

Freedom First

No.: 459, October - December 2003

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A Liberal Quarterly

*What India needs.
A new path.*

► Remembering Ramnath Goenka ► Is Mahatma Gandhi an Alien?



INDIAN LIBERAL GROUP

For a Free, Fair and Peaceful Expression of the Will of the People in the Forthcoming Elections

An Appeal to the People

We, the citizens of India, as Liberals concerned with the future of the country, noting with grave misgiving the fact that organised intolerance is on the rise in our public life, call upon our fellow citizens to be alert to the dangers which loom over us and to initiate steps which would secure a free and democratic republic to our future generations.

The coming elections should be viewed in the wider perspective of the right of all citizens to a life with dignity and freedom which implies far greater concern for human development. We appeal earnestly to our fellow citizens not to be swayed by issues, which do not serve their real needs in terms of two square meals a day, and harmonious social existence as a basis for the welfare of the common people.

As traditional religion has a regrettable tendency to slip into narrow sectarianism generating strife and disharmony, we strongly stress the need for a continuing inter-faith dialogue all over the country in furtherance of mutual understanding, peace and harmony.

We call upon our citizens to positively exercise their franchise, a precious possession that should not be wasted. They should ensure that their names figure in the electoral rolls.

Citizens' duties do not end with the casting of votes. Democracy needs active participation from its citizens. We welcome the various initiatives taken by citizen groups to make the government more accountable. The instrument of PIL has become a fruitful device of empowerment of citizens. We also welcome the efforts made to get the 'right to information' legislated. Much still remains to be done; the battle to make the governments accountable has not ended.

We call upon political parties to give us a choice of candidates of whom we can be proud. We appeal to them to choose candidates who are upright, persons of integrity and unflinchingly committed to secular and liberal values. In this context, the need for transparency and ethics in public life clearly calls for candidates willing to declare their assets, educational qualifications and, criminal records if any, against them.

Political parties, which do not themselves have internal democracy stand suspect as upholders of a democratic culture. Democracy in the larger civil society requires that political parties have internal democracy. Further, there should be stricter accountability of electoral expenses – which should be realistically and not notionally set.

The elected candidates should be required to meet their constituents at regular intervals and be held to the promises they made during their electoral campaigns.

Defections are patently a betrayal of the voters' confidence. The present anti-defections laws are defective and do not serve their purpose. We call upon our lawmakers to enact a law to ensure that legislators who defect should be made to seek re-election.

Different skills are called for in a legislator than those present in a politician who successfully wins an election. Steps may be taken to ensure that legislators are provided with facilities to acquire such skills as are required to enable them to be better representatives of the people.

As Liberals we welcome the ending of the 'licence-permit-quota raj' and the increasing liberalization of the economy. We wish to caution our policy makers that in the pursuit of a free economy they should not lose sight of our objective to have an equitable society. A country divided between the rich and the poor is a house divided against itself. Liberalization should lead to a prosperous India in which prosperity is shared by all the citizens of our country.

We reiterate our belief that while a liberal society calls for urgent steps to be taken in implementing intelligent policies on education, health and employment, we need, at the same time, to reaffirm our commitment to justice, freedom, and liberal values. Education for the masses, advanced technology, high standards of health and full employment are not necessarily incompatible with fascism, but liberty certainly is. It is only when we have both liberty and material well-being that we can hope to have a liberal society that is just and humane.

As members of the Indian Liberal Group we seek neither votes nor office. We are allied to no political party. But we have a stake in our country. We hope to leave to our children a country in which they can live as free citizens, secure in their freedoms, and in peace and harmony with their fellow citizens.

Text of Resolution adopted by the Indian Liberal Group at a Seminar on "A Liberal Road Map for Indian Democracy" held in Hyderabad on October 19, 2003

Freedom First

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BETWEEN OURSELVES ...

Satyendra Kumar Dubey answered our poser 'What India Needs' in a tragically emphatic manner. He died, victim of an assassin's bullet even while he was making his point that amongst us there are still brave men who will not be cowed down by death threats. In dying for the cause of probity in administration he says, yes we have leaders amongst us and there is indeed hope that the younger generation will extricate this country from the stranglehold of *netas*, and criminals.

We salute Satyendra for his courage and dedicate this issue of *Freedom First* in his honour.

As for the *The Indian Express* its has done its Founder proud with an outstanding piece of investigative journalism in drawing the attention of the Indian people to the circumstances leading to the murder of a young and honest IIT civil engineer. By a remarkable coincidence, we pay tribute to another great Indian none other than the founder of *The Indian Express* - Mr. Ramnath Goenka. He led the fight when Mrs Indira Gandhi decided to impose a bogus Emergency and clamped down on press freedom. We tell his story in the pages of this of this issue. This is his birth centenary year.

The next issue of *Freedom First* will carry on its cover the story of another outstanding Indian - Yusuf Meherally.

We haven't thought of a specific theme for 2004. We invite you, dear reader, to suggest one.

Editor

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WITH MANY VOICES

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

India has successfully demonstrated how the best of well-meaning reforms can always be twisted to serve the worst of those from among their intended beneficiaries.

Sumanta Banerjee, *Economic and Political Weekly*,
October 4, 2003

The Hindu deities make no moral demands on us. No matter what one does, they do not retaliate by rejecting or threatening to excommunicate us if we work out our own code of morality rather than follow their precepts.

Madhu Kishwar, *Manushi*, No.136 of 2003.

Caught between the vulgarities of television and the hypocrisies of public life, our generation has lost the ability to enjoy clean fun.

T.J.S.George in his column 'Point of View' while paying tribute to Bob Hope, *The New Sunday Express*, June 1.

I fixed the appointment yesterday. I am not sure she will want to see me today.

Former MP Chief Minister Digvijay Singh,
The Indian Express, December 5.
(The 'she' in this quote is the Indira Congress President Mrs.Sonia Gandhi).

Yes, indeed the leader of our party deserves credit

for the fact that we bucked the anti-incumbency trend in 1998 but this defeat is entirely my responsibility.

Former MP Chief Minister Digvijay Singh,
The Indian Express, December 5.

Politicians tend to be more adventurous because they are willing to take risks and there's no feeling that I can sit back for 30 years. My job is there because I have to go back to the people in five years.

Sheila Dikshit, Delhi's Chief Minister,
The Indian Express, September 22

When politicians get hold of a sense of superiority because of their faith and then try to use it to get power, that's worrying. Politicians become dirtier and religious people lose out.

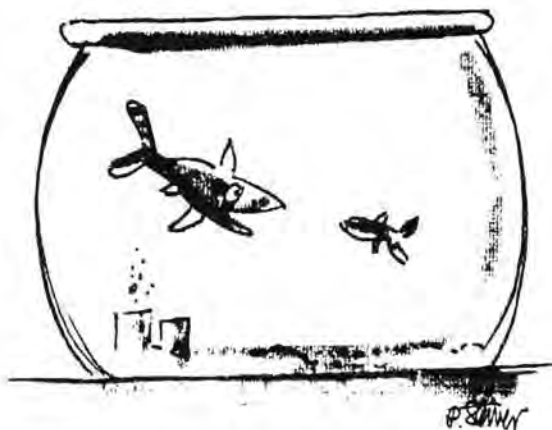
Film-maker John McCarthy,
New Humanist, September 2003

Privatisation and globalisation threaten Dalits more than any other section of the society.

Dalit leader Udit Raj, who quit his government job in 1997 to work full time for Dalits, cited in *Communalism Combat*, November 2003

It is a pity that a number of journalists are reported to be acting as pimps and procurers for bureaucrats and politicians.

Madhu Kishwar, *The Week*, November 2



you can be anything you want to be - no limits

Courtesy: *Span*, July/August 2002.



Courtesy: *Span*, July/August 2002.

What India Needs Hundreds of Satyendra Dubey's

The Killing of Satyendra Kumar Dubey*

- On November 27, 2003 Satyendra Kumar Dubey was shot dead by "unidentified assailants" in Gaya, Bihar.
- 31-year old S. K. Dubey was a 1994 civil engineer graduate from IIT Kanpur.
- He was Deputy General Manager with the National Highway Authority of India (attached to the Government of India's Ministry of Road Transport and Highways)
- He was working on a road construction project which is part of the Golden Quadrilateral – a project credited to the Prime Minister to connect the metros of India with state of the art roads.
- Almost a year earlier, in November 2002 he wrote a confidential letter to the Prime Minister in which he drew attention among other things, to "poor implementation" and large scale "loot of public money". Dubey, did not sign the letter but enclosed his biographical particulars because as he wrote: "Since such letters from a common man are not usually treated with due seriousness, I wish to clarify... that this letter is being written after careful thought by a very concerned citizen who is also closely linked with the project. I request you to kindly go through my brief particulars (attached in a separate sheet to ensure secrecy) before proceeding further".
- Presumably the letter received by the PMO (i.e. the Prime Minister's Office) on November 11, 2002 was not seen by the Prime Minister at all. On the other hand it was seen by a whole lot of *sarkari babus* as the PMO forwarded Dubey's letter, brief particulars and all, to his parent Ministry. As many as eight officials are reported to have read the letter. The Ministry, in turn forwarded the letter to the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) which passed it on to their Chief Vigilance Officer with a covering note which in typical bureaucratic parlance recommended "action as deemed fit".



Photo Courtesy: The Indian Express

• "Action" was indeed taken – not by the Vigilance Officers but by the criminal nexus, comprising the corrupt politician–the corrupt contractor–corrupt bureaucrat–criminal which had him killed.

• Satyendra Dubey was killed on November 27. *The Indian Express* broke the story on November 30. Did any newspaper in Gaya carry the news the day after the killing? If not, why not? Either the press in Gaya couldn't care less because murders are routine in Laloo's Bihar or is it that the Gaya press is afraid of, or controlled by criminals?

Satyendra Dubey – The Man

What kind of a man was Satyendra Dubey?

The following is based on a report in *The Indian Express* of December 3.

Satyendra Dubey was the son of a poor agriculturist parents. He worked hard to earn an IIT degree and a Class 1 job with the Government of India. "The house of the man in charge of a 450 crore project is slowly falling apart. His life's savings are limited to a motor cycle and a mobile phone. "The whole world's money was not enough to buy off my brother" said the youngest of five sisters and two brothers. He was stubbornly honest."

"Within months after joining the Ministry of Surface Transport, he was offered his first bribe - left on his table in an envelope. A clerk later entered his cabin to check if 'Saheb' had seen the *lifafa* (envelope). Satyendra picked up the phone to call the police, but let the clerk off after warning him... He would ride his bike to the quarry to

The Indian Express Deserves the Pulitzer Prize

I do not recall any other piece of investigative journalism that has had the traumatizing impact as this one on the killing of IIT Engineer Satyendra Dubey.

The public revulsion if it is sustained could well lead to a people's movement against the corruption.

The Indian Express richly deserves the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Journalism. We shall forward this issue with our recommendation to the organisation that is responsible for the award of this prize. - Ed.

* This article is essentially based on reports appearing in *The Indian Express*

inspect the quality of stone, count each equipment to ensure that the contractor met the commitment. Once he made one particular contractor re-construct a stretch of six kilometers after discovering the work inferior..." recalled Dubey's brother Dhananjay in an interview to an *Indian Express* correspondent.

This was the man the nexus liquidated.

The Response to his Murder

The response from the IIT was, immediate. IIT Kanpur Director Sanjay Dhande said "We will ensure that we find a suitable way to articulate our anger instead of just issuing our condolences. It's very clear that it is not a murder because of personal feud but because of corruption".

Mr. P. K. Basudhar a senior professor at IIT Kanpur's Civil Engineering Department from where Dubey graduated said: "This is shocking, we tell our students to be straight and to raise their voice against corruption, but after this, which student will believe us".

It is encouraging and a sign of hope that all is not lost yet in the battle to retrieve India from the nexus; that it's the students who are taking the lead in the mounting a campaign to catch the culprits. "The IIT Bombay Alumni will request other IIT Alumni Associations to gather support for this despicable (act resulting in the) loss of an idealist's life. We appeal to all citizens who value ethics and honesty in India for support" said Bombay Alumni chairperson Shailesh Gandhi.

But there was deafening silence from two persons whose response should have been immediate and condemnatory – The unofficial chief minister of Bihar Lalooji and prime minister Atalji. Laloo Prasad Yadav said not a word about the killing until December 5 when he demanded, what has now become a familiar ploy among politicians, CBI probe. It took another five days for prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to open his mouth. This too only after being prodded by Infosys chief N.R.Narayana Murthy who asked the Prime Minister to "suspend the contract with the contractor concerned, and swiftly punish the guilty with the toughest possible punishment.

Do our Parliamentarians Really Care?

"Chances are Parliament is unlikely to see a big discussion about the death of a young man from this dilapidated house in a Bihar village, five kms. from the last telephone pole.

"The murder of Satyendra Kumar Dubey, an IIT graduate who was killed building the Prime Minister's dream Golden Quadrilateral, is not exactly the stuff political debates are made of."

The Indian Express, December 3.

The Plight of Bihar's Engineers

While researching the story for NDTV on Satyendra Dubey, the IIT engineer killed in Gaya, I discovered that in the past ten years, 57 Bihar engineers have been killed, 25 kidnapped and missing, 37 brutally assaulted.

It just shows how bad the situation is and so critical it is for us to set the liberal agenda.

Manuwant Choudhary, TV journalist and a member of the Indian Liberal Group

This was on December 8. The next day the Prime Minister broke his silence and said that the guilty won't be spared. He went on to reiterate the government's determination to complete his Golden Quadrilateral Project completely missing the point, or choosing not to focus on the fact that the central issue was corruption that cost the young engineer his life. There was no threat to his pet project because it was a gold mine for the corrupt!

Crime and Punishment

Who are the culprits? The person who pulled the trigger? The criminal nexus that organised the killing? The babus in the offices of the PMO, the Minister of Highways? the NHAI? We would say all of them are responsible. You may catch the culprit and put him in jail. The trial will drag on for the next five or ten years and finally someone may be punished. When this actually happens the news will merit a small five or ten line report somewhere in the inside pages of some newspapers. By then all would have forgotten that an honest man called Satyendra died fighting corruption – a martyr to the cause of integrity and honesty in the administration.

We need to go far beyond merely apprehending the culprits, if we really want to clean up this land of ours; if we want to rid this country of the foul stink of corruption.

What is needed is a people's movement to fight corruption at all levels of administration. Something on the lines of the Total Revolution Movement launched by the late Jayaprakash Narayan. This movement, it may be recalled, was launched in Patna.

For this India needs hundreds of Satyendra Dubey's.

And they are out there but are afraid to come out into the open. Why?

Because of fear – fear of the corrupt politician – corrupt contractor-corrupt bureaucrat-criminal nexus.

We, the Silent Majority of Decent Indians have to speak up and Act Now before this nexus takes over our Country.

Who are the nexus? Who are they? Who are they? Who are they? This nexus – whoever they are and wherever they may be?

Satyendra Kumar Dubey would have wanted nothing less.

In Free India

Only Politicians, No Statesmen

Only *Netas*, No Leaders

What India Needs ...

This is the fourth and concluding part of a cover feature which began in January this year. The first focused on Gujarat. The second viewed the problem from the perspective of Bihar. The third dealt with the Reservations conundrum. These first three chronicled some of the things that were going wrong. We tried to analyse or comment, if you will, on the current situation. This, the fourth and concluding part of our series offers suggestions on what needs to be done to set India on the right path.

These suggestions were made at a seminar on "What India Needs."

The seminar discussed these 'needs' from four perspectives:

(1) The Governance Perspective; (2) The Economic Perspective; (3) The Political Perspective; (4) Social Justice Imperatives

Mr. A. D. Moddie who delivered the keynote speech was clear that the "keys to the quality of life are freedom and good governance" and that if India is to enter the 21st century with a better "track record than its record over the past 25 centuries then "India needs to fundamentally modernize and globalize its mind."

Economist J. K. Mukhopadhyay dealing with the Economic Perspective felt that India could achieve faster economic growth if we change our mindset on a number of economics-related propositions. Moreover, in the present "over-plural kind of democracy" our governments, particularly our ministerial cabinets, need to learn to work as a team. Equally important we need to accept the fact that the roots of Indian prosperity lie in the prosperity of Indian agriculture. And policies need to be tailored to this essential requirement.

Political scientist and columnist Prof. Nagindas Sanghavi posited that corruption, criminalization and communalism need to be tackled head on. Intimately linked to this is the reform of the judiciary, if India is to get out of the mire it finds itself in.

Discussing Social Justice Imperatives, educationist and former Maharashtra minister for education Prof. Sadanand Varde was firmly of the view that a determined effort is needed to "equalize opportunity to see that education, health facilities, housing and better roads etc. are available to the socially vulnerable and deprived sections of the community."

This is just the beginning of the debate. Atleast we are now talking of what needs to be done and not beating our chests about what went wrong – and that's a step forward .

Now read on. (Ed)

The Good Governance Perspective

A. D. Moddie

I will take your mind to Dr. Ambedkar's warning, which nobody heeded, on the 26th of January 1950, three years after Independence. He warned, "we are going to enter a life of contradictions. And if the contradictions are not removed, those who suffer from inequality, will blow up the structure of political democracy, which this (Constituent) Assembly has so laboriously built up with the Constitution". This, the blowing up of the Constitution began with the most privileged people in our society, including Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, when

she imposed the Emergency.

I am going to make two major propositions in my address. The first is that the keys to the quality of life are freedom and good governance. These are the two things which have come out in the last fifty years of our history – that a society must be adequately free and it must have relatively good governance. For example, a comparison between Singapore which has no resources, and Jamaica which has good tropical resources, will show a world of difference in terms of the

quality of life. Or when you compare Japan and Nigeria. Though Nigeria has far more natural resources than Japan, Japan is heaven compared to the Nigerian hell. In our country take Bihar. Bihar is the richest State in India – North Bihar has the richest quality of soil (alluvial soil) in the world. South Bihar has the country's richest mineral resources. But what is Bihar today? It is India's Central Africa.

Now if we want to emerge – we have not emerged – if we want to emerge out of twenty five centuries

In Free India - Only Politicians, No Statesmen. Only *Netas*, No Leaders

of feudalism, casteism, communalism, misgovernance, to enter the 21st century with a better track record, India needs to fundamentally modernize and globalise its mind.

It has to begin with the mind, especially of the upper and ruling classes, whom I hold primarily guilty. I remember when I was young, I was in a very small minority, which favoured the only good decision that I feel Nehru took, and that was "adult franchise". 99% of my class thought it was disastrous, but to my mind, this is the one thing that has given India stability. Our class, the upper class, the top 5%, have let this country down very badly, in the last half century. There are marginal signs of what is now called "India Unbound", in other words, India is changing.

But the forces of India Bound are stronger than the forces of India Unbound. It has to gather momentum to move at least the top 100 million. It needs to know what it means to compete in the modern world of global geo-politics, global trade and technology, beyond personal *sauda* which has been with us since the *Arthashastra*. Kautilya knew his society and it is the same society even now.

