Singh, VC, the ultimate respect,

when he alighted from his car, saluted Umarao and gave him the right of way, saying, "How can I drive my car ahead of a VC?"

Unfortunately by attaching a monetary value to such awards, we have completely lost sight of their true significance. In this respect we have gone to the extent of issuing a Ministry of Defence order this year, to the effect that the criteria for the monetary allowances for the pre-Independence gallantry awards, and those of post-Independence cannot be the same. The latter today is four to five times more than the former. It tantamounts to saying that, the criteria for the act of gallantry under which India's first soldier, Field Marshal Manekshaw, got his Military Cross (MC) in Burma, cannot be the same as someone who gets the Vir Chakra (VC) or equivalent award in Kargil, or for that matter any wars since Independence.

What the Government (Ministry of Defence) forgets is that, the criteria for valour on the battlefield has not changed for the Indian army, pre-Independence or post-Independence. It is the same Indian army in both cases governed by the same traditions of gallantry,

Are the Armed Forces Being Politicised?

if any thing, it was much more difficult for an Indian soldier to get a gallantry award in the pre-Independence British Indian Army, than what has now been dished out by the dozen in post-Independent India. Our government still has a

prejudiced mind-set of the pre-Independence Indian army, as one serving the Raj, our erstwhile rulers. Leave alone not having ever seen a battle (except on TV), the civilian Secretary of the MOD, cannot comprehend even the meaning of

the word gallantry. They can only visualise a medal made of gold or silver, the word honour does not feature in it.

BRIGADIER N. B. GRANT, AVSM (Retd.) lives in Pune and is a frequent contributor to *Freedom First*.

A Tribute to Our Brave Fighting Men

Prem Vaidya

War some times become necessary to establish the rule of Right over Wrong and to punish the guilty.

Peace is our faith. Peace is vital for national and international progress. But even to maintain peace, our defence preparedness must be strong. The martial tradition in India goes back to well over 2000 years ago. In 326 when Alexander the Great was trying to conquer the known world, he was stopped by the display of Indian soldiers in full regalia; 'a nation by repute brave, well equipped, more civilized'. The spirit of his soldiers began to flag and they said 'thus far and no further'. The retreat of Alexander is a record of success without aim! Before he turned homewards to Macedonia, he paid high tributes to the fighting qualities of the Indian military.

The golden period of Indian military history occurred during the long reigns of Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka, Krishnadeva Raya, Rana Pratap, Akbar and Shivaji.

After independence, one of the greatest strengths of India was the 250 year old institution of the armed forces, endowed with the tradition of being totally apolitical.

A record, even to this day. Time and again, the Indian armed forces have shown the highest order of discipline and dedication, efficiency and competence that is traditionally rooted in Indian culture in safeguarding the unity and the integrity of the country. The motto '*Seva Paramo Dharma*' (Service Before Self) sums up the basic qualities of selfless dedication being inculcated in the cadets as the foundation of our Army, Navy and Air Force.

The first units of the Indian army were raised by the British East India Company under one Commander-in-Chief in 1748. This marks the beginning of the modern Indian Army.

During the First World War, soldiers of the Indian Army fought in Mesopotamia, Palestine, Egypt, France and Belgium. Their superb fighting qualities brought them awards from many countries including nine Victoria Crosses, the highest British decoration for gallantry.

In the Second World War, during the North African Campaign, the Oxford History of India

records that Indian troops "proved themselves second to none in the world."

India's first Victoria Cross in the Second World War was won by Capt. P. S. Bhagat.

On the Burma front, the Indian Army showed its mettle in most difficult terrain. It played a crucial role in driving the Japanese forces from Burma and liberating the country. Field Marshal Slim described Indians as among the best soldiers in the world. Of the 27 Victoria Cross awarded during the Burma campaign to the 14th Army, 20 were won by Indian soldiers.

Though the youngest among the three, the Indian Air Force proved second to none in valour. On February 1, 1942, No.1 Squadron of the IAF reached Toungoo in Burma for operations against the Japanese and entered the Second World War in right earnest. Sqn. Ldr. Majumdar took two 250 lbs bombs in his Lysander aircraft and destroyed a Japanese base and the result was that the No.1 Sqn. became a bomber squadron - an unknown feat in the

Are the Armed Forces Being Politicised?

RAF. Sqn. Ldr. K.K. Majumdar was awarded the D.F.C. the first to be offered to an officer of the IAF. By 1943, the strength of the IAF went up to eight squadrons. Many Indian Air Force officers proved second to none in valour and received decorations for bravery. Among them the DSO to Meher Singh and the DEC to Arjun Singh who was later to become Air Chief Marshal.

A new chapter was opened when freedom dawned. The Indian Army was charged with the tremendous task of defending our newly won freedom. The partition of the sub-continent witnessed an exodus unparalleled in human history. The Indian army supervised the two-way traffic of the refugees and helped the suffering.

When hordes of tribals from Pakistan invaded Kashmir in October 1947, units of the Indian Army were rushed to save the Kashmir valley. On November 3, Major Somnath Sharma's company was sent on a fighting patrol to Badgam village near Srinagar airport. Though heavily outnumbered, they beat back several attempts to capture the airfield. When Major Sharma was himself loading a light machine gun, he was killed by a mortar shell. His inspiring leadership helped save the Kashmir valley. He was awarded the country's very first Param Vir Chakra (PVC) for valour.

The Indian Armored Corps created history by fighting with tanks at Zojila Pass at an altitude of over 11,000 feet – a feat never performed by any army. The Indian Air Force provided effective ground support to our Army. Air Commodore M.M. Engineer, DFC was

incharge of air operations in Kashmir. For his exemplary leadership, Air Commodore Engineer was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra (MVC).

On January 15, 1949 General K. M. Cariappa became the first Indian Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army. The Army became an extension of India's policy of 'International Peace.' The Army of Independent India played important peace-keeping roles in Korea, in the Congo and in Ghaza.

Many deeds of valour were witnessed during the border conflict with China in 1962. On October 23, a platoon of the First Sikh under the command of Subedar Joginder Singh was defending Tong-Rengla in the Eastern Sector. Wave after wave of the enemy were encountered. A wounded Joginder Singh charged with fixed bayonets and fell fighting. Joginder Singh was awarded the PVC.

A company of the 13th Kumaon Regiment under Major Shaitan Singh was positioned on the 18,000 ft. High Rizangla Hill to defend the road to Chishul Airport in Ladakh. The Chinese forces attacked them in massive waves. Shaitan Singh moved from bunker to bunker to inspire and help the greatly outnumbered jawans. Shaitan Singh was badly wounded. When two jawans tried to help him, he ordered them to go and fight the enemy and they did to the last man, the last bullet. Major Shaitan Singh was awarded the PVC.

It was after the Himalayan conflict with the Chinese that the army paid increasing attention to training our jawans for high altitude

warfare. The more they train in peace the less they bleed in war.

On September 1, 1965, at 4 p.m. Pakistan attacked India. At 5.45 p.m. IAF aircraft were airborne and carried out 28 missions on the first day and knocked out 14 Pakistani tanks and 30 armored vehicles. This was the time when most school and college going students were chanting the names of Sqn. Ldr. Trevor Keelor and Flt. Lt. V. S. Pathania.

During the 1965 Conflict with Pakistan, Indian soldiers were equal to the challenge. The Haji Pir Pass in the Uri-Poonch bulge had become a regular route for infiltrators into the Kashmir valley. Major Dayal's forces were ordered to occupy the Pass. Our jawans faced tough opposition and overcame both the handicaps of high altitude and heavy enemy fire.

In the Khemkaran sector Havildar Abdul Hamid of the Grenadiers moved forward his recoilless anti-tank gun mounted on a jeep. He knocked down one tank, changed position and scored a direct hit on another. He was killed in action. The nation honoured him with the PVC.

On the night of November 2, 1965, Nayak Darshan Singh of the Sikh Light Infantry showed exemplary courage and devotion to duty hunting out enemy bunkers. He was posthumously awarded the MVC.

An Indian Armored Division under Maj. General Rajinder Singh 'Sparrow' advanced on the Siakol Sector. Col. Tarapore led the attack on Phillaura. When he was on the

point of success, he was killed in action. He was awarded the PVC.

In 1971 the India Army helped liberate Bangladesh. During operations on the Eastern Front, Lance Nayak Albert Ekka of the Brigade of Guards led his section against a well fortified enemy position. Though seriously wounded, undaunted he continued to clear bunker after bunker. He was awarded the PVC posthumously.

On the night of December 4, 1971 a task group of the Western fleet under Commander Gopal Rao attacked enemy ships. The Navy succeed in sinking two enemy destroyers and one mine sweeper. Commander Rao then led his ship in the successful bombardment of Karachi harbour. Commander Rao was awarded the MVC.

On December 9, 1971, the 14th Frigate Squadron of the Indian Navy under Capt. Mahinder Nath Mulla engaged an enemy subma-

rine in the Arabian sea. Capt. Mulla's ship the 'Khukri' was struck by a torpedo and sunk. Captain Mulla helped many sailors to save their lives and he himself remained on the bridge to the end and went down with the ship. He was posthumously awarded the MVC.

On December 14, 1971, Srinagar airfield was attacked by a wave of enemy Sabre jets. Flying Officer Sekhon was on readiness duty. Sekhon took off and shot down one Sabre jet and damaged one more. When Sakhon was outnumbered 4 to 1, he flew his Gnat with flying skill, courage and determination at three top level and it crashed. Nirmaljit Singh Sikhon was posthumously awarded the PVC.

It was among the armed forces's finest hour when General Jagjit Singh Aurora accepted the unconditional surrender of Pakistani forces numbering 90,000 in what was then East Pakistan. At the

end of that war, General Sam Manekshaw, India's first Field Marshal pointed out that glories in the field are achieved by the Indian army because it is a family of men imbued with patriotism and selfless devotion to duty.

The Indian armed forces is the supreme example of secular India where soldiers live and work together regardless of caste, creed and language. Indian soldiers tend to be deeply religious and respect each other's religious sentiments. At all regimental centers there are temples for Hindus, mosques for Muslims, gurudwaras for Sikhs and churches for Christians.

War some times become necessary to establish the rule of Right over Wrong and to punish the guilty.

MR. PREM VAIDYA, a documentary filmmaker was with the Films Division of the Government of India.

Politician in Uniform

Chief of Army Staff General V.P. Malik has taken on a role far exceeding his brief. He has emerged as a spokesperson for the Vajpayee government during his well-publicised visit to the US. He has been making political statements in a manner that is not at all becoming to the uniform he wears. The general, who has been meeting a variety of people in Washington and New York, has been encouraged to hold impromptu press briefings where he has spoken on matters concerning Jammu and Kashmir, the Line of Control, Pakistan and the South Asian region. On a 10-day official visit to the US, Gen. Malik seems to have forgotten that he represents the armed forces of democratic India and not of Pakistan. And this country takes pride in the fact that its military confines itself to the cantonment, does its job professionally in securing the borders, and the defence chiefs keep their political views to themselves. Gen. Malik has come out of the closet and like his Pakistan counterparts has been regaling the international audience with his views on all and sundry matters. "Our neighbour (Pakistan) is unstable and you don't know what the future holds for us," he told reporters in New York. This statement goes even beyond the diplomatic overtones in Delhi which have been hostile to the new military regime in Pakistan but stopped short of actually stating that the neighbour is unstable. But what is particularly objectionable are his remarks about Jammu and Kashmir. "What is also evident is the kind of support that people there are getting from outside," he is reported to have said. This implies that the people of the state

are part of the insurgency operations and that they are getting help from the terrorists across the border. The Indian official position, however, is that the mercenaries and terrorists are responsible for the violence in Jammu and Kashmir and the people are disillusioned and disenchanted with the continuing uncertainty and instability. Obviously, Gen. Malik has clearance from Delhi to say what is on his political mind. And he is being pitted against Pakistan's General Pervez Musharraf as most of his diatribes is against the neighbouring country. This is a regrettable and dangerous development as it indicates the level of politicisation of the armed forces, and more specifically the Indian Army, that has started expressing itself during and after Kargil. Gen. Malik would have done the country proud had he kept the non-committal silence expected from a military professional and limited his remarks to defence matters. ... Gen. Malik has not been able to stop the political masters from politicising the Army and he himself has now become a part of the political discourse. All said and done, the general would have done better for India and the defence services he represents had he followed the tradition set by General Cariappa and General Manekshaw instead of setting new parameters in which the distinction between the uniform and the politician is becoming increasingly blurred.

Editorial in *The Asian Age*, 12 November 1999.

Remembering Pesi Masani

J. B. D'Souza

Pesi Masani, Minoo's youngest brother, died in Pittsburgh on the 18th of October 1999. His was a lonely funeral. Pesi had lived a lonely life, centred for the last several decades on the Mathematics department of Pittsburgh University, where, even well after he retired, the university retained a study for him, and where he continued a prolific academic output.

My niece Mary wrote to me on the 23rd: "I just got back from Pesi's funeral service. I felt quite sad through the service, as there were a few people from his department and a priest who did not know him. None of his relatives were there. So I continued to feel quite sad until as we were leaving the church a nurse I know, who does wonderful work with homeless women, told me that Pesi had sent them \$3000 each Christmas for several years. She had never met him but saw the obituary in the paper and decided to come. She said she would have been glad to visit him had she known he was ill. \$3000 had meant a lot to the little organisation that she runs so well. It made me feel a lot better."

As I read that I recalled our school and college years at Seven Bungalows, Versova. The Masanis lived right opposite Dadabhai Naoroji's house, at the mouth of the creek. Our home was further upstream. Naturally we grew into good swimmers. Pesi and I were then the only residents of Versova beach. The beach had acquired a bad reputation as being infested by dangerous currents; practically every year someone or the other was drowned.

