

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

❖ *Beyond Hazare ...*

- *Corruption as an Attempt to Destroy Democracy?*
- *Anna's Revolution - Cause and Aftermath*
- *What Sad Times! What Sad Doings!*
- *Who Moved My India?*
- *"In the Name of God, Go"*
- *Crisis of Credibility*

❖ *Delhi Bomb Blast*

- *Do We Even Bother?*
- *High Time for the Federal Government to Draw Lessons*

❖ *Declining Child Sex Ratio in Maharashtra*

❖ *Marathi Footprints in South India*

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Freedom First

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Between Ourselves...

Since May this year the cover feature has been dominated by the Anna Hazare movement. This was, as it should be. After the Jayaprakash Narayan movement for 'Total Revolution' in the 'Seventies this has been the biggest field agitation (if I may use the expression) as distinct from the numerous 'seminar-room protests', led by a single charismatic personality whose personality inspired tremendous credibility and not merely shook the establishment but galvanised the people. Both had taken on a government led by the Congress – in the first case when it enjoyed an overall majority and second a much weakened Congress leading a motley coalition. The Hazare Movement woke up a somnolent people, and, in the process, invigorated our democracy.

The final scene leading to the summoning of parliament, the adoption of a "Sense of the House" statement, the withdrawal of the 'Fast' and the referral of various drafts of the Lokpal Bill to a Standing Committee of Parliament tempts one to go Shakespearean "Alls Well that Ends Well". This is true insofar as the health of Anna is concerned but the primary cause of the agitation that spread like wildfire throughout the nation has yet to be sorted out. And that is what the Standing Committee is doing.

We Liberals undoubtedly swear by the primacy of the individual vis-a-vis the State and are suspicious of the collective. But Parliament has been put there by the individual vote, therefore for us it is the temple of democracy. We respect it and are sworn to protect it even if we have in it too many members of undesirable character/background for our comfort. Remember we put them there so we are as much responsible. Be that as it may the Lokpal conundrum is in Parliament's hands. We believe that we should let them (the Standing Committee) do their work without continuing distractions from outside. Despite the 'undesirables' we the people need to trust them to do their job and deliver a healthy and effective Lokpal, just as they delivered an outstanding Right to Information Act.

We hope to carry in the November issue a note or article on the Standing Committees and its composition with particular reference to the Lokpal bills referred to it.

Meanwhile we at *Freedom First* will give this matter a rest and wait to see what the Standing Committee on the Lokpal delivers.

TO TURN TO MORE MUNDANE MATTERS: MAY WE REQUEST THOSE OF YOU WHO HAVE NOT RENEWED YOUR SUBSCRIPTION TO DO SO. IT IS RS. 200 FOR ONE YEAR; RS.350 FOR TWO YEARS AND RS.500 FOR THREE YEARS. PLEASE ALSO CONSIDER CONTRIBUTING TO THE FREEDOM FIRST/QUEST DIGITISING FUND.

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From Our Readers

Hamid Dalwai

You might have known about Hamid Dalwai, the great liberal of 1960-70. I met him during the year 1950, when he was a socialist, at the residence of Mr. Achyut Patwardhan. It was a short meeting and also the first and the last. He was in his twenties and had very clear liberal views.

A few days back, I was going through a recently published book, *Thinkers of Modern India*, by Ramchandra Guha. I found more about him in it. Mr. Guha classified him as a modern thinker. He seemed to me to be a matured liberal and had very clear and progressive ideas about Muslims. During my long political career, I have come across many Muslim modernists, but did not find anyone to be so anxious to convert Muslims towards modernism and liberalism.

This book contains three of his essays, originally written in Marathi and translated into English by Dilip Chitre. His ideas are powerful since he “anticipated the rise of Hindu fundamentalism, following a failure of robust and credible movement of modernism amongst Muslims. So he worked and hoped for a sustained growth of a class of modern secular and dynamic liberals, especially amongst Muslims, who may be unencumbered by public allegiance to any religion or community.” Personally he was a traditional Muslim but believed that religion is only a relation between a person and his God, having no concern with social, political and religious matters of a community.

He said, “Unless Indian liberals, however small they are as a minority, are drawn from all communities and join forces on a secular basis, even the Hindu liberal minority will eventually lose its battle with communalists and revivalist Hindus. If Muslims are to be integrated into the fabric of a secular and integrated Indian society, a necessary precondition is to have a class of Muslim liberals, who would continuously assail communalist dogmas and tendencies. Such Muslim liberals, alongwith Hindu liberals and others, would comprise a class of modern Indian liberals.”

Will it not be appropriate if we introduce some ideas of Dalwai in *Freedom First*.

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“A Hindu Kingdom in India”

I am referring to the article of Firoze Hirjikaka - “A

Hindu Kingdom in India” (FF531, September 2011). Normally, I do not find articles in your magazine which are based on nothing but media reports and more so in the case of Hirjkaka. For the first time I find Modi bashing. While there is nothing wrong about it, yet there has to be some evidence. It would seem from paras 4 and 5 of his article that he has been influenced by the Gujarat Government declining to renew the contract of SMMI to run the Nerur Leprosy Hospital. Without knowing reasons for this decision by the Gujarat government, Mr. Hirjikaka jumps to the conclusion that the renewal of registration was denied to counter the missionaries trying to convert “gullible Hindu patients to Christianity”. Perhaps Mr. Hirjikaka is not aware of the fact that Christian candidates contested the local elections in Dang on the BJP ticket and won. Even the charge of discrimination against Christianity and so-called terror unleashed against Christians in Dang which was given worldwide publicity, falls flat in the light of the above.

As regards discrimination against the Muslims, he states that they are denied jobs and made them to feel unwelcome so that they may migrate to other states. Justice Sachar is not an RSS member, rather his leanings have been more against Hindu organisations and yet in the Sachar Committee report, it is mentioned that the condition of the Muslims in Gujarat is one of the best in the country. Maulvi Vastanvi who was the head of Deoband Seminary was ousted only because he stated that the Muslims are doing well in Gujarat. He is from Surat district and he would know better. I would like to know from Mr. Hirjikaka as to how many Muslims have migrated to other states after Modi came to power.

The comparison with Munich and Czechoslovakia is simply ridiculous because Germany was already gearing up its war machine for further advances. The very fact that RSS and VHP are not all that happy with Modi should be sufficient to deny the various unsubstantiated charges made by him. The presumption behind his article is that all Hindus in Gujarat are communalists and have been voting repeatedly because they are so. Mr. Hirjikaka forgets that continuously for a number of years in “*India Today*” survey, Mr. Modi has been adjudged No.1 Chief Minister by people from all over the country.

Yet, what happened in 2002 is deplorable and whosoever is responsible for aiding, abetting or conniving at the gruesome riots including Narendra Modi should be punished if eventually so established. But prior to that, based simply on media blitzkrieg opinions should not be formed by persons with rational and reasonable

background. I would request Mr. Hirjikaka to visit Gujarat and talk with all Muslims - businessmen, service class and labourers to find out how they feel in Gujarat.

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“We are Only Regulatory”

Recently, two ships were washed up on Mumbai beaches:

MT Pavit was being towed to a ship breaking yard in Gujarat. Somewhere off Mumbai, it broke away from the towing ship and landed up on Juhu beach.

MV Rak Carrier developed mechanical and structural problems, because of which the Captain decided to abandon ship. The crew was rescued by navy helicopters before the ship sank off Versova beach.

Some actions taken by Indian authorities are interesting:

1. The entire crew of MV Rak Carrier has been arrested. According to last report, they were languishing in Yellow Gate lockup. One of the persons arrested said, “I only served food to the crew. Why am I arrested?” There were many similar cases. It is difficult to see why these persons are kept under arrest; except to put pressure on the ship owners.
2. According to press reports, it took MV Pavit’s owner nearly a fortnight to arrive at a plan to remove the oil tanker from its patch at Juhu beach. It seemed that the owner may need almost another fortnight to execute the plan. On August 11, the salvors were to turn the vessel around and tow it away; but could not because the owner had not collected the necessary permissions from government agencies, including the Collector, Maritime Board, Customs and Police.
3. MV Rak Carrier was spewing oil every day.
4. Simple and available technology, suggested by Prof. Asolekar of Indian Institute of Technology at Powai, has been ignored even though it was presented by the Professor to the Maharashtra Pollution Control Board (MPCB) last year. Today when the city is reeling from the oil spill, the MPCB claims it is unaware of the technology. Dr. Y. B. Sontakke, Regional Director (Headquarters) MPCB told the *Times of India* that MPCB was only a regulatory body and was not involved in providing technologies.

Citizens are entitled to some explanations such as:

1. Are our bureaucrats only “regulatory”, as stated by the MPCB Director? Do they not have a duty to get off their chairs and take the initiative so that action is taken for public good?
2. If they have to give permission for removal of a public menace, do they have to wait for an application for permission?
3. Having received an application for permission, can they take their own sweet time about it, while there is danger to the public?

We are reminded of a story from “*Freedom at Midnight*” by Collins and Lapierre:

“A number of distinguished men in that room would in the period ahead feel the cutting edge of Mountbatten’s wrath because they could not keep that pace. One day, recalled H. V. R. Ienagar, Nehru’s Principal Private Secretary, the Director of Civil Aviation failed to get an aeroplane with emergency medical supplied off to the Punjab on schedule.

“‘Mr. Director,’ Mountbatten said, ‘you will leave the room. You will go immediately to the airport. You will not leave, eat or sleep until you have personally seen that plane go and reported its departure back to me.’ Hurt and humiliated, the man staggered out of the room, but the plane left.”

Fortunately, our navy did not expect people to apply for permission when they rescued the crew of MV Rak Carrier!

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India Wins!

Please congratulate the English cricket team on having three Indian players. India won after all!

We have taken India’s best and made them ours.

Indians can feel a certain rueful pride in this.

Christie Davies, Reading, England.
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Beyond Hazare

Jagdeep S. Chhokar

Is there life after or beyond the Anna Hazare movement? The question obviously is rhetorical but is not unreal.

There is no dearth of analyses about what the movement of which Anna Hazare became, and continues to be, a symbol, was or is, what it could have been, and what might it result in, if anything at all. Will corruption be eradicated from the face of our country and society, will it be controlled, will it be reduced, or will it not be affected at all. All kinds of opinions are available, in the media – both print and visual – and of course in buses, local trains, community meeting places, clubs, and even living rooms. This piece is also an attempt at trying to understand what the Hazare Movement has done, if anything, and what might happen in future.

Anna's movement certainly has the *potential* to alter the political landscape in the country. Whether the potential will actually be realized will depend on a large number of imponderables. But first, what has it done.

Arrogance of the Elected

With the advent of coalition governments over the last two decades or so, each government is a motley collection of parties who come together solely for the purpose of forming a government and acquiring executive power. Those who are left without a share of the pie of power, naturally feel frustrated and keep trying to embarrass the government at every opportunity. At the same time, they keep trying to cobble up adequate numbers with an eye on forming an alternative government. The efforts of cobbling numbers usually do not succeed because no one trusts another when it comes to sharing power. The net result is that once an election is over, every one is busy enjoying the fruits of office even if the office is not an executive one. There are adequate, actually more than adequate and plentiful, privileges of being only an MP or an MLA.

The primary purposes of legislating and keeping a check on the government are not on the agenda of our elected representatives. Actions such as raising the amount under the Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) from Rs.2 crores to Rs.5 crores obviously have much greater priority.

The guarantee of continuing in the legislature for five years, gives our elected representatives a sense of

invincibility, which gradually morphs into a sense of innate superiority over the proletariat, something like the arrogance of the elected. This arrogance manifests in the belief that being elected bestows absolute power on them so that they are authorized to do whatever they like, with absolutely no regard for public opinion or societal or national well being. The advice that a chief minister gave to Anna Hazare's team while Anna's fast was still on is revealing. The chief minister said, "I would advise Anna Hazare and his friends to forget about this fast, etc. They should form their own political party, contest the 2014 election to the Parliament, win the election, form their own government, and then *do what they like*." The expression "*do what you like*" captures the mindset of our elected representatives perfectly.

Another publicly known example of this arrogance of the elected is the statement of the Home Minister in Parliament on August 17, 2011, widely reported in the media. Mr. P. Chidambaram was quoted as saying, "The people have a right to vote us in and vote us out of Parliament but no right to make law. That right has been given to us by the people." Given Mr. Chidambaram's expertise and experience as a senior lawyer, he is technically and legally absolutely correct in what he said but the spirit of his statement betrays the same arrogance and haughtiness as that of the chief minister's statement quoted above.

Implicit Social Contract of Democracy

What Mr. Chidambaram, the chief minister quoted above, and all other elected representative need to remember is that no right given by one person or group to another is ever absolute, and that there always are some basic norms underlying such bestowal of rights or power. The People give the right to make laws to the members of Parliament, and executive power to chief ministers, or even Prime Ministers, under the implicit assumption that the laws, and governance of the state or country will be made in the spirit of the overall good. What our elected representatives seem to forget is that representative power in a democracy is based on an implicit social contract based on this assumption. If this assumption is violated, then the implicit social contract becomes weak, and that consequently lowers the prestige, credibility, and even legitimacy of the elected representatives regardless of the

size of the margins of their electoral victories.