In the 21st century world, there must be a clear political and civic recognition that the lesson of 2000 A.D. is that the freer the country, the more prosperous and democratic and strong it is. This is one of my fundamental beliefs. We have got to free ourselves. We have got to free ourselves from authority, from all that comes in the way of our making

free choices. This was established in the Economic Freedom of the World 2000 Annual Report of Canada's Fraser Institute, along with 54 other institutions around the world. This was a global study and India had one such institution, called Centre for Civil Society which participated in this study.

In this Report, Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, USA and UK share the top five places. The least free economies are Myanmar, Zaire, Sierra Leone, Rwanda and Madagascar. India's place was 86 out of 123 countries. Life expectancy was longer for people in twenty four of the most free states – most free than in the twenty four of the least free ones. Average income per capita in the top twenty was \$18,000 compared to \$2,000 for the least free twenty at the bottom of the scale. The extent of inequality was also lower in the top twenty compared to the rest. In other words, the social objective of income inequality was achieved by the top 20 because they were free societies, not just prosperous societies. They also had far lower rates of illiteracy, poverty, and corruption. They had better access to safe drinking water, more political rights and civil liberties and higher labour productivity.

We believe that in 1947 the people of India became free. To my mind, all that happened in 1947 was a transfer of power from 'white' hands to 'brown' hands and the same colonial administration has continued. 'It was a mere transfer of power. What is that which we did not do in 1947 and thereafter? We did not discard the colonial and pre-1947 legacy in governance. In 1947 we took over all the laws, the Official Secrets Act, the Criminal Procedure Code, the Indian Penal Code, the IPC,

the Police Administration, and so on, and thought we had changed it when in 1950, we gave ourselves a Constitution. We didn't. The Constitution is only a thin layer on the cake. The cake was colonial. And the new people in power, after 1947, of all parties, were only too happy to exercise those colonial powers.

What should have happened was there should have been a coalition of the best political and administrative minds together with the country's new class of top business managers and the media in this country who could have acted as a countervailing power to the government and the political parties. We have to build up such a countervailing power. You saw recently in Gujarat, how even the country's top business leaders in the CII cringed before Chief Minister Narendra Modi and apologized to him. Certainly they did not know how to tackle a situation like this.

So, we have to get these groups of people together, we have to get a kind of national consensus for change. I am putting this before you as the central objective of the country. The central objective: To virtually discard the legacy of the 19th century colonial, authoritarian administration and to design a 21st century post-licence, post-permit raj era – a modern efficient administrative architecture. This is an architectural job. This is not a question of a little interior decoration. You have to change the entire architecture of the governance of this country. For better policies and decision-making, for governments as economic, viable facilitators, not as Tughlaks; for better national security and intelligence, for better public delivery systems, with a degree of privatization, for more efficient tax

Read by Shri. V. K. Vaidya, Mumbai. Making of the Indian State: History and Present Avatar. Allied publishers, Mumbai).

collection, and for more people's raj in local communities, which to my mind is the test of the freedom of the people.

As government departments have proliferated with the world's largest cabinets and bureaucracies there is need to re-design the architecture and functions of state governments. We need to determine what are the central functions of the central government and can we design a cabinet around those central subjects, and not to accommodate the X, Y and Z's of politics and of politicians. We must contain the seizing of power by the entire political class; otherwise the legislature becomes the government. In fact, the legislature today is partly government and partly an interference in government's day to day activities. They are the least productive institution in this country if you were to analyze how they spend their time.

Rajaji, the best of minds of pre-and post Independence India, used a beautiful phrase to sum up our thoughts. He said we have a government-less civilisation. And he was right. As a historian, I support that because we did not have good governance for twenty out of twenty-five centuries. So we became a government-less civilization. But how did our society last for all these centuries? It is one of the most sustained cultures and civilisations in the world. It lasted because we had institutions of customary local management by local communities with access to local resources.

We have got to go back to those local customary systems of governance. This is not easy. This is not a black and white world now. Because in the last 50 years, we have

introduced politics, we have introduced electoral systems, and so on. But there is a thirst for this kind of change, and there are many cases of success. There has been a constitutional change, in the mid-seventies for local government. But no proper implementation of these changes.

The last point I would like to make, is the Dismantling of the Control Raj and Economic Reforms. You will not get economic reforms that we need unless you dismantle the control raj. Now, dismantling the failed colonial control raj has failed to deliver the development in public services like distribution. There have been surveys on that too. 80% to 90% of the people are dissatisfied with all the public services. And if you analyse who are those 10-15% who are satisfied, you will find those are the fellows who have reach, contacts and sources to get permits, licences. Now the people who don't have the reach, are the ones dissatisfied with the public services.

To summarize, we have an irresponsible, predatory political class without countervailing power outside the government. The so-called captains of industry have no countervailing power. If anything, they are afraid of the people in government.

The intellectual class. There is no countervailing power. Hundreds of small NGOs, are becoming small countervailing powers. You take the media. Is the media the countervailing power? Not much. Witness the record from the Emergency to Tehelka. But we have to build institutions of countervailing power.

We have a soft *sauda*-driven state. I do not use the word corrup-

tion. "*Sauda*" is the word because the whole political system has become a bazaar where people buy and sell themselves. The governance of this country has become a bazaar. Stop the *sauda* driven state, consuming all of the revenues and mounting debts, living on increasing borrowings, with diminishing amounts for people's development, damaging the security of India, and the inability to deliver public services to the satisfaction of the public; a weak unorganized public opinion and weak countervailing power.

What India needs to do is also what all of us need to do – be more effective in our way of working.

Finally, what sustainability will seminars like this have? I seriously suggest that groups among us must take up the various issues to some of which I have drawn attention. For example, one group may feel that constitutional changes are important, another group may share my view that we need to change this 19th century administration of ours. Can we pursue these and form study groups. Can we network with other organisations across our country; because there are so many institutions thinking along similar lines, but are lost, having no countervailing power.

Let us give thought to make these seminars sustainability, if we do not want to treat these seminars as intellectual picnics.

(An abbreviated and edited version of a talk delivered on September 27, 2003 at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai).

MR. A. D. MODDIE was a member of the first batch of the IAS (1947-48); a representative of industry to governments. Author of the well-known book *The Brahmanical Culture and Modernity*, until recently Chairman of the Central Himalayan Eco-development Group.

The Economic Perspective

Jiban K. Mukhopadhyay

There is a high correlation between agricultural growth and both industrial and overall economic growth. The Chinese reforms started from agriculture.

The subject of this seminar is 'What India Needs' and I have been asked to provide an answer as to what India needs from the economic perspective.

I consider myself a passionate student of economics. Even though some people would call it a dismal science, I understand it as an art of making things happen, providing a mechanism so that over a period of time the standard of living of more and more people is improved.

Ideal is not always Feasible

What needs to be done ideally is, by and large, known to everybody. But there is always a gap between what is "ideal" and what is "feasible". Ideally, many would like the Indian economy to grow by, say, 9%. Why? Because at this rate of growth our per capita income would double within 10 years. It took Great Britain nearly 57 years to double its per capita income; it took the United States about 37 years and Japan 15 years. But it took China less than 10 years to double its per capita income. And China did it twice over in the last two decades, when the GDP increased by more than 10% per year. In our case, it has not, happened. And ours is a socialist, democratic republic, and a mixed economy, as opposed to the Chinese People's Republic, a communist government, which has now become a 'socialist market economy' since 1978.

A lot of things have happened in our country. For example, today we can manufacture goods ranging

from a safety pin to a missile, but we cannot manufacture many of our industrial products competitively, which could be sold in the global market at a competitive price.

A realistic perception must be based on a feasible rate of growth and it has to be more than what it is today. I will try to present a feasible perspective.

Some Hard Facts

Ours is a vast country, we do not have just one single language, and we use the same colonial language to communicate amongst ourselves. There are 18 languages listed in the Constitution, 1,652 mother tongues spoken across the country. Every 1.5 seconds a child is born. The moment a child is born, it is hungry. It consumes things till its death. Unless every child that is born and becomes a man or a woman produces things which have a value more than what he or she consumes, he or she is not an asset, but a liability. They need opportunities to enter the employment and income stream of the economy. This is not easy to create.

About 44% of Indians cannot spend even one dollar a day (on PPP basis) on their basic necessities. Thus, almost half a billion people are very poor. Besides, 43% adult Indians are illiterates. The overall distribution of income is highly skewed, with 46% of the income/consumption coming from the top 10% of Indians, while 10% of those

who are the poorest, contributing only 8%.

We started with a model - a mixed economy. Initially, it was all right. But this mixed economy turned into a public sector dominated economy. It kept India in its grip for almost four decades till it was thrown out in 1991 when market oriented economic reforms were introduced.

Today, after 12 years of economic reforms, the Indian economy has changed beyond recognition. The country's corporate sector today is totally different from what it was earlier. Today, the forces of competition, determine the destiny of Indian industry and the Indian economy.

I think we are living through "the best of times and the worst of times". The best of times is that the glass is half full and it will get full over a period of time. The worst of times is the fact that we continue to hang on to our colonial past in terms of administrative systems and procedures. Recently, I had to go to a government office to obtain a simple Domicile Certificate needed for my son's admission to the medical college. To get this done, I had to take two weeks' leave! In the last four years, I have never had a holiday - but I had to take 2 weeks leave - spending most of it in a Borivali court with those papers because there was a deadline to catch.

It is unlikely that there would

be a qualitative change in our kind of governance in the near future. There is a lot of talk about improved corporate governance, but there is little to talk about improvements in the political and administrative governance of the country. So as not to give an impression that I am being pessimistic I would say that the "countervailing forces" that Mr. Moddie so passionately advocated are slowly emerging. Internally, from within the society, things are happening which are going to compel the government to bring in qualitative improvement – over a period of time.

First Hesitant Steps

In the 1980s Mrs. Indira Gandhi took some half-hearted steps in the direction of liberalization during her second term as Prime Minister particularly in the area of Import-Export policies. And then, in the late '80s, under Rajiv Gandhi, some further steps were undertaken towards liberalization, particularly in telecommunications. In those days to make a trunk call to Calcutta, I had to come all the way from Andheri to the Central Telegraph Office, Hutatma Chowk. Today, it is possible for anyone from any corner of India, even the remotest and most secluded corner, to find a public call office, a STD-ISD booth.

There are many such small steps, which are coming through in a small way with the initiative of the people, which give impetus to a higher rate of growth, and will ultimately compel the government to decentralise governance, both at the Union, and the States level – down to the village panchayat level.

Higher Growth Rate

So things are happening and my perspective is an optimistic one. From a rate of growth in the 1980s of 5.5%, the overall rate of growth of

GDP has increased to 6.1% during the post-reform years. The population growth has come down from 2.5% to 1.9% now, so the differential between the overall GDP and the per capita growth has also decreased. Now everybody is talking about a 7% plus rate of growth. What is so special about this? What is special is that anything that grows by 7.2% for ten years, doubles the growth rate. This means that the overall GDP needs to grow by 9% to double our per capita income. Is this feasible? Can India's GDP grow by 9%, 10% or 16% as some people say? I think at this stage, such a high and sustained growth rate is beyond the dream sequence. What is feasible is 7% plus rate of growth of GDP, which eventually will double per capita income in 15 years. This is the Indian elephantine rate of growth. If 7.5% rate of growth is achieved on an average during the next five years, the economy will be elevated to a higher level. It will be feasible to have 9% growth thereafter.

We need to restructure industry to make it more productive and globally competitive. When we do this, employment goes down. Studies done by us reveal that after the reforms were introduced, overall total factory productivity, labour productivity and capital productivity of Indian industry have increased compared to the pre-reform years. When it comes to the top 50 private sector companies, total factory productivity, labour productivity and capital productivity have improved at a bigger scale compared to overall industry figures.

Growth and Unemployment

What happens when there is a growth in productivity, particularly relating to labour is that less people can do a better job more efficiently, and value addition for employees is increased. But what

happens to those who either could not get a job or lose their existing job? There is a need here to introduce a policy compact on those industries and services (eg. tourism) having the advantage of forward and backward and high employment elasticity.

The unemployment situation is grave. We are told that some 50 million Indian citizens are unemployed. The fact of the matter is that there are no dependable statistics on the number of unemployed. You will not find it in any of the Plan documents. There are no reliable figures. But the fact of large-scale unemployment is real and needs urgent attention. During the 1980s the overall GDP growth was 5.5% per year and employment growth was over 2%. During the 1990s, the GDP was 6.1% per year, but employment growth was less than 1%. How to convert the jobless high growth into a growth with job? Mercifully, some mechanisms are being worked out by the Planning Commission.

Agriculture is the Key

Let us turn to agriculture: its growth is the key to achieve sustainable higher rates of growth in the country. Agriculture's contribution to the GDP came down from about 56% in the 1950s and is about 25% today. According to the 2001 Census, 67% of our population and 54% of the total work force depends on agriculture, one way or the other. But the rate of growth in agriculture oscillates wildly. The growth rate of agriculture (as a component of the GDP) moves up to 9.6% in one year; in the next year it comes down to a negative 2.4%; in the third year it moves up to over 5%, then remains flat at less than 1% for 2 years. Last year (2002-03) was a drought year, and, as a result, the overall rate of growth of industry and GDP came down.

A hungry man is not a free man.

– Adlai E. Stevenson



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What happens here? One incremental percentage growth in agriculture leads to an incremental income generation of Rs.10,000 crores in the hands of the farmers. Let's assume 1/3rd of that would be used for the repayment of debts, which the farmer might have incurred. The remaining 7,500 crores of rupees are incremental disposable income of the farmers. It will come into the market. Small things like toothpaste, chappals, clothes, food items, small everyday needs will be purchased. And this huge demand gives a push to industry. This incremental rate of growth from agriculture to industry will be reflected in raising the overall GDP growth.

The point is that if we can activate agriculture, we find that we have created the pace of growth for the economy. There is a high correlation between agricultural growth and both industrial and overall economic growth. The Chinese reforms started from agriculture. In 1978 the huge command economy of Chinese agriculture was abandoned through one simple order. China is a command economy even today, in terms of political governance because it is not a democratic state. But its economy has become "socialist-market" economy.

"Excessive Pluralism"

In India it is an over-pluralistic kind of democracy in which everybody will give two or three different opinions, depending on where they are speaking from. When a government is being run by 24 political parties, it is extremely difficult to take the initiative on any thing. The Supreme Court's ruling stalling the disinvestment of the oil companies saw one minister dancing with joy, while another was depressed. The fact is that in a

competitive environment we have got to work as a team. But the composition of the governing team at the centre is so diverse that it is anything but a team. Privatisation is a done thing all over the world. The Chinese are doing it vigorously. It is pointless to be anguished about it because we have to accept the fact that a few things cannot be done here so easily. We have to reckon with the system rigidities, we have to live with. At the same time, trying hard to smoothen the rough edges.

The issue is not the funding, capital or money, but the simple fact of managerial decision making in the area of applied economics.

WTO

Finally, a few words about the WTO imperatives. The WTO represents a kind of global reality considerably influencing competition in trade, investment etc. The 148 members of the WTO contribute over 98% of the world exports. Communist China worked for 14 long years to become a member of WTO and was admitted last year at the Ministerial Round held in Doha in September 2001. I was witness to the joyous scenes with a large contingent of media people from China, celebrating the fact that eventually China made it to the WTO.

And in our country on the same day, our minister made a presentation almost trying to destruct the process of globalisation! In our country, even today, people say let us walk out of WTO. It is very easy to get out of the WTO. Our government can write a half page application addressed to the General Council of the WTO, that we want out and we are out! Thereafter, we Indians can freely enjoy the music of adversarial competitive world trade. To transact with the rest of the world, we will have to have a

large number of bilateral agreements. 148 member countries multiplied by 38, which is the number of major WTO agreements, gives us a number 5,624, i.e. so many transactions or bilateral agreements will have to be done in doing trade with the rest of the world.

But the WTO provides the opportunity of having a multilateral umbrella which is transparent, based on the agreements, negotiated and agreed upon by all signatory member countries, which gives facilities to the developing country over a period of time to be integrated with the WTO system. At the same time, the rich countries, in WTO parlance, the Quad countries (United States, EU, Japan and Canada) are the big boys of international business, who call the shots. But since Doha, and now Cancun, despite its failure, the voice of the developing countries has become a force to reckon with. It has to be heard because WTO is a unique forum with one member one vote, unlike the IMF or World Bank.

Here, a single member, every member whether it is Bangladesh, or the United States, has only one vote. Even if one member from a tiny nation says 'No, I don't want it', everything has to stop. So, this is a mechanism available to us, and it is up to us how we use this mechanism to further our own interests.

We need to take a positive stance at negotiations based on the principles of liberal economics and try to take advantage of multilateral trade and investment opportunities as well as face the challenges of competition.

(An abbreviated and edited version of a talk delivered on September 27, 2003 at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai)

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The Political Perspective

Nagindas Sanghavi

There is an English proverb that "Crime never pays". Unfortunately, in India, today, crime pays and pays quite well

I would like to concentrate on three major factors which torment our public life today – corruption, criminalization and communalism. I am going to treat corruption and criminalization in one single frame for the simple reason that to my mind they are the two sides of the same coin. Corruption and criminalization are so inter-twined and are so inter-dependent that it will be almost impossible for one to exist in the absence of other. Both are most widely prevalent in our society and that canker is corroding our political structure, making a mockery of our democracy and ruining all our moral precepts and principles.

We have reached a position where politics has become almost powerless to counteract either of them because corruption or criminalization has got our political leaders, our political parties and our political institutions in their twirling coil. We will have to seek a remedy for such political evil outside the arena of politics because politics today has become too sick to cure itself.

There is an English proverb that "Crime never pays". Unfortunately, in India, today, crime pays and pays quite well; so much so that the most highly educated, the most powerful and the most prosperous sections of our society have become the "*gangotris*" or the starting point for both the evils.

A former Union Law Minister Mr. B. Shankaranand was echoing

the general feeling when he described our judiciary as a sheltering umbrella for criminals. Several highly placed judges and most of the experienced lawyers have expressed similar views. They felt that to deal with the political evils of corruption and criminalization we will have to strengthen our judiciary, both, numerically and morally.

Our judiciary is numerically much more weak when compared with developed countries. I am told that in the western democracies there are 135 judges for every million of the population. In India the figure is a meagre 13. What will happen by strengthening the judiciary. A whole army of criminals and corrupt people would immediately be thrown out of politics if a numerically strong judiciary is able to discharge its function of awarding punishments to those who deserve it. Punishments need not be very severe, nor be very cruel because crime and corruption are eradicated, not by the severity of the punishment but by the swiftness with which it is dealt with.