Pesi's immersion in marine lore was much deeper than mine.

He once persuaded some of the Versova fisherfolk to take him out to sea with them on a two or three day fishing trip. I on the other hand had been rescued from drowning when I was about 12, so became overly cautious, taking care never to enter the water once the tide had started ebbing, for fear I would be carried out to sea.

Until Pesi dissolved for me that excessive prudence: "What if you drift out?" he asked. "Don't fight the current, tiring yourself in a futile endeavour. You go out with the ebb; you return easily when the outward current abates, which it must, in due course." For me, that took the fear out of swimming. More importantly, it told me that safety in the water was a matter of the mind, not of physical prowess.

The tides were not all that brought us together. We were contemporary honours graduates in Mathematics, Pesi from Elphinstone College, I from St. Xavier's. But whereas he went off abroad in pursuit of higher academic distinction I vegetated in government service in Bombay. Some years later he returned, working his way from America on a cargo steamer. He came to teach Mathematics at the Institute of Science in Bombay. He soon began to fret at the stagnant state of the Mathematics departments at the Institute and at the University. We had had no exposure to Mathematical Logic, not even to Georg Cantor's set theory, which had revolutionised the subject already in the 19th century and

was so basic to current advances in various branches. He tried valiantly but in vain to bring some sense into the University's Mathematics curriculum. Quite soon he abandoned his efforts and returned to the US. I was not to see him again for some 45 years.

In 1997 I travelled to Pittsburgh. He had by then acquired an international reputation in Mathematics and Philosophy. One of the two papers he gave me to read during this visit was too hard for me to comprehend. The other was a denunciation of administrators, whom he dubbed 'peccatores' (Latin for sinners), and their corruption, which he regarded as endemic in a democracy. Quite naturally, it invited a rejoinder, and I sent him one, but I doubt that changed his views on my profession. As I write, I suddenly recall that Pesi's father, Sir Rustom Masani, was once Bombay's Municipal Commissioner.

We met for the last time when he travelled to India earlier this year, to lecture at the Atomic Research Centre. He was now more austere than ever. What did surprise me in Pesi's written work was his intense regard for religion, and, towards the end, an increasing immersion in Christian doctrine and institutions. To me this was unaccountable. I had started life as a devout Catholic, but in 1946 had totally abandoned the faith to which he now seemed to be reaching out. Following a funeral service in St. Mary's church, he was buried in St. Mary's cemetery, in Pittsburgh.

COPING WITH COALITIONS*

A Presidential System is Unsuitable for India

S. V. Kogekar

Though institutions are important to provide the framework within which political activity is to be carried on, one must remember that institutions by themselves are inert, they have to be worked by people.

The presidential system under the U.S. model is no panacea for our political ills. Given the multiplicity of political parties as against only two major parties in the U.S. system, the election of a single executive President is not likely to be a smooth operation with an electorate running into crores of voters. Then there is the ubiquitous caste system and the intense competition for power among different caste groupings. The idea that an executive president will be able to function independently in the best interest of the nation without having to worry constantly about retaining the support of the majority of the members of the popularly elected house of the legislature (as is the case today) is likely to be difficult to realise in practice.

The possibility of the president belonging to a party different from that having a majority in the legislative branch severely limits the independence of the President. Various compromises will have to be made by him to humour the legislature into supporting legislative measures as well as the all-important budget initiated by him. Even within the legislative wing, the formation of various committees will

involve a lot of bargaining between different regional, caste, language and communal groups. Besides, there is always the danger of the President assuming dictatorial powers for his government and frequently using his veto over the bills passed by the legislature. In Sri Lanka, where they have tried the experiment of changing over to the presidential system for almost two decades, opinion has veered round to the view that the earlier parliamentary system was far more democratic and there are clear indications that the country will revert to the older system soon.

For any system to function in a smooth, progressive and responsible manner, it is necessary to have a general consensus in favour of observing the rules of the game as it were. In the absence of such a consensus, the situation resembles that of a 'free for all' fight. The end product of this fight is personal power to the exclusion of the larger social objectives. Corruption at every level thrives in such a political atmosphere. For the success of a democratic system, the first thing necessary is the cultivation of what can be called 'democratic self-restraint'. It implies that no one will

exercise power without reference to the accepted social or national objective to be pursued.

Our common weakness today is the tendency to go to the logical limit of authority, following the letter and not the spirit of the law. This is modified only by the necessity of retaining power as long as possible and thus making compromises and concessions which spell disaster to the concept of the rule of law. So long as such an ethic prevails, any institutional structure can be perverted, be it that of a parliamentary or a presidential form. Though institutions are important to provide the framework within which political activity is to be carried on, one must remember that institutions by themselves are inert, they have to be worked by people. If the people do not accept the sanctity and also the limitations of

Corporate Wisdom

A crow was sitting on a tree, doing nothing all day. A small rabbit saw the crow, and asked him: Can I also sit like you and do nothing all day long? The crow answered: Sure, why not?

So the rabbit sat on the ground below the crow, and rested. All of a sudden, a fox appeared, jumped on the rabbit and ate him.

Then the crow thought: Poor rabbit, I forgot to tell him that if you want to do nothing, you must sit very high.

*In the last issue of *Freedom First*, we carried contributions defending the parliamentary system. The authors concluded that the parliamentary system was most suitable for an extremely complicated society like ours. We conclude that debate with articles that had to be held over for lack of space.

Coping with Coalitions

institutions, they can play havoc with any system of government. It is therefore for serious consideration of all concerned whether the need of the hour is to change the institutional structure of our polity

or whether the malaise from which we are suffering goes deeper into the psyche of the people, influenced by narrow, parochial pursuits through the electoral system of democratic government.

PROFESSOR S. V. KOGEKAR is a retired Principal of Fergusson College, Pune.

COURTESY: *Journal of Indian School of Political Economy*, April-June, 1997. From a review of Jashwant B. Mehta's book, *Quest for a Better Democratic Alternative*.

A Change in the System is Called For

Sisir K. Dhar

Can we deny that Parliament has been converted into an arena for 'maidan' politics? ... In the existing political system, our MPs and MLAs are becoming commodities, purchasable like other commodities in the market.

Will a fresh election solve our problem? The fact is that all the Lok Sabha elections since 1989 have given us 'hung parliaments' one after another. Most probably, another election tomorrow will not produce a different result when the political life of the country is fractured at the popular and party levels. In such a situation, we cannot resort to the costly luxury of repeated elections, every few months, involving 600 million voters and a huge expenditure by the state and the contesting candidates. Not so long ago, *The Economist*, London, commented editorially: "Another poll, another coalition, another set of rogues and incompetents to misgovern India".

Today, the country is suffering from a fractured polity, a fractured parliament and a fractured government. In this situation, those who are more unprincipled and more crafty, the opportunists, benefit more and more, cornering their principled brethren, not very

with a stable government and a sound leadership, only aggravate the situation. National reconstruction is a task absolutely beyond the capacity of fractured, shaky, short-lived governments that we are having today.

A Different Reality

The question ultimately is, is the parliamentary system of government helping or hindering the cause of democracy in India? This is not to suggest that there is anything inherently wrong with the parliamentary system. But a country's institutional arrangements must be appropriate to the socio-cultural and political milieu and must serve the cause of progress. On paper, the Indian parliament is at par with the British parliament. But in reality, it is a pale imitation of the latter. The criminalisation of politics is a thorny reality in India's political life and the poverty of our parliament has a relation to the degraded version of our politics and this degraded version has a basic relation to our socio-cultural milieu.

is conspicuously deficient in terms of efficiency, political culture and morality. While the income and perquisites of our MPs have risen, their efficiency and devotion to parliamentary norms are falling. In an editorial, "The Lawless House", *The Statesman* (17-18.4.99) refers aptly to "Parliament's grievous neglect of legislation". One can offer concrete instances to highlight the failure of our parliament in discharging its duty. At the moment, more than 100 Bills await the consideration of the Lok Sabha. We may refer here specifically to the fact of the highly important Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill that was introduced in Parliament as far back as 1968 and has lapsed so far instead of becoming a law that good governance demands, all the more at a moment when large-scale corruption at higher levels is becoming rampant and those charged with corruption, having enough political power, do not fail to have protectors who would make the legal process rather impotent.

Poor Quality of MPs

The quality of parliament proceedings has been falling alarm-

The Indian parliament today

* This article was written before the elections to the 13th Lok Sabha.

Coping with Coalitions

ingly. The country knows too well how our honourable MPs and MLAs are functioning in a manner that is so often neither honourable nor parliamentary, that the Speaker finds it wise to switch off the TV reporting system, so that his countrymen are not shocked watching what is happening there. When a large number of Bills are on the waiting list, it is not uncommon nowadays to see members stall proceedings, create pandemonium, shout down fellow M.P.s, rush into the well of the House, turn a deaf ear to the appeals by the the Speaker to maintain order - some members even snatching papers from the hands of the Speaker - and force the Speaker or the Chairman to adjourn proceedings frequently. Can we deny that Parliament has been converted into an arena for 'maidan' politics?

The ailments in our political life call for an appropriate change in the style and form of government. The major function of a government should be the formulation of long term policies and programmes and their steadfast implementation. The fragile governments of the present type are most unfit to shoulder such a responsibility.

There is another type of moral infirmity that our parliamentary system with its shaky coalitions has to tolerate. When recently, a number of our politicians were trying frantically to form an alternative government, charges and counter-charges of horse-trading were made against one another. In the existing political system, our MPs and MLAs are becoming commodities, purchasable like other commodities in the market. Cur-

rently a former prime minister is under trial in a court of law on the charge of having made deals to overcome the minority status of his government. Surely, there must have been such deals before and will be there hereafter if political conditions create inducement for such commerce. The expression *Aya Ram Gaya Ram* is Indian politics' contribution to parliamentary methodology.

Lack of Interest

We must also take into account an important fact when considering the service that our parliament should render. The work of the members of legislative bodies is mainly of two types: (a) law-making and (b) 'king making'. Law-making is by definition the primary responsibility of a legislature. It is clear however that our legislators in general are more interested in 'king-making'. The thin attendance in our legislatures, both at the Centre and in the states, even when important legislative businesses are being transacted, manifests how much or how little our legislators are interested in legislative matters. I remember, a report in *The Statesman* that during the two days allotted for discussions on the Dunkel proposals, two-thirds of the members of the Lok Sabha were absent. Law making demands some knowledge of the subject under discussion and a minimum understanding of matters relating to different aspects of our social life. How many legislators are genuinely interested in such prosaic matters?

Even the parliamentary system has functioned in England is no argument that it will function in India. It did not function in France

and France changed the system. We are in a somewhat identical situation. It is difficult to expect that the present trend of fragmentation of political parties - as also of sub-national parties can be halted if the present parliamentary system is continued.

Surely the framers of the Indian Constitution did not anticipate the fact that our legislatures would be packed with persons with criminal records.

The Presidential System

There is little reason for us to continue our infatuation with the parliamentary system. A democratic alternative is the presidential system. Both the systems have, in theory, their merits and demerits and we need not detail them here. Perhaps, no human contrivance is perfect or final and, in practice, that system is good that serves better. What is obvious is that the presidential system ensures stability of government that India needs the most, for continuity and effective implementation of declared government policies, unaffected by political uncertainty.

Variations Possible

The presidential system is no less democratic than the parliamentary system. America is no less democratic than England. It is also characterized by such essential democratic principles as the rule of law, fundamental rights and independence of the judiciary. In our parliamentary system, a Prime Minister could declare an emergency, even at the expense of other problems and almost throttled democracy. It is important to remember the President will be

Coping with Coalitions

elected by the entire voting people, having no chance for virtual nomination with secret confabulations among a few 'king-makers' as happened recently in the case of our having two Prime Ministers, the two who had not even dreamt of occupying this office a week earlier.

The presidential system in India need not be a carbon copy of

the system in America. The French have shown there need not be a single form of the presidential system. We can think of variations suiting our needs, retaining the basic character of the system. The U.S.A. has a federal system, more federal than ours. A large country with so much of diversity, India must have a federal system, facilitating the decentralization of power.

In the presidential system, with the separation of powers, persons with aptitude and competence for law-making will come forward for election to legislative bodies. If the legislators are divested of their 'king-making' power, the villainy and vulgarity of our legislative elections will lessen significantly.

MR. SISIR K. DHAR is a freelance writer.

In Search of Stable Governments

P. R. Dubhashi

The proper functioning of government is absolutely essential for dealing with the problems faced by the nation which in a developing country such as ours are essentially long term in nature.

The issue of stable government at the Centre has once again become the focus of political discourse in the country. The Congress claims that it alone can provide a stable government. It points out to the fact that while all Congress governments at the Centre completed their full term, none of the non-Congress governments - the Janata government of 1977, the breakaway government of Charan Singh who never faced Parliament, the minority government of V. P. Singh of 1989, the UDF governments of 1996-97 and lastly the BJP coalition government of 1998-99 could do so; forgetting that it was itself responsible for bringing down all these governments except that of V. P. Singh. The Congress rejects the theory that the era of coalition governments has come to stay in India.

On the other hand, the BJP which until recently was treated as a political untouchable, has now

come round to hold a definite view that it should seek to form coalition governments in partnership with the regional parties. Shri Vajpayee has asserted that the regional parties representing the diversity of India have a place in national politics. Shri Kushabhau Thakre, the President of the BJP has stated that even if the BJP got an absolute majority in the thirteenth Lok Sabha, it would still seek to form a coalition government. It would go to the electorate with its "national agenda" from which it had dropped its stand on Ayodhya, Article 370 of the Constitution and the Common Civil Code all of which proved controversial and gave a stick to the Congress and other parties to beat the BJP with, as a communal party.