Who has the greater responsibility for weakening the implicit social contract of democracy in India – the politicians or the People – is for every one to judge.

Shallow and Deep Democracies

The Anna Hazare movement has also given us somewhat of a measure of the effectiveness of the functioning of our democracy. India is often called a vibrant democracy, and is widely admired almost the world over, and justifiably so. But are we also a *really effective* democracy? Staunch nationalists may not approve of this question but in the aftermath of the Anna agitation and in the interest of making our democracy even better, it is worth asking, and answering.

What sometimes makes us complacent and the international opinion generous is the fact that we hold periodic elections to Parliament and State Assemblies, and occasionally to Municipalities and Panchayats, and have non-violent changes of government. But is that proof enough that we have a really effective democracy?

One of the measures of an effective democracy must be the extent to which people feel they have a say in how they are governed. Regardless of the view one holds about whether Hazare really represented the true, and complete, public opinion in the country (even if one assumes that such a thing actually exists), the disconnect between the political class and the people at large was hard to miss.

And that is what tells us that our democracy is shallow at best, and superficial in fact. Elections are fought with candidates moving all over the country, air-dropped from one state to another, where the electors and even workers of the parties that the candidate is supposed to represent, do not even know them. While celebrating and being overawed by the hectic activity of periodic elections, it seems to have escaped our attention for quite a few decades that no electoral system can function properly unless the underlying political system in which it operates is appropriate. And for a democracy, the underlying political system obviously needs to be democratic.

And what is this “underlying political system”? It consists of the political parties, none of which in India is currently democratic in its internal functioning. That is why we had the spectacle of all political parties saying that they (a) supported Team Anna’s demand of having an effective mechanism for controlling corruption, (b) supported Team Anna’s *right* to protest, but (c) did *not*

support the *mechanism* suggested by Team Anna’s to control corruption, and (d) did *not* support their *method* of protest, whereas significant proportions of public opinion seemed to be oblivious of such fine, legalistic distinctions and seemed to be all for Team Anna. The actual situation obviously was far more complex with the media playing for its own interests and various strands of civil society taking on their preferred stances.

One mechanism for deepening democracy that has been suggested for quite some time now, since 1999 when it was first articulated by the Law Commission of India in its 170th report titled “Reform of the Electoral Laws” is to require political parties to be democratic in their internal functioning *by law*. It has not found favour with the political establishment for obvious reasons as this will reduce, if not eliminate, their oligarchic power.

Life beyond the Hazare movement

So, to answer the question we began with: What will be life beyond the Anna Hazare movement? Not being blessed with clairvoyance, let me stick to what life *can be* beyond the Anna Hazare movement. Anna Hazare’s major contributions are to (a) bring the disconnect between the political class and the public out in the open, and in a very effective, stark way; and (b) awaken the country to the possibility of injecting some morality and probity in public life in India. Whether these can become lasting contributions will depend on how this movement or campaign is managed in the months and years to come. This management is critical because it is going to be extremely easy for the campaign to fritter away, particularly as there will be a large number of vested interests that will be very keen to help and entice it to fritter away.

The biggest contribution of course is to create an opportunity for the political class to introspect and move to a higher level of maturity and functioning. The political class, and particularly its leadership, now has an occasion and a reason to rise above the personal, the partisan, and purely party interests, to start taking national and public interests into account on a regular basis. **IF** that were to happen, the Anna Hazare movement could be life changing one in the history of the nation, and India may live happily ever after...but only **IF**.

PROFESSOR JAGDEEP S. CHHOKAR (chhokar@gmail.com) a life member of the Indian Liberal Group, is former Professor, Dean and Director In Charge of the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad and a founding member of the Association for Democratic Reforms (www.adrindia.org) and National Election Watch (NEW).

Corruption or An Attempt to Destroy Democracy?

Sharad Bailur

Is the Janlokal answerable to ANYONE? If he is not we are giving up our freedom. Given a choice between crooks in Parliament (and the economics of election demands that there can ONLY be crooks), and a Big Brother (call him the Janlokal if you will), a liberal would prefer the crooks for just one reason. They at least come back to us once in five years to get a reaffirmation of our approval. Big Brother/Janlokal will do nothing of the sort. That does NOT mean that liberals approve of corruption.

Recipe for Instant and Total Paralysis

If we are really talking about corruption, and I will continue to ask this question again and again, the issue is clearly a deficit of governance at all levels. And the answer appears to be to ensure that the deficit is tightened up as much as possible. Put yourself in the shoes of a government servant. You have been (reluctantly or inefficiently) doing the work assigned to you lubricated by bribes up to now. Tomorrow a Lokpal (pristine and uncorrupt and a firm devotee of Anna) ensures that your bribe gravy train comes to a dead halt. Will you still do the work? Or will you stop doing the work? Remember there is no clear way to punish a government servant for not doing his work. You cannot get rid of him. His job is secure under a government mandated law. *This makes any efficiency on the part of the Lokpal in doing his job a perfect recipe for instant and total paralysis of governance.* So the pressure will mount on the Lokpal to the extent that it will become impossible for the Lokpal to continue to do any useful work - or if 'Economic Determinism' works, as it must, the Lokpal himself will become the fount of corruption. There will therefore be an additional layer of bribing to be done to get your work done. This is quite apart from the constitutional questions and the threat to democracy that the Lokpal poses.

'Right to Services Acts'

Julie Gilstrap, a senior Research Associate with the Centre for Civil Society (CCS), New Delhi had this to say about the "Right to Services Act" in the CCS blog of August 31, 2011:

"Right to Services Acts"

"Amidst the furore caused by Anna's protest and the government's rethinking of their Lokpal bill, something exciting in the states seems almost to have been missed. It's not particularly flashy and it doesn't have any celebrity spokesman, but it hits on many of the issues of most concern to Anna

and may be already beginning to make a real difference on the ground. It's called a Right to Services Act, and it either has already been enacted or is being considered in at least six states, all within the last year.

"The Right to Services Acts are really pretty straightforward. They're all slightly different, but the basic format runs something like this:

"The government is responsible for delivering a set of services. These are enumerated in the legislation. Some states have seven or eight on that list; others have more than thirty. Regardless of the number, government responsibilities are clearly identified and articulated.

"The legislation specifies a specific period of time within which a service must be provided. This varies by state and by service, but perhaps a birth certificate must be issued within seven days or water supply has to be provided within thirty days. Again, the requirement is specific and clear.

"The individual government official responsible for delivery of the service is specified. It's not just "the government" or "the department" that is responsible for providing the service; it's a specific person.

"If the service isn't carried out in the time frame specified, then the responsible individual is held accountable and charged a fine. The government can make him pay by garnishing his wages. The fine is returned to the aggrieved citizen as compensation.

"The Jan Lokpal Bill has similar provisions, but I think there are at least two key ways in which the two differ, and both are, I think, reasons to be more optimistic about these state Right to Services Acts, than about the national Jan Lokpal Bill.

“First, the Right to Services Acts vary from state to state. Anna’s bill would create a central agency and then roll out parallel state agencies that would work with the national. “The whole thing would be uniform and coordinated from the centre. All standards in all states would be the same. At first, this sounds kind-of appealing, but it’s actually a weakness. Not all conditions in all states are the same. What if a state can provide some services more quickly than other states? Would it not benefit those citizens for its government to shorten the allotted timeframe for those services? What if there are services that are really crucial in some parts of the country but, in others, are less important? Would it not benefit those citizens for their state governments to have the flexibility to prioritise the services more important to local needs?

“There’s a principle here, one called “subsidiarity.” It basically means that responsibility should be taken at the lowest level possible. So, if states can handle an issue, then the central government shouldn’t get involved. If a municipality can handle something, then a state shouldn’t get involved. If communities can take care of a par-

ticular need, then the municipality should stay out of it. If a family can manage, then it should be left to them. Subsidiarity says let the states handle this for themselves. The whole process stays closer to the people that way, and more responsive to their particular needs.

“In addition, all those state Right to Services Acts are slightly different, so they act as experiments. Each state can look at what others are doing and learn from those examples. It’s a way for state governments to improve their systems and legislation over time without having to try everything directly themselves. This too is a real strength.

“The second major issue is that the Jan Lokpal Bill seeks to tackle “corruption,” an issue too big to be manageable. Yes, we’d all like to see an end to corruption, but the problem is so huge. It’s hard for even the most optimistic to see how it can be rooted out in one fell swoop. The Right to Services Acts, on the other hand, are narrow and clearly defined. They don’t take on every type of corruption, but they do effectively deal with a particular problem. By limiting their scope, the chances of

Rectitude From Above Can Also Lead to Paralysis of Governance

Two articles in recent days need to be considered with some thought and perhaps with increasingly comprehending apprehension. The first is, ‘Indian military officers voice fears on defence’, by James Lamont of the *Financial Times* of London. The second is ‘Reforms to the Rescue’ by Arvind Panagariya, a Professor at Columbia University in *The Times of India* of September 8th, 2011.

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

Mr. Panagariya’s lead article in the TOI therefore suggests some very sensible remedies. Among them: Our reform process has come to a halt. We should return and address corruption at source as we did in the case of bribes generated by the command and control economy.

It is clear that the more rules and regulations that hem in the lives of our citizens, the more the opportunities for corruption. Also, it is true that attempting to clamp down upon corruption from above, in no way lessens corruption. Besides the greater the efficiency with which any Lokpal/Janlokalpal dispensation imposes its will on the administration to eradicate corruption by punishment, the greater the paralysis in governance that will result.

The reforms process must therefore include the dismantling of as many laws and regulations as possible – laws and regulations that encourage corruption.

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being effective are increased.

“This is due to the shift in incentives the Acts brings about. The Right to Services Acts rightly recognise that people’s behaviour is driven by their personal incentives. Those incentives can be anything – money, a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction at doing the right thing, avoiding punishment. All of these are incentives, and people will act to maximise positive incentives while minimising negative ones. By introducing personal fines, the Right to Services Acts change the incentives for officials. A department fine doesn’t really affect an individual official very much. He doesn’t particularly care about that. But if the fine is coming out of his own pocket, he does care. That is far more likely to affect his behaviour.

“The Jan Lokpal Bill includes something similar, but in trying to be too far reaching, it may cease to be effective and therefore lose this power of incentives. If officials don’t really think that failure to deliver services will be traced back to them and have individual consequences, then the incentives will continue to be as they are now – to act in an inefficient and corrupt manner. The more focused Right to Services Acts more effectively harness that power of incentives.

“The Jan Lokpal Bill would abolish all Right to Services legislation in the states. It would supercede and replace any existing systems or Acts. This would be unfortunate. The aims of the Jan Lokpal Bill are noble, but if it gets in the way of measures that are already beginning to work in the states,

then it could actually move us farther away from the corruption-free India we all want to see.”

The Hard Truth

For all my friends who vociferously came out in favour of Anna Hazare’s campaign to abolish corruption: You should have something to say about this new development, quoted above. If not, the only logical conclusion to be reached is this:

All the tall talk about corruption and even the use of Anna Hazare as a mascot, was meant to hide a much more insidious and ugly *attempt to unseat a lawfully elected government*. That this government also happened to have corrupt elements in it - Raja, Kalmadi etc., came in handy, of course. There is nothing wrong with wishing to unseat a lawful government. There are legal and political procedures laid down to allow this to happen. That was not the aim. Why has the public euphoria about Anna Hazare’s campaign evaporated overnight? The aim was to do it illegally by drumming up mass protest for a cause that vanished into thin air the moment Anna gave up his fast.

‘Impatience with Democracy’

Besides a large number of highly educated people, said they were ‘impatient’ with democracy. I have had responsible friends, regular contributors to *Freedom First*, and others mentioning this repeatedly. It is surprising therefore that there was no talk of ‘benevolent dictatorship’ with shades of Mustapha Kemal Ataturk and General Musharraf thrown in for good measure.

The Luxury of Impatience

The simplest and most effective method of committing suicide in a totalitarian dictatorship is to go and tell the dictator that you are impatient with his regime. Imagine talking like that to Hitler or Stalin. Auschwitz or Belsen-Bergen if you were lucky or the meat-hooks in one case; and the Gulag if not the firing squad in the other. Patience is a virtue forced upon its citizens only in alternatives to democracy which, of course, are all dictatorial in one form or another. They are most often overthrown, most often violently, only after decades: The Communists got kicked out of the old Soviet Union after having ruled it from 1918 to 1996. The Nazis got killed in a War and ruled between 1935 and 1945. Mubarak got kicked out after 30 years of ‘service to his nation’. Gaddhafi is being kicked out after 40 years. The Cuban communists continue to retain power despite its people’s best attempts to rid themselves of the incubus after more than forty years. The people of Burma got under a military regime when Gen Ne Win overthrew a democratically elected Prime Minister U Nu back in 1958 and they still continue to be under the harrow. Yes, it is people who suffer dictatorships that need patience - a lot of it.

A number of people have told me they are impatient with our democracy. This is a very good sign. It means that they want to control their own lives more actively. It is a sign of active citizenship. People like us who live in democracies can afford the luxury of impatience because we have the right and the means to get rid of those who would rule over us, and do it legally, without recourse to violent means.