Look at the way in which our Supreme Court dealt with the Government of Gujarat. One example of what a judge can do to clean politics of both crime and corruption. To argue that the judiciary is a toothless tiger is just not true. Our judiciary has both sufficient powers and sufficient opportunities in our times. Of course the judiciary itself needs certain reforms and one reason which prevents judicial reforms is

the immunity which the judiciary enjoys from public scrutiny and public criticism. This immunity has made our judiciary lethargic and inefficient. Secondly, lawyers, who are a part of the judicial process are expected to be the framework and supporters of the law. Every lawyer who delays the judicial process activities with trivialities or who knowingly defends a criminal by resorting to technicalities ought to be declared an accomplice and should be punished as such. This is a harsh measure but life saving surgery requires sharp tools and unless harsh decisions are taken and implemented, corruption and criminalization cannot be stopped before it destroys the very fabric of our society.

When I begin with judiciary I am not exempting the political processes from major scrutiny. Our political processes, especially the democratic processes are smothered by numbers. Have you ever wondered about the huge hordes of political activists, the unhealthy numbers of so-called political aspirants in the name of public service and the massive upsurge of ticket seekers and ticket grabbers at every election from the Lok Sabha to the local panchayat? Such enthusiasm is not a measure of our democratization. It is an indication of a malignancy in our body politic. Why are so many people, who are not competent either intellectually or morally, eager to participate in the democratic process. There are two reasons for this. The first is the fact

that in a society where opportunities for advancement are so scanty, politics provides an opportunity to climb from total obscurity and poverty to a visibility that is unheard of. This happens because politics opens a window to a world of perks and privileges. No other democracy offers so much to its legislators or to its ministers – free residential quarters, cars, laptops, free travel facilities. Our legislators can bestow or 'sell' many benefits like cooking gas connections, petrol pumps, residential quarters and commercial offices to their favourites, helpers and supporters. No other democracy provides their elected representatives free residential quarters certainly not USA nor England. The temptations offered by public life in our country are too much for ordinary mortals. The only way to

cut down the rush of unscrupulous elements to embrace public life and open the space for better quality leaders, for intelligent and honest leadership is to drastically cut down on many perks to politicians. They themselves will never do it. But public pressure, vigilance against misuse, and more strict enforcement of the law, may, over a period, help.

Communalism is a very loathsome disease from which our society has been suffering for many centuries and not merely decades. Anyone who claims or hopes that he can eliminate communalism easily is living in a fool's paradise. Let us accept the fact that communalism now, is probably less dangerous than it was in our pre-Independence days. It was communalism that led

to Partition. In a plural society like ours, every individual and every group clings tenaciously to what it perceives is in the best interests of that group. Let us remember that in India, every community, and I do make no exception, suffers more or less from the disease of communal passion. Today every party, every political leader is competing to rouse this communal passion and to derive as much benefit as possible from this disease. What do we do about it? As far as communal passions are concerned I have nothing to offer as a solution.

(An abbreviated and edited version of a talk delivered on September 27, 2003 at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai).

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Social Justice Imperatives

Sadanand Varde

I think as a community, as a people, we are very docile. We do not initiate action for the right kind of things.

The foundation of our Constitution is social justice. It is mentioned in the preamble itself – Justice: Social, Political, and Economic. If the ideas of social justice were not to remain on paper, how do we give them concrete shape? How do citizens realize that it is through governance they ought to get social justice? I read the other day in the newspaper of a Muslim woman who three year's back was accused of drug peddling. She was acquitted by the High Court. Three years have passed and yet the fact of her acquittal has not reached the jail authorities and she continues to be in jail. There have been cases of under-trial prisoners languishing in prison but here you have the instance of a person honourably acquitted by the High Court, continuing to be in jail.

Primary Education

The Directive Principles of State Policy in our Constitution have, in a way, elaborated on the way in which State power should be used to promote welfare, reduce inequalities, universalise education and so on. The Constitution required governments to universalise education in ten years. It is more than 50 years since the adoption of the Constitution and yet we are far away from universal primary education. The basic problem in my view is the societal structure. In terms of political rights, in terms of voting rights, people are equal. But in the societal structure they are not equal.

One had hoped that after adopting a democratic Constitution, with industrialization, with the right to move from one part of the country to the other, with universal adult franchise, things should improve. May be to some extent it has improved. But the fact remains, that in our country a person's status in life is determined by where he or she is born. It continues even now, to be a dominant reality. If a man's status is determined by where he or she is born, then you have before you the structure of an unequal society. That is why, while Dr. Ambedkar on the one hand spoke about this, he also made provision, to some extent, for reservations. Though reservations became an instrument to grab political power, the fact remains, that Dr. Ambedkar's doctrine of preferential opportunities was meant to give social justice to those who for generations were denied education, were considered the scum of the earth. I do not think, he ever had considered caste as an instrument of political power.

There are two ways of looking at this problem. If one is to take the view that reservations in educational institutions, in jobs are to equalize opportunity, then this is something which militates against the very idea of an equal democratic society. Another way, a more constructive way, if I may say, is to consider it, at least for a period of time, a breathing space so to say, for people who have been denied

opportunities to come up in life.

Unfortunately, after the Mandal Commission's recommendations, reservations became more an instrument of capturing power, an instrument for political mobilization. Even then, I am not persuaded that reservations are totally wrong. Therefore, when we talk about social justice in a society where people have been denied opportunities by being born into a backward caste, reservations have a place.

Recently the Supreme Court ruled (what Dr. Ambedkar himself had said) that reservations could not be more than 50%. In some states reservations have touched almost 70% and now there is a move to provide reservations even for upper castes based on economic backwardness. To take a more positive and balanced view of social justice, I would like to know, how are the underprivileged placed in terms of education, health facility, housing, and other opportunities of life. In Maharashtra we have 65,000 primary schools out of which 12,000 schools i.e. nearly 18% are one-teacher schools. That means, there may be 200 students, 4 classes or 5 classes, but there is only one teacher. The proportion of drop-outs amongst these underprivileged groups is very high. Of 1000 students in the primary first class, hardly 9 or 10 survive to take the matriculation. That is why I think, constitutional provisions were

made to provide education particularly for persons from scheduled castes and tribes as a matter of social justice.

Social Reality in Rural India

I would like to share with you two cases of what is the social reality outside the cities. Traditionally, from the days of the British some tribes were labelled as criminal tribes and among them are the Pardhees. A few days back in a village in the Usmanabad district of Maharashtra, criminals entered a farmer's house, and killed two persons - the farmer and his wife - and robbed their belongings. The police were investigating, when the funeral procession of the two persons killed was moving towards the crematorium. On the side of the road an ST Bus was standing at the bus stop. There were some five Pardhees inside the bus. They were travelling in the bus and had nothing to do with this case as they were from some other place. At that moment somebody from the crowd shouted "these are the people". These five Pardhees were dragged out of the bus, beaten mercilessly and stoned to death.

In Nashik district, a young Dalit from a village, a college student, fell in love with a Maratha girl. If it had been the other way round, there would probably have been no problem. But the Maratha community in the area would not tolerate a Maratha girl marrying a low caste Dalit boy. Both were of legally marriageable age. So they just ran away and married. What was the result? The village was pillaged by upper-caste Hindus.

Recently an entire Dalit *basti*¹ in a village in the Raigad district of

Maharashtra was attacked and Dalit houses burnt because the Dalits 'dared' to draw water from a well used by the Hindus. The springs from which they drew water had dried. So they were compelled to use a well used by the Hindus a kilometre away. The caste Hindus felt that the well was polluted. However, this did not stop the Dalits from using the well. They continued to draw water from the 'Hindu' well despite the fact that they were beaten up as nothing stops a person from quenching his thirst. So, the upper caste Hindus brought dirt and chemicals and polluted the water.

These are not isolated events. They are widely reported by the media. So if we are thinking in terms of social justice it is governance that matters. Good governance, effective governance. Unfortunately, barring a few exceptions, those who are elected as representatives, are not really bothered about government programmes reaching the people. It is true that the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution giving powers to the Panchayats has done the right thing. We have reservations for women. In some places the Sarpanch² is a woman. Now, I am told, government has come out with a rule that a Sarpanch must follow - the two-children family norm. But if one is already elected and it is found that the person has more than two children, to disqualify his/her election is not a proper thing to do. But then in our hierarchical society does the woman have any right, any say about the number of children she will have? If that's not true about educated family, what are we talking about rural families.

So my point is that to equalize opportunity to see that education,

health facility, housing, better roads, etc. are available to these vulnerable, deprived sections of the community, there must be enough pressure on the government, on the elected representatives to ensure that this is being done.

Purpose of Political Power

Politics today has sunk to depths of degradation as at no time in the past. I remember, the time when the Chief Minister was talking about the grave famine situation in the State, he expanded the cabinet to a record number of 69 ministers. In Meghalaya out of the 60 members of the Assembly, 40 are ministers. What is the use of, what we call in Marathi *Prayojan*³. What is the purpose of political power? What is it meant for? Politics is the use of political power for public service, public upliftment, for redressal of grievances, for the removal of injustice. Politics is not for accumulation of private wealth. However, politicians and political parties have long given up this responsibility. And now, by mixing religion and politics, the situation has further deteriorated and action of the kind that we, as secular citizens desired, is becoming increasingly impossible.

Accountable Governments

When we are talking about social justice imperatives, we may have more laws in various walks of life, but we need governments that are accountable. We need representatives who are answerable and therefore we need citizens who are more active, and are more articulate and who are aroused when they find that an injustice is being done. Otherwise whatever has been written in the Constitution will remain on paper. And, we will have to either

In Free India - Only Politicians, No Statesmen. Only *Netas*, No Leaders

depend on our judges or on good officers to achieve even partial results.

Right to Recall

Therefore, the imperatives, as I understand them, are in terms of social action by citizen's groups and, I would suggest the incorporation through an amendment to the Constitution of the 'right to recall' an elected representative who is not doing his job for which the people elected him or her. Today, a representative is elected for five years. Irrespective of whether he attends the assembly or not, whether he does his job or not, whether or not he makes illegal money, whether there are demonstrations against him, whether or not the press writes against him, his five-year tenure is safe and secure. We, who elected him, can do nothing to legally have him or her removed if we have lost confidence in him. Therefore, can we think in terms of a law to recall representatives who do not do their job. Such a law is, for instance, prevalent in Switzerland and in the state of California in the United States. I am not saying that this is the answer to our problem because such a provision also can also be misused. But in today's situation when neither politicians nor elected representatives nor bureaucrats fear the citizens, what else can the citizens do?

People's Apathy

One reason why politicians and political parties rule the roost is because of the widespread apathy of people like us. Elections may be a foreign idea, but our universal experience is that illiterate, uneducated people, participate in far greater numbers in the electoral process by casting their votes than

the urban elite. What does this signify? It signifies that the poor and uneducated have understood that it is in their power to bring parties and individuals to power and when they are not satisfied, they can throw them out next time round. But not the urban elite who have become cynical and have decided to keep out of the 'dirty game of politics'.

On the other hand today's urban elite seems to prefer filing writ petitions in courts of law seeking justice. I am not saying approaching the courts is wrong. But, at the same time, at the ward level, at the local level, it is necessary for local committees to be formed to deal with problems of citizens.

There was a time when I, as a socialist, believed that social justice meant that all means of production must be publicly owned. I do not subscribe to this belief any longer as it is not a solution. But social economic justice also implies the pursuit of proper economic policies, ensuring that the target groups for which government programmes are designed get the full benefit of social welfare programmes.

Rajiv Gandhi, when he was Prime Minister, said that he knew that only 10 paise of every a rupee earmarked for welfare reached the target group. In these circumstances he set himself a modest target. He said he would endeavour to see that at least 15 paise reach the target group! This is a travesty of justice.

Active Citizenship

I began by drawing attention to the sad case of a woman who was acquitted after due trial by a court of law and yet spent three years in jail. What did the High Court do when this was brought to their notice? Was

any one punished? Did any one suffer? That is the tragedy of our democracy. Therefore, the State must pursue proper policies, government must be accountable and the courts of justice must ensure that their decisions and orders are properly implemented. The rulers, our elected representatives, are permanently insulated from action. We may have stray instances of action being taken, but overall it is the agencies to whom I referred which have got to be made more effective. Finally, how do I, as an individual as a citizen relate to these problems? Do I feel motivated to write a letter to a newspaper, do I feel like writing a letter to the person concerned who has done something wrong? Recently, the entire Board of Directors of the Jalgaon District Co-operative Bank was suspended and an Administrator named. The court ordered that the properties of all the directors be confiscated because they had misbehaved. The Chairman happens to be a Minister. He has not resigned. Even worse is the fact that the Chief Minister has not kicked him out of the cabinet. This is the kind of political culture that brings our democracy into disrepute. In England today, Tony Blair is going through an ordeal, for having 'sexed' up the intelligence report to justify taking Britain into war against Iraq.

I think as a community, as a people, we are very docile. We do not initiate action for the right kind of things. Nor are we motivated or moved to do things when we see something wrong is being done. There was this awful instance of more than a dozen persons in a train watching a minor girl being raped and not going to her rescue. May be this is the result of the mind-set at the top which permeates down and contributes to so much apathy.

so much inaction, so much indifference saying it is not my business. More so it is the case with the educated, the enlightened, the elite. With the rise of consumerism, with the type of *glitterati* that now appears to be the staple diet of the press, glitter seems to have become the ideal of life. Our sensitivity, our motivation is blunted. I am not blaming anyone. I am tremendously moved when I get into a bus and see a school-going boy with bags in hand, seeing an old man, getting up immediately to give him a seat. This gives me the feeling that all is not lost. There is hope yet.

Finally I will tell you a story, that has inspired me. It is not a true story. It is the subject of a documentary by Sai Paranjpe. This

documentary is about an old man in a village who goes to the post office to collect a money order sent to him by his son employed in a distant industrial town. The old man has his grandson with him. The grandson sees his grandfather putting his thumb impression and take his money. He asks his grandfather 'Grandpa why did you put your thumb impression. Can you not write? His grandpa replies, 'no, I cannot write, I cannot read, I never went to school'. The grandson asks: 'Grandpa if I teach you, will you learn? 'Sure', replies his grandfather 'I will'. Within two or three months the old man is able to write his own name. The next time the postman comes with the money, the postman puts the stamp pad in front of the old man. The old man pushes aside

the stamp pad, takes the pen from the postman's pocket and signs his name. This is a very simple story. But one grandchild's action changed the life of an old man. This symbolises the type of action that is required in a democratic set-up like ours. The little boy is my role model. That is all I have to say.

¹ *Basti* - a Hindi word for dwelling, a place where people live. In this case where the Dalits live.

² *Sarpanch* - A Hindi word for the head of the Panchayat.

³ *Prayojan* - Marathi word for purpose.

(An abbreviated and edited version of a talk delivered on September 27, 2003 at St. Xavier's College, Mumbai).

PROFESSOR SADANAND VARDE is an educationist, social worker and former minister for education in the government of Maharashtra.

India-Israel Cooperation in the United States

When the (US) House of Representatives passed a \$3 billion aid package for Pakistan this week (July 2003), Jewish and Indian American lobbyists teamed up to win an amendment pressuring Pakistan to stop Islamic militants from crossing into India.

Despite their obvious differences, the alliance has the potential to magnify the voices of two communities that are small in number – about 5.2 million Jews and 1.8 million Indians – but highly educated, affluent and attached to democratic homelands facing what they increasingly view as a common enemy.

In recent months, pro-Israel and pro-India lobbyists successfully worked together to gain the Bush

administration's approval for Israel to sell four Phalcon early warning radar planes to India for about \$1 billion, a deal that has alarmed the Pakistani government. Three years ago, the United States blocked a nearly identical proposal for Israel to sell radar planes to China.

Participants said the alliance has been quietly forming for several years.

The American Jewish Committee, for example, has sent seven delegations to India since 1995, and two years ago it took a group of Indian American leaders to visit Israel. This year, it is opening a permanent liaison office in India and completing renovations to an earthquake damaged school that serves mostly Muslim children in the

Indian state of Gujarat, according to Jason Isaacson, AJC's director of government and international affairs.

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, India has become one of Israel's largest business partners, with more than \$1 billion in trade and many high-tech joint ventures. So far, the Jewish-Indian alliance in the United States has focused on foreign policy. But the two communities also have combined forces on electoral politics. They worked to defeat former House member Cynthia McKinney, whom they perceived as antagonistic both to Israel and to India.

Excerpts from a report filed by Alan Cooperman in the *Washington Post*.

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What India Needs!

V. N. Torgal

We are today practicing the method of policing the evils of greed and corruption that are eating into the vitals of our nation. Instead we should adopt measures to prevent the rise of these evils as we did in the past.

The exclamation mark which I have added to the question raised by the editor is symptomatic of the maze we have woven around us in the 56 years of our freedom.

We sidelined the spirit of the *man* we accepted as our mentor and revered as the father of the nation. We sent his "*Hind Swaraj*" to the library shelf and aped the 19th century ideals of democracy and 20th century ideals of planning. We failed in both except for the 'vote' in democracy and in the mixture of planning and anarchic free competition in our economic ideals.

A friend of mine, a former MLA and of the Lohia school of thought, says that the political ideals of western democracy and the economic ideals of anarchic free competition or of centralised planning were totally alien to the dream of our freedom fighters especially of the 1942 Quit India struggle. They had dreamed vaguely of village republics in a decentralized federal constitution for India. But we strayed from this dream and have got ourselves into an impossible maze of greed and corruption.

What we need today is to revive the memories of the great man not ritualistically but to follow his ideal of "*Hind Swaraj*". This is not any utopian idea or a mad dream. We can bend the present structure to form a new set up with the help

of the existing institutions like the Supreme Court, the Election Commission and the reports of the various commissions like the Human Rights Commission, the Sarkaria Commission etc.

The new ideal of the nation should be simple living and high thinking. It does not mean austere living but living without ugly luxury. The ideal of simple living and high thinking has been till today (except for the social life of the citizens of the Greek republics) an individualistic ideal which now needs to be practiced as a national ideal.

The late revered Rajagopalachari is reported to have washed his *dhoti* and *jubba* even when he was the first Indian Governor General of free India and later when he was Home Minister in the Central Cabinet. This should not be dismissed simply as an individualistic gesture but should be inspire the nation to adopt the ideal of simple living and high thinking. That is the only way which can help us get rid of the helplessness of accepting corruption and greed as a way of life.

We are today practicing the method of policing the evils of greed and corruption that are eating into the vitals of our nation. Instead we should adopt measures to prevent the rise of these evils as we did in the past. To wit a very small evil, the

copying at examinations which today is a national evil. One government in Uttar Pradesh went to the extent of handcuffing the copying students! The need here is to prevent the spread of the malady.

Similarly an elective post should be seen as an obligation and a responsibility and not as a prize post of 'voteocracy'. This will lead to the miracle of making our public life purer and cleaner.

But all this needs a little needling by the top leadership of the country and by the various institutions, which are even today trying to rid us of the maladies in our national life.

A decentralized political and economic setup will automatically lead to the ideal of simple living and high thinking which in turn will prevent the rise of social evils like corruption and greed in their multifarious forms.