It is a fact of India's post-independence history, that for forty years the Congress party provided stable governments at the centre as well as in several states. This has

few parallels in a democratic polity except perhaps that of the liberal party in Japan. There were exceptional circumstances that accounted for the achievement. The Congress party was the one which led India to independence. It had the image of a national institution with which all sections of India's diverse society and persons of different ideological persuasions had a sense of identity.

Gandhiji's Advice

Gandhiji had made the sensible suggestion that having performed its historic task, the Congress should be wound up. But Nehru, his chosen heir, thought the Congress party should carry forward its mission by forming government at Centre and the states which could perform the task of building up a welfare state in India. His charismatic leadership could give India a stable government for seventeen years till his death in 1964. The very stability of

Coping with Coalitions

the Nehru era generated a sense of anxiety about political instability even during his lifetime conveyed by the question "after Nehru, who?" However, his daughter Indira soon established her authority. The charisma of the Nehru dynasty was inherited by her and later her son Rajiv.

Dynastic Rule

But this dynastic stability got the first blow when there was nation-wide protest against the emergency imposed by a dominant but insecure Prime Minister. The nation's polity never regained the confident stability of the fifties and the sixties, despite the return of Indira Gandhi in 1980. Her assassination in 1984 was another blow to political stability. The succession of Rajiv Gandhi without loss of time ensured continuity, and his triumphant success in 1985 general election made him PM in his own right.

But a basic change had started taking place in India's political system. The era of one party rule of the Congress was over but an alternative to the Congress in the shape of a single coherent party did not emerge. The Janata party which was hurriedly put together by Jayaprakash Narayan after the end of emergency came to power but soon internal dissensions led to its disintegration. This was followed by the proliferation of parties both on the right and on the left, the rise of regional parties and a constant realignment of political forces.

The British Experience

The stability associated with decades of dominance of a single political party and the unquestioned

authority of a single political leader and the instability associated with minority governments with outside support have been the peculiar features of our polity which are in sharp contrast to the stability of a mature democracy like Britain with its two party system. There what is normally expected is pendulum like oscillation from one general election to another. The parties are disciplined and the phenomenon of defections is non-existent. The party which gains majority in a general election is expected to last for five years but the typical anti-establishment factor may bring the party in opposition in power in the next general election. The formidable personality of Prime Minister Thatcher managed to keep the Tories in power for an unprecedented period of 17 years but disenchantment did set in and the last general election saw a totally reformed Labour party coming to power with a tremendous majority under the young leadership of Tony Blair.

Both, the long stability of the early era and the chronic instability of recent years in India have been harmful to Indian democracy. The long stability of early years gave rise to a monopoly of political power with all its attendant evil consequences. Lord Acton's epigram, "power corrupts people and absolute power corrupts absolutely" seems to be absolutely true in our situation. The long years of power made Congressmen feel that in the exercise of power they need not be bothered either about the rule of law or the public interest nor need they make any distinction between the government, the party and the family. Thus one central minister was indicted by the Supreme Court for arbitrary allotment of govern-

ment accommodation and another for allocation of petrol pumps. The arbitrary exercise of power led to massive political corruption. The imposition of the emergency without the knowledge of the Cabinet and depriving the personal liberty of large numbers of people in public life by putting them in jail for raising their voice against the emergency was the worst example of misuse of power which made a mockery of democracy and the Constitution.

The Indonesian Example

Another country which has suffered the consequences of such political stability is Indonesia. Gen. Suharto seized power from the popular, brilliant but discredited Sukarno and retained it for nearly thirty years. His Golkar party managed to win every election, reducing elections in that "guided democracy" to a farce. His absolute power was used by his family, his dead wife (percentage madam) and seven children to make fortunes out of questionable deals. It was this "crony capitalism" which brought disaster to the Indonesian economy plunging the Indonesian rupiah from 2400 to a dollar to 17000 per dollar, with inflation in the prices of essential commodities and looting of the shops owned by the prosperous Chinese.

But the instability born out of frequent changes in government and premature general elections are also harmful. Some thinkers welcome such instability as an antidote to the misuse of power by the politicians and a means of keeping them in check. They argue that what is important is not the stability of government but that of the society and the economy.

Coping with Coalitions

However it cannot be gainsaid that the two are closely related to each other.

With the advent of the era of liberalisation, the scope of governmental activity might have been reduced. But the proper functioning of government is absolutely essential for dealing with the problems faced by the nation which in a developing country such as ours are essentially long term in nature – problems such as mass poverty (which even after eight five year plans still persist), illiteracy (forty percent of the population is still illiterate), malnutrition, non-availability of potable water both in villages and towns, lack of proper shelter, and woefully inadequate infrastructural facilities not to talk of the dangers of internal and external insecurity. These require a

stable government with a resolute sense of purpose, laying down long term policies and programmes and carrying them out effectively through a motivated and competent public service. In the absence of such confidence and unity of purpose we saw a dithering united front government unable to stick even to its own minimum programme, its prime minister unable to introduce the bill for reservation of women in Parliament and its finance minister unable to see through the bill for the establishment of an insurance regulatory authority.

Suggestions have been made to make changes in the Indian Constitution and ensure political stability. One is the German system of constructive vote of no confidence. The other is banning

defections of any sort – an MP or an MLA going against its party's decisions must first resign. The third is electoral reform insisting on a 50% plurality for the election of a candidate; and finally providing for a more active Presidency which can set up, at least as an interim measure an all party government, with parties represented in proportion to their numbers, in case Parliament is unable to put up a stable government, thereby ensuring that the Legislature would function for its full term of five years.

Such reforms are long overdue and should be taken up immediately lest India enter the twenty first century with weak governments, frequent elections and consequent political instability.

DR. P. R. DUBHASHI is a former Vice-Chancellor of Goa University.

POWERING INDIA'S GROWTH FOR MORE THAN FIFTY YEARS

Thermal • Hydel • Nuclear • Diesel • Gas • Wind

A leading Engineering Company offering a wide range of products

- Medium & Large Pumps
- Hydro-Electric Generating Systems
- L.T. & H.T. Alternators and Motors
- Special Rotating Electrical Machines
- H.T. Switchgear & Switchboards
- Electronics Control Systems

And undertaking Turn-key Projects with a single - source responsibility

 **Jyoti Ltd.**

P. O. Chemicals Industries
Vadodra-390 003 (India)
Fax : 0091- 265 - 381871

Coping with Coalitions

Constitutional Devices against Unstable Governments

Gerhart Raichle

The only way parliament can pass a vote of no confidence and thus remove the government, is by electing a new Chancellor.

Governmental instability can be a dangerous thing. Germany experienced this in the early 1930s when a quick succession of governments, all of which were sooner or later toppled by parliamentary votes of no confidence, finally led to the Nazi take-over in 1933 which marked the end of the first German democracy.

One of the reasons for this disastrous development was that, due to the unmitigated proportionality of the electoral system, there was an extreme party-political fragmentation of parliament: more than 30 parties, some of which held but one or two seats.

Another important reason was the constitutional dispensation that governments could be formed without a parliamentary majority but could, in practice, not last without a majority. The President of the Republic could instal a government, but a parliamentary majority could sack it by passing a vote of no confidence.

Obviously, there is nothing wrong with that as long as parliamentary majorities are stable. In a parliamentary democracy (unlike one that has a clear separation of powers as in the USA) government must have majority support in parliament in order to survive. If, however, majorities are unstable because of shifting alliances among a multiplicity of parties, governmental instability can easily result. The situation in India in recent

years is a good example of this. That a "negative" majority, i.e. a majority against the incumbent executive, should not be enough to sack it. Only with a "positive" majority, i.e. a majority for an alternative executive, should this be possible.

Since the federal constitution of 1949 makes the Federal Chancellor the central figure of the executive, everything hinges on him: it is the Chancellor who is elected, not the ministers, and if the chancellor is sacked by a vote of no confidence; by the same token the whole cabinet is sacked. So what the Founding Fathers wrote into the 1949 constitution is simply this: The only way parliament can pass a vote of no confidence and thus remove the government, is by electing a new Chancellor.

They left one possibility for a "negative" vote of no confidence: if the Chancellor asks for a vote of confidence and loses it, he and his cabinet are sacked without being replaced at the same time. As long as he does not ask for a vote of confidence, he can only be sacked by a vote electing someone else in his place.

This method of ruling out "purely negative" no confidence votes has produced the desired effect in federal Germany (and perhaps more than that): The toppling of governments by votes of no confidence has been extremely rare, because it is much more difficult to form a majority to support a new government than to form a majority against the incumbent government. In fact, the "constructive vote of no confidence", as the technical term is, has only been

attempted twice and succeeded only once in the 50 years' history of the Federal Republic.

Ironically, the alternative procedure of the Chancellor asking for and losing a vote of no confidence was applied successfully more often, i.e. twice - yet these cases were not cases of governments losing support but simply tricks to achieve a dissolution of parliament. Here again, the Founding Fathers had taken care of stability by making premature dissolutions of parliaments extremely difficult: losing a vote of confidence is almost the only possibility of getting a parliament dissolved before the end of its four-year term, and therefore supporters of the government abstained in the ballot in order to get a dissolution.

Apart from these, the constitutional devices have worked as they were designed to work: the one case of a government being dismissed by a vote of no confidence was a case of a substantial parliamentary realignment: a new coalition and a new government were formed which lasted for 16 years, until the electorate changed the majority in the 1998 general election. The requirement of forming a new and sustainable majority in addition to just dismantling the old one has worked as it should: as an effective brake on irresponsible parliamentary tactics.

DR. GERHART RAICHLE is the Head of the Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung.

The Founding Fathers of the second German democracy took into account this possibility. They decided

*Freedom is not worth having
if it does not connote
freedom to err.*

- Mahatma Gandhi,
March 1, 1939.



ESTD - 1910

LAKSHMI
MILLS LIMITED

1100, AVANASHI ROAD, COIMBATORE 641 037.

Minoo Masani - As I Knew Him

K. K. Pathak

On the occasion of Minoo Masani's 94th birth anniversary, an old friend shares with readers of *Freedom First* some of his reminiscences.



It's my personal feeling that Minoo Masani did not get his due either in his life-time or after his death last year. In this part of the country the national dailies carried a PTI news item of hardly fifty words when he died. As far as I knew the man, he deserved much more.

As a leader, he belonged to a class apart from the second line of leadership during our struggle for independence. If I were to name the three wisest men of the country I knew, I would unhesitatingly name C. Rajagopalachari, Minoo Masani and Nani Palkhivala. I should like to live with my bias rather than relent on my choice. And so Masani was a leader who had a very clear vision of what his country should be and how the desired change was to be brought about. He was an intellectual whom nothing could hire as he was amongst the honest ones who held his convictions and opinions as firmly as possible. It was this force of conviction which induced him to work as a zealot and crusader

whose enthusiasm was unbeatable. He died as a cardholder of the Swatantra Party. It's proof enough of his being a class apart from his colleagues.

I came to know him through a preface Masani wrote in 1956 for the Asian edition of James Burnham's *The Coming Defeat of Communism*. The book is no more with me as I had presented it to a friend who is now our minister of foreign affairs. I don't have the slightest idea if he has read the preface. I'm quite confident Masani's views would stand in good stead even today. A unipolar world is a stop-gap arrangement. The world has to be bipolar because the entire universe is a carnival of opposites. So how could the world be reduced to a unipolar status? Cold War or no Cold War, man will continue to swim against the tide, inventing ideologies that tend to overlook the laws of nature in a bid to bring the heaven of equality and equal opportunities on the earth, making mankind happier than ever before. The world is heading for a multipolar one this time. It may take hardly a decade or two to see this happen.

Masani's preface is a brilliant exposition of sound tenets of foreign affairs. A brief preface which hardly runs through two pages is full of suggestions for a better understanding of the new world order that is going to emerge in the future. It was written in 1956, but is valid even today! He was, like C.

R. and Nani Palkhivala prophetic in his vision of things. Right from education down to foreign affairs, including his advocacy of sound economic wisdom, he spoke and wrote with a clear vision which very few in the country possessed. He was a crusader in a true sense. He had no place for human effort to be fruitful enough against the laws of nature. They are eternal as they stand in no need of a cause to operate and are beyond the scope of human effort to alter them to suit the convenience of humanity at large.

'Globalization' is just a manifestation of a desire to work for a common human effort. It's just the beginning of a kind of ideological disarmament for the benefit of humanity as a whole. This seems to me true wisdom, quite apart from the experiences of nuclear energy for military purposes, which has been exhibited by mankind in recent times. Thomas Paine had visualized globalization some two centuries ago. If the bonds of globalization grow stronger and fruitful enough in the days ahead, the folly of piling up nuclear arsenals may be reduced to a point where a nuclear disaster may become just out of the question. It's no scholastic view. It's the imperative of the future.

Minoo's transition from a firebrand socialist to a staunch votary of a free-market is an interesting aspect of his intellectual endowment. After the fall of the

erstwhile USSR and collapse of communism in East Europe, he had sent me a copy of his booklet, *Socialism Reconsidered*, written way back in 1944. I was reminded of one of our long chats in which he had narrated to me a story of his socialist days, participating in the labour movement in England. He was an instinctive lover of change. That gave his life an impression of waywardness. Once he told me how he had changed 22 jobs in just as many years. I agree with JRD Tata on this account. I believe Minoo could have been a different man had there been more means at his disposal for what was so close to his heart.

He was a romantic who was quite adventuresome in life, exploring new grounds and avenues. It was this inquisitiveness of an intellectual which gave an impression of a wayward life. Anyway, his waywardness was with a purpose – a cause to espouse. His exterior was soft, more guided by emotions and even sentiments than the logical reasoning which was his stick to beat his political colleagues with,

but his interior was hardened by mature opinions and settled convictions. That was the frame I highly appreciated and loved. I met him for the first time way back in 1961 at the time of the second national convention of the Swatantra Party at Agra, my native town. Some office bearers of the U.P. Teachers Association had accompanied me. That day we had a good chat over a cup of coffee at Lauries Hotel where he was staying, a place hardly one furlong from my home.