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But then of course, Vladimir Lenin's cohorts and commissars were impatient with democracy. They were all educated people. Thyssen and Krupp, Siemens and Hoechst, Zeiss and Junkers, Blohm and Voss, Messerschmitt and Bolkow, Ferdinand Porsche who produced the first engine for the Volkswagen in 1932 on Hitler's orders and others in Nazi Germany: They were all impatient with democracy. And they all were, or had, highly educated people working for them. They supported Hitler very enthusiastically. Remember Hitler's Armaments Minister Albert Speer? As a Nazi, he was impatient with democracy. He was a great architect and highly educated. It was not a lack of education about democracy that was responsible for what happened. Speer's book, 'Inside the Third Reich' written in his Spandau prison cell is very revealing: Absolute power corrupts absolutely. Hitler wanted absolute power, and he got it, just because, 'this brilliant but sheep like nation' (Churchill's quote), was not

vigilant enough to stop him.

So what was the corruption that our Anna supporters and impatient friends wanted to eradicate? The corruption was our democracy and our Constitution. Let us call this particular spade a shovel if necessary, but it stands. Absolute power - that is what our 'impatient' people wanted as well. Let us be quite clear - It was not just an attempt to unseat a government unlawfully; it was also an attempt to destroy and sweep away our liberal Constitution and the freedom that is its essential hallmark, in favour of a dictatorship, aided by the electronic media including the internet. It did not succeed.

If there is a God let us fervently thank Him.

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Anna's Revolution – Cause and Aftermath

Firoze Hirjikaka

So where do we go from here?

Reams of newsprint have been expended in detailing every aspect of Anna Hazare's people-power revolution. This has been a laudable, if somewhat excessive, endeavour. However, what has not been adequately highlighted is the object lesson that Anna's movement has provided for political parties who profess to be the voice of the people, or at least a particular community. What has set Anna's methods apart is that he has consistently exhorted his followers not to resort to any form of violence, even in the face of grave provocation. For example, he urged his followers to remain calm even if he was forcibly removed from Ramlila Maidan on the pretext of concern for his health. And the people responded with great enthusiasm. Contrast this with the monotonously familiar tactics employed by outfits like the Shiv Sena and the MNS who take up a jingoistic "cause" - without invitation and ostensibly on behalf of the "people" - and issue veiled threats of retaliating in "typical Sena/MNS style" if their demands are not met. Hopefully Anna's spectacular success will cause them to reflect on the error of their ways - but I'm not holding my breath.

So what does one make of the whole Anna Hazare-Lokpal-Congress brouhaha? On the face of it, the Congress

party comes off as a collection of bungling morons stumbling from one avoidable catastrophe to another. The sequence of events is now the stuff of legend: Manish Tiwari's foot-in-mouth aggression against Anna; Anna's ill-thought arrest and quick release; the list goes on. It was almost as if the Congress was tired of governing and was inviting the BJP to please relieve them of the burden - a death wish, as it were. But power is a heady drug, isn't it? No one gives it up willingly, least of all politicians. So what is going on?

It could be that the Congress was guilty of the twin failings of arrogance and disdain. When they fielded articulate and intelligent luminaries like Kapil Sibal and P.Chidambaram against a man they perhaps regarded as a glorified country bumpkin, they may have believed it would be a walkover. But the bumpkin proved to be too smart for the geniuses. He was too savvy to engage them in a debate he was aware he could not win. Instead he simply ignored them and went over their heads directly to the masses. Ordinarily, he would have received a lukewarm response, but he very cleverly latched on to the one issue that had long impacted the maximum number of people and, besides, had been featured by the media,

ad-nauseum, for months on end: corruption. It helped that the chief perpetrators of this malady were politicians; a tribe most Indians love to hate. The icing on the cake was that even some high profile entrepreneurs and their underlings were also found guilty; and the common man has always been envious and somewhat resentful of the obscene wealth amassed by these perceived parasites.

Suddenly Anna had an “army” of raucous, flag waving zealots who gloried in their two minutes of fame on television channels and thereby attracted even more recruits. It was as if Cairo’s Tahrir Square had been transplanted in New Delhi’s Ramlila Maidan. The hapless Congress leaders could only watch and gape. They were bemused and eventually overwhelmed. Worse, their Supreme Leader was out of the country due to illness and not available to hold their hand. And of course, the BJP sensed a golden opportunity to kick their hated rivals when they were down – and took it gleefully. Above all, the prospect of Anna dying due to his fast – and the Congress being blamed for it – was too disastrous to contemplate. The Grand Old Party went into encephalitic shock and meekly gave in to conditions on the Lok Pal Bill that it had been vehemently opposing for months.

It wasn’t all serious however. Providing entertainment were the likes of Om Puri and Kiran Bedi; the former fulminating openly against politicians and articulating the opinions held by a majority of citizens; and the latter getting carried away by the moment and putting in a Filmfare Award worthy performance. For sure, there seems to be a universal perception among the populace that our politicians are uniformly corrupt; and those who ridicule them - like Om Puri and Kiran Bedi recently - are regarded as heroes. But are those judging them as pure as the driven snow? I found it hugely ironical that the very same taxi and auto drivers who took out a procession in support of Anna Hazare merrily fleeced passengers, as usual, on the day when bus and train services in Mumbai were thrown out of gear by recalcitrant unions - and that too while Hazare was still on fast. And just recently, we read about how the BMC “chabbiwallas” who regulate the flow to our taps continue to extort the public by tactics which are nothing short of crude blackmail. Then again, a newspaper report revealed how the Department of Women and Child Welfare has been squandering funds on grossly overpriced medicines, utensils, etc., most of which never reached the *anganwadi* children for whom they were ostensibly meant. I can cite numerous instances where we the people - who were having a gala time sporting “Anna” caps and waving flags do not hesitate for a moment to grease palms to “get their work done”. Before

we start complaining sanctimoniously - and hypocritically - it would be appropriate to turn the focus on ourselves. Who are the hypocrites here?

Now that Anna’s fast is over, his team is trying to keep the momentum going, although I fear it appears to be more symbolic than effective. Volunteers from the NGO “India Against Corruption (IAC)” are proposing to go round the city asking civic and government officials to sign a declaration stating that they will neither receive bribes or indulge in any form of corruption. Although well meaning, these IAC guys seem to be living in la-la land. It has been well established that our public officials belong to one of the most shameless species on the planet. Even repeated exposure by the media and entrapment by the Anti-Corruption Bureau has proved woefully ineffective in curbing their malpractices. And now, signing a piece of paper is supposed to make them honest? Give me a break. All this will accomplish is to make the bribe takers less brazen and carry out the transactions behind closed doors. Besides, why should the entire onus fall upon public servants? Don’t forget that corruption flourishes mainly because there are far more citizens prepared to pay bribes that those ready to accept them. What is going to change their mindset? Even after the public spectacles during Anna Hazare’s fast, it is pretty much back to business as usual. Instead of expending considerable effort and manpower on such fruitless endeavours, the IAC should spend their energy on trapping the wrong doers in the act and ensuring that they are not let off with a mere transfer or suspension. This is the only deterrent that has a chance of working.

So where do we go from here? At the moment, we are at a sort of crossroad. The “people” have discovered they have power, but they are not sure how to use it. Everyone agrees that the present system of governance needs to change, but they are unclear about how to achieve this. Waving flags and shouting slogans is not going to accomplish anything concrete, nor are cosmetic measures like signature campaigns. The government was badly rattled by Anna’s *tour de force*, but now they have time to breathe – and to strategize. The Lokpal Bill is now in Parliament; familiar territory where the government is adept at obfuscating and procrastinating. The government is hoping that, over time, the peoples’ passion will abate and wither away; and unfortunately, past experience supports this theory.

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What Sad Times! What Sad Doings!

K. K. Pathak

I wrote about Anna Hazare's fast at Jantar Mantar, saying a few words by way of appreciation about him. (Freedom First, No. 527, May 2011, page 11). The way he has been conducting all these months compels me to revise my opinion about him.

I must frankly tell the reader that I have nothing to do with any political party in the country. I may be utterly wrong in my revised assessment of Anna in the eyes of the so-called supporters of Anna, including the VHP, the RSS, the BJP, apart from a large brigade of unemployed youth having nothing to do constructive in life and be a burden on parents they could hardly abide. Neither education, either at home or at school or even at college and University, is completely devoid of any civic-orientation with a clear goal of fostering and inculcating civic virtues which go to make for a democratic set-up meaningful in producing good citizenry responsible enough to let democracy be a functional affair instead of a guided one. It has been so for these 65 years in the absence of a well-informed public opinion to check the unbridled horses of our political leadership. Neither leaders of society nor even the so-called religious leadership have done anything to help build a national character which could sustain and let our democratic set-up run smoothly. If the head of a family is not an ideal for his family members, thousands of Annas will fail to achieve anything in wiping out corruption which has been percolating from the top down to the bottom with frightful speed ruining the social ethos. A crisis of character has gripped very badly the political leadership, culminating in a bigger crisis of national character. Corruption is the result of this unhappy situation.

Those of us who used to take on Jawaharlal Nehru for corruption in all walks of life are no longer effective in rousing the people to let the nation come out of the quagmire of the crisis of character we witness today.

Nehru cared a fig for any criticism of corruption. His ruinous policies let loose in the country seeds which sprouted and germinated in his lifetime, becoming tiny plants during Indira Gandhi's tenure and now turning into gigantic trees which thousands of Mahatma Gandhis will fail to fell to cleanse the Augean stable our country has come to become today! Since our society has gone corrupt, neither legislature nor Executive nor even the Judiciary is free from the deadly virus of corruption. Religion and

Politics are big game for scoundrels in the country. Ramdev, who is called a "yoga guru" by the electronic media, is the last example before us. He could amass 20 cores of rupees in a short span of less than 20 years! The most enterprising businessmen took more time.

Anna was born in 1940 and left service in the Army after the 1965 war with Pakistan. He served the country as a military man as a driver for less than five years! He claims to have served the country as an Army man. What he did after leaving the Army service is not worth describing here. He might have done some good work in his village and thereafter in Maharashtra through his crusade against corruption, getting three State ministers in Maharashtra removed. I occasionally read about his activities in the national newspapers. What he has been doing over the last six months is a matter of deep concern for he is for anarchy in the name of wiping out corruption.

In my considered opinion, Anna is not a Gandhi in his thinking. I honestly and earnestly refuse to recognise him as a Gandhian of any consequence as I stoutly refuse to call Ramdev a Yogi, least of all a Patanjali Yogi. In my opinion, Anna, as so many others in the past, has been misusing the tools of Mahatma Gandhi like Fast Unto Death, *Dharnas*, and other many truthful ways of rousing his countrymen from the slumber of slavery these days. I doubt Anna has even a little idea about the genesis of corruption and all the more little idea about how to curb corruption, let alone wipe out corruption lock, stock and barrel, as he so loudly claims to do. These are unadulterated facts with neither any bias nor prejudice for or against the establishment and Anna.

I am in full sympathy with Anna for his crusade against corruption and respectfully differ from him on the ways and means he has been adopting to achieve the goal of curbing corruption. Vast crowds that have thoughtlessly rallied behind Anna have made him all the more ambitious resulting in his arrogance not to see reason. What is more is the fact that the most corrupt national and regional parties are lending support to Anna. Neither the BJP nor

Mulayam's Socialist Party nor Mayawati's BSP are free from the virus of corruption. As for the unemployed youth, taking to crime as a whole-time profession, along with the tacit support of the RSS and the BJP cannot wipe out corruption. If this is "Anna-Anna" throughout the country, I should like to tell my countrymen that we are running with very frightful speed on the path of national ruin.

My opinion about Anna changed on 5th June this year after the 4th June crackdown on Ramdev, who has also joined hands with Anna now in his crusade against corruption. Anna's comment on 5th June was: The Government of India would be taught a lesson soon. This comment shocked me so much that I doubted Anna was not at all a Gandhian, as Mahatma Gandhi never held out such threats even to the British Raj in his struggle for freedom from foreign rule. Anna is not only ambitious for name and fame, but also totally ignorant about the malady of corruption and how to tackle it. If Anna is a man of any moral scruples, he should lead a moral revolution, a peaceful revolution of ideas, in the country with the support of the largest silent section of our society. I quite remember Jayaprakash Narayan's crusade against Indira Gandhi in the name of "total revolution", letting students abstain from their classes and coming out on the roads with wanton destruction of national property. I wrote him a letter at his Kadamkuan residence in Patna asking him

to ask his brigade to sit in 'dharna' at their homes and asking their parents to feed them with money earned through honest means. Jayaprakash paid no heed to my advice for bringing about a "total revolution" in the real sense.

Anna's inflated ego is amiable to no reason, as things are unfolding with time. He is full of self-contradiction as there is hardly any clarity of thought excepting resorting to fast unto death, creating anarchy in the name of any meaningful reforms. He could get three ministers by resorting to such fasts in Maharashtra. Could he curb corruption in that State? Narendra Modi, who indulged in a heinous crime by letting Muslims be slaughtered, is a good man in Anna's opinion. Where was Anna when Gujarat was burning on account of a wild fire of communalism let loose by Modi. The upright and honest IPS officers who have come out with facts damaging enough to let Modi be shown the door out are victimised by Modi and Anna is a silent spectator!