I may even make bold to say that this will be an answer to terrorism which is stalking the country today.

MR. V. N. TORGAL is a school teacher in Bijapur in Karnataka.

Democracy means sticking to the rules of the game, even when the referee is not looking.

Manfred Hausmann

Just Think It Over

M. D. Kini

What India needs is clarity of thought and action which can be done only by taking into account all facts and truths of the present and the past, and chart a course of action for a great future.

I believe that we are all getting into a rut. We are all so sure that we have solutions for all the problems. We have our heroes and villains. We forget that heresy of one age becomes the orthodoxy of another. If any problem does not get solved by pursuing one, supposedly perfect, solution, we do not look for some other solution. The mind-set is the same as that of erstwhile communists. Facts and truths have to conform to our theory.

Let me explain.

The Indian state started with three great principles – Socialism, Secularism and Non-alignment. They are indeed great principles. However, our definition of them made a mockery of these principles.

Socialism meant not just state control, but state ownership – commanding heights of the economy. Individual initiative and entrepreneurship was frowned upon. 'Profit' was a dirty word. The licence-permit raj that was created

made India one of the slowest economies of the world. They called it Hindu rate of growth, for what reason I do not know. They were all secularists. This socialism neither created wealth, much less distributed it. It could only distribute poverty. The long lines for ration, long delay for a telephone, a scooter or a (outdated) car was routine for Indian people. I still remember the curbs on cement production when there was a great demand for it for housing etc. We were planning for an economy of scarcity rather than plenty. Who does not remember Mr. Antulay and his trusts? All this changed when Mr. Narsimha Rao and Dr. Manmohan Singh took a bold decision to liberalise the Indian economy or rather were forced to do it. Not that India has solved its economic problems. But there is hope it will, in a few years. I still remember what Mr. Masani said at that time – that we are not against the ideals of socialism but the methodology.

As far as non-alignment is

concerned, less said the better. Its hollowness was revealed when China attacked India and the 'support' that India received from other non-aligned countries. Now, of course, it has withered away after the Soviet collapse.

This brings us to the third pillar – secularism.

Secularism has degenerated into anti-Hindu. This has been well summed up by V. K. Sinha, in his piece, *Hinduism and Hindutva* where he approvingly quotes Arthur Koestler to say "Hinduism has to die, if India has to live" (*Freedom First*, July-September, 2003). There is no respect for Hindu sentiments, whether it is Hindu Code Bill and Temple trusts (both by a secular state), Cow-slaughter (banned by even some Muslim rulers) or even lighting a lamp to inaugurate a function. However, triple talaq, non-maintenance of a divorced lady is hailed as sacrosanct and has to be accepted to respect the sentiments of the minorities. The real problems of

Participants at the Seminar on "What India Needs" held on September 27, 2003, St. Xaviers College, Mumbai:

Mr. Avind A. Deshpande • Maj. Gen. (Retd.) E. D'Souza • Mr. J. B. D'Souza • Mr. E. J. Fernandes • Mr. Thomas Fernandez • Mr. A. V. Karnik • Mr. Yogesh Kamdar • Mr. F. T. Khorakiwala • Fr. Conrad Mascarenhas S. J. • Mr. J. K. Mukhopadhyay • Mr. A. D. Moddie • Fr. Lancy Pinto S. J. • Mr. Sidney Pinto • Mr. S. V. Raju • Mr. S. Ramachandran • Mr. R. Ramakrishnan • Mrs. Kashmira Rao • Prof. Nagindas Sanghavi • Prof. (Retd.) S. G. Sharma • Mr. Vinod Shiroli • Prof. V. K. Sinha • Dr. R. Srinivasan • Dr. Mary Thomas • Prof. Sadanand Varde • Fr. Paul Vaz S. J. • Mr. E. R. Vincent

Muslims – that of health and education are of no consequence to them or to the supporters of the Muslim identity. In the name of secularism, there is tyranny by a minority of secularists. Indian philosophy which proclaims that all roads lead to the same goal and all rivers lead to the same sea, is by definition catholic and secular. It accepts, not merely tolerates, other ways of worship. There is scope for change in Hindu tradition and custom since it is not codified for all eternity by one book or one prophet. The concept of Dharma is the basis of Hinduism – that which sustains society.

When I read a series of articles in the *Freedom First* on the post-Godhra carnage, "Mera Bharat Mahan" I realized that whatever has happened has a genesis. We have not tackled the causes of Hindu-Muslim conflict. The Indian State's policy all along has widened the divide rather than bridge it. Hence, I sent the article, "Hindu-Muslim Divide : Can We Bridge It?" While

nobody can hold a brief on the beastly acts of revenge, I felt we have to go a little deeper into the problem of Hindu-Muslim Divide, its genesis and find a solution to the problem. I believed that your liberal quarterly would publish my piece and throw open its pages for a discussion on the topic. I was a little disappointed when you did not publish it.

Later, I sent it to three leading newspapers. While one regretted its inability to publish it, others did not even acknowledge it. This is how 'liberal' our press is. They do not go beyond the conventional wisdom.

You say, politicians have no 'courage to take right decisions' and you also say, 'viewing the problem from different perspectives'. In what way you are different from these politicians? You are a prisoner of your prejudices just like all others. There is no open mind. We cannot put problems under the carpet all the time. They will continue to haunt us until we confront them.

What India needs is clarity of thought and action which can be done only by taking into account all facts and truths of the present and the past, and chart a course of action for a great future. There is a place for all – majority as well as minorities. The future has to be based on equality and human dignity as enshrined not merely in the Constitution and the Human Rights Charter of the UNO but all also in the Indian tradition, which says we are all sparks of the same divine.

The days of liberals like Rajaji, Gopalkrishna Gokhale and Mahadev Govind Ranade who combined tradition, modernity and liberalism are now over. We are now in an age of radicals who want to uproot the traditions of this country, lock, stock and barrel. Communists have failed in this. The 'liberals' will also fail in this task.

Just think it over.

MR. M. D. KINI is a freelance writer and a former editor of *Freedom First*.

Where Do We Go From Here

R. Ramakrishnan

I attended the meeting held recently to discuss "What India Needs". All the participants came out with good suggestions on several issues. I also read the exhaustive remedies put forward by Mr. Moddie.

At the end of the day, a big question arose in my mind as to who and how the recommendations can be put into practice. Today, we Indians do not discharge our duties and responsibilities and many of us do not even know what are our responsibilities and duties. Our country has many political parties and *netas* who are in the business of politics only for their personal gains of power and wealth. No consideration of the Constitution or of the Rule of Law prevent them from pursuing their plundering activities. They have become extra constitutional power centres. Even Supreme Court directives and orders, articles and sections in the Constitution are

misinterpreted, diluted and circumvented to suit their misdeeds and they come out with all sorts of explanations that reflect their disrespect for the law. Today this is possible only because of indifferent behaviour of the citizens and voters' apathy over the decades.

Under these circumstances, how do we go about implementing the remedial measures? Who and from where should corrective actions begin, is the big question that arises. *Freedom First* should begin a campaign immediately for educating the masses, of their responsibilities and duties along with the remedial measures. Let others follow tomorrow.

R. RAMAKRISHNAN is General Secretary of Swatantra Party, Maharashtra Unit.



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Reflections Serious and Facetious

Louella Lobo Prabhu

India Vs. Israel

For decades, India, in order to please the Muslim world, ignored Israel, giving it only a Consular status in Bombay. Moshe Dayan had to be sneaked in by the Morarji Desai Government, while a projected visit by Prime Minister Netanyahu, had to be cancelled, because the response to this initiative was lukewarm. The BJP has taken a much more friendly pro-Israel stance, and when Mr. Sharon came this time, he received a warm welcome.

The change was slow in coming, but it has finally come. India and Israel have much to exchange. High on India's priorities, are vital weapons of military

hardware, in the manufacture of which, Israel excels. The interaction of our troops with their Israeli counterparts may be on the cards. High on the list, also, is expertise in horticulture, as Israel's economy is at least 50% of agricultural products.

India and Israel have much in common, chief of which is that both of them are democracies, while other surrounding countries are dictatorships and medieval monarchies. Both face the problem of terrorism on their borders. The Sharon visit therefore had a historic significance both for India and Israel.

An Asian Who Made It To The Booker Prize List

Next to the Nobel Prize for literature, is the Booker for a new novel. Both excite public interest. This year, the only Asian to reach the finals, is Monika Ali of Bangladesh. Her offering is "Brick Lane". It is the story of a Bangladeshi bride, transported from Bangladesh to London's East End, and her slowly getting accustomed to the very different ambience of her new home. The author is an Oxford graduate, which suggests that her own life, is not entirely her autobiography, in terms of social mores. The bookies are reported to have a field day, as the Booker award is a prestigious award. (It is nice to know that the Booker is sufficiently honoured,

by a nation, which is primarily enthused only by sport. Amazingly, Monika Ali, was suffering from the aftermath of the "baby blues", following the birth of her child. This proved to be a fruitful depression. She was driven to write, and has come up trumps. Actually, someone in the publishing world saw a part of the novel, and got her, an advance of 300,000 pounds, even before the whole manuscript was ready. This time's likely winner is J. M. Coetzee, which would make him the only three-time winner of the prize. One wishes that Monika Ali becomes a surprise winner*.

** This was written before the Booker Prize was announced.*

Why Leander?

Leander Paes is the pride of Indian sport. In combination with Mahesh Bhupathi, he has been successful in numerous "doubles" tournaments. In mixed doubles, also he won with Martina Navratilova, recently in Wimbledon. He apparently lives in the U.S. It was there, that he got himself checked into a private hospital for what looked like a bad attack of flu. After further tests at the hospital, it was discovered that he had a brain lesion, which could be carcinogenic. He will certainly be effectively out of action – especially if it is a cancerous tumour. It is unfeeling already to speculate, on his future, or whether at all, he will be able to play in the U.S. Open.¹

He brings up a question. If God is just, why do

good people suffer, the blows of Fate. If there is a just God, this should not be. The Book of Job, poses this perennially unanswerable question, where God and the devil battle for the mind and faith of the protagonist job. The protagonist wins – but after years of misery, during which he is afflicted with many torments, and loses his children too. It is stated that when his children died, new sons and daughters were given to him – as if any new "issue", makes up for someone known and loved. Meanwhile, let us hope that the operation will be on a non-cancerous tumour. He deserves to be rewarded with many years of sports ahead.

This was written before it was discovered that the lesion was benign.

Creating A Scientific Outlook

Creating a scientific temperament, is one of the Constitution's many Directive Principles. Yet, large numbers of people died, and many more were injured in the Kumbh Mela at Nasik, where 50 lakhs of people participated. There was a group of *sadhus* at loggerheads with another group of *sadhus*, who had priority in taking the bath, first. The second group, or the other group, walked grimly to the site of the "*snaan*" (the traditional bathing place), and threw coins into the ground. In the anxiety to pick them up, (what price sanctity?) people bent down in a narrow lane, they were pushed as they bent down, and then, all hell broke loose, bringing about death and devastation.

One should not blame Hindus alone, for not having a scientific temper. Rituals and myths, seems to have no logical reasoning behind them. In fact, this is not the first of its kind in Nashik, where disaster has

struck at least a fourth time. Put together with other holy shrines, the total of people who died, in their quest for God, makes up for a formidable number.

The question to be asked, is why God rejects the deep faith of the people who come to seek Him. Instead of blessings which are the motivation that makes pilgrims travel, often great distances, they meet with death, in a gruesome fashion. Christians are better. It is lucky that the pilgrims to Vailankanni, do not break out with plague or some other disaster, as the shrine, not once a year, but every day, plays host to people of all communities.

As God is everywhere, it is unnecessary to access him *en masse* in such places. In fact, there is much to be said in favour of a private silent prayer, instead of one which is hemmed in by noise, and the sweat of human bodies.

Intellectual Intolerance

One of the two episodes I will be writing about relates to Catholicism. The Church at St. Thomas's Mount has a group of statues in which St. Thomas is preaching to people of different faiths, and walks of life. The statues have been there, for quite a long time. But the administration suddenly decided that the sculpted presence of Brahmins, wearing their sacred threads, constituted an offensive affront to Christianity. They removed the statues. In so doing, they were practising Christian fundamentalism, and effectively destroyed the legacy of St. Thomas' work, of which the high point, is the fact that he had an appeal for people of all religions. Malabar, and the West Coast, have Christians converted from the upper classes, whereas in the rest of India, they came from the lower depths.

The second case of intellectual intolerance, comes from Madhya Pradesh. Noted folklorist and personality, Habib Tanvar, was touring the State with his group of folk artists. The Bajrang Dal decided to make it impossible for him to stage a performance. They pursued him from town to town, and in one case, removed the electric pole of the auditorium. This, despite the fact that the District Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police were both in the audience. The only crime which warranted this systematic persecution, is, that the leader of the group is a Muslim. The Bajrang Dal deprived people of their right to see something of their own choosing.



... If teachers and student leaders do not give (the) lead, is there nothing that the individual student, at least the college student, can do by himself? I think he can, as every individual citizen can. The least that every one of us can do is to be human. If each one of us took some care to arouse his humanity, India would be a different country. There would then be no paradox of starving children on the one side and heavily laden dinner tables on the other.

Jayaprakash Narayan

Towards Total Revolution Volume 3, page 52
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THE SOCIETY FOR THE RIGHT TO DIE WITH DIGNITY

Affiliated to the World Federation of the Right to Die Societies

Editor: Dr. Aparna Bagwe
Scientist, ACTREC

NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2003

Euthanasia – The Debate

The applied ethical issue of euthanasia, or mercy killing, concerns whether it is morally permissible for a third party, such as a physician, to end the life of a terminally ill patient who is in intense pain. The euthanasia controversy is part of a larger issue concerning the right to die. Staunch defenders of personal liberty argue that all of us are morally entitled to end our lives when we see fit. Thus, according to these people, suicide is in principle morally permissible.

For health care workers, the issue of the right to die is most prominent when a patient in their care (1) is terminally ill, (2) is in intense pain, and (3) voluntarily chooses to end his life to escape prolonged suffering. In these cases, there are several theoretical options open to the health care worker. First, the worker can ignore the patient's request and care can continue as usual. Second, the worker can discontinue providing life-sustaining treatment to the patient, and thus allow him to die more quickly. This option is called passive euthanasia since it brings on death through nonintervention. Third, the health care worker can provide the patient with the means of taking his own life, such as a lethal dose of a drug. This practice is called assisted suicide, since it is the patient, and

not technically the health care worker, who administers the drug. Finally, the health care worker can take active measures to end the patient's life, such as by directly administering a lethal dose of a drug. This practice is called active euthanasia since the health care worker's action is the direct cause of the patient's death. Active euthanasia is the most controversial of the four options and is currently illegal in the United States. However, several right to die organizations are lobbying for the laws against active euthanasia to change.

Two additional concepts are relevant to the discussion of euthanasia. First, voluntary euthanasia refers to mercy killing that takes place with the explicit and voluntary consent of the patient, either verbally or in a written document such as a living will. Second, non-voluntary euthanasia refers to the mercy killing of a patient who is unconscious, comatose, or otherwise unable to explicitly make his intentions known. In these cases it is often family members who make the request. It is important not to confuse non-voluntary mercy killing with involuntary mercy killing. The latter would be done against the wishes of the patient and would clearly count as murder.

<http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/e/euthanas.htm>

The May 5, 2003 issue of *The New Yorker* has an extensive article on Dr. Francis Moore, possibly the most influential surgeon of the 20th Century. Two years ago Dr. Moore, who was then in his late 80s, rose from the breakfast table and went into his study and shot himself to death. Apparently no one knows why - he left no note. A close friend who is also a surgeon said that he was not surprised by the suicide. Several others said the same thing. A colleague who was then in an assisted care facility said, "If you ask any of us, we all have some kind of plan." He then confided that he had a special bottle of pills in his bathroom cabinet. Dr. Moore was a controversial figure, in spite of his tremendous accomplishments. His philosophy is given on the first page of his textbook: "A good doctor employs any effective means available. And if there is no effective means available? Then you must try to come up with one. Death must never be seen as acceptable." This world-famous surgeon, reviled by many for his new and unproved desperate measures on the dying - "the doctor who would try anything" - made sure that he controlled his own death.

Ann M. Lewis, San Francisco
Hemlock Member

Net News ... and Views!

RIGHT TO DIE ACTIVISM AND GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWNS

By Stephen Jamison, Executive Director,
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worldfed@pacbell.net

At the same time that right to die organizations worldwide are working to secure laws for assisted dying, numerous individuals still use "extra-legal" means to end their lives. They secure secret assistance from their own physicians, family members or friends. In addition, there are those who assist in other ways by providing information or counseling on non-medical methods of suicide, or even items or devices that can be used to help end the lives of the dying. Not surprisingly, some individuals have taken high profile approaches to change the law and others have taken risks to provide what they see as vital information or help to the dying. The media, hungry for controversy, readily seek out such individuals, including the dying who are in need of help as well as those who provide assistance in some way. This can certainly increase publicity for one's cause. We see this in court challenges by and for such people as Diane Pretty in Britain and Ramon Sampedro in Spain. Even after their deaths, their names are invoked to garner support for legal change. Some deaths have even been designed to challenge laws, including Sampedro's death and those of Sue Rodriguez in Canada and Nancy Crick in Australia. And there have been other extra-legal efforts, some more public than others.

One of the dilemmas involved in fighting for legal change and using extralegal means to achieve it is that it can alert both the media and authorities, and the risk is that those who push the boundaries of the law may find that "the law" sometimes pushes back. We see this currently in a variety of disturbing events worldwide.

SOME CELEBRATED CASES

In Canada, Evelyn Martens, 72, an active member of Canada's Right to Die Network, was arrested and charged with counseling and aiding the suicides last year of two women who were believed to be terminally ill. Some accusations involve the provision of plastic bags, tubing, and helium to aid in their deaths. After spending several

days in jail, Martens was granted bail, but with strict conditions. These include a 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. curfew, possible weekly searches of her home, prohibition against her possessing helium, plastic bags, or tubing, accessing a computer, using the Internet, and even possessing right-to-die literature and materials.

In Australia, Queensland authorities are deciding whether to file charges against any of the 21 witnesses to the suicide of Nancy Crick last year. Earlier, to publicize her cause a website was established which carried journal entries from Crick and described her intentions. The investigation into her death included simultaneous raids of the homes and offices of various individuals and groups associated with Crick and the right to die. By all appearances, this was not solely an attempt to secure information about possible wrong doing, but also was an attempt to quell some of the more vocal proponents of the right to die movement in the region. Recently, one of these "witnesses said that he watched Crick end her life, was "proud to be there", and was "tired of waiting to be charged". The 21 never intended to remain hidden, as they were present to show support for Crick and "to bring the issue into the open", but followed legal advice to stay quiet. If charged with and convicted of assisting a suicide, the crime carries a maximum life sentence in Queensland.