I recall another incident. The Third Plan had been formulated with three steel plants at the cost of Rs.100 crores without generating adequate employment, considering the tune of investment and even without any prospects of any quick and attractive returns. I remember he worked out an alternative Plan with due emphasis on irrigation, transport and the like, ensuring quick and attractive returns in terms of GNP as well as giving employment and thereby using manpower in the most adequate way. Marx was a critic of capital-

ism without a viable alternative. Masani was a critic of socialism and communism with a viable alternative. My putting him alongside of Marx is just to point out the marked difference in Masani's thinking after taking market economy as a viable model and shedding his socialist credentials. His national priorities, though different from the Nehru Government, were not only sound but also, if they had been adopted by the persons that be, would have resulted in a better and much surer road to prosperity and affluence. He wrote an article 'Third Plan : An Alternative', in the *Hindustan Times* on the lines indicated above. I had commented on his article in the *Hindustan Times* some 35 years ago, upholding his opinions.

I loved him, still love him and will continue to do so for the rest of my life. He was very kind to me. My only regret is that I couldn't be what he might have wanted me to be.

MR. K. K. PATHAK is a retired teacher.



A Lesson in English Usage!

When M. R. Masani said that the Fourth Plan now produced was mulish, he used the word in its correct sense, obstinately attached to old errors. The Prime Minister diverted the House with an exposition on the excellent qualities of the mule, its patience, its hardihood, etc. But it was no answer to the charge of a plan or policy being mulish. If one's behaviour is sheepish, that is awkwardly bashful or timid, it is no good answering that sheep's is good meat. If a fellow is called goatish for his lustfulness it is no use expatiating on the nimbleness of the goat.

There is no harm in entertaining the House with a diversion of this sort. Adjectives with an -ish ending convey the not so admirable qualities of the substantives from which the adjectives are derived, e.g. boyish, womanish, etc. I was amused reading a cutting sent to me which said the PM "rebuked" Mr. Masani. The PM did nothing of the sort but merely entertained the House with praise of the donkety-mare sterile hybrid.

C. Rajagopalachari

Swarajya, June 21, 1969.

Issued by the Rajaji Foundation

Need for a Liberal and Not Dogmatic Activism

R. C. Saxena

In most cases, dogmas have always taken precedence over the 'cause' resulting in the 'cause' languishing under the weight of propaganda.

In Ms. Arundhati Roy we have a new convert to "social activism" which continues, not surprisingly, to titillate the muse in the likes of her. I am referring to the new-found interest of Ms. Roy in the anti-Narmada project crusade. In her first and record-breaking novel "The God of Small Things", Ms. Roy revealed herself to be an *avant-garde* liberal who perceived poverty and hardships, even as a child, from a liberal standpoint without being dogmatic, thereby lending an authentic and undiluted touch to her narrative. Her treatment of communists did not go unnoticed and without strident reaction. Beautiful prose makes for creativity a thing of joy but hardly makes up for the belated espousal of a cause for ideological reasons.

Ms. Roy's *diktat* to the fellow citizens, in the backdrop of perceived threats by big dams, not to have any more children, is quite like a Leninist *firman* which, in the post communism era, appears out of place. Ms. Roy is clearly influenced by her communist co-crusaders of the anti-dams campaign.

How Can Marxists be Anti-State?

This article is not, however, concerning Ms. Roy's personal view or her campaign. It is about the inflexible dogmatic stand of most of the social activists who take up people's causes. In most cases, dogmas have always taken pre-

cedence over the cause resulting in the cause languishing under the weight of propaganda. The Narmada Bachao Andolan is a case in point. Its leader Ms. Medha Patkar has, reportedly, admitted to being first a marxist and then everything else. If that be the truth, all her campaigns, hitherto, however bold and courageous, have come to naught. I say this because any campaign against the State is anathema in marxist ideology. Marxism validates the supremacy of the State and holds that all else is subservient to the State. Ms. Patkar's ideology is in direct conflict with her actions thereby increasing the gap between ideological inflexibility and the ground realities. Ideally a fight against the State can be launched only by liberal champions and not by statist ideologues.

To highlight Ms. Patkar's dilemma, consider the fact that the fundamental right to property under the Constitution of India would not only compel the State to guarantee that right but also compel the judiciary to enforce the same against the State in favour of tribals and displaced persons. Alas, the fundamental right to property was deleted from the Constitution and made an ordinary (and un-enforceable) right in the 'seventies much to the joy of the communists. Now we have ideologues who want the state to restore the lands to the displaced tribals (and other people), yet, at the same time, want

to continue to be the votaries for the extinction of the fundamental right to property. Ms. Patkar would serve her cause better if she campaigns, with equal zeal, for the restoration of the inviolable fundamental right to property in the Constitution which can be enforced against the State.

Neither Land nor Compensation

Similar is the case with anti slum-demolition activists who confuse the fundamental right to life and liberty with the right to retain property. Even the ordinary law entitles those slum and hutment dwellers who have been living in one place for a number of years, to constructive acquisition of their dwelling places; but who, in the absence of the fundamental right to property, are most vulnerable to be displaced since the State cannot guarantee them the right to property nor can the judiciary enforce the same. Acquisition by the State of lands owned by farmers to lay oil and gas pipelines, set up refineries and fertilizer projects etc. have caused immense hardship to farmers who spend their precious savings seeking enhanced compensation. They will neither get back their lands nor fair compensation.

When land reforms were introduced soon after Independence, holding of property was considered sinful. Land reforms may have been necessary in places like Bihar and U.P where

YOU CAN TASTE THE MOUNTAIN
FRESHNESS & THE FULL DARK POETRY OF PURE COFFEE

Every bean that goes into Coorg Pure Coffee is born from the freshness

of Tata's Coffee plantation - the largest and finest in Southeast Asia.

All the mountain freshness of Coorg Country is brought out by the Roast-master.

Roasted just right Ground and blended, with great care and high art.

So when you taste a cup of Coorg Pure Coffee from Consolidated Coffee,



you taste the sunshine, you taste the mountain breeze.

you taste the full dark poetry of pure coffee



COORG COFFEE IS COORG COUNTRY

feudal landlords pillaged anything that grew on the soil including cattle and humans. In the name of land reforms, however, the State insidiously acquired the unfettered right to acquire any land, anywhere in the country. The State's malicious designs got a boost when the fundamental right to property was deleted from the Fundamental Rights chapter in the Constitution in the early 'seventies. The ideologues of the day applauded such a deletion and the judiciary of the day only enabled it. The liberals of the day, Mr. Minoo Masani and Justice Khanna, to name but two, were silenced by the then socialistic Government of India. The activists, most of whom, then, swore by Marx, saw an unfolding of a golden chapter little realizing that the supremacy of the State would one day visit their constituency with untold misery.

Grotesque Theories

In the 'eighties, the ideologues amongst the social activists defended the State in the matter of reservation for scheduled castes, tribes and backward classes which propounded grotesque theories of other backward classes and 'creamy layers', whereas they ought to have been, ideologically speaking, striving for a classless society! In the 'nineties they saw sinister capitalist designs in the economic reforms and liberalization of trade policies even while biscuit factories were being privatized in Russia. Now, they deplore the proposed disinvestment of inefficient PSUs and privatization of the insurance sector by the State. They mock the WTO as an instrument of capitalist nations when globalization of world trade is a reality. The liberalization of trade policies and economic reforms, which is perceived as a "sell-out" to multinationals by many social activists is in fact a significant

measure to reduce the State's control in matters of trade and private enterprise.

We have seen how disastrous has been the control by the State of our trade and private enterprise, in the past. Recently, a group of activists is demanding more State control in matters of education fearing that education will land into the hands of private business. We have seen how hopelessly the State has handled education in the past fifty years. Protection by the state of religious minorities demanded by the activists is paramount but equally significant and with far-reaching consequences is the need for promoting religious reforms to keep pace with evolving culture. Likewise, preserving tribal culture is no more important than assimilating the same in social progress.

In the closing days of the twentieth century the ideologues amongst the social activists are caught in a bind. The human race endeavours, in the meanwhile, to cut across ideological barriers and march into the next millenium with the liberal paradigm of the highest goods for the highest numbers.

Liberal Activism

Social activists must discard their dogma in favour of liberal thinking. Liberalism has, over the years, come to mean extension of democracy which concerns itself with the development of personal freedom and social progress. It is distinct from radicalism inasmuch as social change in liberalism is conceived as gradual, flexible and adaptive whereas radicalism mandates fundamental change based on new principles of authority. Liberalism desires fewer state controls and interventions in the areas of economy and private enterprise and demands positive State action to

reduce poverty, improve health-care, provide for old-age benefits and curtail unemployment.

Liberal activism is called for even in the anti-dam campaigns. The anti-dam crusade is a losing battle not because of the cause but because of the conflict of ideology and reality. The reality, much as we dislike it, is that the State has unfettered powers to displace and dispossess persons of their properties. I blame the very ideologue activists who supported and enabled this reality. Whether the construction of the dam is halted or not is no longer relevant. The dam must be opposed on grounds of misrepresentation by the State, which promised a utopia. It must be opposed for the fraud perpetrated on the people, for the inordinate delays, for the wasteful expenditure of public money, for hoodwinking poor investors who will not get returns in their life time, for breeding corruption, for unjustly enriching the politicians and bureaucrats, for deluding us into the belief that water can defy natural laws of physics and reach the Rann of Kutch and many other valid and justifiable reasons including criminal negligence of ecology and environment. But, it cannot be opposed on grounds of displacement of tribals and dispossessing them of their properties the right to which, unfortunately, is neither guaranteed nor enforceable. A more liberal approach other than a dogmatic one is called for.

MR. R. C. SAXENA is a lawyer practicing in Baroda

Bettering the British

During the entire period of its 200-year rule in India, the British passed just 400 laws while the Indian parliament in 46 years passed about 4,000 pieces of legislation.

Courtesy: MID-DAY, August 17, 1999.

Environmentalism

- Some Central Issues

Kusum Chopra

It is an open question whether the entire environmental issue is not being derailed by the strident but shallow environmentalism practiced by those in the glare lights of the media?

What is the central issue of environmentalism?

Is it that the environment, as we know it today, is to be preserved at all costs, irrespective of the preservation of Man or of the factors contributing to the ongoing evolution of the Earth, in which periodic changes in temperature and climate have been the precursors of remarkable changes in the flora and fauna, along with its human population and its social and economic development.

Several species, man, beast or flora died out as the world evolved during the Ice Ages, triggered off by some phenomena which has not yet been firmly established.

But in our times, each tiny change in temperature, in humidity or in atmospheric dust has the environmentalists up in arms, spewing as much brim and fire as the early day prophets of doom and the volcanoes which spew out the heat and the dust of the innards of the Earth.

Contradicting such doom-sayers, a recent study has indicated that the periodic spewing of fire and dust into the atmosphere by volcanoes have a positive fallout in that this forms a heat screen against the sun's rays.

Another theory, this one of global history propounded by scientists of the National Geophysical Research Institute, Hyderabad holds, on the basis of empirical evidence from seaside, glacial and tree ring studies, that the earth has, in the last 11,000 years seen 20 anthropological waves affecting human history with a cycle of approximately 550 years, including 6 cycles of transgression and regression by the sea.

There are some interesting consequences of this theory of global history. That sometime between 18000 and 6000 B.C., the relative global sea level rose by nearly 150 meters before stabilising, to affect climate and trigger off the agricultural wave which resulted in a rapid advancement of the human intellect.

Among the other major watersheds are the "Wisdom Wave" between 800 and 250 B.C. which saw the sudden rise of religious intellectualism, viz. Brahminism, Buddhism and Jainism in India, Zoroastrianism in Iran, Judaism in the Middle East and Confucianism and Taoism in China; and the post 1350 AD Colonization Wave which marked the migration of Europeans to establish empires in different parts of the world.

Environmentalists have been making a great hue and cry over various development projects to be located in what is always termed "ecologically sensitive areas".

One would imagine that ev-

ery ecosystem would be precious to its inhabitants and equally "ecologically sensitive" to any inroads by invaders, natural or otherwise.

Pray where then are those areas in the world which can be deemed not to be ecologically sensitive enough to survive inroads of projects which would afford employment to more? Which can be safely despoiled without inviting the "righteous" wrath of the so-called environmentalists?

MS. KUSUM CHOPRA, a freelance journalist, is a regular contributor to *Freedom First*.

We Were No Better

Indians may criticise the Pakistanis for having accepted military rule without demur. But they did not do better in 1975 when civil dictatorship was imposed through the emergency. More than 100,000 people were detained without trial but there was no public protest. The credit for sustaining democracy in India should go to our armed forces. They are apolitical. They scrupulously stayed away from the power games. Even when, during the last days of the emergency (1975-77), the late Sanjay Gandhi sounded Army Chief Raina if he could 'help them', the latter said 'no'.

Kuldeep Nayyar,
The Indian Express,
October 26, 1999

The Right of Dissent

An Open Letter to India's Prime Minister

The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) is deeply concerned by the latest efforts to suppress discussion of the social and environmental costs of Gujarat's Sardar Sarovar dam construction, part of a controversial irrigation and hydroelectric project along the Narmada River.

In a statement issued by a three-bench panel of India's Supreme Court on July 22, the judges said that the essay by Arundhati Roy on the Narmada Valley Project - which originally ran as an article in the Indian weekly newsmagazines *Outlook* and *Frontline*, then was excerpted in London's *The Guardian* newspaper, and has now been published as a short book - seemed to be "an attempt to undermine the dignity of the court and influence the course of justice." Two leading activists with the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), or "Save the Narmada Movement," are also threatened with contempt charges.