Let the readers take up the cause of educating the ignorant people. That alone will do good to the ailing nation.

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Who Moved My India?

H. R. Bapu Satyanarayana

The eagerness of the Congress to come to power was very much evident, when against saner counsels of those who opposed partition, it succeeded in muzzling their views during the historic meeting on June 14, 1947 when the decision to partition of the country was taken. From then on the Congress has never camouflaged its intention to stick to power by hook or by crook.

To retain power the most powerful ideological anchor that the Congress latched on to was their concept of secularism. For this very reason the preamble to the Constitution was amended in 1976. This has been used for cultivating vote bank politics particularly the Muslim vote bank. Except for the Congress's symbolic gestures to proclaim to the world their 'secularism' by appointing some educated Muslims to high office it has done little to ameliorate the lot of Muslims, a large part of whom still wallow in poverty. No real effort has been made to bring them on the national mainstream. On the other hand It has sought to impress Muslims as in the Shah Banu case and steadfastly refusing

to make a common civil law. The special status given to Jammu and Kashmir stems from this same mentality and has become a millstone around its neck now. This is not to imply that Muslims must be treated as second class citizens. As Indians they have every right to be brought into the national mainstream as equal partners. In fact, Congress policy has actually worked against the interests of the Muslims compelling a large number of them to live in ghettos.

The recent initiative of the National Advisory Council in framing the Communal Violence Bill has all the potential to further dividing the communal divide. It is

this mindset that has delayed carrying out the supreme court judgement in the case of Afzal Guru who attacked our parliament and catering to the whims of the 28/11 terrorist Ajmal Kasab pronounced guilty by the court and sentence to death but who continues to live in style at huge cost to the public exchequer.

Distortion in Governance

All these distortions in governance have arisen mainly because of the greed for power. The oil that greases the route to power is the deadly mixture of money and influence which acts as a powerful aphrodisiac that has given birth to corruption. That is how politicians and people with money power and influence have been able to manipulate court decisions in their favour. The frustration of people was building up when they witnessed the glaring examples of a series of cases of people escaping from the clutches of the law. The case of Jessica Lal murder is a case in point. The judgement in this case had created cynicism and dismay among the people. When the media joined the public outcry the judgments were reversed and the guilty punished. This brought about a transformation in the mood of the people who realized that they are not that helpless.

The Congress party in power was obviously out of step with what was happening in the country. Its political posturing revealed a one point agenda to create disaffection in the minds of people against the other mainstream political party viewing its emergence as a threat to the Congress and the dynasty that controls it. A healthy democracy can only endure if a responsible opposition is encouraged.

Corruption Galore

What we are seeing today is the spectacle of two mainstream political parties frittering away their energies locked in a fierce power struggle trading charges and countercharges while the governance has gone for a toss. The government has subverted all systems to toe its line leading to an impregnable nexus between politicians and bureaucrats revealed so clearly in the Radia tapes exposing how corporate giants and some media controlled by them have joined the bandwagon. The Congress party has realised that the fulcrum that tips the scale in its favour to remain in power is money power. This is the primary reason why the country is steeped in corruption and the reason why so many scams are happening..

The Congress keeps repeating *ad naseum* that the

country has progressed. Nobody disputes the fact that there has been tremendous technological and economic progress. But the plain fact is that while the urban population may have tasted the fruits of economic liberalization, the vast majority of the rural population who actually serve as the bread basket for the rest of India has been left far behind. It is this serious mismatch that is hurting India.

Rise of Anna Hazare

It is in this situation the 73-year old Anna came from the remote village of Ralegan Siddhi in Maharashtra and people could easily identify themselves with him for he was in every sense a representative of the *aam admi*. Anna Hazare's reputation followed with his record of being a giant killer laying low with his fasts many a powerful politician in the state of Maharashtra and this was perhaps why there was an immediate rapport with the youth who gravitated to his support in large numbers. What is unique is the fact that despite a sea of humanity joining behind Anna's crusade, the movement has been non-violent and peaceful. Slogan shouting, music and bhajans and mass hunger strikes in support have been the feature in which men and women of all ages and children, of different languages, religions etc have participated. It is a sort of non-violent revolution that is going to usher a new mood with a message that the corrupt can no longer have the field free as earlier to loot public money with impunity.

The Government Checkmates Itself

The way the UPA reacted only served to increase the stature of Anna and strengthening his case though the intention was to drive him to a corner and do its best to discredit his crusade and vilify him personally. When they found that the crowd only increased, they developed cold feet and entered into dialogue. What happened after Anna went on fast and 13 days later called it off when the government and parliament agreed to take him seriously has been comprehensively covered by the audio-visual-print media on an almost hourly basis as never before as in a cricket match!

Triumph of Will

In the initial stages of Anna's fast the senior ministers Messrs Kapil Sibal, Chidambaram and Ambika Soni held the stage trying to deflate Anna's crusade but only managed to antagonise Anna. The government had to rely on its trusted trouble shooter finance minister Pranab Mukherjee to get into the act. This culminated in the meet-

ing of the Lok Sabha – perhaps the only session of its kind that was viewed perhaps by the largest number of viewers. When all members belonging to all parties made an appeal to Anna to end his fast. Anna responded in a conciliatory mood and put forth his three core demands: a) Inclusion of Lokayukta in all the states; b) a mechanism for bringing of the lower bureaucracy in the ambit of the Lok Pal Bill; and c) Citizens' Charter. Even at this late stage the government tried to play games but the mortal fear of the dire consequences that may follow, if anything happened to Anna's health finally prevailed. With the Lok Sabha adopting 'a sense of house' declaration accepting in principle these three core demands.

It is the Beginning of Change

It is too early to say whether Anna's fast has yielded the desired objective but it is the beginning. As rightly expressed by Anna, the battle is half won and he was emphatic that he will continue his fight if the Jan Lokpal Bill does not become a reality and more importantly at

an early date. There are many hurdles to cross and the entrenched political class will not rest for it will invoke every constitutional stratagem putting road blocks in its implementation for it holds a real threat to its hold on power. Already dissenting voices like that it is only an urban phenomenon, the Muslims and Dalits have not been a part of the movement are making the rounds to divert attention. In addition Anna has touched upon other issues like electoral reforms etc. which makes the ruling political class wary. For the youth of the country who lent such massive support and who were not a part of India's independence movement and for the rest of us fortunate to have been a witness to the making of history, the Anna movement has blazed a new trail across the country and the world for its unique and unparalleled nature - a peaceful crusade nay, revolution, as nowhere else in the world.

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“In the Name of God, Go.”

Nagesh Kini

Do Governments as well as political parties need a popular mass upsurge across the length and breadth of the country to twist their arms to bring into operation an enactment that was first introduced 42 long years ago, but always shoved unceremoniously into the back burner all these years by successive governments at the Centre led by parties of practically all hues and colours?

What Cromwell demanded in the English Parliament centuries ago, now applies to India to day. Way back on 20 April, 1653, speaking at the Rump Parliament debate, Oliver Cromwell had said “You have sat too long for any good you have been doing lately. Depart and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go.” Google's further quotes of Cromwell's address by Thomas Salmon are very aptly applicable to conditions in today's India. The language, if reproduced here *in toto*, may be deemed to be extremely offensive in the Indian context as ‘unparliamentary’ and possibly attract contempt charges. Those curious can access it verbatim on the net under Oliver Cromwell.

It required the 5-medals decorated ex-serviceman Anna Hazare with his India Against Corruption Movement to metamorphose the common men and women into a dynamic assertive society. In Annaji, a genuine leader with an impeccable and excellent track record, India found someone ideal enough to lead the charge to galvanize the

masses after turning around a once desolate Ralegan Siddhi into a haven of peace and prosperity.

We are a country swamped with scams galore, the Opposition trying to play it safe by adopting the silent mode – they too are in it somewhere down the line. The present ruling UPA government has been a great disappointment and the Prime Minister is seen to be irrelevant. Four of the five top states are run by non-Congress governments. The government's own economic advisers believe that the UPA has failed on the mandate for reforms promised in the 2009 Election Manifesto on stepping up infrastructure development, more particularly roads, ports and power; failed to stem the spiralling food and milk prices, runaway corruption and loot of the exchequer. It has lost political capital following the Cash for Vote scandal, the 2G, Commonwealth Games, Taj Corridor and Adarsh scams. These have resulted in a policy paralysis, governance deficit and stymied reforms crucial for rapid economic growth. For the common Indian citizen, the

Congress Party's election slogan of *aam admi ke sath Congress ka hath* has become a totally irrelevant cliché. Three MPs are in Delhi's Tihar jail; about 170 have criminal charges, some absconding. The next Election should have none of them. In future we, the electorate must have the Right to Reject on the ballot paper and the Right to Recall them mid-term when they fail to perform.

It is high time we, the people, demand that the government seek a fresh vote of people's confidence right now, long before the next General Election scheduled for 2014. The Election Commission needs to be directed to initiate the electoral process to conduct snap polls not later than December 2011 which can bring in a new Government in office by Republic Day 2012.

The Government initially went into the futile exercise of asserting the supremacy of the Parliament over civil society. They ignored the inalienable right of the people to demand good governance. The people are sovereign masters, they are rendered helpless spectators when their elected representatives turn unruly freebooters throwing around papers, microphones and even high value currency note bundles into the well of the House.

The people are fed up of stock phrases and stale notions on democracy, the supremacy of Parliamentary processes which are now meaningless clichés as they have been perverted and subverted by the very same political class of MPs/MLAs who were expected to function as custodians of people's interests. Their callous failures have left the people with no alternative but to take charge by coming on the road to show who are the bosses.

The politicians have been mouthing the nonsense of Gandhian methods that were relevant in the bygone days of the Hunter Commission enquiring into the Jallianwalla massacre. It is now the time for the people to be fearless in fighting injustice by being steadfast in upholding their rights conferred by their Constitution that begins with "We, the people..." There is now an emerg-

ing trend of genuine interest for protecting and preserving the deeper democratic traditions going beyond just supporting movements by rallying in their thousands all across the length and breadth of India from Ramlila/India Gate at Delhi to Azad Maidan at Mumbai, the Freedom Park at Bengaluru to the Marina Beach at Chennai. The turnout of entire families with youth and kids at these mammoth gatherings speaks for itself.

It now becomes imperative for those in power to wake up to the reality of creating People-friendly policies and institutional mechanisms to demonstrate People Power with effective tools like the Right to Information to access information that was hitherto not available to the common man.

The Central Vigilance Commission in its Annual Report 2010, tabled in the Parliament on August 26 deplores the state of affairs in India when it states – "There is little debate and discussion (in the Parliament) for eliciting preventing and corrective actions" on its findings and recommendations, and goes on to add "Ineffectiveness" of current anti-corruption efforts has led to the citizens losing faith in the system and institutional mechanisms available.

The citizens are now becoming more sensitized enough not to bend or break the law and prepared to swear on oath not to grease palms to ensure quicker disposal of their papers. They need to make fuller use of the simpler existing alternative mechanisms to seek information under the Right to Information Act and make effective use of the information obtained to get things moving the straight way. I say this with full confidence because, I, myself have succeeded in making good use of this low cost-effective approach and I have no hesitation in commending it to my fellow men and women

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Freedom First Digitisation: Missing copies

The work on digitisation of *Freedom First* is underway. The following 44 issues are missing. This is an appeal to long time subscribers who may have preserved copies. Should you be in possession of any of the issues listed below or have passed them on to libraries may we borrow them from you with the promise to return them to you after they have been digitised.

YEAR	NUMBERS	MONTH/S	YEAR	NUMBERS	MONTH/S
1964	151	December	1965	152 to 163	January to December
1966	164 to 175	January to December	1967	176 to 187	January to December
1976	284 to 289	July to December	1982	351	May

We look forward to your helping us to locate the missing numbers – Editor

The Anna Hazare Agitation : Crisis of Credibility

A Management Analysis

Sharu S. Rangnekar

Managing any situation requires “Power”. Power is best defined by the Sanskrit phrase “Kartum, Akartum, Anyatha Kartum Wa” (To do, To undo or To do otherwise).

Thirty five hundred years ago Confucius gave the basic sources of power which he called “Guns, Rice and Faith”. Translated into management language it means power comes from fear created by possibility of damage, inducement through ability of giving benefit and credibility which gives the affinity amongst those involved. During the Anna Hazare agitation the word “blackmailing” was bandied about as a bad word. In fact all means of power involve blackmail by fear, temptation or faith.

Anna Hazare made a significant statement during his agitation that he is not only using Gandhiji, but he is also using Shivaji. Gandhiji’s approach was to create faith through non-violent agitation. Shivaji’s strategy was to use what was called in history as “*Ganimi Kawa*” (guerrilla tactics). It comprised having a force attacking suddenly and moving away before it was dealt with - causing damage without suffering much damage itself. With his *Ganimi Kawa* attacks, Shivaji created terror in the heart of the mighty Mughul army; once he attacked even the tent of Aurangzeb and cut the summit of his tent. These tactics demoralized the Mughul army and ultimately led to their retreat.