Linked to Crick's much-publicized suicide, authorities have continued their efforts to stop the work of Dr. Philip Nitschke. Since the repeal in 1998 of the Northern Territory voluntary euthanasia law, Nitschke has both worked for legal change and has held "clinics" at which information on suicide is discussed and controversial suicide devices are demonstrated. Since Crick's death, he has been the target of what he sees as "government harassment". Authorities have raided his offices looking for evidence, confiscated material, and have taken other actions to prevent his promotion of "self help" approaches to suicide. In another crackdown, Australia also is planning to prevent the email distribution of any information on suicide methods. They have cited "expert" studies that supposedly show the risk of Internet access to such information.

In New Zealand, Lesley Martin, has been charged with the attempted suicide of her mother in 1998. Martin, a right-to-die activist and writer, was arrested after describing the events surrounding her mother's death in her book. For a time, as a condition of her bail, Martin was not only barred from discussing her case, but also from campaigning for the legalization of voluntary euthanasia. All this occurred at the same time a Death with Dignity bill was being readied for introduction. This bill would force a conscience vote on euthanasia eight years after it was last debated by Parliament. Some see Martin's arrest as an attempt to silence her.

NEW DIRECTION

These are not isolated cases. There have been others, and there will continue to be other cases for as long as individuals and groups see the need to challenge the law in extralegal ways. Though we should not see the responses by authorities as necessarily organized, they do point to a change of direction where they occur. They have begun to pay closer attention to the Internet, and to information discussed within the right to die movement, and also to what is reported in the media. Authorities are no longer willing to sit back, especially when confronted. Regardless of how each of us may individually feel about these and other extralegal activities, "protest deaths", or challenges to authority, right to die organizations need to pay close attention. ♦

Man Faces Charges in Apparent Mercy Kill

By John Christoffersen

Associated Press, March 31, 2003 – Prosecutors were to file murder charges against an 89-year-old man who smothered his 85-year-old wife in her nursing home bed to end her pain. Bridgeport, Connecticut police said Meyer, who uses a wheelchair, told officers that he had suffocated his wife of 63 years, who had been suffering from a chronic illness and was in constant pain. Meyer and his wife shared a room at the nursing home where they had lived since November 2001. He told police his wife had begged him to help her die, so he made his way to her bed and held a pillow over her face,

An arrest warrant was issued for Morris Meyer,

who was being evaluated at a hospital. It was not clear when he would be arrested, but State's Attorney Jonathan Benedict said he would be subsequently released on a promise to appear in court. Said Benedict, "I don't recall prosecuting anybody this age for murder or anything else that comes to mind. It was a fairly easy call based on his confession. It's tragic. But regardless of the amount of pathos involved, our duty is to prosecute and enforce Connecticut's laws. This is clearly a violation of the murder statute."

Marsha Meyer, one of Morris and Cornelia Meyer's two daughters, decried the prosecutors' decision. "Not an 89-year-old man," she said. "He can hardly walk any more. It was an act of mercy." Marsha Meyer said her parents were devoted to each other, more than anyone could be, and her father, a retired machinist, was never violent. "He just keeps saying, 'Your mother is happy now, We're all going through hell but she's happy.' said Marsha Meyer, who had never seen her father cry until now. "That's all he's doing now," she said. "He keeps crying." ♦

Reproduced with permission from Derek Humphry's non-profit ERGO right-to-die mailing list, Right_to_die@efn.org

- Unless the "person who wants to control" me is holding a gun to my head or to a loved one's head, then I think I have a CHOICE whether to give up my right to CHOOSE from available alternatives in whatever issues are at hand.
- I DO have the "right" to control my own life and destiny. No one "gives" me that right because I never lost it. Unless I give up that right I have it by DEFAULT. So does every other person on the planet, IMO. It is a profound puzzlement to me why so many hand over the reins to their existence so easily to "authorities." I can only conclude that somehow they've been taught to obey, like sheep, never once realizing that their "shepherds" don't know any more about how to live a life than they do!
- That my decisions might not sit well with "authorities" is of no consequence to me. (Of course, I take the feelings and views of "significant others" into consideration, and I do choose my battles with whatever degree of cunning I can muster, but I always reserve the "right" to come to my own conclusions and choose my own path.) To paraphrase Sinatra: "I DO IT MY WAY."
- To live life always singing someone else's song or according to some predigested philosophy not of your own making is a sad state of affairs. My profound sympathy goes out to those who think they must "obey" authority at the expense of their own Quality of Life. It's a very poor bargain.

Richard Earl
rae2-2@shaw.ca

SRDD News

Loksatta, May 25, 2003

"Almost 70-80% of senior citizens of over 75 years age when asked the question 'Are you happy to be alive?' respond, in a tone filled with sadness, that they are living merely because death has not yet befallen them. Several of them suffer from chronic disease. If such people past the age of 75 years express the desire to embrace death, the law should permit them 'ichhamaran' or voluntary death. All efforts must be made at the highest level to make this possible. I feel that senior citizens' organizations and citizens who wish to take recourse to voluntary death should organize themselves and approach the Society for the Right to Die with Dignity (SRDD). It is my firm belief that man should live only up to the age of 75 years. Although I do not suffer from any chronic disease or have family problems, I myself wish to embrace voluntary euthanasia and donate my body for research. I am now 72 yrs old. It is my request that when I reach 75 yrs of age (if natural death has not occurred first), the law should permit me to embrace death voluntarily. I am sending a copy of this letter to SRDD."

Shri Vishnu Shripati Thite
B-110, Blue Jewel CHS Ltd., S.V.P Road, Pendse Nagar,
Dombivli (East) - 421 201.

Slip-disc victim seeks mercy-killing

DH News Service, DAVANGERE, June 3, 2003: A retired teacher, H B Karibasamma, who has been suffering from slip disc for several years, has said that euthanasia would be the only way to end her misery. Forwarding a formal request to the government, Karibasamma, 62, has also said that she would approach the court in this regard soon. In her request she has said: "I have been suffering from this ailment for past six years and during severe pain I have to be always lying on the bed. It is a mental torture since I have no one to look after me. I have no desire to live. I don't want to commit suicide as it is against the law. Instead the government should permit me to opt for mercy-killing."

The teacher has already donated her body to the Anatomy department of the JJM Medical College in Davangere after her death. She has also appealed to the government to enact a law to permit euthanasia in the State as it would also help others like her who have been suffering. Persons who have been suffering from incurable diseases should be permitted to die if they wish so, Ms. Karibasamma has said in her request. The Euthanasia Bill has been passed in Belgium and

Netherlands. A similar law should be enacted in Karnataka, the teacher has urged.

She recalled a similar incident in Amaravathi district in Maharashtra, where a woman submitted a plea in the court to allow euthanasia of her 10-year-old daughter as she was suffering from an incurable disease. "There are hundreds of such people in the country who would want to commit euthanasia. The State should allow for euthanasia on humanitarian grounds, she said. She has also said that her husband was against euthanasia but it was her personal choice. The teacher is determined to hold a seminar on the issue and submit the opinions expressed there to the court.

Published in *The Deccan Herald*, June 4, 2003.

Personal Communication, June 30, 2003

"Wrangler R. P. Paranjpye's autobiography in English 'Not out 89', translated into Marathi by his grand daughter Sai Paranjpye, contains the following paragraph on page 172: 'After the age of 84 years, man rarely aspires for new pleasures or experiences. He may harbour stray aspirations for his relatives or close friends, but he rarely seeks anything for himself. I wish to live only so long as I can carry out my personal chores myself – without being a burden on others, so long as my organs are healthy – and in particular my memory unaffected. I feel that once a man is unable to look after himself and becomes a burden on others, he has no right to cling to life. A thinking man would not desire the existence of long-lived plants, such as that of the immortal 'Struldbrughs' painted so horrifically by Swift. I am of the firm conviction that a person suffering from an unbearable and incurable disease or an insane person should take recourse to voluntary suicide or euthanasia. Even for myself, I would not be afraid of embracing the permanent state of 'samadhi'. In fact, it would form the very pinnacle of my happy existence in life.' "

Shri Vinayak Rajaram Limaye
'Mrugjal', Kupwad Road, Vishrambaug,
Sangli - 416 415.

Please convey your queries, suggestions and contributions to:

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Society for the Right to Die with Dignity
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Government Accountability in the United States

We reprint this from the American Center Bulletin of June 2003. The issues described in this article on Government Accountability are practices that India so badly need. – Editor.

Government Accountability

Government accountability - that is, the duty of public officials to report their actions to the citizens, and the right of the citizens to take action against those officials whose conduct the citizens consider unsatisfactory - is an essential element, perhaps the most essential element, of any democracy. How does this work in practice in the United States?

The Constitution

First, we start with the Constitution. The Constitution of the United States requires that Congress keep a record of its proceedings, including of the votes that are placed. It also requires that the President give to Congress a status report on the country - this has become the annual State of the Union address - and that the President's reasons for any veto be published in the Congressional record. The Constitution also obligates the federal government to make its financial accounts public. The Sixth Amendment to the Constitution provides for public trials, thus keeping the judiciary in check. In addition, the Constitution subjects all civil officers of the government who commit any act of malfeasance to removal from office, impeachment, and conviction.

The fifty state constitutions have similar provisions. There are also many more legal guarantees contained in federal and/or state statutes. For example, citizens may have the right to inspect public records, candidates for public office may have to reveal the names of those who contributed to their

campaigns, public officials may be obligated to disclose their sources of income, and legislative meetings might have to be open to the public.

Separation of Powers

Since the founding of the United States, we have also relied heavily on the separation of powers to keep our officials in line. In principle, this means that the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of our government are separate and distinct in their powers, but with the ability to check and restrain each other.

The separation of powers works in conjunction with federalism, which means that each governmental task is assigned to the smallest, most local government unit able to perform it. The U.S. Constitution drafted in 1787 gives to the federal government such powers as the conduct of foreign relations, issues of war and peace, and the regulation of commerce among states and with foreign countries. The federal government is not involved with, say, fixing potholes on local roads, educational curricula, or the appointment of local officials.

The method in which the courts exercise and enforce government accountability was not established by the Constitution but through a landmark 1803 Supreme Court decision, *Marbury v. Madison*. This case established the principle that all laws and other governmental actions must conform to the Constitution, and that any individual who believes that his or her constitutional rights are being violated by any level

of government - federal, state, or local - may obtain redress through appropriate litigation. This is known as judicial review.

In one well-known case in 1974, President Richard Nixon refused to hand over tape recordings of conversations which were reported to be relevant to the Watergate burglary and cover-up. The Supreme Court decided against the President and ordered him to deliver the tapes to the criminal court that was trying the case. The Court reasoned that while the president does enjoy an "executive privilege," which enables him to maintain the confidentiality of presidential conversations, that privilege is not absolute, but rather must be weighed against the countervailing interest in disclosure in individual circumstances. The Court concluded that since President Nixon had not asserted any particular need for secrecy, his interests were outweighed by the obvious need to maintain the integrity of the criminal process. As many may remember, the president promptly delivered the tapes to the criminal court.

The Media

An additional check on the government is the media. The First Amendment to the Constitution provides for freedom of speech, press, assembly, petition, and association, or, collectively, freedom of expression. A free press provides voters with the information they need to make informed decisions by facilitating an exchange of political discourse. The media sometimes go further, however. Using the

Watergate era as an example again, it was two Washington Post reporters, Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward, who doggedly pursued information about the burglary and the burglars' connections to the executive branch of the government. While they were not the first reporters to challenge our government, they have been an inspiration to many young journalists since that time.

In order to do their job as government watchdogs, media organizations develop very strict rules for their journalists and interaction with the government. For example, many media organizations forbid their journalists from accepting meals and/or travel from government employees. Media organizations pay big bucks for their journalists to accompany the President, the Secretary of State, and other government officials on domestic and foreign trips.

Limits to Accountability

Courts have acknowledged that the government's responsibilities towards national security may outweigh the reasons for disclosing information. Proceedings involving national security may be exempted from disclosure requirements. In addition, where national security is concerned, public trials may be substituted by fair but closed trials.

Acts and Practices

One of the authors of our Constitution and later our fourth president, James Madison wrote, "A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy or perhaps both." Madison perhaps foresaw the federal Freedom of Information Act and the similar statutes now on the books of all 50 states. Federal law requires that some documents be placed in

public reading rooms and that other information be made available upon request, without the requester having to give a reason for the request. Exemptions include classified documents related to national defense, certain legal enforcement strategies, privileged financial information, and invasions of personal property. The 1996 Electronic Freedom of Information Act requires that agencies provide electronic access to certain types of documents.

The Ethics in Government Act provides for, among other things, public financial disclosure by government officials and civil servants. Financial disclosure gives citizens sufficient information to judge whether the actions of those officials are likely to be influenced improperly by their own financial interests. This is primarily a preventive tool because, with early disclosure, agencies can then change the duties of employees or counsel them with regard to the measures that must be taken in order to avoid actual conflict.

The Federal Register is the official daily publication for rules and notices of federal agencies and organizations, as well as executive orders and other presidential documents. This is also where the public can read about proposed laws, rules, and regulations. These are published in the Federal Register in order to give interested persons an opportunity to participate in rule-making prior to the adoption of the final rules. Public hearings on proposed rules are also published here. Instructions for filing comments are provided.

The Federal Register serves more mundane purposes as well, functioning as a sort of governmental wish list. For example, when

the State Department has money for linkages between American and foreign universities, it would announce this in the Federal Register along with the guidelines for applying for the funding.

Additional acts include the Sunshine in Government Act, which provides for open meetings, with notices published in the Federal Register ahead of time, and the Privacy Act that provides access to government documents for people wishing to review any files kept on them. The Whistleblower Protection Act protects from retaliation federal employees who disclose information regarding official conduct that the employees reasonably believe is a violation of law, rule or regulation, a gross waste of funds, gross mismanagement, abuse of authority, or a danger to public health and safety.

History has shown that open and transparent governments are less susceptible to corruption.

U.S. Government Integrity Systems and Ethics

Over the last two centuries, the U.S. federal government has developed a comprehensive structure of laws and regulations designed to prevent, detect, and remedy conduct by government agencies and officials that is not in the public interest. The overarching purpose of this legal framework is to promote institutional integrity as well as the personal integrity of each federal employee.

Many of the basic components of the legal framework supporting government integrity in the U.S. arose from events involving great national tension – wars, assassinations, and resignations – with refinements occurring over time. The fundamental assumption behind these laws is that government

employees are public servants or public trustees and that individual integrity is essential for the health of our government.

The activities of any government are carried out by individuals. Early in U.S. history, holding a government job was based upon a so-called "spoils" system, and individual conduct was not closely controlled. As each president was elected, he brought with him individuals who had supported his election. This still happens today with a limited number of political appointments, some of which are subject to Congressional approval. But today, individuals with influence in a new president's administration can no longer sell their ability to secure jobs for others for a percentage of their salaries. In the old days, people would shell out money in order to secure government jobs because they knew they would later be able to "reimburse" themselves in other ways from the public treasury. Jobs in particular demand were those that allowed the holder to collect funds from the public. Integrity or competence was not of primary importance in the selection of these employees. After the appointed Collector of the Port of New York absconded with over \$1 million dollars of public funds in the 1830s, however, the grossly corrupted federal service became a national scandal. Reforms were implemented over time, with the first comprehensive civil service law finally enacted in 1883, establishing an examination process for fitness and competency, promotions on the basis of merit, and a fair system of job and pay classification requirements. The civil service exam was abolished 100 years later as it was judged too cumbersome and not responsive to federal agencies' needs, but the basic tenets of the 1883 law – merit and competency, combined with more

recent concepts such as equal opportunity – still form the basis of our civil service employment system.

Decades later, in the mid-20th century, restrictions limiting the political activities of government employees were enacted. The restrictions serve two purposes: to protect employees from requests from office seekers for assistance in their elections and to protect the public from having government employees use the authority and resources of their offices to help particular candidates.

The 1960s saw the creation of conflict of interest laws governing public servants that not only addressed conflicts of interest, but also the appearance of such conflicts. These laws direct government employees to avoid any action that might result in or create the appearance of using public office for private gain, giving preferential treatment to any organization or person, impeding government efficiency or economy, losing complete independence or impartiality of action, making a government decision outside official channels, or adversely affecting the confidence of the public in the integrity of the government.

The next decade saw public confidence in our government shaken by the Watergate scandal. In reaction to this, Congress created internal agency watchdogs, known as inspectors general, to audit operations and programs, to recommend improvements to economy, efficiency, and effectiveness, and to detect fraud and abuse. In addition, the Office of Government Ethics was created to oversee a prevention program consisting of public financial disclosure, counseling, and education, and to establish an ethics policy for the entire executive branch.

In the legislative branch, the Senate and the House are responsible for determining the qualifications and setting the behavior standards of their own members. Each has a specific ethics committee and its own rules of conduct. Although members of Congress and Senators are democratically elected by their constituents, the House and Senate may expel their members on the grounds of misconduct without having to wait for voters to recall their representatives through elections.

The judicial branch has its own codes of conduct and disciplinary process. Those judges who are guilty of serious misconduct, however, may be convicted by the House and impeached by the Senate. Impeached federal judges are prosecuted by the Department of Justice for criminal violations.

Criminal conflict of interest statutes prohibit officers and employees of all three branches from accepting bribes or gratuities, from representing private individuals in matters before the government, and from sharing in a claim against the government. Executive branch officials are prohibited from acting in any government matter in which they, a spouse, or a child or certain types of organizations with which they have a fiduciary or employment relationship, have a financial interest. They are also prohibited from accepting from private sources payment for their government services. However, a nuclear arms analyst for the Department of State may accept payment for articles she writes on wine for a local newspaper, for example, or a Department of Justice lawyer can be paid for her services as a prosecutor on Sundays, as these activities have nothing to do with their government jobs. Finally, former officers and

employees of the executive and legislative branches are restricted, for certain periods of time after leaving government service, from representing others to or before the government on certain types of matters.

Jane S. Ley, former Deputy Director for Government Relations and Special Projects, U.S. Office of Government Ethics has written

Beginning with the Constitution itself, the United States has developed an interdependent system of laws and regulations that promote and require integrity and ethics. This system is designed to promote institutional integrity through the establishment of consistent, fair, and public procedures for carrying out the business of government and to promote individual employee integrity through the establishment of fair, consistent, and enforceable standards of ethical conduct. It is a system that has evolved over time and must and will need to continue to adapt to new challenges, such as the changing role and scope of government itself and the effect and sometimes stress of new technologies on government processes.

Citizen Participation

In any democracy, the most important guarantee of government accountability is the right of citizens to control their government through elections. James Madison wrote "not only that all power should be derived from the people, but those entrusted with it should be kept in dependence on the people."

Citizens' groups such as Common Cause, Public Citizen, and the Center for Public Integrity have made public activity – or inactivity – their focus of attention and reason for being. All levels of government are now subject to monitoring by these groups and others that look at issues such as election financing, consumer concerns such as food safety, corporate accountability, and public education.