Chief Justice A. S. Anand, Justice S. P. Barucha, and Justice B. N. Kirpal scheduled the hearing in response to a petition filed by the Gujarat state government, which claims that there should be a ban on the "publication of various matters in different newspapers, journals, and other media touching upon the matter under consideration of the court." In February, the court lifted a four-year stay on further construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam, and this decision was scathingly critiqued in Roy's book, *The Greater Common Good*.

In her book, Roy argues against "Big Dam" projects generally, and criticizes the court for its apparent indifference to reports that the Sardar Sarovar project would displace half a million people.

Meanwhile, in Gujarat State, CPJ's sources report that virtually all bookstores have pulled copies of Roy's book for fear of violent reprisal. Last week, activists from the two most powerful political parties in India, the Congress Party and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), held demonstrations condemning Roy for her anti-Narmada views. On June 22, members of the youth wing of the Congress Party burned several copies of *The Greater Common Good*, and Youth Congress president, Himatsinh

Patel, threatened that "If within the next 24 hours, all [Roy's] irresponsible, anti development books are not withdrawn from the shelves, the bookstores will have to face the wrath of angry Youth Congressmen." The BJP's youth wing held a similar demonstration on Saturday, July 24. In this climate of extreme intolerance, the renowned Gujarati writer Ashwini Bhatt was unable to find a publisher willing to release a Gujarati edition of Roy's essay, and is now planning to publish the book himself.

However, CPJ fears that distribution of the book will be extraordinarily difficult, and even dangerous.

As an organization of journalists dedicated to the defense of press freedom around the world, CPJ is dismayed that the powers held by India's Supreme Court and by Gujarat's political leadership are being used to stamp out dissent on a matter of vital public interest.

CPJ respectfully urges Your Excellency to use the power of your office to condemn the actions taken by the Youth Congress as well as by members of your own political party to threaten and intimidate bookstore owners and publishers in Gujarat, effectively censoring debate regarding the Sardar Sarovar dam.

We further request that you instruct the Gujarat state government to ensure that those who choose to display and distribute *The Greater Common Good* will be protected from violent reprisal.

CPJ also hopes that the Supreme Court will uphold Article 19 of India's constitution, which guarantees that "All citizens shall have the right... to freedom of speech and expression," and abandon its pursuit of contempt of court charges against Arundhati Roy.

Ann R. Cooper

Executive Director

Committee to Protect Journalists

330 Seventh Avenue, New York,

NY 10001 USA. Phone: (212) 465-1004

Fax: (212) 465-9568 Web: www.cpj.org

New York,
July 28, 1999

“21... I think... er... see... when India was formed... in... nineteen... umm... nineteen... umm... when it was formed... they had less states than they have now... er... we have more states... now... I think they added one more... we... we added one more... no, two more... recently... it was in the papers... not all of them... some... so 21 plus 2... that is 23... 23 states... without including Goa... and... Delhi... Delhi is actually seen as the capital... not a state in the true sense of the word... constitutionally, it is 21... but then when you say states... it is 23... yes... no!... sorry... there is Andaman... and Pondicherry...”

After The Papal Visit

Louella Lobo Prabhu

The most curious thing concerning the Papal visit was the low-key reaction it evoked in the mainline English press. His arrival barely made it to the front pages of the papers. Only after he left was there a front-page photograph and some barely adequate coverage about the thrust of the Asian synod document.

This was quite unambiguous that "Evangelisation", will go on, the word being qualitatively different from conversion. The first, means to make known the life and teachings of Jesus without necessarily culminating in a formal change of faith. Conversion does involve formal change of faith. Here again, the spokesperson of the Vatican, was clear that legitimate conversions will go on. And that freedom of conscience to pursue one's religion/changeover to another is a fundamental human right.

Last year, during the incidents in the Dangs, and the murder of Rev. Staines and his sons, the Press played a very positive role in espousing the good work done by Christians. This time, the coverage was "mixed". Editorials wrote the right things: But 'lead' articles, were generally anti-Catholic. At least one was anti-Papacy not just anti-pope, the author being learned enough, to quote from a newly-released book which apparently deals with Pius XII and his Semitic mind-set, which kept the Church neutral, *vis a vis* the Jews and Hitler during World War II.

This is a controversial area, but it may be added that Golda Meir, a Prime Minister of Israel, spoke kindly of Pius XII.

Role of the Government

If I am not wrong, the invitation to the Pope was extended during the tenure of the Gujral government. It was gracious of the NDA, not to cancel the visit when the BJP segment of the NDA, certainly knew the rumpus it would set off, in the Sangh Parivar. The whole visit must have been one of great tension, for the Prime Minister and Home Minister. Having conceded this, it may be added, that the government appeared to have acted correctly but without the warmth, which the Pope found on his first visit. They were placed in a quandary: If the visit had been cancelled, the worst impressions of the minorities would have been confirmed. If something disastrous had happened, the government would have been condemned, in the eyes of the world. It has not acquitted itself too badly.

Article 19

I personally was conscious of a double standard in my own mind. When protagonists of Tibet, were caned, during the visit of a Chinese dignitary. I felt outraged. Yet, I was anxious, that no demonstrations should mar the Pope's visit. Article 19 guarantees freedom of speech and expression; also movement throughout the territory of India. This is subject to many restraining provisos, one of which, is friendly

relations with a foreign State. After Rajiv Gandhi was killed, by a live human-bomb, the government was right in using the restraining clauses of Article 19, rather than the freedoms guaranteed therein.

Political Fallout

As the Pope was obviously ill, and as the Vatican is extraordinarily well informed of local politics, he could have opted out of the visit, when he saw the controversy he was creating. Christians, hitherto, never in the news were being singled out for attack – their very works of mercy turned against them. The Pope was the victim of a failed political assassination before, and stood the risk of another such attempt, in the climate of hatred which was beginning to surround the visit. He chose to come courting possible martyrdom. So that, (in my reading), the eyes of the world would be trained on the plight of the minorities in India under the NDA government, with its majority BJP segment. Except that the word 'conversion', which implies formal change of faith has been changed to 'evangelisation', meaning bringing the knowledge of Christ to others, he has yielded nothing of the core Christian Doctrine.

Vatican Spokespersons

Two of them appeared on Star TV. They said that the Pope's social teaching was in favour of the Third World, *vis-a-vis* the rich countries of the northern sphere. However, like Mother Teresa, his

theological clone, his idea of inculturation does not include artificial contraception, even in Third World countries with a pressing population problem. Both the

Vatican and Mother Teresa frowned on the use of condoms, to combat AIDS. They believe in the perfectibility of human nature: that man and woman, only seek sex in mar-

riage. The Vatican spokespersons, admitted, that this position will not change in the tenure of the present Pope.

Tibet

Because China was a "great" power, while Tibet was not, the world, generally, did little to make China vacate its invasion. Like the Holocaust of the Jews in Nazi Germany, the silence of the free world became virtually a kind of complicity, with the unlawful intrusion of the invader, into a peaceful country: the world's rooftop Shangri la. I was a teenager, when Russian tanks rolled into Hungary, and little more than that, when the Chinese

overran Tibet. It would seem that even then, my mind had some place in it, for people and values, while the thrust of my thinking was always, then, as now, for the underdog. Hungary has finally come out of the Russian's iron embrace. Tibet remains under the suzerainty of China. The worst part of this situation, is, that the new generation that comes to adulthood, will not remember free Tibet and agitate for it. A development which

no doubt, China anticipated. It has installed a fake "Panchan Lama" of its own though the Dalai Lama had anointed his own candidate, based on the Buddhist belief: that rebirth manifests itself by signs which will be recognised by the authorised person (in this case, the Dalai Lama.) That justice delayed, is justice denied, applies as much to international law, as to personal struggles *vis-a-vis* courts, in general.

Olympus Lifts Service and Technology



Bharat Bijlee Limited

301/302 Swastika Chambers, 3rd floor,
Jn. of CST & Station Road, Chembur, Bombay 400 071,
Tel: 022-5228772 / 73 Tlx.: 011-61062 BEBE IN Fax: 022-5225870

OLYMPUS

THE RURAL PERSPECTIVE

Time for Introspection

Bhanu Pratap Singh

Socialist gigantism has given way to capitalist gigantism.

Though our politicians are trying hard to create the impression that we are now moving ahead at a much faster rate towards prosperity and will soon emerge as a great industrial power, the reality is that we are moving towards a more unequal and explosive society.

India has no doubt made some progress, if we compare our present with our past. But if we compare our present with the contemporary world, we find that we have lagged further behind, than where we were, say 50 years ago. In 1950-51, in terms of GDP, India occupied the 10th position in the world, now she ranks 15th. In 1950, India's share in world exports was 2 per cent, now it is only 0.6 per cent. A small country like S. Korea is now ahead of India, both in GDP and exports.

Some Bare Facts

It also needs to be realised, that mere growth in national income does not necessarily ensure the well-being of the nation, particularly so, if the bulk of the increase in national income goes into the pockets of the already well-to-do. Can our politicians deny the following facts?

- That the number of persons, living below the poverty level in India has increased in recent years, instead of decreasing.
- That plan expenditure on Agriculture, Rural Development and Irrigation, which was 37% of the total plan expenditure during the First Plan, has been reduced to less than 20% during the Ninth Plan. The gross capital formation in agriculture which was 18% in 1980-81, had sharply declined to about only 8% in 1997-98. That is why, the overall growth rate of agriculture (all crops) is now reduced to less than what it was in the pre-green revolution days. Also the growth rate in foodgrains production during the last 5 years has been slower than the growth rate of population, which has resulted in more undernourishment of our people. The percentage of our malnourished children, below the age of 5, has been estimated to be 66%, the highest in the world, except that in Bangla Desh which is 68%.
- That the organised sector (private and public combined) has failed to generate additional jobs, even at the rate of one per cent per annum, while our population has been increasing at the rate of 1.8 per cent per annum. The farm sector too, on account of capital shortage, has failed to generate more employment, leading to large scale exodus of poverty-stricken and unemployed persons, from villages to the already overcrowded cities.
- That there has been growing disparity in average annual per capita incomes of agriculturists and non-agriculturists. It was 1:2 in 1950-51, 1:3 in 1970-71 and is now more than 1:5.
- That the illiteracy rate in rural areas is 86.6 per cent higher than in cities (rural 55.8%, urban 29.9%). Between 1971 and 1996, neither the number of primary schools, nor the number of teachers in these schools, has increased in proportion to the increase in the rural population of the country. The result is, that the pupil-teacher ratio in villages has now reached 64:1. This has made the imparting of proper education to rural children almost impossible. That is why, 39.58% of those who get enrolled in class I, drop out before they pass class V, and 54.14% before they pass class VIII. The quality of education at all levels, in schools and colleges, funded by the government, have sharply declined.
- That the infant mortality rate in villages is 66.7% higher than in cities (rural 80, urban 48 per 1000 live births). The death rate is also nearly 50% higher in villages than in cities. No trained medical attention is available to 46.7% of villagers, during their last sickness, before death; whereas in cities,

Armayesh

The Finest Hand Embroidery - Forever

ARMAYESH, world leading Manufacturer-Exporters of the finest quality of exquisite Hand Embroidered designs and products supplied around the world, also guarantees the same international quality and timely delivery **FOR THE INDIAN MARKET.**

You can select from many existing international designs or order any design of your choice for your Sarees (Parsi Garas are our Speciality), Dupattas, Ghagras, Cholis, Jackets, Vests, Handbags, Cushion covers and other products which will be exclusively hand embroidered for you.

Please telephone Mrs. Sheila N. Aga or Mr. Armand N. Aga on 3084283/3072330 to finalise the date and time of your visit to our

DESIGN STUDIO AND SHOWROOM.

Armayesh Fashions Pvt. Ltd.

Design Studio & Showroom
513 - Veena Killedar Estate
Pais Street, Byculla (West)
Mumbai 400 011.
Fax : (91-22) 307 23 01
E-mail : Armayesh@bom3.vsnl.net.in

this percentage is only 14.1% (mostly slum-dwellers, who have migrated to cities in search of employment).

- That the crime situation in the country has rapidly deteriorated.

Neglect of Rural India

Unemployment, poverty, and even crime are the consequences of defective planning. These cannot be eradicated by illusory promises, or even distribution of state charity. Only faster growth of agriculture, has the potential to resolve our two major problems of poverty and unemployment. The crime situation will ease with the reduction in poverty and unemployment. But all this will not happen, till a more equitable policy is adopted towards the rural masses, most of whom are agriculturists. During the last 10 years, whosoever has been in office at the Centre – including the BJP-led government, had promised to announce a National Agricultural Policy. But all of them have failed to do so. Why? The Government of Japan had enunciated its Agricultural Policy, in just one sentence: "It would be the government's responsibility to raise agricultural productivity, and to close the gap in incomes and welfare amongst the farm and non-farm people". Why can't our government adopt the same policy? Even our Constitution has directed that disparities in incomes and welfare be reduced. The only difficulty is, that our politicians dare not go against the vested interests of the country, which are benefitting at the cost of our agriculturists.

Neglect of Education

Both under Nehru's socialism, and our recent policy of liberalisation, human development has been grossly neglected. The

quality of education makes or mars the future of any individual, and collectively, of the nation as a whole. This is also the most effective means to promote social justice. While it is not possible to equally distribute the physical assets of the country, intellectual assets can be made available to all. Universalisation of education is also essential for control of population, and faster adoption of the new techniques of production, both in industry as well as in agriculture. That is why, it was directed in our Constitution, that within ten years of its adoption, education will be made free and compulsory for all children between the ages of six and fourteen years. But this directive has not been implemented, even after fifty years of *Swaraj*. Again the difficulty is financial. Against the world average of expenditure on education at 5.2 per cent of the GDP, our expenditure on education does not exceed 3.8 per cent of our GDP. The reason is that very little is left with the Government, after meeting its interest payments and the ever-increasing demands of its administrative and political outfits. The extravagance of our Central Government is evident from only two facts: that its total expenditure is now nearly two-thirds more than its revenue receipts; and that its interest payments now exceed its total plan expenditure.