Anna Hazare used the basic source of power: Faith/Credibility. Everybody was talking against corruption but most political party leaders were suspected of being corrupt themselves and hence did not have credibility. Anna Hazare used this to his advantage. His agitation for the last twenty years did not generate any assets for himself. He did not have even his own house and stayed in a temple. This created a high credibility for him.

Government on the other hand tried to fight this credibility by using force. Force or temptations tend to have a rebound effect. The Government steps to imprison Anna Hazare and harass “Team Anna” had this rebound effect. Government tactics did work in the Baba Ramdev case because Baba Ramdev having accumulated thousands of crores of rupees did not have credibility in the eyes of the common man - only his loyal followers be-

lieved him. Anna did not create any such followers. He encouraged people to wear a cap saying “I am Anna Hazare”. This created a sense of identity which is the source of highest motivation. Consequently the tactics that worked in the case of Baba Ramdev had an opposite effect when used against Anna Hazare. As somebody put it, these were instrumental in recruiting followers for Anna Hazare. He insisted on non-violence causing no damage to any public or private property. This increased his credibility. The Government had no antidote for this and even now is in confusion as how to deal with this situation.

Historically we had experience of similar agitations in the 1930’s by Gandhiji and 1974 by Jayaprakash Narayan. Gandhiji’s agitation along with the economic and political upheavals of the Second World War forced all colonial nations to give up their colonies and Gandhiji was considered the father of our independence.

In the case of Jayaprakash Narayan, the agitation led to a change of regime and the opposition came into power under the banner of the “Janata Party”. However, credibility can be lost faster than it can be acquired and the Janata Party lost its credibility due to internal strife. As put by M.J.Akbar:

Barbad chaman ko karne ko Ek hi ullu kafi hai. Har shakh pe ullu baithe ho Anjam-e-Gulistan kya hoga. (To ruin a garden one owl is sufficient. When every tree has a owl on it – What can be the state of the garden!)

Internal strife diminished the credibility of the Janata Party and brought back Mrs. Indira Gandhi to power.

The government is trying to create internal strife in Team Anna and in the opposition parties which are backing Anna Hazare. Only if the government is successful in breaking the group because of internal strife does it have a chance to reduce the credibility of Anna Hazare and rebuild its own credibility.

The government is losing credibility for the follow-

ing reasons:

1. Cases of government ministers and bureaucrats involved in corruption.
2. Weak and delayed efforts to deal with corruption cases,
3. Increase in consumer prices: The rising prices are affecting people more directly and daily – even more than corruption.
4. Delay in taking steps (even when government committees have recommended these steps) to curb terrorism – including naxalite activities.

The steps to improve government's credibility are:

1. Leadership which is relatively free from the stigma of corruption.
2. Visible efforts to curb corruption and recovery of black money

3. Control on rising prices.
4. Integrated nation-wide efforts to deal with terrorism.

The traditional strategies using affinity groups of caste, community, language, religion, state etc., to create vote-banks might not prove effective in the onslaught of the Anna Hazare type of agitation. Concrete and visible demonstration of steps taken to improve the situation will be the only way the agitation can be countered.

Particularly in the next step when Anna is likely to use the Shivaji strategy. He will get people to gherao each of the Loksabha members to ensure voting for Anna version of the bill. It will be again called coercion and blackmailing, but as long as the “aam public” is behind it, it will succeed. Anna cannot be countered by force or inducements – because this is a battle for credibility.

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On Social Networking and Electric Power

For those under the age of thirty, Facebook, Twitter and text messaging have made the internet a global electronic café, a dance floor, a means of exchanging lecture notes, even an annexe to the bedroom. The Arab spring, already turning into an Arab winter of sectarianism, began with a street vendor in Tunisia setting fire to himself. But this fails to explain the sudden appearance of Arabia's previously politically supine youth on the streets of several different countries at almost the same time. In each the authorities, fearing demonstrations, switched off the internet. This was to invite mayhem. Social networking is as addictive as heroin. The young, many of whom merely wanted to go on messaging, poured onto the streets only to be met with an exercise in instant politicisation – government bullets and baton charges. Governments cannot outguess the internet. Osama Bin Laden's death was twittered before the White House announced it. Close ups of the body of Karim Fakhrawi, founder of Bahrain's leading independent newspaper Al-Wasat (his death was officially described as 'kidney failure') were on the internet half an hour after his corpse reached his relatives. The King of Bahrain may be an American client but these pictures will bring him down. China which fears the net has a government sponsored equivalent of Facebook, 'Renren' where the young can flirt and date under proper political supervision, but the authorities are like Canute bidding an electronic tide. As Wikileaks has shown, it gets in everywhere. If a server goes down in Beirut, one in Stockholm will take its place. If Stockholm fails there is one in Pretoria. It is everywhere but nowhere. It cannot be silenced except by one thing: lack of electricity. The growing number of internet farms, many the size of villages, demand enormous quantities of power. There are more than 5 million servers in the US. The need to keep the web alive – governments depend on it to rule – has become a highly significant book entry in the calculations of energy planners. Despite the fact that only the atom can satisfy our general need for electrical power the Greens and Liberal Democrats intend to do everything they can to prevent Britain building new nuclear power stations. If they succeed only the very rich will have twentyfour hour heat, light and telephones. The rest of us will live among brownouts and outages, ration queues and standpipes.

Excerpted from the editorial in *The Salisbury Review - Summer 2011*. The editorial is with reference to an article by Professor Christie Davies in that issue on "Nuclear Panic". Readers will be glad to know that Professor Davies has very kindly agreed on the subject for *Freedom First* readers. Look for it in our November edition - Ed.

Declining Child Sex Ratio in Maharashtra

J. S. Apte

There is a strong son-preference and severe neglect of and scant attention to the girl child.

Census 2001 reveals India's population at 1.21 billion. This seventh census in post-Independent India brings out a starkly declining sex ratio in general and child sex ratio in particular. Child sex ratio is the number of girls to every 1000 boys in the 0 to 6 age group. This has brought to centre stage the imbalance in child sex ratio impacting health and development issues.

Selective Abortion

A recent on-line study published in *The Lancet* (May 24, 2011) reveals a growing imbalance between the numbers of girls and boys aged 0 to 6 years. The three-round National Family Health Survey data between the period 1990 to 2005 covered 0.25 million births. The survey has shown that selective abortions of the girl child specially in the case of pregnancies after a first born girl has increased to a much greater extent. The sex ratio in the second order births was skewed, proving that selective abortion of girls was quite expensive with families preferring not to have any more girls. The multi-author study found that selective abortions were between 4.2 and 12.1 million between 1980 to 2011. A higher rate of increase was observed in the 1990's than in 2000's.

During the 50-year period 1961-2011, child sex ratio has declined by 46 i.e. 960 in 1961 to 914 in 2011. Census 1971 showed an increase by 4 (960 to 964). The PCPNDT Act (Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques) (Position of sex selection) Act 1994) formulated to control sex determination and sex selection abortions 17 years ago has helped to file criminal cases against 130 Sonography centres since 1994. Till date 40 cases have been decided, 17 doctors were punished and the rest were acquitted due to lack of evidence. However, 94 cases are still pending. This is the situation as far as implementation of the Act is concerned.

2011 Census Findings

Child sex ratio has declined in 431 of the 641 districts in the various States of India. Surprisingly it has improved in 149 districts. Shocking decline in numbers was reported in 6 districts of Jammu & Kashmir and 1 each in Sikkim, Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra. The

decline in numbers is between the range 73-173. J&K Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah posted on Twitter "We are the worst state after Punjab and Haryana. If anything needed a mass movement and public appeal, it would be this." A hoarding put up in a busy intersection in Srinagar says, "How would the world be like without women, give it a thought".

Maharashtra was the first State in India to pass an Act, the Maharashtra Prenatal Sex Determination Act, 1988. The Government of India initiated suitable follow up action by introducing legislative measures in 1994, 2003-04 and 2005. According to a Survey conducted in 2004 by Dr. Sanjivani Mulay and Dr. Nagarajan of the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (Pune), 78% of sonography centres in the State were located in Mumbai, Pune, Nasik and Kolhapur districts of which nearly 50% were set up in the Municipal Corporation areas. According to the Survey, 88 Talukas of 19 districts in the State have a child sex ratio of less than 900. Ahmednagar District tops the list with 13 Talukas, next comes Jalgaon with 12 Talukas, Solapur and Aurangabad 7 each, Pune, Satara and Beed 6 each, Kolhapur and Osmanabad 5 each, Sangli and Jalna 4 each, Buldana and Nasik 3 each, Vashim 2 and Dhulia, Latur, Thane, Hingoli, Chandrapur 1 each. It is a shame that Pune, Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara and Solapur, the progressive and fairly rich districts of the State, Ahmednagar with the highest number of sugar co-operatives and Jalgaon, the seat of North Maharashtra University have a child sex ratio of less than 900. This shows a lack of public education. Awareness programmes have to be conducted in women's empowerment and male education.

Beed District in the Marathwada region is among the 10 worst districts of India with a child sex ratio of 801. Ms. Pankaja Munde-Palwe, MLA from the district and a member of the Committee against Female Infanticide observed, "It is a shame that my district has such a poor sex ratio. We consider women as goddesses, but apparently do not want girls to be born".

Maharashtra is regarded as a progressive state. It has a long tradition of social reform and social service. There is a strong son-preference and severe neglect of

and scant attention to the girl child. According to the State Health Department's information, 4,68,680 females foeticides took place in the State during the last ten years. 107 female foeticides per day. These figures are shocking and call for early urgent action.

It is a welcome sign that the State Government has started vigorously to control the decline in child sex ratio. 273 sonography centres are being sealed, medical practitioners who have been found violating the PCPNDT Act are arrested. Public sentiment is being expressed in the form of rallies, demonstrations and sting operations.

Rules, regulations, restrictions and laws have a definite role to play in curbing this evil practice. At the same time, a liberal, tolerant, broad mindset has to be nurtured in childhood, developed in adolescents and sustained in adulthood. This can be achieved through education at all levels. Constant awareness is the only way.

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Child Sex Ratio in Maharashtra

<i>Year</i>	<i>CSR</i>
1991	946
2001	913
2011	883

The Top Five and Bottom Five Districts in Maharashtra

<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Top Five Districts</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2011</i>
1.	Gadchiroli	980	956
2.	Chandrapur	951	926
3.	Gondiya	978	944
4.	Ratnagiri	961	940
5.	Bhandara	964	939
<i>Sr. No.</i>	<i>Bottom Five Districts</i>	<i>2001</i>	<i>2011</i>
1.	Beed	939	801
2.	Jalgaon	925	829
3.	Ahmednagar	959	839
4.	Buldhana	945	842
5.	Kolhapur	931	845

Ideal CSR – 952 females per 1000 males.

Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

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

Anna's Agitation : Attack on Democracy?

1. Anna's agitation ended successfully (August 27) with the Government conceding, in principle, his major demands, which should have been accepted without the fast. Unfortunately, the Government had made up its mind not to give importance to Anna and did everything to defeat his movement. First, it ignored Anna, and then it tried to side-track him by including his team in the drafting committee without meaning to accept its suggestions. It simultaneously started denigrating the Anna team, even alleging that Anna was steeped in corruption from head to toe. Seeing that this did not work, the Government changed track and decided to crush the agitation by arresting Anna and his men, pretending that it was all the work of the Delhi Police. When that too boomeranged, the agitation was dubbed as an attack on democracy and an affront to the Constitution. This deceptive chant was supported by many of our exalted intellectuals who took pleasure in ridiculing the middle class as 'menbattiwalas' (candle brigade) and unelected rabble-rousers. Then it was 'discovered' that Anna's agitation was controlled by the Sangh Parivar. It was followed by the engineered apprehension that the agitation was anti-minorities. To what lengths a Government can go to destroy what it considers a challenge to its power! Nothing worked and the Government had to accept Anna's demands although it managed to obfuscate several issues. Finally, the whole fight was described as victory of democracy over mobocracy; questions were raised whether Anna had achieved anything at all. It is juvenile to treat this development as victory or defeat for anybody but the people know who won and who lost. Hope the wise men will realise that they misread Anna's agitation. The Government is still engaged in denigrating Team Anna and it would not be surprising if the Standing Committee of the Parliament ignores the 'sense of the House' statement adopted by the Lok Sabha and comes out with technical objections why the Jan Lokpal provisions cannot be accepted.

1. This was one agitation which need not have taken place as everybody was in agreement that corruption had to be eradicated. There may be honest reservations about some clauses in the Jan Lokpal draft but that does not justify underhand methods to defy the people's will. All the drama was about whether the people had the right to ask Parliament to enact legislation according to the people's wishes. The civil society was deemed an outsider as its members were not elected. How can a demand that Parliament act in a certain manner be undemocratic and an assault on the Constitution? It is argued that similar agitations may be launched on trivial issues to bend the Parliament. The simple question is: Will such agitations gain country-wide support? Anna got support mainly because corruption was seen as a national evil and more so because the Government was perceived to be unwilling to act against it. Besides, Anna's own image of being a selfless crusader gave an aura to the agitation. Other issues would hardly get such response; the bogey of copy cat agitations is a specious argument. The Government treated the agitation with singular ineptitude. Rahul Gandhi who was expected to seize the moment to resolve the dispute came with what he claimed to be a 'game changer'; the gambit failed badly as his plan amounted to starting a new game altogether. The Government continued to blunder till the last comma and it was as painful as teeth extraction to get the Government to draft a simple statement expressing the 'sense of the House'. The BJP earned some brownie points after initial hesitation by coming out firmly in favour of the Jan Lokpal. In the end, there was no conflict between the people's power and the Parliament as many 'experts' had fearfully predicted; the people's power was given due weightage by the Parliament and a lesson drawn that the two ought to work together. True, the Jan Lokpal may not put an end to corruption but don't we need to begin somewhere?