More important than any group, however, is the individual. The primary public tool in accountability is the individual vote. In the U.S., we directly elect government officials. In at least 26 states, we also vote on specific issues. These are in form of referenda – where state legislatures refer a proposed or existing law to the voters for their approval or rejection – or ballot measures that allow voters to cast ballots on specific proposals.

Ballot measures and referenda are known as "direct democracy" or "direct accountability." Ballot measures may include questions about raising or imposing taxes, instituting or dropping term limits, restructuring the governing bodies of state universities, or, as in the Florida elections last November, mandating the humane treatment of pregnant pigs. Voters can have issues placed on the ballot through petition drives – the collection of a specified number of signatures.

Rules for ballot measures and referenda vary from state to state but all are ultimately subject to judicial

review. In certain cases, governments may be required to place issues before the voters. Changes to state constitutions are usually done through ballot referenda, for example.

Voting on candidates, for ballot measures, or on referenda all depend heavily on an informed electorate and access to the media for all sides of an issue. Fans of ballot measures see them as a useful check on ill-considered actions, while critics call them an unnecessary check on representative government. Ballot measures raise the question of whether they are a threat to the tradition of representative government. Voters seem to like them though. The number of ballot measures has mushroomed over the last couple of decades. Discussion about them is yet one more reminder that we cannot take democracy for granted.

Whether we are citizens, civil servants, or elected officials, the bottom line is that in protecting a democracy, we must all be vigilant. We must encourage open and vigorous debate. We must make decisions based on moral sense and on the desire to leave the world in better shape for our children and their children.

For more details about the questions and issues raised above, see the U.S. Department of State Electronic Journal, "Accountability in Government," at <http://usinfo.state.gov/journals>.

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Ramnath Goenka

- The Doughty Champion of Press Freedom

Prem Vaidya



Ramnath Goenka
(April 18, 1904 - October 6, 1991)

A landmark on Mumbai's Marine Drive (famous the world over as the 'Queen's Necklace') is a spot at the junction where Veer Nariman Road meets Marine Drive. This is the spot where the irrepressible Nana Chudasama (whose genuine love for the city inspired him to coin and popularise the slogan "I Love Bombay" long before some politician (naturally for purely political considerations) thought up the "Mee Mumbaikar" chant, shares his one-liners with all who care to read. These range from carping sarcasm to well deserved tributes to policies and personages. One such tribute was to Shri Ramnath Goenka on October 6, 1991 - the day he died:

Ramnath Goenka hailed from the district of Darbhanga in Bihar among the most exploited backward parts of colonial India. During the freedom struggle, Ramnath, a student at the Muzaffarpur College, was greatly influenced by Mahatma Gandhi.

In 1924 Gandhiji appointed 20 year-old Ramnath Goenka a Life-Trustee of the *Hindi Prachar Sabha*. His teacher at Kashi Vidyapeeth was none other than that great freedom fighter Acharya J. B. Kripalani.

To earn a living young Ramnath migrated to Madras (now Chennai) in the Deep South where he found employment as a representative of Sukhdevdas Ramprasad, a business concern of a distance relative. In Ramnath's words, "When I landed in Madras I had only a *lota* (a metal water pot) in my hand." ¹ Soon he rose into prominence in the city. In 1926, the British government nominated him a member of the Madras Legislative Council. In that year Lord Irwin landed in Mumbai in April 1926

succeeding Lord Reading as the British Viceroy of India. Swami Shraddhanand, the Arya Samaj leader was shot dead by a Muslim in Assam resulting in fierce communal riots in Calcutta. The Simon Commission paid two visits to India in 1928 and were met with black flags and slogans of 'Simon go back'. In October that year at Lahore, in an anti-Simon protest march, Congress leader Lala Lajpat Rai sustained fatal injuries when he was badly beaten up by the police. The blows were severe. His death caused deep sorrow to the people all over India. Against the brutality and reign of terror of the unjust colonial rulers, Gandhi adopted the doctrine of 'Satyagraha' as his political weapon. In March 1930 Gandhi, accompanied by 78 ashramites (from the Sabarmati Ashram), undertook his famous 241-mile-long 'Salt-March' from Ahmedabad Ashram, which galvanised the freedom movement.

For Ramnath Goenka - who belonged to the Marwari community known for their business skills - life became its own teacher. In 1932 at the age of 28, he decided to combine his business skills with his passionate support for the freedom movement. The result was *The Indian Express* a daily newspaper he founded in Madras. Incidentally, this was also the year when another Marwari youth, Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia ² obtained his doctorate in economics from the Humboldt University, Germany. The subject of his thesis was Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha. His guide was the

LET'S PONDER

RAMNATHJI
MAN OF STEEL
THEY COME
ONCE IN 100 YEARS

- Nana Chudasama

renowned Prof. Werner Sobart.

It was no easy task running *The Indian Express*. One was not enough circulation; lack of enough advertisements; and the challenge from two well-known newspapers – *The Hindu* and the *Madras Mail*. Despite these difficulties *The Indian Express* held its own due to Ramnathji's determination and dedication. Along with daily reports on the freedom movement, his paper was a crusader against prevalent large-scale illiteracy, unemployment, poverty and communalism. Around this daring doyen in the field of journalism came to be known as RNG.

Lord Willingdon replaced Lord Irwin as the British Viceroy. On his arrival in India Willingdon vowed to crush the subversive activities of the Indian National Congress. During the Second Round Table Conference in London.³ Gandhiji, was treated as His Majesty's guest at Buckingham Palace. Whereas on his return to India, on January 4, 1932 the Viceroy put him behind the bar in His Majesty's prison in Yeravada (Poona)! The Civil Disobedience Movement launched by Gandhiji saw thousands of Indians courting imprisonment. Soon the jails were filled with freedom fighters.

On August 17, 1932 the colonial government played a dirty trick by announcing its 'Communal Award' to create conflict between Hindus and Hindus (untouchables). Gandhi rejected this 'Award' and in prison began his 'fast unto death' on September 20. In a press interview Gandhi said, "I have undertaken fast at God's call for the eradication of untouchability..." Day-after-day the news of Gandhi's fight against the Communal Award was widely reported in the national newspapers. RNG's *Indian Express* was one of them. There was spontaneous support from millions

of countrymen to Gandhiji fast. Thousands offered prayers and also fasted to demand the removal of social disabilities. Temple doors were opened to 'untouchables' all over the country. Finally the Government had to yield to Gandhi's moral persuasion.

September 1939, the Second World broke out. Lord Linlithgow, then Viceroy, dragged India into the war without consulting the Indian leaders. Subhas Chandra Bose on parole, disappeared from India in January 1941 and formed the Indian National Army (INA) in Malaya. On March 8, the Japanese Army entered Rangoon. All this made the British to think of some political settlement with Indian leaders. A delegation led by Sir Stafford Cripps which came to be known as the Cripps Mission came to India with a "post-dated cheque" promising independence after the war, did not succeed in its mission. On August 8, 1942 at Bombay's Gowalia Tank, Gandhi announced the "Quit India" movement demanding immediate independence. His rallying cry to Indians, "Do or Die".

Next day on the early morning of August 9, Gandhi was arrested and interned at the Aga Khan Palace in Pune. The All India Congress and its Provincial Committees were banned. The whole country was thrown into turmoil. Some students from Mumbai and Pune attempted to take a procession to the Aga Khan Palace but were dispersed and some 50 arrested, prominent among them was Minoo Masani.⁴ During this time RNG came in close contact with most of the Indian leaders including Jawaharlal Nehru, C. Rajagopalachari and others. Recalling RNG's role in the freedom struggle, the late Mr. C. Subramanian, Congress leader, Union Minister and former Governor of Maharashtra said: "Mr. Goenka during the Quit India Movement had helped underground workers by

printing proscribed material in his press. Ramnathji was a courageous man who had built a great newspaper empire after starting life almost from scratch."⁵ RNG's contribution during the freedom movement was well recognized by many of his contemporaries. K. Kamaraj nominated him to the Constituent Assembly in 1948. RNG was a member of the All India Congress Committee until Mrs. Indira Gandhi split the Congress in 1969. He disassociated himself with the Congress when suffix (I) for Indira was added to identify the party with one individual bent on establishing dynastic rule in the country.

A few years later, early on the morning of June 26, 1975, Mrs. Indira Gandhi declared a state of internal Emergency. And even before it was publicly announced national leaders like Jayaprakash Narayan, Morarji Desai, A. B. Vajpayee, L. K. Advani, Chandrashekar, Madhu Limaye and thousands of opposition activists were arrested. Censorship was imposed on the media and was enforced by cutting the power supply to some newspapers particularly in Delhi. A voluntary Code of Ethics to which newspapers subscribed was replaced with new guidelines by the censors.

The Indian Express a staunch supporter of Jayaprakash Narayan and the movement for democracy led by him was raided and subjected to unprecedented harassment. As many as 201 revenue cases were hurriedly slapped; the paper was invaded by over 500 revenue officials trying to find evidence of 'misdeeds'.⁶

During this time, RNG was in a Kolkata Hospital recovering from a heart attack. Without his knowledge, an oppressive Government nominated its own Board of Directors on *The Indian Express*! After he was discharged from the Hospital, an

angry RNG came to Delhi and reversed the nominations and took over the Chairmanship determined not to capitulate to a vengeful government. RNG and his paper were black-listed along with some others. The rebel saw no obligation to subserve the ends of those in power when the national interest was itself at stake.

By 1976, pre-censorship was imposed on 60 selected well-known papers all over the country. Among them were RNG's *Indian Express* and *Sunday Standard* published from Delhi, Mumbai, Madras, Madurai, Vijayawada, Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Cochin. RNG fought fought censorship in free India with the same determination he showed fighting the colonial rulers during the Quit India Movement.

When the Government's Directorate of Advertising and Visual Publicity decided not to issue any advertisements RNG filed a writ petition in the Bombay High Court. The ban was later revoked.

"Liberty has its price. But the cost is an ongoing cost never fully paid", said Mr. Nani Palkhivala speaking on the emergency of 1975-77. He praised the courage of Mr. Ramnath Goenka for not giving in

to the repressive Government⁷. Minoo Masani, who was then editor of *Freedom First* and C. R. Irani of *The Statesman* stood solidly behind RNG when they took on Mrs. Gandhi's Censors. Both battled Mrs. Gandhi's Censors in the Court of law.

The Indian Express had incurred the Government's wrath not because it had broken any law but because it dared to take on the Government for its dubious acts. RNG, the fearless fighter for freedom of the press continued his fight steadfastly. Even at the time of his death there were 250 cases instituted by the Government - some against him and some against his paper! Unaffected, the 12-edition *Indian Express* continued its publication and millions of copies were sold every morning.

RNG was not a journalist nor was journalism his field. Nowhere in his publishing empire, did his name appear as Editor or even as a writer. But, the urge to fight for the freedom of the press continued throughout his life. From the 23rd floor of Express Towers in Mumbai, the lion kept roaring triumphantly till death claimed him.

For students of journalism, this is what he had to say: "Do your

duty honestly and fearlessly. That's what I tell all my editors. Courage comes from professional integrity. It cannot be a mantle worn by a cowardly man ... If you keep your head high, who can dare take you on? Which government has the integrity and the guts to attack a truly courageous editor or proprietor?"⁸

¹ *Sakal*, October. 7, 1991.

² Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia (1910-'67) played an active role in the freedom movement and founded the Socialist Party.

³ There were three Round Table Conferences held in London. These Round Table Conferences were so described because Indian leaders belonging to various different political parties and groups were invited to discuss political issues relating to British Rule, besides freedom.

Representatives of the British imperial power sat round a table to discuss the future of India. Gandhiji represented the Indian National Congress. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar represented the Scheduled Castes.

⁴ Congress Activities 1942-46 Vol. IV, p.62

⁵ *The Indian Express*, October 6, 1991.

⁶ Nanaji Deshmukh in *The Indian Express*, October 11, 2002.

⁷ *The Indian Express*, December 4, 1987

⁸ From an interview to *The Illustrated Weekly of India* cited in *The Indian Express*, October 6, 1991.

MR. PREM VAIDYA, a documentary film maker, was with the Films Division of the Government of India. He can be contacted at abhayv60@hotmail.com

Catching up with Today's Social Mores Yet Another Lesson from Singapore

After allowing bartop dancing and hiring gays in the civil service, Singapore is further shedding its staid image by relaxing censorship rules on movies, plays, broadcasting and publications, says a PTI report.

But, the report adds, there will be no nudity on the news stands in a city-state which still regards the popular US women's magazine *Cosmopolitan* and the hit cable TV series *Sex and the City* as adult material.

"Globalisation, technological advancements and the new economy have changed our society," said a statement issued by the 22-member Censorship Review Committee (CRC), made up of private sector and government representatives.

"The desire to safeguard the young from unsuitable content and to respect racial and religious sensitivities is strong," the CRC statement said.

But there have been calls for greater diversity in choice and content standards, and "considering the tension between these views" the CRC "sought to generate greater artistic space in a practical and gradual manner."

The CRC recommended a refinement of movie and video classification ratings, and said more mature programming should be allowed after 10 pm on television and cable TV, with "appropriate consumer advice."

Feedback on *Freedom First*

On *Freedom First* No.458

Banning of Strikes by Government Servants

Mr. S. V. Raju's press release is simply superb! It is a path-breaking package, that unifies the employees of all categories for strength and civilises them from the primitive strikes and Fasts unto death. I hope that both the employees and employers will carry on a win win situation.

Plight of Senior Citizens

In the plight of senior citizens, the crucial point that *Dearness Allowance* (while in Service) and *Dearness Relief* (on superannuation) are not verbal niceties or elegant variation, has not been highlighted. The legal status is crystal clear and people's government operate more from a welfare angle and not hinge on laws.

Population Control

The approach to population control is no doubt fresh but I am not sure whether it will drill sense into a massive crowd in the country which reproduces with ease and even with enthusiasm! The governments should make it clear that it functions on the fraction of material resources generated by the public and their numbers cannot be indefinite unless matched by contribution from their end.

Legislators' Pay and Perks

Rajagopalan's Parliamentary watch misses the point that all including the honourable legislators respond only when it pinches their purse; like

remuneration and perks on the positive side, there must be financial deductions for aberrations. An institution with a staggering cost per unit time and tuned for public welfare cannot afford what goes on now.

Aung San Suu Kyi

The Aung San Suu Kyi story reminds me of Churchill's aphorism on Russia, as it then was: a riddle inside an enigma wrapped in mystery! Does this apply to Myanmar?

On Free Elections

If all are Equal before the Law, should we not have Laws that are Equal to all! Like proportional representation in the election of the President of India (in India, it appears to be more selection by the party in power!) the individual Vote of every MLA/MP cannot be but be a fraction proportional to the percentage of votes he had garnered out of the total votes polled. The views and working arrangement from the pen of Supanekar would be welcome.

Like All Work and No Play making Jack (or Jagdish, Indianising the idiom) a dull boy why cannot you think of some jokes and cartoons in *Freedom First*. There is a *genre* of humour, which subliminally drills into your mind good sense and judgement, subtly exposing our foibles.

N. Dharmeshwaran
Mysore

We welcome critical comments from readers and thank Mr. Dharmeshwaran for his initiative. - Ed.

Kudos

Freedom First is an excellent quarterly – each issue is carefully planned on a topic of major importance concerning, in the main, India and the Indian people, Democracy and Freedom. It brings back to us the stalwarts of our nation to whom we are forever grateful and who were a source of inspiration. (Note the lines quoted in boxed frames)

The book reviews are useful and are well-written. Moreover the issues of your journal are such that they can be read and re-read – each time something new is gained. There is a bountiful harvest in every quarterly.

I look forward to your observing Jayaprakash Narayan's Birthday every year from 2004 onwards.

Your front cover of issue No.457 has the phrase "Back to the Feudal Age" For 600 years in Anglo Saxon England "law and order had been rubbed out from the mind and memory of man", there was no freedom at all! No freedom means no sense of individual responsibility and no adulthood.

A wake-up call to the younger generation.

Khairu Mecklai
Pune



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DRAWBACK OF EARNING A LOT OF MONEY.

*Source: IRS

Of all The Statesman readers, 80% belong to SEC A and B*. Which means that they belong to the moneyed class, the taxpayers and decision makers.

The Statesman
Why settle for less?

EuroRSCG/Tsm/039/02

Is Mahatma Gandhi An Alien?

Kashinath A. Divecha

People around the world are following the Mahatma. We can lead them, if we think we can because we are Indians. Or, why not simply follow them meekly?

One of our leading English dailies published in its issue dated 13th February 2002, a photograph of a procession in Salvador, Brazil in which Mr. Agnaldo Silva, President of the Brazilian Mahatma Gandhi Institute was dressed up as Mahatma Gandhi. The caption said, "Thousands of followers of the Gandhian ideology of non-violence dressed up as the Mahatma and performed in the street during the annual carnival".

It was a moment to feel pompous as an Indian. But that false pride in the reflected glory of Gandhiji was rudely shattered by the reality of the barbaric Godhra incident. Further, the mindless carnage that has been going on and on all over Gujarat in its aftermath is disgusting and repulsive.

Naturally, the first impulsive reaction to such virulent eruption of mutual hatred, pure and naked, was to condemn it in no uncertain terms and to unequivocally denounce those who rejoiced over this diabolic development in revengeful manner, instead of expressing any remorse. It is most disturbing to find that our polity has been vitiated and degraded to this great extent and to realize that it will remain so for a very long time, as confidence building process takes years to bear fruit. It is also an indication that we have failed as a state. Look at the manner in which the daily mayhem in the state is being brushed off lightly by the administration of

* This article was written in April last year.

Gujarat right from the Chief Minister downwards.*

The present shameful episode in the history of our nation, therefore, warrants that people identify all such rogue and extremist elements within our society to weed them out of our political system. It needs to be emphasized that these vociferous elements are miniscule minorities themselves within their own respective groups, notwithstanding their high-pitched claim to speak on behalf of their groups as a whole.

This overgrowth of the politics of hatred can be attributed to our ignoring the Mahatma and abandoning the path shown by him. In this context, it is a humbling thought that people around the world hold the Father of our Nation – Mr. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi – in very high esteem. But in India, his *Janmabhoomi* and *Karmabhoomi*, he has become almost an alien, so far as our politicians are concerned.

True, there are genuine Gandhians. But, true to the teachings of the Mahatma, they have devoted their lifetime in social fields towards various constructive activities. Importantly, it is obvious that they kept out of politics by deliberate choice. Regrettably, their number is dwindling. Similarly, those Gandhians who left the social field to jump into politics to wield and enjoy power were outnumbered long ago with the advent of non-Gandhians.

Today, the field of power politics is infested with self-seekers of all kinds, who are ever ready and willing to indulge in any macabre dealings, including pitting one section of people against the other to grab and stick to power to garner the loaves and spoils of office; all this in the name of service to the people and the nation. Thus, they present the very anti-thesis of Gandhian philosophy. In simple terms, under Gandhian philosophy, political activity calls for keeping and treating the totality of Indian people with their diverse identities together and intact, instead of drawing and projecting divisive lines among them.