The New Path

The basic defect in the development strategy, pursued so far is that we have been indulging in gigantism, establishing large scale enterprises, constructing huge hydro-electric plants, and at the same time creating the largest and the least productive bureaucratic structure in the world. In doing all this, we have ignored the common man, his needs and aspirations. The recent policy changes in the name

of economic reforms, will not alter this situation. All that has been done is to facilitate the entry of foreign capital and technology in our country, hopefully for more efficient utilisation of our natural resources. This in itself may not be wrong, but this will not lead to any significant improvement in the lot of the common people, who are not in a position, either to buy shares in the huge companies being floated; or the elitist goods that these will be producing. In fact, socialist gigantism has given way to capitalist gigantism. Excluding only some territories like Singapore, Hongkong, etc., no big country has ever succeeded in making real progress, unless it had first developed its human and agricultural resources. The USA, Europe, Japan, S. Korea, and even China, had first developed their human resources and agriculture, before indulging in gigantism.

At least from now on, we should pursue the path of humanism, i.e. of ensuring the well-being of the nation as a whole, and not merely of its upper strata. Humanism is based on the belief, that the progress of any country, ultimately depends on the knowledge and character of its people, and not on what it can get from abroad. We should pay more attention to develop our own knowledge and capabilities, instead of depending on outside help, which will never be unconditional. The quality of life and productivity of our people will improve, only when everyone born in the country, gets equal opportunities to learn, work, and receive remuneration, according to a nationally acceptable equitable policy on prices and incomes.

SIR BHANU PRATAP SINGH is a former Union Minister for Agriculture. He led the Swatantra Party in the U.P. Assembly for a number of years.

Self-reliance: the keynote of our independence

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

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

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

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

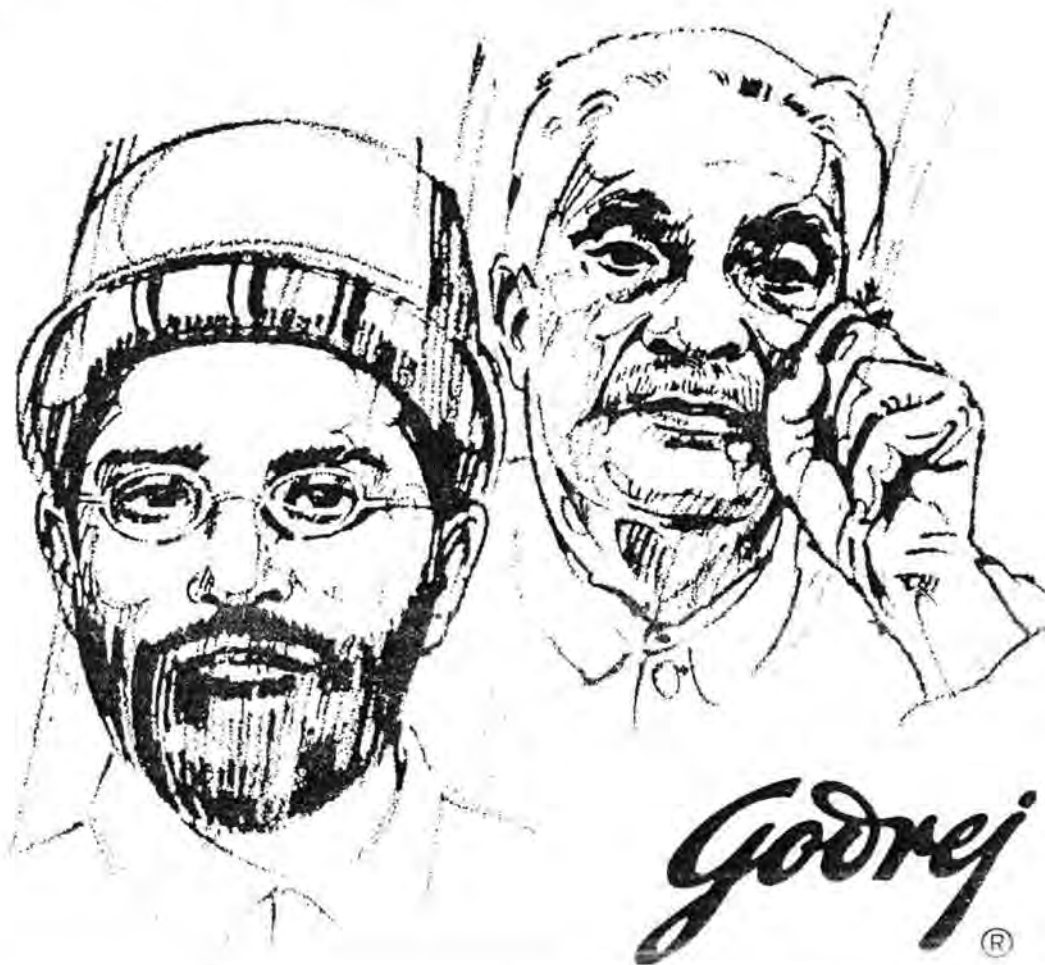
Made to international standards and backed by continuous technical innovation, their products range from locks and security equipment, machine tools, forklift trucks, architecture and steel castings to furniture, typewriters, refrigerators, computers and electronic

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

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

Self-reliance is both a means and an end.

For Godrej it is the essence of independence.



Be Lean, not Mean

V. C. Viswanathan

Chief Executives must be people of great vision and statesmanlike qualities, not street smart bullies, hatchet men or petty politicians.

One obnoxious expression which has become part of management lexicon in recent times is the expression, 'lean and mean'. CEOs proudly proclaim that they are transforming their organisations to become lean and mean. I can understand the need for organisations to be lean and efficient especially if they are over-manned, slow, bureaucratic, unresponsive and suffer from symptoms of obsolescence. But I do not see how desirable it is for organisations to be mean. If the stakeholders – be they employees, customers, suppliers, shareholders, the government or the general public – perceive a company's management to be mean, does it help?

I looked up five dictionaries – Oxford, Cambridge, Webster, World Book and Random House for meanings of the word, 'mean'. The most common were: ignoble, poor character, greedy, unscrupulous, small-minded, petty, stingy, selfish, shabby, inferior in quality, low-grade, malicious, ill-tempered, vicious, cruel, synonymous with base, contemptible, despicable, sordid. I wonder if any company would like to be identified with these qualities.

Paradoxically, while the CEOs say they want their companies to be lean and mean, they spend huge sums of money to project themselves as good corporate citizens. They would like the public to believe that they are com-

mitted to values and excellence in quality – of products and customer services. It makes no sense.

What is needed are honest, courageous and tough-minded CEOs who are transformational leaders, not weak, mean-minded, manipulative managers. Chief Executives must be people of great vision and statesmanlike qualities, not street smart bullies, hatchet men or petty politicians.

In fact, the most effective organisation is where the CEO expects and demands everyone to act like the CEO of his or her job function, accepting total responsibility and ownership. That calls for tough-mindedness of the highest order. Let's examine the qualities of a tough-minded CEO.

- He will be tough on himself first. No excuses: no passing the buck for non-performance.
- Being self-confident, he does not need to take credit for himself or overuse the word, I. He will seldom talk about himself.
- He will never talk poorly of his subordinates. He will be a team-builder.
- He will not try to manipulate people.
- He will be straight in his dealings with others, not overly diplomatic or sugary, he will not be a 'phoney'.
- He will be assertive, neither aggressive nor submissive.
- He will never trample on others' feelings and try to destroy their self-esteem.
- He will not be an appeaser, nor be a yes-man. He will stand up for his convictions.
- He will listen to other people's points of view and welcome honest differences of opinion.
- He will stick to strict standards of self-discipline in his personal life, habits and work.
- He will be courageous in owning up his mistakes and will not hesitate to accept responsibility for the consequences.
- Being conscious of the value of time, he will never waste his or other people's time on meaningless activities.
- He will give great importance to the continuous all round development of himself and his people.
- He will encourage teamwork and deal ruthlessly with people who play politics and waste time plotting, working about, imagining, and defending one another's hidden agendas.
- He will not give a quarter to sycophants and will not keep yes-men around him, especially those who are out to serve their own ends.
- He will keep open communication with people.
- He will walk his talk. His deeds – and not his words – will speak of his integrity. He knows

that management by integrity is not only possible and workable, but in reality there is no substitute for it.

- Being a person of strong character, he will exude confidence and radiate warmth and fellow feeling towards his people.
- He will make sure that everyone knows the what, where, when, who, how, and – above all – the why of their jobs and what the organisation's vision, mission and goals are.
- Knowing that 'management is essentially the development of people, not the direction of things', he will make it operational in the way he manages.
- He will create a climate conducive to innovation, creativity and joy of work in all facets of the business.

Oren Harari, the well-known writer on management says: "To be an effective leader, you don't have to be a hero with all the answers, and you don't have to be a cop overseeing clones... Your job is to create an environment where your people take on responsibility to work productively in self-managed, self-starting teams that identify and solve complex problems on their own... If you concentrate on doing this, you'll find that your people will need you only for periodic guidance and inspiration, which frees you to spend your time confronting big-picture, common-fate sort of strategic and organisational issues." Such an environment can never be created in an organisation that sets out to be mean.

MR. V. C. VISWANATHAN is Advisor, Marketing, J. K. Industries Ltd.

I haven't lost my mind. It's backed up on a disk somewhere.

From the Internet

Untrained People's Representatives

Suresh Bankeshwar

One gets more and more disgusted reading in the newspapers the fast deterioration in the pattern of day-to-day proceedings in Parliament, Assemblies and Municipal Corporations. The intellectuals in particular are moving more and more away from our political system and may gradually lose faith in the system itself. The standards of behaviour being seen in all these institutions is a matter of concern because the behaviour of our representatives and the functioning of all these democratic institutions vitally affect the interests of each and every citizen of the country. Issues raised in all these institutions often come out in the streets and law enforcing agencies, which are otherwise deployed to take care of the interests of the people, are kept at the service of the people's representatives. Enormous amounts of money and manpower needed to maintain law and order on the eve of many a political rally is an ultimate burden on the common man.

Politicians and bureaucrats are two sides of a coin and unless both function in an orderly and coordinated manner, the system fails. While, the administrative wing is trained through the Administrative College and other institutions, the other equally important political wing is without any training. The bureaucracy is perceived as subordinate to the people's representatives resulting in ever increasing political interference, thus weakening the administration. Since all those who constitute Parliament, Assemblies and Municipal Corporations are political

managers of these institutions, necessary training in how to manage political institutions is most essential.

With the rapid growth in the communications media and the satellite TV channels' coverage of live political events of other countries of the world, people at home are bound to compare the calibre and performance of our political institutions with those in other parts of the world. Training, therefore, is sure to improve the performance of our people's representatives.

Such training may include imparting knowledge on various political systems operating in the world, the origin of our democracy, the difference between referendum and the electoral college system, various traits of failure and success of leadership, the art of communication to influence decision making and the art of conducting meetings. Experts in Human Development should evolve appropriate syllabus on all these matters so as to improve the present standards of functioning of our democratic institutions.

The existing oath taken by our elected representatives needs to be suitably amended to include a solemn promise of following peaceful and non-violent methods as well as a promise to uphold the dignity and honour of the country in the eyes of the world community.

Mr. Suresh Bankeshwar is a banker.

From the Internet

The Parable of the Starfish

Once upon a time there was a wise man that used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work.

One day he was walking along the shore. As he looked down the beach, he saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself to think of someone who would dance to the day. So he began to walk faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he saw that it was a young man and the young man wasn't dancing, but instead he was reaching down to the shore, picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean. As he got closer he called out, "Good morning! What are you doing?"

The young man paused, looked up and replied, "Throwing starfish in the ocean."

"I guessed that, but why are you throwing starfish in the ocean?"

"The sun is up and the tide is going out. And if I don't throw them in they'll die."

"But, young man, don't you realize that there are miles and miles of beach and starfish all along it. You can't possibly make a difference!"

The young man listened politely. Then bent down and picked up another starfish. He threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves and said—"It made a difference for that one."

There is something very special in each and every person that we meet. We have all been gifted with the ability to make a difference in another person's life. And if we can become aware of that gift, we gain through the strength of our visions the power to shape the future.

We must each find our starfish. And if we throw our stars wisely and well, the world will be blessed.



AMRUTANJAN

For every ache and pain

Amrutanjan is a name trusted for over 100 years. The range includes Amrutanjan Pain Balm, Amrutanjan Strong and Dragon Liquid Balm which offers relief for a variety of aches and pains.

We understand pain

India's
largest selling
and most
exported fan

Ab PSPO kaun nahi jaanta?



ORIENT
PSPO

The measure which the whole world treasures

Mudra OF-111

BOOK REVIEWS

SWITCHING CHANNELS: IDEOLOGIES OF TELEVISION IN INDIA by Nilanjana Gupta; Oxford University Press, YMCA Library Building, Jaisingh Road, New Delhi-110001; 1998; pp.155; Rs. 395.



THE IMPACT OF TELEVISION ADVERTISING ON CHILDREN by Namita Unnikrishnan and Shailaga Bajpai, Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd., M 32 Greater Kailash Market-1, New Delhi-110048; 1996; pp.426; Rs.250.