Sitting Ducks

2. The Delhi blast (September 7) soon after the Mumbai bomb explosions (July 13, 2011) is a sign of resumption of terrorist attacks on India. Can we do anything about it, except crying and cursing? The usual talk of intelligence

2. Are we sitting ducks that the terrorists can attack anytime they choose? The feeling of helplessness is worse than the injury itself; in war, much greater damage is absorbed stoically but it is accompanied by the feeling

failure and blame for lack of coordination has begun. Unfortunately, it leads us nowhere. The Home Minister has made it a practice of narrating the sequence of events and leaving everything else in the air; the Prime Minister promises strong action against the perpetrators and promise to prevent any further attacks. Everybody knows that both mean nothing. The people's faith in the ability of the Government to do anything has eroded. The Government laments the fact that our neighbourhood is disturbed, which is true but does that solve our problem?

Experts need to remember that information is not knowledge and knowledge is not wisdom

Riots and Reason

3. The UK riots (August 2011) came as a shock as it happened in a perceptibly well-administered country like Great Britain. The Middle-East riots of recent origin were understandable as the cry of the people for freedom from dictators. The Indian sub-continent riots are generally ascribed to communal or caste friction of the past centuries. Even the Harlem (1964), Los Angeles (1992), Brixton (1995) and Paris (2005) riots could be explained as the outcome of racial disharmony. However, the widespread outbreak of violence in the United Kingdom this year left political thinkers wondering. Was it poverty, racial discrimination or plain hooliganism? How and why a proud welfare society could be brought to its knees in four days of widespread rioting in major cities of the country? Is welfare an adequate answer to all societal ills?

*It was economics that brought down the Berlin Wall, not the myriad jokes about communism.
(It's a very equitable system. We pretend to pay and they pretend to pay us.)*

Simon Hoggart, *The Spectator* 2 July 2011

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

India rising or chaos in the offing?

The prime minister says he has no magic wand to stop corruption; his finance minister announces there is no quick-fix to stop price rise; now the home minister tells us there is no way to prevent terror attacks completely... It's time to deal with our inner ailments and to ensure that poor performance is punished, else we could be headed downhill. On the day of the terror blast at the reception counter of the Delhi High Court, the prime minister declared bravely from his Race Course Road residential fort, "...we shall not succumb to terrorism", although he did not labour to explain how India is safeguarding itself from 'succumbing' to the menace of terrorism. Elsewhere in Delhi, at about the same time, his home minister was nearly succumbing, saying "...we cannot prevent terror attacks... there is no way..." The terrorists must have celebrated and played this statement over and over..

Excerpted from an article by Karan Kharb in *Moneylife* of September 20, 2011.
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that we are also inflicting damage. Here it is all one-sided; hence the pain! By constantly harping on intelligence failure and police inefficiency, we are barking up the wrong tree. No doubt our systems are inefficient, unaccountable and lack drive but in the case of trans-border terrorism, the focus has to shift elsewhere. When an adversary launches multiple attacks, it is futile to fight each attack separately as we are trying to do; some attacks will succeed as our intelligence can never achieve a hundred per cent success rate. The focus has to shift from being episode-centric to generic. The answer lies in stopping the adversary from launching the attacks. Since war is ruled out, diplomatic and economic squeeze is needed. And let us not depend on the US to do our job as we have been doing for the last ten years.

Delhi Bomb Blast – Do We Even Bother?

Firoze Hirjikaka

It has now been established beyond doubt that our government and security agencies are impotent when it comes to preventing terrorist attacks or protecting our citizens.

Since the attacks have become as routine as morning tea, here are some time saving suggestions for the powers that be. First, since the same stock speeches are given out after every attack, they should be pre-recorded and simply played back at the appropriate time. Secondly, since you just cannot stop the VVIPs from showing their “concern” by visiting the victims – after making sure that television cameras are strategically positioned to record and broadcast their “humanity” – a separate entrance and viewing area be reserved for VIP *darshan*, as is done in many major temples. Thirdly, a selection of sketches of bearded individuals, preferably sinister-looking, be kept available so that the police can hand them out and claim they have a “lead” in the investigation. Lastly, a standard report of an “inquiry commissions” be prepared and kept available (no one reads or acts on them anyway), so that it can be furnished after six months during which time a retired judge or senior *babu* can enjoy an office, secretarial help, a car with driver and unlimited free phone calls.

On a more serious note, while it has become routine and fashionable after every attack to blame intelligence failure and investigative inefficiency, it is time we started to look inward as well. A day after the blast, an eminent lawyer on a television panel complained bitterly that the surveillance cameras at the courthouse were absent or malfunctioning; and that the policemen posted at the premises just sat around chatting all the time. That may well be true, but if the lawyers have such a low opinion of the police, why did they leave their own security entirely up to them? Considering the huge fees this lawyer charges per court appearance, he probably could have single handedly financed the setting up of high quality cameras and deployment of trained security personnel. As a collective effort, it would have meant a trifle for them. However, like most of our fellow Indians, the problem is not of finance but of will. Somehow security, even their own, is not a priority. Perhaps it's the Indian penchant for karma and destiny. If something bad is meant to happen, it will happen. *Sab uperwale ke haath main hai.* (Everything is in HIS hands) Couple this with the typical indifference to loss of life – unless it is a near and dear

one – and you have a recipe for fatalism.

Then there is the infamous I-don't-want to get involved attitude ingrained in many of us, especially city dwellers. Among the milling crowd at the Delhi Courthouse entrance, I am sure at least a dozen people must have noticed the bomber leave a briefcase on the premises and walk away. But nobody saw fit to report it to the policemen present because, well, it's not their problem. Actually it is everyone's problem. Maybe the cops were not as vigilant as they should have been, but ordinary citizens cannot just shrug off their responsibility – not when they are the ones likely to suffer the most. If the US hasn't suffered a major terror attack in the past ten years, it is not only because of the professionalism of that country's intelligence and security apparatus. It is also because ordinary Americans have become conscious of their security and their obligation to report suspicious activity.

Another impediment to terrorism prevention is the Indian set of priorities. Increased and better surveillance is all very well, but not worth the inconvenience it causes. Take the case of Opera House and Zaveri Bazaar in Mumbai, where wounds of the June attacks are still raw. Immediately after the blasts, the residents showed great enthusiasm for installing CCTVs and clearing the overcrowded roads of hawkers and illegally parked vehicles. But mark my words, within a few months the same people will complain about the unavailability of cheap snacks they used to buy at *khau galli* and the hawkers will be back; and the cameras will become non-functional due to lack of maintenance because no one has the time or inclination.

As for the government, both at the central and state level, they have proved themselves adept at making laudable plans and then taking forever to implement them – if at all. The affair of the CCTVs at the Delhi High Court is a case in point. The decision to acquire and install the best available ones was made some months ago. Everyone agreed it was a good idea and essential. But then it ran into the wall of Indian bureaucracy and the inevitable what's-in-it-for-me syndrome. Even when cameras, scan-

ners and metal detectors are procured, they break down after a few months, but this should not come as a surprise to those familiar with the system. The selection is not based on quality or reliability, but on who is prepared to give the largest “commission”. And the same criterion applies to recruitment of policemen and other security personnel. What sort of result can you expect?

We Indians enjoy moaning that India is a soft state and easy prey for terrorists and blame the government for this sorry state of affairs. The government is definitely culpable of many lapses; unprofessional attitude, corrup-

tion in the security apparatus and misplaced priorities to name a few. But there is precious little we can do about it. We can take out processions; at most, we can vote one party out of power and bring in another one. But they are birds of the same feather, so nothing will really change. It is time the people realized that their life is in their hands – literally.

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Delhi Terror of 7/9

High Time for the Federal Government to Draw Lessons

P. M. Kamath

The main political parties ought to depoliticize their approach to terrorism. Terrorism is a national menace which has no colour of caste or creed, or religion.

Terrorists had planned a dry run to attack on the Delhi High Court on 25th May this year. But policy makers in the federal government slept despite so much of experience. The Result: Delhi saw another heinous attack of terrorism on 7th September, killing 13 and wounding more than 90 at the time of writing. This, so soon after the 13/7 Mumbai attacks. Now Home Minister, P Chidambaram (PC) says Delhi police were given intelligence in July. But the Lt. Governor of Delhi, Tejinder Khanna says it was not actionable.

Assuming that PC is right, an important question arises regarding the process of policy making and administration. Since international terrorism is a subject that directly comes under the federal government, does the responsibility of the Home Minister end with the passing of the actionable intelligence? No. That is the only the beginning of action! Since the minister meets, it is said, the Delhi Police Chief almost daily, isn't it his duty to follow up on the action taken? Did PC, at any time, ask for a report?

This worked very well as an alibi for the federal government in the case of the Pakistan sponsored cross-sea terrorism of 26/11 against the financial capital of India. PC had then informed the Lok Sabha that intelligence that was available was not actionable! But Ram Pradhan who went into the Mumbai attack of 26/11, brings out vividly the fact that intelligence received clearly identified targets of attack like the Taj and Oberoi - though in October rather than November! But there is no indication that the

federal government ever followed up to enquire about action taken!

Be that as it may, policy makers and politicians waiting in the wings, aided by bureaucrats visited the Delhi High Court bomb blast site as they did earlier Mumbai after the 13/7 attacks. The Prime Minister, who flew down to Mumbai spoke of his determination to see that the “perpetrators of the Mumbai bomb blasts shall be pursued relentlessly and brought to justice quickly.” He had expressed almost identical sentiments about the seven bomb blasts of 11/7 on Mumbai suburban trains that killed 181. After the latest Delhi blasts, he said: It is a cowardly act. We will deal with it. It is a long war....We will not succumb”. But in nearly six cases of terrorism in the recent past, the culprits are yet to be identified!

Pakistan at the Root of Indian Terrorism

These words of Prime Minister indicate helplessness of a government that is groping in total darkness. The Prime Minister often described as a lame duck, however, has one important unfinished agenda now in his mind: to increase the trust asset between India and Pakistan, develop “normal relations” and resolve the Kashmir issue in his remaining three years in office. In pursuance of the goal, this time, as in Mumbai, 13/7, in the absence of concrete evidence of Pakistani involvement - direct or indirect in 7/9, Prime Minister was unwilling to name Pakistan's hand.

However, in the last thirty years Pakistan's Army

has supported numerous terrorist groups based in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK), to hit at India. It is done through the military controlled ISI, which has mainly relied on LeT and JeM to carry out its heinous crimes against humanity in India. The single most important reason why the Pakistani Army is supporting terrorism in India is its intense paranoid desire to avenge its defeat at the hands of Indian Army in 1971.

The duo has been forced to use numerous indigenous, but ISI trained, financed, controlled and brainwashed groups to believe how Indian government is against Muslims to carry out terrorist attacks. With an elected government in place in Pakistan, it gives an opportunity to the civilian façade to exercise plausible deniability.

Further, particularly after 26/11 and the 2nd May, killing of Osama bin Laden by the US right under the nose of Pakistan's Military Training Academy in Abbottabad and subsequent loss of credibility the Pakistan Army and ISI, have been forced to use numerous indigenous, but ISI trained, financed, controlled and brainwashed groups to carry out terrorist attacks. With an elected government in place in Pakistan, it gives an opportunity to the civilian façade to exercise plausible deniability. Thus, Pakistani President, Zardari and PM Gilani have been very prompt in condemning terrorist attacks on 13 July! Pakistanis now point out that they too are victims of terrorism as on the very day Delhi High Court had the terrorist bomb blast, they too had a bigger bomb attack in Quetta carried out by Pakistani Taliban in which 25 were killed and at least 60 were injured! They conveniently forget the fact that indigenized Indian terrorists of Muslim faith were brainwashed, trained, funded, sheltered and used by Pakistan, while the Quetta suicide bombing had no Indian elements in it!

Lessons to be Learnt

Today ordinary people in India ask if the US can prevent attacks on its homeland in the last ten years after 9/11, why can't India do it. That is because we refuse to learn any lessons from our past experiences. What are the lessons, then to be learnt from the latest terrorist attacks? In the absence of an Indian will to self-help to protect its national security, the US has been able to extend its help by pressurising Pakistan to abandon terrorism. But neither Pakistan nor the US, can come to India's help against Pakistan promoted, trained, financed, and controlled attacks by Indian terrorist groups like IM or SIMI and their sleeper cells. India needs to act on her own.

Hence, India needs to learn certain lessons and im-

mediately act upon them to make acts of terrorism very costly to them. First, its time to consider all terrorist attacks linked directly or indirectly to Pakistan as international terrorism. All externally promoted terrorism ought to be treated as an attack on the state lawfully established, and governed as such.