However, the power factor turned out to be so alluring and powerful that the process of side-tracking Gandhiji and his teachings had begun long ago; one can say, soon after his death in January 1948. He was an unnecessary burden on the minds of power-hungry politicians. They tried to get rid of him by merely displaying his photographs, busts and larger-than-life statues. This was, of course, more out of guilt-feelings than any reverence for him.

For these politicians, who had no desire to follow the teachings of and the path shown by the Mahatma, the emergence of fake Gandhis, one after the other on the Indian scene, turned out to be one of the most opportunistic coincidences to be able to forget, or rather discard, the Original Gandhi.

It is a paradox that Gandhiji's teachings were useless to them, but his name was legal tender. Thus, Gandhiji came to be tolerated while his namesakes and their politics flourished. It is a pity that even those from other groups who came to power intermittently were no different.

Before proceeding further, a caution is in order to avoid misunderstanding the Mahatma. Let no one commit the mistake of even thinking that Gandhiji was apolitical. He was more a politician than a *sadhu*. In fact, he was a politician of the highest order in the truest sense of the term. Again, he was more a leader of men than a mere politician. If the modern concepts of man-management were to be applied, he was the leader par excellence. At the same time, he was no armchair management consultant. He was the field worker himself and used to meet people directly - and he led by example.

It is a matter of record that if the processes he initiated entailed punishment, he willingly accepted and suffered the punishment. A number of times, the British rulers resorted to his arrest as a precautionary measure. There seems to be some misconception about the sanctity he attached to law. He challenged only that law or rule which was unjust, unfair or unnecessarily harsh. Again, he defied such a law only to focus the attention of the authorities on its unjust character, but submitted himself to the majesty of the law and the logical consequence of that defiance. By his example, he instilled in others not only courage and determination but also a sense of justice and fairplay. In other words, it was his attempt to mould leaders

Take a glance at his life from 1916 onwards, once he set foot in

India and start counting the agitations he generated, the struggles he waged and the movements he launched over the entire length and breadth of undivided India. Unlike present generation petty politicians, the Mahatma did not seek to grab headlines. He did not have to. He was the headline.

He was truly an organisation man. He created indigenous leadership to carry on the tasks initiated by him. He trusted his lieutenants totally and completely. And, after handing over to them the full responsibilities of running the movements, institutions and organisations, Gandhiji did not interfere. As a result, where he was satisfied that the activity or movement begun by him would continue without his physical presence, he did not impose himself. This enabled him to move on and take on other innumerable activities he always indulged in.

Mahatma Gandhi cannot be

faulted for the misdeeds, bunglings and blunders of those who strayed from the path shown by him. Again, it is pertinent to note that only those who were entrusted the political field did not survive as true Gandhians. This fact does not and cannot deprive Gandhiji of his greatness. On the contrary it is enhanced. The genuine Gandhians and their running institutions are proof enough of the impact and greatness of Mahatma Gandhi.

The Mahatma is great because his achievements were great. He achieved them, in adverse circumstances of limitations and constraints. His achievements were great because they were scattered all over undivided India. In contrast, almost all the politicians who came after him are petty, parochial, narrow-minded and worthless. They have a constituency or state to nurture. For Gandhiji, the whole of India and its people were one constituency. No politician has been able to match his track-record, in spite of having all the jet-age



President of the Brazilian Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Anandito Siliu, parades along a main avenue in Salvador. Thousands of followers of the Gandhian ideology of non-violence dressed up as the Mahatma and performed in the streets during the annual carnival.
Courtesy: The Times of India, February 13, 2002.

gadgets at his disposal and the power and comfort of office at his command.

Therefore, to even suggest, directly or indirectly, that the Mahatma did not understand people, politics and power is to expose one's own ignorance about people and politics, and also about Gandhiji himself. Against the British policy of "Divide and Rule", Gandhiji's constant refrain was to take along people of various denominations with all shades and hues from all over India. He maintained that India belonged to all Indians - Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Sikhs, Parsis and Jews as well as followers of other faiths. According to Swami Vivekanand, there has to be total acceptance, not mere tolerance, of all faiths and their followers. For, so-called tolerance is hypocrisy and pretence of tolerance is blasphemy.

Gandhiji's "Prayer" meetings symbolized his approach. This emphasis on the word "prayer" is deliberate. For, he did not preach or propagate sectarian values, virtues or merits at these meetings. He talked only about national issues and people's problems. It was at these prayer meetings that he derived his mandates and endorsements directly from the people.

It is just a thought, but needs to be voiced loudly and bluntly. It seems he was aware that frivolous men, who would find it difficult to tread on the path shown by him would try to misrepresent him after he was gone. Probably for this reason he used to end his meetings with prayer to his Lord, asking Him, to give Good Sense to all *Sabko Sammati De Bhagwan!*

Let us, therefore, be honest and gracefully admit that it has been our failure that we did not imbibe Gandhiji's teachings. Further, it has nothing to do with the economic or industrial policies that were adopted. Our failing was and has been that we did not practise impartial politics, instead we did play with abandon the game of vote-bank politics, and perfected the dubious art of dividing people to rule over them. No political group can escape this castigation. This has now snowballed into mass hysteria, which we are finding difficult to manage.

Had all our rulers after independence not succumbed to this lowly temptation, we would not have been witness to the great divide that is indicated by Godhra and Gujarat. We must remember that it is only a few mischief-mongers - albeit, from all sides - who indulge in fanning the flames of fanaticism

and fundamentalism as if it is their livelihood! It is painful to realize that only these few are able to make all the difference.

All said and done, our people in every nook and corner of India and in every walk of life, irrespective of their caste, creed, language, religion, region or any other diverse status, would want to live peacefully. They have more pressing, personal and economic, problems of hunger, poverty, unemployment, education, health, etc. to grapple with.

It is high time for us to go back to Mahatma Gandhi for bringing some semblance of sanity in our polity. Let us learn our lessons once again at his feet. There should be no sense of shame in doing so. People around the world are following the Mahatma. We can lead them, if we think we can because we are Indians. Or, why not simply follow them meekly?

No use blaming his original legatees. They have failed us. No use blaming the other political groups. They too have fooled us. Both of them are content clutching on to only a mere name "Gandhi"; one, helplessly and the other, hypocritically.

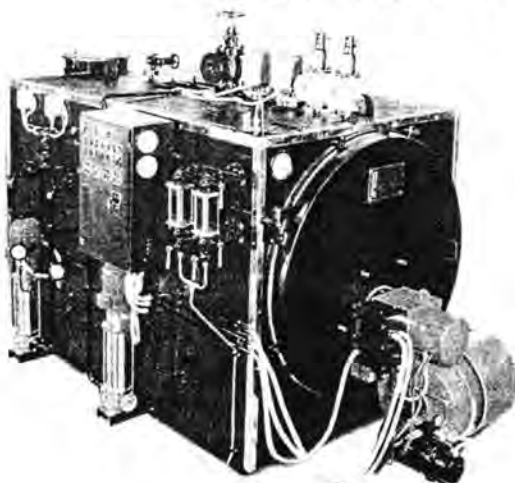
MR. KASHINATH DIVECHA is a trade unionist and a freelance writer.



I don't know if the story is apocryphal. But it deserves to be true. Max Mueller was asked by someone why, though taking so keen an interest in the ancient wisdom of India, he did not go to India. "I don't wish to be disillusioned" was his answer.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI
Swarajya, April 6, 1968

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Hindu Economics

S. H. Deshpande

I purposely dug up a somewhat old book for this review article because even today, it would be enlightening (and also diverting) to acquaint ourselves with the ideas of some of the high priests of the *Swadeshi* movement concerning the nature and meaning of economic science. The book entitled *Hindu Economics* claims that an economics, better than the ones produced in the West, existed in India and is still valid not only for India but also for the whole world. The book carries an adulatory 40-page introduction by a most strident advocate of *Swadeshi*, Shri D. B. Thengadi.*

Let me, at the outset, say that Bokare's opus (400 pages) makes for delightful reading in a very special sense. Among theories of humour, there is one that says that occasional defiance of logic and reason frees the mind from a constricting straightjacket and produces a liberating sense of delight.

Bokare discovers economic theory in ancient Hindu religious and other texts, particularly in the Vedas. He strikes the keynote of his long discourse by announcing that Hindu economics is an economics of abundance while Western economics is an economics of scarcity.

The reference, obviously, is to the well-known definition of economics by Prof. Lionel Robbins to the effect that economics is a study of human behaviour governed by the

necessity of allocating relatively scarce resources to alternative ends. It should be clear from this definition that economics *explores* behaviour under the constraint of scarcity and does not 'advocate' it.

In fact, no science ever advocates anything. It has to be neutral between ends which people pursue. Economists, of course, also happen to be citizens of their respective countries and in that capacity can advise on policy, perhaps on the basis of a more informed judgement. However, economists *qua* economists are competent to tell only what *is* and not what *should be*. Bokare does not seem to care for this elementary distinction.

And, pray, who in the long line of Western economists (as advisors) have been so cussed as to prescribe scarcity as economic policy? Right from Adam Smith who looked into the causes of the 'Wealth of Nations', hasn't economics been so full of issues concerning Growth and Development? It is the crassest ignorance to aver, as our author does, that Keynes 'returned to create scarcities' in his *General Theory*.

He avows that *Hindu Economics* is a book on 'economic theory'. The basis for this claim is that the Vedas mention resources, production, markets, prices, wages, interest etc. He calls these 'concepts'. They are not. They are bare facts of economic life stated without any attempt at conceptualisation. In fact, Bokare himself admits that these phenomena have not been 'theorised'. Where is then the economic theory, which he wants to

present to 'Europe and America' as 'the alternative to their economic theory'?

And why is Hindu economics an economics of abundance? - Because there are prayers in the Rigveda for more milk, more cattle, more food!

However, somewhere in his subconscious, the author knows that 'abundance' is, in fact, the hated materialism of the West. So he remembers 'moderation in consumption', even *aparigraha* (non-acquisition, asceticism). How plenty on the one hand and asceticism on the other are to be reconciled is left to the reader to ponder.

The Sanskrit equivalent of the word 'emulation' is translated as 'competition' and the conclusion, therefore, is that the Vedas recommend a competitive economy. (Derivable from Vedas or not, this is at least a comforting thought since other expositors of 'Hindu values of life' have been telling us that competition is an evil, co-operation is good and that the latter was ensured by the *Varna jati* system.)

A Vedic prayer runs as follows: 'May we be masters of our possessions'. Bokare stretches this to mean a regime of private property and self-employment. There would be no wage employment in such an economy, no proletariat and no exploitation. Curiously, such an economy does not suffer from the ups and downs resulting from the fluctuations in the rate of profit.

Another message flowing from the sacred texts is of

* *Hindu Economics* by M. G. Bokare with a foreword by D. B. Thengadi, published by Janaki Prakashan (for Swadeshi Jagran Manch), 129, South Avenue, New Delhi 110011, 1993; pp. 406; Rs.150

'continually (!) falling prices'. One suspects that Bokare equates this with abundance.

Bokare's economic utopia, which he extracts from his understanding of ancient Hindu writings, consists of continuous deflation, interest-free loans and taxless budgets – the last to be wholly financed by 'printing notes'. How this accords with continuous deflation, Bokare does not tell us.

D. B. Thengadi, acclaimed to be a theoretician, in a grandiloquently titled introduction – *Quo Vadis?* – hails Bokare's book, as 'pioneering' and describes it as a 'landmark in the history of economic thinking in our country'.

Thengadi's vast erudition is evidenced by names of celebrated economists scattered all over his piece: Hobhouse, Arthur Lewis, Pigou, Patinkin, Lerner, Harrod, Domar, Pasinetti, Joan Robinson, Solow, Feldman, Hirschman, Rosenstein-Rodan, Nurkse, Leibenstein, Myrdal, Samuelson – and many more.

The result of his churning of the economic literature of the East and the West is rather strange: There is no need for an economic theory! 'In Bharat ... there was no need for theories to precede construction'. Theories, in his understanding, are fanciful constructs. For him theories, ideologies, 'ism's – are all one and the same and equally useless. In Bharat, 'appropriate timely action' could be taken 'in the light of the unchanging universal laws of *Sanatana Dharma*'. Now, if appropriate action could be taken 'in the light of *Sanatana Dharma*', the latter would simply be another name for economic theory. On the other hand, if it is not economic theory, but just a set of broad moral imperatives, it will not help Mr. Bimal Jalan decide at what level to peg the bank rate or the cash-reserve ratio. However, such doubts do not assail the intrepid mind of Mr. Thengadi.

In Thengadi's view, Western economics ignores analysis of self-employment (which Hindu economics offers as a panacea for the ills of the world). Wrong! Look up

Mill. Look up the Russian Chayanov. Back home, look up the exciting debate in the '70s that followed the publication of the findings of the Farm Management Surveys.

Socialism is dead, says Thengadi, and capitalism will not survive 'more than two decades'. Time is now ripe for Hindu economics to provide a new light to the world. It is only eleven years from now till the Doomsday (the book was published in 1993). Hurry up then and broadcast to the world the inanities of continuously falling prices, free loans and taxless budgets.

Both Bokare and Thengadi must have felt that they have rendered a service to Hindutva. In fact, by attributing to ancient Hindu sages and thinkers, things they would never have dreamt of suggesting, both the authors have merely succeeded in making them look silly.

PROFESSOR S. H. DESHPANDE is former Professor of Economics, University of Mumbai.

Nobel Peace Prize Winner Shirin Ebadi

For once the Norwegian Peace Prize panel consisting of 5 members (3 women and 2 men) has done an excellent job of selecting a relatively unknown, but one who has done excellent work to receive the much politicised Nobel Prize for Peace 2003. Otherwise, year after year, stupid political leaders are selected.

Among about 160 odd nominees were the Pope and Indian prime minister A.B.Vajpayee. The Pope who worked for 25 long years, always taking up for Peace, safety of people, apartheid, against war, however missed the prize because of the cacophony of women's groups for his views on abortion, divorce, etc. If he been selected as a co-winner (because there is a provision that every Nobel can be given to maximum 3 persons), then the entire attention would have been focused on Holy Father and Shirin Ebadi would have been neglected. Hence, we must compliment the Nobel Committee for the very wise decision in selecting Shirin Ebadi as the sole winner.

Shirin Ebadi is the first Iranian woman to receive the coveted prize. "By honouring her the Norwegian Nobel Committee has recognized the critical importance of human rights and the individuals who defend them around the world," said Amnesty International.

Born in 1937 in Hamdan in Iran – Shirin Ebadi finished her BA in law and started her career as a judge in 1965 and continued as a judge until 1969. She was the first woman to be a judge in Iran. After a brief jail term for her activities in Mullah-run Iran, in 1983, she started practising as a lawyer once again, taking up human rights issues and writing in different journals. Ms. Ebadi is well known for her work on children's and women's rights.

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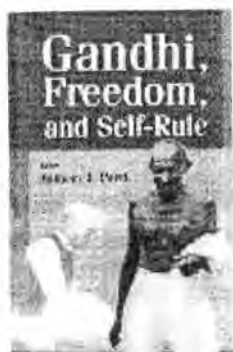
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BOOK REVIEWS



This interesting volume owes its origin to an international conference on Mahatma Gandhi held in Canada in 1997. Five of the eight essays in it were presented at that conference while three including the Introduction were written specially for this volume. All the writers are senior scholars from Universities in England, U.S.A. or Canada. Except for one scholar from a Theological institution, they are all specialists in the field of History and/or Political Science. All of them have made a deep study of the various aspects of Mahatma Gandhi's ideas, activities and wide-ranging contribution to political and social philosophy. And this is done with an objectivity which is difficult to come by in today's India. Taking Gandhi seriously is no longer fashionable even in academic circles, not to speak of the multitude of activists of different hues stalking across the land.

In a brilliant Introduction, Dr. A. J. Parel, Professor Emeritus of Political Science at the University of Calgary, Canada, analyses the Gandhian concept of *Swaraj* under four categories, viz. national independence and three freedoms of the individual – political, economic and spiritual. The first three are negative in character in contrast to the positive character of the last one. It is a state of being to which everyone especially those who are politically and economically free ought to

aspire". The complex nature of Gandhi's concept of freedom is elucidated with reference to the influence of both the ancient Indian tradition of aspiring for self-rule and the modern Western tradition of freedom from coercive restraint on the shaping of his ideas.

The essays that follow the Introduction deal with specific issues arising from Gandhi's concepts. Trying to find out if there is a Gandhian definition of liberty, Antony Copley explores the Western libertarian tradition of freedom and pluralism as also the views of eminent Gandhian writers and leaders in India only to find that a categorical answer to the question eludes one. Gandhi's concept of liberty may mean many things to his inquisitors because his main interest is not to be found in the purely mundane problems of the individual's life in society but rather in the spiritual concept of self-realisation which comes through the pursuit of Truth transcending all other pursuits. But he recognised the numerous ways of finding Truth and therefore often came very near the libertarian notions of freedom and tolerance.

Addressing himself to the Gandhian notion of Autonomy in the modern world, Ronald Tordella points out that Gandhi "combines aspects of both civil republicanism and liberalism" and "weaves

together commitments to equality, non-domination and personal responsibility". He further observes that in Gandhi's ideal, world autonomy occurs in a cosmic harmony but finds that in the real world such autonomy is illusive. Hence the need for a struggle to realise it.

In an incisive essay on Gandhi's originality, Dennis Dalton points out that "Gandhi tried to forge a unique set of values that would make compatible his strict adherence to truth and moral values with both radical political action and pluralism. The master key to this combination was his theory and practice of non-violence, the source of his idea of the means-end relationship". Though Gandhi was preceded by many thinkers like Vivekananda who had emphasised the organic relationship between means and ends, Gandhi not only elaborated but applied those ideas to social and political action and demonstrated their effectiveness. This according to Dalton is his 'ultimate originality!'

In yet another essay entitled 'Gandhi and Human Rights: In Search of True Humanity', Judith M. Brown points out that Gandhi's attitude to human rights was closely related to his conception of a social order based on duty (*Dharma*) rather than on rights. The latter, he thought, would follow the honest exercise of

GANDHI, FREEDOM AND SELF-RULE

Edited by
Anthony J. Parel

Published by
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New Delhi 110048

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Reviewed by
S. V. Kogekar, political scientist and former Principal of
Fergusson College, Pune.

the former. She further observes that Gandhi's idea of the duty of pursuing *Dharma*, though 'spiritual' was not pietistic or inward looking, but robust and outgoing, leading one to social and political activism. She quotes a famous passage from Gandhi's Autobiography in support of this view.