**Reviewed by
Dr. Suman Oak**

Recently I happened to read two books on the electronic mass media: "Switching Channels: Ideologies of Television in India" by Nilanjana Gupta, and "Impact of Television Advertising on Children" by Namita Unnikrishnan and Shailaga Bajpai. Both books are the outcome of research work in an area, where so far very little academic work has been done.

Switching Channels

The first book by Nilanjana Gupta, published by the Oxford University Press in 1998, tries to find out how television has affected the home, the family, and the individual and its role in our community. It gives a brief account of the history of television (including its predecessors - the radio and the print media) all over the world and shows that a nation's telecasting system develops and changes in consonance with the changing ideological and political

structure of the respective communities. Although each nation has its own ideological and political structure quite distinct from other nations, the huge investments needed to set up and sustain telecasting systems lead to the virtual domination of a few major broadcasting systems. The initial state control of the media gradually gives way to control by the commercial corporations and the media conglomerates. As telecasting slips out of government's control, the original triad of education, information and entertainment as the main aims of telecasting gives way to a profit oriented commercial proposition. The media conglomerates even manage to throw their weight behind certain politicians who agree with their convictions and their patriotism. Whenever the media happens to be still under state control it helps unite an economically, culturally, socially

diverse country, through popular programs but these programs unwittingly impose cultural, political and social values of the ruling elite, as happened in the case of India where, in the initial stages, television programs were packed with classical music and dance and serials depicting middle class culture and values, all in Hindi that being the national language.

Besides examining the control of the telecasting media Nilanjana also takes stock of various other aspects of television in India. She describes how radio broadcasting and later telecasting policies which were initially formulated in consonance with the state's overall ideological thrust at that time, changed as the concept of the state's role in the polity changed. Here she traces the history of the process of broadcasting and telecasting and the policies that determined the kind of programs - right from the establishment of All India Radio and its programs, through Doordarshan and its programs like Krishidarshan (for rural areas), the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE in 1975), the University Grants Commission Higher Education Project called Countrywide Classroom (in 1984) to the present virtual take over by Star TV and Zee TV.

Also discussed in detail are: Issues of government control (or interference) *vs.* autonomy of the media; the basic problems of literacy, health and hygiene and more complex social issues like castes and religious committees appointed to deliberate on these issues; the reports made as well as various rules, regulations and bills that were envisaged or brought into being in accordance with the changing po-

litical scenario. In this historical account she has not ignored the technological advances that facilitated the development of telecasting in India.

Nilanjana very effectively discusses the positive and negative influence of television on the lives of people from all walks of life based on a survey of 180 households of West Bengal.

The Impact of Television Advertising on Children

Earlier, similar research with a different aim, i.e. to investigate the impact of television advertising on children was conducted in the Delhi metropolitan area by Namita Unnikrishnan and Shailaja Bajpai, and its report was published by Sage Publications in 1996.

This book reflects the growing sense of unease and helplessness caused by advertising on television that shapes our consciousness, especially of our children who become addicts of these advertisements. None of these advertisements depict in any manner, the life that our poverty stricken children lead in the villages and the urban slums, or even the middle class homes of India. Nor do they care for any values Indians cherish. Their target is the rich, urban elite.

Here they simply spin a web of consumerism with the sole aim of making profit, and more profit. The research gives special attention to children because they are the ones who are most likely readily to accept the view of life and hanker for the lifestyle promoted by TV advertising. The study therefore, investigates both TV advertising itself as well as the relationship between the child and the TV set that conveys ideas to him or her so effectively.

Through surveys and children's interviews the research project studies the relation between various aspects of TV watching such as time spent in TV watching, types of programs watched, and their effect on children's other faculties and familial relationships. It tries to address important questions such as: What kind of image and lifestyle TV advertising promotes; does it enforce a sense of social responsibility; does it create a true and acceptable picture of the adult world; in what way does it influence the child's values, attitudes and aspirations; can eight-year olds discern and recognize the distortion of the advertising messages?

The study points out the ill effects of TV watching on children and seeks through its discussion to reach out to parents, teachers, policy makers and even children to initiate a debate on television and advertising.

The writers of both these books agree that TV and TV advertisements promote and portray Western life, ignoring the hardships of Indian life, and reflect a heavily westernized ethos, which also means an economy, dominated by market forces and consumerism. Both these phenomena are alien to a country like India, materially less developed and culturally and traditionally altogether different from the West. The problem becomes severe because the electronic media with its emotional appeal panders to our raw and crude drives like greed, aggressiveness, domination, exhibitionism, sex and addiction and requires to be addressed immediately. It has already started playing havoc with our value system, in its drive towards its version of modernity.

DR. SUMAN OAK taught in the Education College of the SNDT University, Mumbai.

NON-ALIGNMENT AS A FACTOR IN INDO-AMERICAN RELATIONS : THE NEHRU ERA
by Parvathi Vasudevan; Kalinga Publications, Delhi; 1996; pp.205; Rs.300.



Reviewed by Dr. Lionel Fernandes

This book surveys Indo-U.S. relations over the seventeen-odd years of Jawaharlal Nehru's stewardship of independent India's affairs. It focuses on the Nehruvian policy of non-alignment as a key determinant in the roller-coaster relationship that evolved between India and the United States during the administrations of Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson. The relationship was never an easy one despite the fact that a common adherence to democracy should have served to bond the world's largest democracy and its most powerful one much closer than was actually the case. The fact of the matter was that America's evangelical fervour did not blend easily with India's cosmic approach to international affairs. Both India and the United States were pursuing realpolitik objectives within the matrix of an ideological subterfuge that failed to carry conviction with the other and that occasioned frequent acrimony.

Vasudevan takes us from the origins of non-alignment in the lat-

ter 'forties through the vicissitudes of the 'fifties upto the end of the Nehru era in 1964. After dwelling on what one might term the 'philosophy of non alignment', she touches on issues that illustrate the nitty-gritty of the policy as put into operation both on the domestic and foreign fronts. While weighing the pros and cons of non-alignment she clearly takes a stand in its favour though she does endeavour to give its critics a fair hearing. However one cannot but discern a certain ambiguity bordering on equivocation on her assertion that "The non-aligned nations steadfastly disavow the obligation to strictly steer a middle course either philosophically or in the actual conduct of foreign policy." In other words one can run with the hare and chase with the hounds if one is non-aligned! Also surprising is the view ascribed to Rana that ".....India's foreign policy at its roots was marginally influenced by the religious confluence of Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism....." If a foreign policy is influenced at its roots, it cannot be so influenced just marginally but fundamentally, and this is too much of a utopian claim to make. Be that as it may, Vasudevan does make a plausible attempt to justify non-alignment on grounds of both principle and praxis. Significantly, it was only much after the emergence of non-alignment that the rival Superpowers, first the Soviet Union and then the United States, veered round to the view that it was not such a bad thing after all!

Turning to the crucial issues of the Kashmir dispute and of the long-standing policy of U.S. arms aid to Pakistan, Vasudevan argues along the lines of the stand traditionally taken by India's foreign policy establishment. However one wonders whether an academic rather than a partisan stand could

have better served the purpose of throwing light on a ticklish problem and suggesting possible ways out of the Indo-Pak gridlock over Kashmir *et alia*.

An outside observer with no axe to grind either on the side of India or of Pakistan might legitimately be left with the impression that India's case over Kashmir is either one of an equal claim to it vis-a-vis Pakistan at best, or a weaker claim at worst. If the former, India would have to work out a compromise with Pakistan over Kashmir; if the latter, India would be constrained to agree to a U.N.-mandated plebiscite over Kashmir. In either case, a zero-sum game as played out by both parties to the dispute would not be a viable option.

Another point that needs clarification is whether the United Nations viewed the Kashmir problem in the same light as India did at the relevant time. Did it view India's case as a dispute or as a complaint? If the latter the U.N. would have the relatively easier task of establishing whether aggression had been committed against

the territory of India and then calling on the aggressor to vacate Indian territory. If the former, the U.N. would have quite a task on its hands as it would have to go into the relative merits of the claims of both India and Pakistan. It would appear that both the U.N. and Pakistan viewed Kashmir as disputed territory whereas India claimed that it was an internal matter in which Pakistan had no *locus standi*. If so, why did India take the matter to the Security Council in the first place? This is a question that Vasudevan leaves unanswered.

Again, in the case of U.S. arms aid to Pakistan, it is amazing that a country of India's size, population and potential should squeal each time a consignment of U.S. arms reached its neighbour's shores. Does a regional power like India have to predicate its security policy on what items of military hardware are or are not on Islamabad's shopping list? And where is the point in whining and wailing over one's rival's defense acquisitions when one should be putting in place instead a well thought-out national security policy?



Turning to the end of the colonial period, Vasudevan cites the instances of the Suez, Hungary and Goa as illustrative of India's advocacy of non-alignment and its fall-out for Indo-U.S. relations. Her treatment of the three cases is fairly comprehensive and brings out the immense complexities involved in steering between the 'Scylla' and 'Charybdis' of superpower rivalries. India tried to be consistent with itself in each of the three cases though its own stakes in Goa were of far greater and immediate concern for obvious reasons. Critics may fault India's initial reluctance to criticise the Soviet Union for its action in Hungary in contrast to the alacrity with which it condemned the Suez invasion by Britain, France and Israel. But then to seek consistency in foreign policy matters is to espouse a certain naivety in viewing events in the course of which even non-alignment might be a form of realpolitik.

While dealing with the Sino-Indian border dispute leading to the

hostilities of October 1962, Vasudevan accuses the Chinese of 'aggression' against India. This is an unfortunate term to use as it is not so clear that the Chinese actually committed aggression against India though the latter was certainly at the receiving end both militarily and, to some extent, diplomatically. If China had overrun territory that had been effectively administered by the Indian Government and had held on to the same, it could certainly be accused of aggression. This was not the case, as much of the rugged border running some 2500 miles has not been demarcated to date and even the British-drawn McMahon Line was not recognised by the pre-communist KMT regime which was Britain's ally in the Second World War. Even the U.S. itself is quoted by Vasudevan as never having officially endorsed the McMahon Line, though it rushed to India's assistance following Nehru's S.O.S. thanks to its anti-Communist fervour. However, setting aside the question of aggression, Vasudevan

discusses the challenge to India's non-alignment posed by the Sino-Indian border dispute competently and comprehensively, bringing out its many paradoxes and dilemmas. She is right in claiming that the debacle *vis-a-vis* China provided an opportunity *par excellence* to dust off the cobwebs formed around non-alignment. Such a demystification was called for precisely to render the policy more effective and credible.

Vasudevan's book is very readable, informative and thought-provoking. The printing and get-up is neat, though one would have liked the publishers to do a more thorough job of proof-reading. The cited references and source material are of great help to understand the period in question. At a time when non-alignment is sought to be written off as irrelevant, Vasudevan challenges us to look back and think again.

DR. LIONEL FERNANDES is Reader in the Department of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai.

Women under the Taliban Dispensation

The Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), have, in a statement, called upon all the Afghan elements and organisations opposed to fundamentalism and seeking democracy, to prevent by all means both the Jehadi and Taliban elements from playing with the fortunes of the Afghan people especially women.

In a press statement RAWA said that it has firm faith that the supremacy of the killers of innocent people of freedom, of democracy, and of women's rights could not endure forever.

The statement said that RAWA and other pro-democracy people of Afghanistan and their Jehadi opponents have no legitimacy because both are tied to foreign powers, and have no consideration for human and women's rights, freedom and democracy. It said they cannot rise above their petty

attempts to fuel sectarian, ethnic, linguistic and regional rivalries among people.

RAWA said that in these circumstances, if the United Nations and other human rights bodies continue to work for a rapprochement between the belligerents only, as they unfortunately have been doing so far, then it would mean that some countries are seeking to advance their own respective agendas in Afghanistan.

If the UN really wants to restore peace to Afghanistan it should first halt the supply of arms to the combatants. Later, tangible moves should be made to prepare the ground for convening a broadly representative traditional Afghan *jirga* or assembly to form an interim government for organising free elections.

**NATIONAL MOVEMENT IN
TAMIL NADU** by N. Rajendran;
Oxford University Press, Madras;
1994; pp.185; Rs.275.

**NATIONAL MOVEMENT
IN
TAMIL NADU
1905-1914**



N. RAJENDRAN

**Reviewed by
Dr. R. Srinivasan**

For half a century and more, it has been customary to describe Madras as a benighted presidency. Surendranath Banerjea once observed that he could get only a score of men to be present at a political meeting. It is true that Madras did not nurture leaders of the stature of Dadabhai, Tilak or Gokhale. But there were public men of sterling worth who built foundations of solidity on which the later nationalist edifice was built. It is worth recapitulating that Madras had a respectable number of delegates in the annual Congress conventions.

The book under review seeks to set the historical record straight. It examines in detail the role of the nationalists in the Tamil districts mainly during the first decade of the century when a pulsating national awareness swept over the districts and young people entered the national mainstream through the ideology of *swadeshi* and extremism. Madras has had a long exposure to liberalism and moderate ideologies and in fact the older leadership held steadfast to these but even the loyal liberals could not keep aloof from some of the

programmes of the extremists.

The study explores the impact of the extremist wave of nationalist movement inspired by Tilak, Aurobindo and B. C. Pal and how these were to act as a catalyst for a new nationalist resurgence.

New slogans such as *swadeshi* and boycott were to become popular and this new nationalist wave was to sweep the province. Deep discontent had been endemic in the southern-most tip of the province and memories of the late 18th century opposition to the rule of the Company led by the Poligars, their brave but unsuccessful engagements could not be snuffed out. The colonial policy of rack rent, the susceptibility of the peasantry to recurrent famines, the steady impoverishment of the people as a whole, the inhuman conditions of labour in the few factories and workshops made unbearable by the superciliousness and arrogant behaviour of the Europeans and Eurasians all resulted in a smouldering discontent. Even the Madras Mahajana Sabha founded a year earlier than the Congress generally moderate in its approach to political agitation now bestirred itself to action, and promoted district conferences to agitate for redressal.