Second, international terrorism has to be seen as a central subject irrespective of whether it emanates from across the borders or from Pakistan-promoted bodies or their active cells working within India. Since it is an attack on the state, it should be governed by a special law. Since words like POTA or TADA have become politically divisive, call the new law as a Nation Protection Act. Americans called their reply to 9/11 as Patriotic Act. The law should provide for separate courts for speedy justice and for only one appeal against the verdict of the trial court.

Third, the main political parties ought to depoliticize their approach to terrorism. Terrorism is a national menace which has no colour of caste or creed, or religion. If parties at the political level cannot resist the temptation, at least those who are in governance, like PC should open their eyes for long-term effects of terrorism on the nation rather than think of the next election. Unfortunately, in India even the worst menace of international terrorism, is seen from a communal angle and all political parties from the left to right try to draw political mileage from acts of terrorism. However, all limits of political decency were crossed by former chief minister of MP, Digvijay Singh, when he blamed the RSS for the latest Mumbai terror as though to avenge his loss of power to the BJP. Now people in Delhi after the recent bomb blast jeered Rahul Gandhi and asked him not to play politics with terror!

Finally, justice must be seen to be done to hundreds and thousands of innocent victims of terrorism – injured and dead – by hanging those terrorists who have been given the death sentence by trial courts and confirmed by the Supreme Court. More the nation delays carrying out these just acts, the more we are likely to see even more terrorist acts! Act now to save the nation and its hard working people, without praising them for their so-called resilience which essentially comes from concerns to ensure their bread for the next day!

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Why Only Muslims are Targetted by Police in Cases of Violence

Vibhuti Narayan Rai

Freedom First readers may be surprised to read this. But it is a fact.

If the editor shares my view that this kind of report can help in bridging the gap which has existed between the two communities for decades, please forward it to others as well.

M. A. Haque

As far as communal violence and police's partial role in it is concerned it must be admitted that our laws are very good and our police force is capable of bringing riots and violence under control but in spite of all this we have failed in bringing cases like Gujarat riots under control simply because our police officers in spite of being in khaki uniform remain Hindu or Muslim and the men in khaki uniform act with the mentality of 'we' and 'they'. For them Muslims are 'they' even now. Police generally think that it is Muslims who start riots and the easy and effective way to control riots is to 'deal strongly with them'; even in those riots in which Hindus take the initiative police action in most cases is against Muslims. For a common policeman, this thinking is so deep in his mind that generally speaking Muslims are mischief makers and rioters. It is almost impossible for him to believe that any riot can be started by Hindus. To his mind Hindus in general are moderate or non-violent.

I remember that in 1990 when Ram Janmabhoomi movement was very strong, I was posted in Allahabad. I was surprised to see that in police stations secret information against Muslims only were being received at the communal front and news against VHP and such other organisations which were openly spreading communal violence and hatred were very rarely received. I had to take great pains in making my police force understand that under the present circumstances Hindu organisations and not Muslims, should be on our radar. It is not that in India only police is having such mentality, courts too have disappointed us on many occasions. Political leadership has demonstrated lack of that political will which has failed in putting a stop to communalism and communal violence. Those who are well aware of the truth about Indian society agree that riots can erupt anywhere and any time but these can continue for long if the state i.e. ruling class so wants. I strongly believe that if any riot continues for more than 24 hours, enquiry should be made to find out if any wing of the state is complicit in this.

After 1960, in every communal riot police has been accused of partiality and prejudice and those who make

such allegations are not Muslims only but people and organisations associated with human rights, independent media, reports of different enquiry commissions etc. If we believe official statistics, in that case also we will find that most of those killed in riots are or were Muslims. To add fuel to fire, police action (arrests etc) is mostly against Muslims i.e. in riots in which Muslims were the biggest sufferers in loss of life and property, mostly Muslims were arrested, maximum searches were made in houses of Muslims. In riots in which among those killed, more than three-fourths were Muslims. In police firings also it is Muslims who are generally killed. That is why Muslims have little faith in the police.

VIBHUTI NARAYEN RAI, [Formerly IG Police (Uttar Pradesh)]. This article appeared in *The Milli Gazette* print issue of 16-31 August 2010 and published Online: Aug 27, 2010. Translated from *Rashtriya Sahara Urdu*, 30 July 2010, by N. A. Ansari.

Contributed by M. A. Haque

"Sorry, we are British"

Britain seems to be a nation of over-apologetic people, for a new survey has revealed that an average Briton says "sorry" nearly 3000 times a year – most of the time for things that are not their fault. According to the survey, Britons apologise up to eight times a day i.e. around 2920 times a year. And one in eight people polled admitted saying sorry more than 20 times a day!

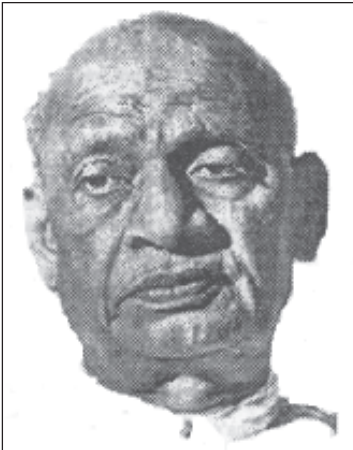
The research revealed that the apology is often used as a response to someone else's mistake – 43 per cent admitted apologizing to a person who knocked them and 17 per cent say sorry when someone else treads on their toes.

The word is also used for excuse me in 30 per cent of cases or when interrupting some one (67 per cent).

Courtesy: *The Statesman* 14 September 2011

Remembering Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

S. C. Sharma



“No other family could claim such a record of serving the cause of the nation from 1857 to 1947.”

Lt.General [Retired] S. K. Sinha PVSM

Freedom First's tribute to “The Sardar” on his 136th Birth Anniversary.

Sardar Patel was born on 31 October 1875 in Nadiad, Gujarat. His father, Jhaverbhai Patel, was a simple farmer who went from Gujarat to Jhansi in 1857, enlisted in the army of Rani Lakshmibai and took part in what is referred to as the “War of Independence” or the “Great Indian Mutiny”. He was wounded, taken prisoner and kept in jail in Indore. He went back to his village after being released. Two of his four sons, Vithalbhai Patel and Vallabhbhai Patel were to make outstanding contributions to the freedom struggle.

Vallabhbhai Patel passed high school from N. K. High School, Petlad at the age of 22. He was brilliant in studies throughout his schooling. Family finances did not permit him to go to college. He borrowed law books from a lawyer friend and passed the law examination as a private student. In those days, one could appear for the law examination as a private student. He set up his practice in Godhra. At the age of 36, he travelled to UK and enrolled himself at London's Middle Temple Inn. He completed the 36 months course for barrister-in-law in 30 months. On return from UK, he established his practice at Ahmedabad and soon joined the Independence movement.

As every reader of this journal knows the Sardar (so titled by Gandhiji for Vallabhbhai Patel's leadership of the Bardoli satyagraha) went on to become India's Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister and often described as India's Bismarck. Here are some episodes that bring out the Sardar's indomitable leadership.

Airlift to Srinagar

Facing the invasion by tribal hordes and the Pakistani Army, Maharaja Hari Singh requested the Government of India for help. The Government of India clarified that

help could be provided only after accession of the State to India, to which the Maharaja agreed. V. P. Menon brought the Instrument of Accession signed by the Maharaja on 26 October 1947. Colonel Manekshaw [later Field Marshal] had also accompanied Menon. C-in-C General Sir Lockhart took Manekshaw along with him to the Cabinet meeting presided over by Lord Mountbatten at 0900 hours on 27 October. Prime Minister Nehru opened the discussion with a talk about the role of the UN. After about ten minutes, Sardar Patel interrupted him, ‘Jawaharlal do you want Kashmir or not?’ Nehru replied ‘Yes.’ Sardar Patel said ‘Then, give them the order to send the army.’ They all waited for Nehru to do so but he remained tongue tied. Sardar broke the ice and instructed the C-in-C to send the army. Troops had already been warned and they were rushed by air to Srinagar the same day.

Hyderabad Police Action

In 1948, India was growing impatient with the intransigence of Nizam's to accede to India. He appealed to the UN and started preparing for war. He imported arms through clandestine channels and advanced Rs 20 crore to Pakistan for a bomber aircraft. His direction to his C-in-C, Major General El Edroos was to hold the Indian Army for three months after which Pakistan would intervene. There was no alternative but the use of force which Mountbatten did not want as long as he was Governor-General. He impressed on Nehru that use of force may prompt Pakistan to attack and there was a danger of riots by Indian Muslims. C-in-C General Sir Bucher echoed a similar warning and added that his friend Major General El Edroos would be able to hold the Indian Army for a long period. He was credited with the ability to turn even a rabble into a fine fighting force. Violence by the Razakars (a militant group which had the support of the Nizam) had resulted in the killing of a large number of Hindus and influx of Hindu refugees into neighbouring states. On 10 September, Nehru issued an ultimatum. UK evacuated their citizens and ordered all British officers in the Hyderabad Army to resign. Nehru had postponed the operation twice. The final decision for D Day on 13 September 1948 was

taken at a cabinet meeting on 12 September to which C-in-C General Bucher was also invited. He opposed the operation strongly 'As your C-in-C, I advise you not to start the Hyderabad operation till the Kashmir show is over. As you do not seem to accept my views and take my advice, I cannot continue to be your C-in-C and would like to resign.' Sardar Patel replied 'You may resign, General Bucher.' He turned to the Defence Minister Baldev Singh and told him that the Army would march into Hyderabad as planned on 13 September. Bucher left the meeting angry. Nehru looked distressed and uncomfortable. Mounbatten had by then relinquished his post.

The Nizam made a last minute appeal to Rajaji, then the Governor General who had succeeded Mounbatten, on 13 September but it was too late. Sardar Patel had already issued orders for commencement of operation even though Rajaji had wanted to postpone it as a gesture to Pakistan since Jinnah had died the previous evening. It was as well that the operation was not postponed for the Indian troops captured a former British commando, Lt Moore, on 13 September carrying explosives to demolish the bridges at Nodrug and other places which would have hampered the Indian Army's advance. The operation was over in five days and the Hyderabad Army surrendered on 17 September.

The Nizam came to receive Nehru at the airport. A few days later, when Sardar Patel visited Hyderabad, the Nizam was reluctant to receive him at the airport but later agreed to do so. The Nizam said to the Sardar that to err was human and Sardar replied "True but errors had their consequences."

Location of National Defence Academy

In 1971, Lord Linlithgow, Viceroy of India, received a sum of 100,000 pounds from Sudan for the sacrifices made by Indian troops in the liberation of Sudan in World War II towards building a war memorial. It was decided to use the money for establishing an academy for the three Defence Services. General Auchinleck, the then C-in-C,

studied the military academies in the various countries and in December 1946 recommended an academy on the lines of West Point Academy of the USA for the three Services.

After partition of the country, India's share came to 70,000 pounds and the Chiefs of Staff made an action plan in late 1947. Lt General S P P Thorat DSO was entrusted with the task of recommending a suitable site. He was keen to locate the proposed Academy in Bombay Province [today's Maharashtra]. The Chief Minister, Morarji Desai, an apostle of non-violence, would not agree to earmark any land for it. General Thorat was called to Sardar Patel's residence for a pre-breakfast meeting. The two of them walked up and down the lawn and General Thorat explained his views for locating the Academy in Bombay province. After about half an hour, General Thorat took his leave. Even before General Thorat reached his residence ten minutes later All India Radio in its news broadcast carried the news that the Bombay Government had released 7000 acres of land for the Defence Academy. It was called to be called National Defence Academy [NDA] at Khadakvasla in Pune. On completion of 3 years training there, the cadets go to their respective Service academies for pre-commission training.

Prime Minister Nehru laid the foundation stone on 6 October 1949. It was inaugurated on 7 December 1954 and the inaugural ceremony was held on 16 January 1955. The quality of training has impressed all visitors and a number of foreign countries send their cadets to the NDA. The Administrative Block is named Sudan Hall and was inaugurated on 30 May 1959 by His Excellency Rahmatullah Abdulla, Ambassador for Sudan.

Sardar Patel died of cardiac arrest on 15 December 1950 and mourned by millions of his countrymen. Had he lived a little longer India's history would have been different – for the better.

Brig. S. C. Sharma (retd.) adviser to the telecom industry and a freelance writer. brigscs@gmail.com

A rather different perspective from Pakistan on its new Foreign Minister

India may be many things to many people but even the most vitriolic Indian-haters grudgingly accept that our two countries are now worlds apart – poles apart will no longer do justice to the real on-ground situation. The Indians are suave diplomats and they manage – with all its warts, the world's largest democracy. ..

It is in this context that one finds HRK's (Pakistan's new Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar) jaunt into India nauseating and in gross bad taste. Did she go to a tense foreign ministers' meeting or launch a fashion show? Did she read up on India? She represents an impoverished country, now permanently and shamelessly begging day and night for sustenance, for alms, for mercy to keep Ms. Khar and her ilk in clover. She is part of one of the most disastrous governments it has been our misfortune to have – incompetent, brazen, cruel and corrupt

Contributed by reader Kunwar Sinha. Excerpted from a report by Masood Hasan in *The News* (Karachi, Pakistan) July 31, 2011.