Incidentally it is a passage a part of which is often quoted out of its context in India by those interested in showing that Gandhi was opposed to secularism, for their own ulterior motives. Perhaps the passage deserves to be quoted even in this review. It reads as follows:

"To see the universal and all-pervading spirit of Truth face to face one must be able to love the meanest of creation as oneself. And a man who aspires after that cannot afford to keep out of any field of life. That is why my devotion to Truth has drawn me into the field of politics, and I can say without the slightest hesitation, and yet in all humility, that those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means".

Needless to say that the word 'religion' used here signifies 'the pursuit of truth' in the Gandhian sense and does not refer to any religious sect or book of Divine

revelation. It is only the last clause of the last sentence that is quoted by those interested as stated above.

The writer of the essay comments on this passage by saying that "for Gandhi the goal of the authentic human person was thus the search for Truth" and Gandhi assumed that men and women were perfectible and they were linked in an underlying unity inherent in the moral order of the Universe. He placed his doctrine of Satyagraha in the context of the duty to follow after Truth rather than in the context of human rights. His priority was never a "right" to freedom but a "duty" to create the sort of society and polity in which Indians could become genuinely human. For him the recognition of individual duty and social and moral interdependence were the foundations of an authentic human existence.

Addressing himself to the meaning of "*Swaraj*", for which Gandhi struggled till the end, Fred Dellmayr explores the philosophical moorings of Gandhi's ideas of 'home rule' which cannot be translated as just 'democracy' in the modern Western usage of that word. He interprets it as "people ruling themselves as caring benefactors seeking to enhance the goodness of people in accordance with *Dharma*. Such *Swaraj* in Gandhi's words, "has to be experience by each one

for himself".

Of considerable topical interest is the succinct historical account of the growth of the idea of '*Hindutva*', in opposition to the Gandhian doctrine of '*Swaraj*' based on the pursuit of Truth and Non-violence, in the essay by Sudarshan Kapur. He deals with these two conflicting visions of India's future development and argues in pursuit of the Gandhian model.

The concluding essay by Stephen Hay views Gandhi as a guide to a better human future. Enumerating the main problems facing mankind to-day as (1) physical violence within and among nations, (2) Socio-economic problems like poverty, illiteracy and the needs of women and children, (3) further degradation of our planet's atmosphere, and (4) decay of standards of moral conduct, he opines that Gandhi can serve as an exemplar in solving these problems. He calls for the acceptance of the Gandhian methods of self-discipline and empathy as the key to their solution.

On the whole, the book is a valuable contribution to the interpretation of Gandhi's philosophy of life and deserves to be taken seriously by those interested in this subject.



Liberals in our part of the world have two big handicaps. We have illiteracy on one side and poverty on the other and these make for irrational and anti-democratic forces to get strong. The important thing is to try and hold the scales even and not to lean too heavily one way or another. The Liberal is always under pressure to choose the lesser evil. We stand for the policy of "double rejection".

MINOO MASANI

At the International Colloquium in October 1968
on Democracy and Development
published in 1969 in a report on the Colloquium entitled
Democracy & Development (page 124)



FEDERALISM WITHOUT A CENTRE
THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC REFORM
ON INDIA'S FEDERAL SYSTEM.

By

Lawrence Saez

Published by

Sage Publication, 32-M-Block Market, Greater Kailash 1,
New Delhi 110048.

Year of Publication: 2002 No. of Pages: 251 Price: Rs.440

Reviewed by

Professor Mohit Bhattacharya, formerly Vice-Chancellor, Burdwan
University, is a political scientist and a Fellow of the ICSSR,
New Delhi.

This book is based on the author's Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Chicago. Inspired by the "academic iconoclasm" characterising Chicago's intellectual ambience, the researcher set out on an inquiry into some of the basic tenets of the study of federalism in India. The catchy title of the research work is traced to the 1996 Hyderabad conclave of a group of chief ministers and regional leaders who are reported to have sensed a paradigm shift in federal relations in India. The slogan of the meeting was: "Federalism without a centre". The participants at the Hyderabad conclave "believed that following the formation of the United Front Government, the pattern of federal relations in India had changed so dramatically that the central government had become superfluous". Despite such cynical denigration of the Centre, the researcher's painstaking analysis of India's functioning federal system concludes on an apposite note, asserting that India's federal system, under today's circumstances, ironically enough, requires the central government to play a crucial role.

As the sub-title suggests, Saez has broken new ground in federal studies by relating federal analysis to political and economic reform issues. Structural-institutional studies on federalism abound. It is in this train of thought that binary characterisations - 'quasi-federal' vs.

'federal' - are common. Another kind of academic interest is reflected in tracing the federal design historically to the 1935 Act or to the debates in the Constituent Assembly. Following the American practice of 'cooperative federalism', Indian federal practice has also been occasionally interpreted in cooperative term.

Intergovernmental relations are shaped by the political forces, which are rarely static. It goes to the credit of Saez that he has gone into the etiology of these forces. To express in his language, how India's political reform has been playing a crucial role in the transformation of Indian federalism constitutes the central concern of his thesis.

The fragility of India's party system has impacted on both the centre and the States. Regionalisation of politics has at one end, ushered in new political forces at the periphery and pressured central government operations at Delhi. At another end, regional parties have affected the formation and viability of governing coalitions at the centre. India's federal structure has borne the brunt of regional pressures and relaxed considerably to accommodate the political demands of the regions. In other words, the original design, of a pro-centre federation has been changing steadily toward a flexible adaptation or a more decentralised federal set-up.

K. C. Wheare's classic study

of federation contained a passing reference to the party system as a major decide of federal functioning. In the present research Saez has delved deep into the nexus between parties and the federal processes; and significantly enough, he has made a fairly correct assessment that the transformation of the party system has not only impacted on federal relations but has also proved a stumbling block to major public policy initiatives in India.

Still another provocative analysis is reflected in the statement (Chapter 5) that there has been a steady transformation in India from inter-governmental cooperation towards inter-jurisdictional competition, incapacitating thereby the inter-governmental institutions such as the National Development Council or the Inter-State Council. The implications seem to suggest a change from conventional Centre-State relations to inter-state relations (horizontal interactions among the state over inter-state issues).

With more and more fractured electoral verdicts, coalition set-up has assumed a degree of permanence at the centre, which is unprecedented. A fall-out of this political transformation has been the gradual substitution of the Nehruvian "interventionist state" by a newly emergent "regulatory state". Doubts have rightly been expressed if the new regulatory state in India would succeed in mitigating the growing

competition among the constituent states that vary so widely in their bargaining capacity.

The present research stands out as unique and highly innovating in its analysis of contemporary economic liberalization as having a decisive impact on India's federal relations. As Saez points out, one of the unforeseen consequences of economic liberalization has been its dramatic impact on federal relations, which in his view, "are gradually been transformed from inter-governmental cooperation between the central government and the states towards inter-jurisdictional competition among the states." Asymmetrical development and regional imbalance have been a well-known problem in India; liberalization is most likely to have an uneven effect on the states and lead to the aggravation of regional economic disparities.

Also, growing inter-jurisdictional competition among states in India is expected to create an antipathy toward the regulatory bodies (e.g. Central Electricity Authority). As Saez argues, the "existing regulatory agencies are ill-adapted in India's changing federal system and have acted to obstruct physical infrastructure projects". This is an area which deserves further probe in future.

At the end, Saez poses a serious question regarding the future viability of India's federal system. Contextually, he reiterates India's changing federal relations - from intergovernmental cooperation to inter jurisdictional competition - which, in his view, has affected the ability of Indian States to address fundamental economic development challenges.

While the researcher's anxiety deserves attention, there seems, in his

entire analysis, a play-down of the crucial role of the central government in giving directions to national and regional economics. As he himself admits, deregulatory efforts have been much more smooth in India, as compared to China, and the second generation economic reforms in India have started producing beneficial results. In his concluding analysis Saez has painted an optimistic picture of a more rationally ordered revenue-sharing between the centre and the states. This in his view, is sure to ensure the continuing viability of India's federal system".

The present research is, in many respects, a path-breaking one - a theoretically rich political-economic analysis of federal relations that opens up new ways of examining the functioning of a federal system.



FREE YOUR MIND : A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO POLITICAL ECONOMY

By

Sauvik Chakraverti

Published by

Centre for Civil Society, B-12, Kailash Colony, New Delhi 110 048.

Year of Publication: 2002. No. of pages: 86. Price: Rs.100

Reviewed by

**Professor S. Radhakrishnan, President, Indian Liberal Group
- Chennai Chapter.**

This is a fascinating book. A book that stimulates thinking. A book that will compel many students of Economics to unlearn and re-learn the way our economy was functioning and managed.

With our economy moving towards market driven forces, though slowly, the old mindset of State driven socialist thinking has not yet disappeared. Students of economics in schools and colleges are being dished out the stereotyped principles and ideologies of the planning regime. They are made to memorise standard answers for

standard questions. It is a system, where students are not made to think.

It is in this regard that this book is refreshingly different. It makes its readers think, think differently from what they were made to in the past. It is a guide to teachers and students to understand the working of our political economy, an economy closely intertwined with the political system.

In sixteen brief chapters, written in a breezy and simple style, with homely examples, the author

takes the readers through some of the fundamentals of economics and politics.

An economy consists of people and exists for the people. Wealth is created by people trading on their skills and services. Wealth and income are concentrated in metros, towns and cities. Poverty can be removed if villages are connected by roads and new towns are allowed to be created. That will provide vast opportunities for people to trade on their services. It is only when people exercise their economic freedom to pursue their own profession or

occupation, unhindered by the State, that they can get out of poverty.

The author explains clearly that the politicians made the vast population depend on the State for a promised, but elusive never-never land of Socialism. Politicians driven by the self-interest of staying in power and plundering the government's resources, work in close nexus with bureaucrats and businessmen.

That is how our political economy has been functioning over the last five decades. Vast millions of people have developed a mindset that the State alone could ensure them jobs and a decent standard of living.

The State crossed its limits by not confining itself only to the provision of public goods, by

venturing into the production of private goods. In the process, it has damaged the economy.

Free market, free trade and economic freedom are the *mantras* of the recent wave of liberalisation and globalisation. It is going to take time before the people are made to understand the benefits of the market economy. For politicians, it is not going to be easy to part with many of the State activities, which gave them opportunities to enrich themselves. Equally, it is not going to be easy for people to realise that economic freedom would benefit them more than dependency on the State.

Attitudinal changes can be brought about regarding individual freedom and state role only through massive education and propaganda. This book is an effort to educate students of economics in the politi-

cal values of freedom and equality. By freeing the minds of youth to understand the realities of contemporary economic issues, we can sow the seeds of independent thinking. Such independent thinking will make people realise that a lean and efficient State can contribute more to human welfare and people pursuing their own economic self-interest would speed up the process of economic development.

This book is eminently readable and breathes fresh air in economic thinking. The Centre for Civil Society should take upon itself the task of educating the school teachers all over the country, by organising seminars, making the teachers study the book and teach Economics to their students differently from what they have been doing so far.



This is the first volume in a series entitled 'New Perspectives in South Asian History', which aims to publish monographs, covering new areas of history and providing fresh perspectives to familiar areas.

The introduction makes a survey of the existing historiography in medical history, and attempts to locate the volume in a broader framework. While conceding that many sanitary measures came from the need to preserve the health of Europeans, particularly the army, the editors, Biswamoy Pati and Mark Harrison, aver, rightly, that the limitations of Government's medical policy was as much due to

inadequate funding as to Indian opposition to medical and sanitary intervention. The Government preferred to be generally cautious, after the Revolt of 1857, but during the plague epidemic of 1896-98 they resorted to drastic intervention, due to economic pressures.

The authors raise a very important question when they ask what was colonial about 'colonial medicine'? It is true that Indians were involved in discussions regarding public health even in the nineteenth century, but this did not mean that their views or suggestions were necessarily accepted. While dyarchy in the provinces of British

India, introduced under the Government of India Act, 1919, transferred health to Indian ministers, as the authors point out, finance remained a reserved subject and the performance of Indian ministers has to be seen from this context.

In his chapter on 'Medicine and Orientalism,' Harrison traces the encounter between European and indigenous medical systems, through four phases. He shows that though there was a dialogue in the early years between the two systems, developments in Western medicine created a wide gulf and Western supporters of Indian medicine were

HEALTH, MEDICINE AND EMPIRE PERSPECTIVES ON COLONIAL INDIA

Edited by

Biswamoy Pati and Mark Harrison

Published by

Orient Longman, 3-6-272, Himayatnagar, Hyderabad 500029

Year of Publication: 2001 No. of pages: 408 Price: Rs.650

Reviewed by

Mridula Ramanna, Reader and Head, Department of History,
SIES College, Mumbai

in a minority.

Rosemary Fitzgerald in her chapter on 'Clinical Christianity' shows how patients, who accepted missionary medicine, selectively, rejected the religious component, while the missionaries themselves devised the strategy of making concessions to local sensitivities on gender, caste and community.

The three following chapters focus on asylums. Waltraud Ernst describes the transition of the 'Madras Lunatic Asylum' from a profitable asylum for upper class Europeans and Indians to a receptacle for the poor and lower class lunatics. She links this to the changing nature of British colonialism. James H. Mills in his chapter on 'Indians into Asylums' uses case notes from the Lucknow Lunatic Asylum to demonstrate how the colonial space of the asylum was colonised, and was re-shaped by the "routine concerns of the local society." Sanjiv Kakkar in 'Patient Unrest in the Leprosy Asylum,' emphasises the similarity in European and Indian perceptions of leprosy, and sees the "liberating role" of Western medicine in developing a cure. But the medical discoveries of the 1920s, which produced a transformed medical perception of leprosy, led to protests.

Sanjoy Bhattacharya's 'Re-devising Jennerian Vaccines?' questions the generalisation of the monolithic medical establishment and argues that medical interventions differed in the urban and rural contexts. While in the former, colonial medicine may have targeted Europeans and the Indian elite, he observes that there was a concerted effort to vaccinate the rural population, throughout the twentieth century. The subject of the next two chapters is colonial intervention in the pilgrim centres of Puri and Pandharpur, in connection with cholera and plague, respectively. Pati in his essay, 'Ordering

'Disorder' in a Holy City,' demonstrates the lack of seriousness and the contradictory colonial attitude to health measures. Consequently, two cities emerged, the "non-native," Puri, which was clean and "good", and the "native" Puri which continued to be regarded as dirty and chaotic. Manjiri Kamat in 'The Palkhi as Plague Carrier' highlights the use of evasive tactics of the local interest groups rather than overt violence to resist official regulation at Pandharpur. It was the attraction of the pilgrim tax for the cash starved municipality and the fear of incurring the wrath of the powerful priestly families that led Indian subordinate officials to re-adapt orders from Bombay.

Neshat Quaiser in 'Unani's Debate with Doctory' shows the complexities of the interaction with Western medicine. There was both approval and disapproval of 'modern' medicine. While asserting an indigenous identity, Unani also incorporated the fight against colonialism, but this did not become a part of mainstream nationalism, because neither the Congress nor the Muslim League was interested in the case of Unani.

The last chapter examines the hitherto unexplored area of the 'Indian Drug Industry under the Raj'. Anil Kumar argues that the British were ambivalent to Ayurvedic *materia medica*, and encouraged the

use of bazaar medicines, till the supply of imported drugs improved. Ayurvedic and Unani practitioners had suffered a crisis of confidence in reaction to the wider acceptance of Western medicine, yet the *kavirajas* of Bengal and the genius chemist P.C. Ray reorganised the Ayurvedic *materia medica* and, by 1910, were competing vibrantly in the Indian drug market. Kumar states that though the British had borrowed from the prescriptions of *vaid*s and *hakims* during distress, they did not synthesise the two systems into one medical system, incorporating Western theory and Indian practice.

The volume is a befitting first in the series and indeed achieves the objective of a fresh perspective. It is a valuable contribution to the existing historiography in the social history of medicine, and the wide variety of issues tackled, leads to a re-appraisal of the relation between imperialism and medicine. There are certain noteworthy features. It has shown that there cannot be generalisations about either 'colonial medicine' or the different kinds of impact it had on indigenous society. The regional focus of some of the chapters gives a better understanding of the complexities of the interactions between the colonial state and Indians. It is interesting to see how 'imperial' medicine had positive features and how it was adapted to suit local requirements.

I SHALL NOT MIND

Justice Dinshaw N. Mehta, who died on July 6, 2003, said this in a speech in 1968:

"For today I shall only state this:

"At the end of my sojourn on the bench, I shall be satisfied if it be said of me that 'he did his duty according to his lights'. Let the critics say 'that may be so, but those lights were rather dim'.

"I shall not mind.

"I shall be satisfied if it were said of me that 'he stuck to the letter and word of the record and did not stray into the realm of imagination'. Then let the critics say 'that was because he had no imagination at all'.

"I shall not mind.

"I shall be satisfied if it were said of me 'although by no means brilliant, at least he was honest'. Then let the critics say 'that was because he lacked the courage of the corrupt'.

"I shall not mind.

From *Jam-E-Jamshed Weekly*

Contributed by Mr. M. B. Damania.

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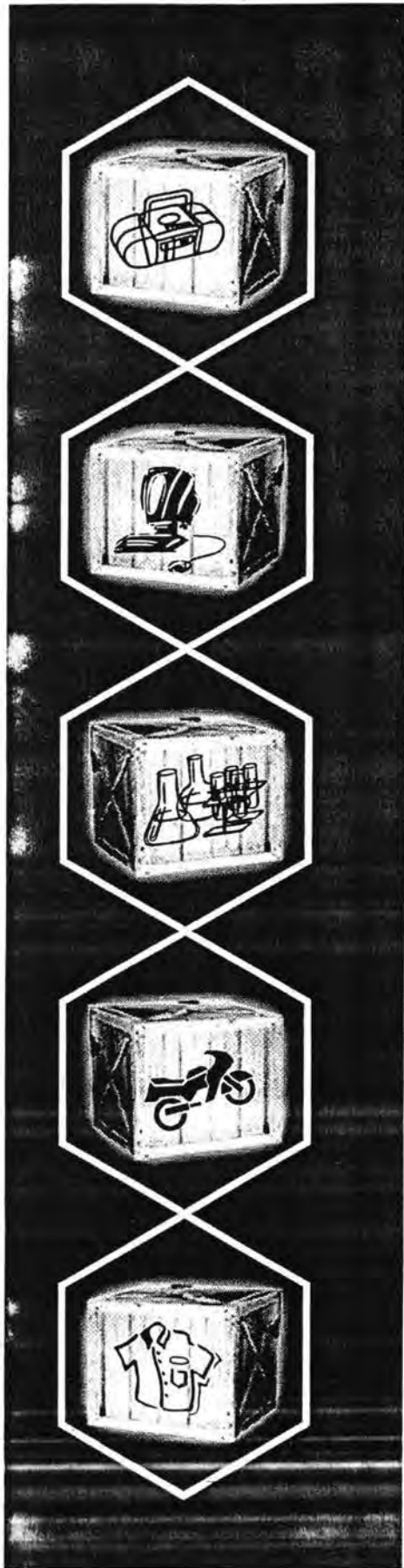
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