College students, both of the coastal districts of Andhra and Madras city, were to be electrified by Pal's whirlwind tour. A new mood was in the air and important figures in popularising this were G. Subramania Iyer, Bharati, V. O. Chidambaram Pillai (V.O.C.). All had to pay heavily for their views and action particularly V.O.C. and Subramania Siva. But during these brief years, V.O.C. had demonstrated the great potentialities of a *swadeshi* venture which would have scaled great commercial heights under a more liberal regime.

The successful strike by workers in the factories in and around Tuticorin also demonstrated a mood of defiance — the rulers could not take for granted the supine submission of a subject people any more. While V.O.C. and Siva were the key figures who electrified a whole generation and aroused a near slumbering population, there were others too whose names are not equally known and who did considerable service in the cause of mobilizing the people and who indeed paid heavily for this noble service. The study commemorates the record and memory of many of them e.g. that of Krishnaswami Sarma. Police, intelligence agencies, the legal department were alert all the time to exterminate expressions of dissent, publication of nationalist opinion through newspapers or journals.

While *swadeshi* could not be regarded as *lese majeste*, extremist measures were of another kind. Tamil Nadu could not but be in-

The Busy Indian

The lazy Indian perpetually lounging in inertia, is a British concept, and like most such concepts, it is quite inaccurate. The Indian is a busy person.

Through the heat of the summer, the shiver of winter, the deluge of the monsoons, the moonlit nights of autumn, and the intoxication of our brief spring, he has always much to do - a power cut to survive, a water shortage to defeat, a bribe to give, a graft to take, an eve to tease, a wife to burn, a *shraadh* to perform, a wedding to attend, a temple to visit, a vote to cast, a reputation to spoil, a government to criticize, a fool to deflect. Where then is the time to go under?

Pavan K. Varma, author of 'The Great Indian Middle Class', *The Indian Express*, August 15, 1999.



The best endorsement of our car's safety comes from a concrete block.

Prototypes of the Indica were repeatedly crashed into a concrete wall at India's only internationally certified crash test facility at our Pune plant to ensure the car's conformity to European safety norms for frontal impact. Vital safety measures such as energy-absorbing crumple zones, side-impact beams, a collapsible steering column and the like were built in for crash survivability. We also conducted the Elk and reverse gear tests to ensure stability. We made sure we got concrete evidence of the Indica's safety standard. Because your life depends on it.



More car per car

Indica is a registered trademark of Tata Motors Limited. All rights reserved.

Telco
TATA ENTERPRISE

Telco • ULKA 112 • 00

volved in revolutionary terrorism for one of the international terrorist leaders was V. V. S. Iyer, the right hand man of Savarkar. The police and the C.I.D. kept a continuous watch, intercepted the infiltration of both 'seditious' literature and of arms. The assassination of Ashe, the District Collector of Tirunelveli was directly the work revolutionary extremists master-minded by Iyer. Vanchi Iyer who killed Ashe was beyond the reach of the government but others implicated in this were tried.

Dr. Rajendran's book is an extremely valuable study of the period. He has referred to numerous published, unpublished, and archival sources, unearthed new and valuable facts, brought to life many unknown but important people of the region and ably mapped out the period. The references are valuable and the bibliography thorough. The presentation is lucid and this will remain an important contribution to the subject of nationalism in the South.

DR. R. SRINIVASAN is Professor of Politics (retired) and associate editor, *Freedom First*.

Market Economy - With a Difference

The Market Economy has made one more stride. Now degrees are available in the not-so-open market for a price, with impressive packaging and guaranteed after-sales service, etc...A degree bazaar is operating in West Bengal which reaches out as far as Bhagalpur in Bihar. For rupees one to 1.5 lakh, an experienced teacher will write a thesis for his 'customer' who is free to choose the field of research. He will also find a research guide, arrange the pre-registration seminar, ensure the selling up of a friendly Ph.D. Committee and take care of all other necessary details.

Editorial in *The Times of India*, August 21.

BETWEEN TRADITION AND MODERNITY: INDIA'S SEARCH FOR IDENTITY (Fred Dallmayr and G. N. Devy (eds.); Sage Publications, New Delhi; 1998; pp.334; Rs.395.



Reviewed by Dr. Harshida Pandit

This is an anthology divided into two parts: Part I includes essays pertaining to Colonialism and the struggle for National Independence while Part II deals with modernization and its discontents. At the outset one can see a very wide canvas, stalwarts examining a very complex phenomena. Examining Indian tradition is in itself a difficult exercise because of its diversities. Moreover, the term is not well defined. Religious rituals and tradition are so interwoven in our culture in such an inseparable manner that it becomes difficult to critically examine it objectively.

Indian polity is at present regressing into fundamentalism and narrow nationalism. As one approaches the 21st century, with its quick communication and globalization, one wonders where we are heading. Indian tradition is full of paradoxes and resistance to change is evident. The book can be described as a product of cross-cultural collaboration since the first editor is a German-American and the second an Indian. For both editors editing such a work

must have been a learning experience. Ancient Indian thought or philosophy is for the higher classes and class tradition and religious rituals for the masses. The search for the Indian identity requires critical rethinking and re-evaluating. This in itself is a herculean task and therefore articles by Swami Vivekananda, Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Veer Savarkar, J. Krishnamurti, M. N. Roy, B. R. Ambedkar, Muhammed Iqbal, Abul Kalam Azad, Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru's are included. Each of these authors has his own individual concept about tradition, e.g. for Vivekananda, tradition may mean our scriptures and spirituality, for Tagore it may mean social structure, customs and practices, for Sri Aurobindo, it may mean renaissance or genuine spiritual rebirth; and so on.

We are all familiar with the several onslaughts on Indian culture and tradition. India has passed through many invasions. Under British rule, everything Indian was criticized and western ideas and values were appreciated. But 'Sanatan' truths have remained unchanged according to Sri Aurobindo. In fact, combining spiritual power and indigenous traditional values with an open mind and accepting and absorbing liberalism and the winds of modernity, Indian tradition has enriched itself. No society can afford to remain static and in this sense Indian society has also changed. The struggle for independence had an undercurrent of social reforms. Some religious reform movements, for instance, the Arya Samaj and Brahmo Samaj, have influenced the mores of our society. The wrongs like *Sati* and untouchability have been righted. Political leaders like Gokhale, Tilak, Ambedkar, Abul Kalam Azad and Gandhiji have

propagated liberal ideas pertaining to caste and gender equality, social justice, democracy and the dignity of labour. The writers of the first part have articulated and presented their ideas very forcefully.

The second part of the Volume is devoted to interpretative essays dating mainly from the post-independence period. And here again the contributors are prominent historians, political theorists, literary figures. Authors like Romila Thapar, Rajni Kothari, Asish Nandi, A. K. Saran, Thomas Pantham, Ramchandra Gandhi, U. R. Anantha Murthy, Nirmal Verma, Sudhir Chandra, Ranajit Guha, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan, Susie Tharu and K. Lalita seek to assess the ongoing process of modernization of communal, ethnic and inter-faith relations, the legacy of leading nationalist figures and the future course of socio-political life of post-independence India.

As A. K. Saran points out in his essay, Gandhi's heir repudiated Gandhiji's social, political and economic thoughts and introduced marxist economic policies. This policy resulted in the state occupying the commanding heights of the economy. This also created regional imbalances and neglected rural development.

Several authors have expressed discontent with the process of modernization, the neglect of education and the incurring of heavy foreign debt. After 50 years of independence, the Indian situation is full of woes. Disintegration, prejudices, communal disharmony, violence, valuelessness, corruption, nepotism, population explosion, poverty and pollution are just some of them. The process of modernization should have been based on a set of priorities, viz. education, housing etc. It is paradoxical that to-day we have the highest number

of young people trained in electronics along with a huge illiterate mass. The last two essays contribute nothing towards the understanding of modernity. Moulana Khan's narration is one sided and very subjective, and the concluding essay on women's writing does not mention even a single woman author's name and work.

In spite of such flaws, the volume must be included in a 'must be read' book.

DR. HARSHIDA PANDIT is a professor of Psychology and a counsellor at the A. K. Munshi Yojana - an NGO.)

SRI AUROBINDO AND THE INDIAN RENAISSANCE by Prof. G. N. Sarma, Professor of Political Science (retd.); Ultra Publications, 1527, 15th Main, M. C. Layout, Vijayanagar, Bangalore; 1997; pp.188; Rs.225.



Reviewed by V. Sivaramakrishnan

In giving the title 'Sri Aurobindo and The Indian Renaissance' to his book, Prof. Sarma highlights but one aspect of Sri Aurobindo's contribution to Indian cultural history. But Prof. Sarma's book covers not one but several aspects of Sri Aurobindo's life and thought. Prof. Sarma's is a comprehensive work, lucidly written and with profuse quotations from the Master, maintains to his 'style' because Sri Aurobindo was unique

among the leaders of the Indian Renaissance in using the English language to great purpose in the grand manner of the Victorian prose-writers. Both in his poetry and prose, Sri Aurobindo dealt with subjects of spiritual import in a style that not only suited the substance but cast a spell by its rhythm.

Sri Aurobindo was the most modern of the moderns of his time if his education in England and proficiency in Greek, Latin and English are considered. Yet, there was no greater and a more brilliant exponent of Indian culture from the point of view if the Indian spiritual tradition rooted in the Vedas. He was a yogi, an integrated personality, whose life was a *sadhana* for realising the divine in self. Intellectually as great as Sri Sankara and spiritually no less eminent, Sri Aurobindo, while accepting the philosophy of *Advaita Vedanta*, rejected the concept of '*Maya*' or illusion and upheld the goal of '*Moksha*' not for the individual alone, but for the whole of mankind.

Unlike other great personalities of the Indian Renaissance, Sri Aurobindo's contribution to the awakening of Indian consciousness, first to freedom from foreign rule and later to freedom from the bondage of the self, was not mass-oriented. His active role in politics was confined to 5 years (1905-1910) and whatever he wrote from Pondichery in journals like '*Arya*' was caviar to the general. Yet, his was a life of fulfillment to the intellectuals of his and subsequent generations. Prof. Sarma's book serves to reinforce this view and helps also in a better understanding of Sri Aurobindo's role in the life of the nation in the first half of this century.

MR. V. SIVARAMAKRISHNAN is Associate Editor, *Bhavan's Journal*.



OUR MISSION

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

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

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

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

AN APPRECIATION

"In its 47th year of publication the January-March '99 issue re-states the quarterly's six principles of guidance towards cultivating a sound political philosophy to live and stand by. This is not a lesson in democracy but we would like to reiterate on behalf of Masani's '*Freedom First*'. Liberty and individual responsibility are the foundation of civilised society; the State is only the instrument of the citizens it serves; any action of the State must respect the principles of democratic accountability; rights and duties go together; every citizen has a moral responsibility to others in society; and, a peaceful world can only be built upon respect for these principles.

In these cynical times of government-toppling and power mongering for personal need and greed, all this may sound so much nonsense!

Yet the late Minoo Masani who passed away on May 27 last year, was optimistic about the country's future, had faith in the younger generation's ability to rise above the mess created by the older generation! A mess acknowledged by no less a powerful personality than Mr. Masani.

Subscribe to *Freedom First*..."

Afternoon Despatch & Courier, May 22, 1999

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

Freedom First

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

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

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PIN: _____

* Subscriptions can also be sent by MO/DD. No postal orders please. For outstation cheques (within India), please add Rs.20 for bank charges.

For Subscribers in India

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

For Overseas Subscribers (By Second Class Airmail)

Annual
\$10
£7

Do A Favour

to your friends
send them
a sample copy of
Freedom First
with your compliments.

Freedom First

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

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pin: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pin: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pin: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pin: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pin: _____

(Sender's Name & Address)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Pin: _____

The Genie's wish was our command.

Even miraculous little genie can't help occasionally. And this is a tale about one such genie - a Philips Genie.

A tourist in Goa discovered that his Philips Genie had stopped functioning. And he called the 'First Choice Global Exchange' Centre of Philips about his faulty phone. (As Philips' commitment to reliability goes beyond testing its products to the highest standards, it promises its customers prompt replacements for instruments that need repair through this service. Anywhere in the world.)

To fulfil its promise, Philips needed help. From a man - A man from DHL, the international express division of AFL.

The magic lamp was rubbed when Philips called DHL with their problem. And poof! A whole chain of events was set in motion.

First, our representative in Goa collected the handset from the tourist and sent it onto Singapore for repairs. Simultaneously, via our intranet, we contacted our hub for a replacement Genie. Which we, in turn, handed over to the tourist. All within 24 hours.

The story doesn't end there though. We then delivered the original phone back to the tourist. Fully repaired and working like magic. The replacement phone went back to our hub to await another call.



A simple case of 'reverse flow logistics' Executed flawlessly.

How does a mere man manage to help a genie?

The answer lies in fifty years of expertise And investments.

In 1945, AFL launched air freight forwarding in India. From there we've come a long way to become the one-stop movement conglomerate.

Today, we provide business solutions to

moving anything, anywhere - anytime, by air, over land, or through water.

For this, we have upgraded our technology and systems at every step. Evidence of our providing the finest infrastructure, are 1200 PCs

connecting over 200 office hubs and key customers.

This dedication has allowed our turnover to exceed Rs. 550 crore today. We believe it will help us cross the Rs. 1000 crore mark by 2002.

And that's not just wishful thinking.



Where movement is a science



AFL CARGO

AFL LOGISTICS

AFL INDTRAVELS

AFL INFOTECH