“A Stream of Correspondence”

with C. Rajagopalachari - 5

K. K. Pathak

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

As early as 15 January 1964 CR wrote about the matter:

“Your affectionate and interesting letter of January 13. Kindly ask Prof. Raghupati Sahai Firaq to write to me what you say he told you about Gandhiji and Hindi and me. I should like to know authoritatively (first hand) what Gandhiji told him (and when, if possible). I was seriously ill a few weeks back. I am recovering.”

I did write to Firaq, asking him to write to CR. I received a hand-written letter from Firaq, informing me of his falling ill again and not writing to CR about the matter. We did not hear from him anything thereafter. Nor did I write to him any further about the matter.

I don’t actually remember what my disagreement was on some policy matter of Swatantra Party. But CR wrote on 11 February 1964:

“Your letter of February 9. You should read *Swarajya* and not be content with *March of the Nation*. I send herein a copy of *Swarajya*. Please see page 9 and read the relevant resolution. I do not believe you can object to it. In any case you have every right to hold a different view. Principle No. 21 of our Party gives you that right and no whipping nor murder nor even annoyance will result.”

“If you wish you can also read my statement on the subject appearing in *Sunday Standard* (the Sunday edition of the *The Indian Express*) of February 9.”

This letter was very significant for the simple reason that CR was extremely tolerant unlike Nehru in such

matters and would go to any length to make the reader convinced of the logic and wisdom he expressed with modesty I have hardly found in a person of his stature and understanding. CR was so open to his own criticism so much so that I was always reminded of Kabir who advised all and sundry to hold their critics in high esteem, instead of downgrading them, let alone hate them.

As I said earlier I wrote a letter to the *Hindustan Times* about the successor of Nehru in the last week of May 1964. Nehru passed away on May 27. CR received a copy of the letter on the 29th of May. He wrote back on 30 May 1964:

“The copy of your letter to *Hindustan Times* was received by me on the night of May 29. What chance has it of publication now, I wonder. But the letter is good.”

CR’s norms were very high. I wrote something for *Swarajya*, praising him. He wrote back on 23 June 1964:

“You are entitled to admire me. But I can’t publish such appreciations of me in *Swarajya*.”

Today things are the other way round. People like insincere flattery more than sincere criticism. CR’s norms were just the opposite of what is the prevailing note everywhere today. People entice media persons to publish their appreciations and thereby get themselves called “veterans”, a term used rarely and with discrimination some 50 years ago. Today every Tom, Dick and Harry is a “veteran leader”. We have the example of a pilot becoming Prime Minister overnight with no experience of public life. Dynasty rule after Independence has made a mockery of our democratic set-up. There is hardly any free thinking in the Congress Party or the main Opposition party like the BJP. Jaswant Singh’s calling Jinnah a secular leader led

to his expulsion from the BJP in August 2009, although he was asked to rejoin the BJP some months ago. Nehru was very intolerant of his criticism. Indira never allowed it and did split the Congress Party three times within a decade!

CR was very critical of the way funds for the Congress were collected. The industrial houses were partial and were more with the ruling party than doing anything to promote healthy Opposition by giving generous help, if not at par with the ruling party, at least in a substantial way to help grow Opposition for sustaining our democratic set-up by not letting it degenerate and become an autocratic system. The crunch of funds was a great handicap and the growth of the Swatantra Party suffered more on that account. I quite remember I wrote a long letter to CR in July 1964, making some suggestions. In response to my letter CR wrote me back on 16 July 1964:

“I have your letter. Your ambitions about the Swatantra Party are very good. Do you realise these plans (my suggestions) call for an immense amount of financial foundation. I am sure you do. The growing strength of the party will bring in funds. But the funds will not come now. So we must go slow”.

As for my suggestions to bring out a Hindi version of *Swarajya* from Upper India for the benefit of Hindi-speaking people, CR again raised the difficulty of financial backing to get projects translated into action. *Swarajya* itself was suffering from financial difficulties.

In an issue of *Swarajya* in September 1964 V. P. Menon wrote a beautiful article. I liked it so much that I made some comments on it in a letter to CR. He wrote back on 17 September 1964:

“Thank you for your charming letter of September 15. Really letters do strain my eyes. I am glad that you liked Mr. V. P. Menon’s article. It is indeed very good stuff.”

I used to make suggestions for making the Swatantra philosophy more and more popular at a time when Nehru was out to make his brand of socialism a political religion more official than anything else for every citizen. There was no other way to counter the blasphemy of Nehru’s socialism. He used to deliver a dozen lectures to the people on benefits of socialism; of his vanity, sending gunny bags of affluence through equitable distribution of national wealth, to Mahatma Gandhi’s “the poorest of the poor”, without any solid plan for creating an infrastructure to grow more wealth for his equitable distribution of affluence. In fact, he was dis-

tributing poverty, and that too, not at all equitable as he himself confessed, as early as 1962, that his “scientific planning” had made “the rich richer and the poor poorer”.

As I used to make suggestions for better functioning of the Swatantra Party, CR used to encourage me more and more to think over the matter. Honestly speaking, he was preparing me for some role to play later on. I could easily sense this from the pains he used to take giving me a shape he wished me to. On 16 October 1964 he wrote me:

“Thank you for trying to help me earnestly. Kindly prepare your note for consideration of our Party in respect of work. Let it be couched in a form easily understood by old fashioned people.”

Why CR considered himself a fogey is not clear to me even today, let alone when he wrote the letter some 46 years ago. He was a forward looking man, full of youthful enthusiasm for the causes he espoused even after crossing 80 years of age. He was basically an optimist, though the conditions prevailing in the country made him a sad man. He was not a defeatist. His love was unmixed, in its degree or quality. When I wrote back that the note may run into 50 pages he was a little upset. He wrote back on 20 October 1964:

“Your letter of October 19. I am alarmed at your estimate of 50 pages for your note on a programme of work. Avoid criticism. Make your proposals clear and brief. No reasons need be given as they are bound to be self-evident.”

I did prepare a brief note according to his specific instructions contained in the letter. It was much liked by him. We met in Delhi in December that year, though it was a brief meeting as he was very busy that day. His usual practice was to drop me a card about his Delhi visit. It was an understood indication that I could come and see him, if possible. I always did as desired by him. I do not actually remember what I wrote him or said because he wrote me the following words on 27 December 1964:

“This is to assure you that I am not at all annoyed with you over anything and that you may carry on without any such notion.”

Almost a month earlier than this assurance he had written me on 14 November 1964:

“I am very very glad to read your letter. Trial by actual work is the best way to push any plan. I am therefore very pleased with what you have reported about the Agra unit.”

... To be continued

Marathi Footprints in South India

R. Srinivasan

This paper looks into an instance of one of the Maratha community, the desasth, settling down in the South, making it their home and doing extremely well for themselves as individuals and as a community. This trend was pre-industrial and the colonial situation helped them flourish in the new environs as perhaps they might not have done in their native habitat.

Generally, the penetration of South India by the Maharashtrians is seen as taking place during the East India Company's domination. It was much earlier. The historian S. N. Sen observes "Shivaji sent some Brahmins to all the villages in this country for governing them: the number of these Scamps (*sic.*) Who had followed Shivaji trying to get some employment is something amazing: they counted more than twenty thousand." We have the instance of a Maratha *desasth* individual of no small attainments rising up high in the service of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan and his family was to occupy a position of importance for many decades and elevate itself in the old Mysore territory. I refer to the family of Purnaiah the *desasth* Brahmin. Once, the legal servitors of Tipu, the family had no problem in not only adjusting itself to the Hindu successor and later adapting itself to the subsequent rule of the Company and its government, testifying to a rare capacity for survival and for flourishing even under an adversarial religious disposition. The community spread itself throughout the districts of the South and occupied elite as well as modest positions in society.

The East India Company found their services indispensable. By 1855 elite cadres in the Madras Presidency were occupied by Brahmins particularly Maratha *Desasth* Brahmins. Of the 305 positions in the district administration of the Presidency, 154 were with the Maratha Brahmins and 83 by other Brahmins.¹ In an enquiry of the administration a statement occurs which is eloquent.

"Is there anything about Madras collectorates that makes them so difficult that only a Maratha Brahmin can fathom it?² Again another question from an administrative report is incisive: "The Maratha Brahmins who served Tipu and administered the affairs of all eastern provinces were equally eager to swell the revenue of the English government. A Brahmin never considers himself of any nation; he is a 'twice born' and by virtue of this ... is bound by no such ties. He asked what countryman he is the reply invariably will (be) ... that in his family such a language is used. He and his fathers have had nothing to do with one nation more than another. And whoever may rule India, he fully believes that all financial affairs will be administered (in

the South) through these 'twice-born' that speak the Marathi language."³

Loyalty in their case as with other Indians was to their caste, their language and not to the State that they served. They monopolised the administration and did not allow any interloper into their territory. Certain methods were adopted for this which was not exclusively in the Presidency but in the neighbouring States as well. All the accounts were in Marathi and unless one knew the language thoroughly, one would be unable to enter into its mysteries. A complicated system of accounting was developed with 1200 columns which could be mastered only by a Maratha. In these equatorial ... foliage the truth of accounting was smothered and they were able to "keep the right hand from not fully knowing what the left hand was doing".⁴

The English Collector in charge of the administration was a novice and could never plumb the depths of the administration. His tenure was brief and he could hardly master the complications and mysteries of the accounting details. Caste intermarriage, nepotism in the administration led to a dense network, spread out both vertically and horizontally. The headquarters were permeated with informers who would keep the field staff posted of the latest developments. And they had the total confidence of their expatriate superiors.

They were the backbone of the district administration not in one district but throughout South India. They provided security and smooth functioning of the administration but at the cost of corruption. In Nellore (in Andhra) there were 56 relatives in key offices in the State administration. Of the 388 officers in the district of Bellary, 235 were Brahmins most of them *desasth*. It is said that they were responsible for softening the impact of the mutiny in the South for they had more to gain in civic stability than by rocking the boat. However, this peace was bought at a price.

For forty years and more, they were able to defalcate and cheat the government of its resources. The sarkar was aware of the leakage but was unable to plug it or find out where the revenue was leaking. It was a determined collector who was later to occupy an honoured position in the

administration, Walter Elliott and his *desasth* assistant, Appa Rao, who after herculean labour were able to unravel the mysteries of the disappearing taxes. They visited all the villages of the district of Guntur and examined the records in person and discovered an irreversible quantity of records, false accounting, manipulated details prepared to meet exigencies, "true accounts immersed in tanks and wells, hidden in grain pits, torn up and burnt."⁵ Every account maintained was checked for authenticity and people were threatened to reveal the true records. Witnesses were separated and questioned in isolation and their contradictions laid bare. Layers and layers of fake accounts were exposed. Since the entire district was honeycombed by caste loyalties, a stranger from Poona, Srinivasa Rao was brought in to take charge of the district.

The report of 400 pages and appendices and collection of statistics laid bare the extent of corruption. Elliott said that they had only scratched the surface and concluded with proof that 5,72,801 rupees had been unauthorisedly taken away from the villages and 51,540 rupees had ended in the wrong deep pockets.

Attempts were made to neutralise the hold of the community in the administration. The old ruling that no officer could hold land in the district in which he was in charge was enforced. No two members of the same family could be employed in the same district. No two members of the same caste could hold top position in the administrative office or department. These were difficult to enforce and we shall see later the same complaints were to be repeated elsewhere. Examinations were introduced by which any individual could compete for positions in "specialised branches of the administration". Covenanted branches of the civil service were opened to Indians and many non-*desasths*, now competed for these.

We may now examine the role of a second group of Maharashtrians, again *desasth* Brahmins, almost all of them of the *Madhva* sect. They loomed large in the public life of South India and spread themselves in Travancore, Mysore and Madras.

The most eminent of the older group was Purnaiah to whom reference has been made. Arthur Wellesley, in a letter expressed his admiration for his unique political and administrative skills and his general acumen. In his period, a number of *desasths* occupied strategic positions in the army and the treasury. We can count at least eight *desasth diwans* in the Southern princely states and this is without a parallel in modern South Indian history. Neither the Tamils nor the Andhras came near their number and all of them were Tamil speaking. For sixty years, all the Diwans of Travancore were of this community. "Their hold had become so tight that a Marathi department was formed in the *huzur Kutchery* and the Diwans performed a great proportion of their work on

Marathi."⁶ The most renowned of the tribe was T. Madhava Rao regarded to be non-pareil among Indian *Diwans*. His father and his brother were Diwans of Travancore and Madhava Rao himself was third in the family to be Diwan even as his son Anand Rao was to be in Mysore. Madhava Rao's cousin T. Rama Rao too was *Diwan* in Travancore.

No South Indian in his time was more honoured than him and Gandhi wrote glorifying him in his South African newspaper. He was the earliest to be Diwan of three states and his tenure in Travancore lasting over many years is regarded as unsurpassed in raising the State from feudal anarchy to modern order and he was described as the Indian Turgot. Any account of Travancore has to recognise his superlative contribution to the social and economic well-being of the State. Yet he was to face criticism from certain sections. He lost his sheen in his later years and a younger generation was unsympathetic to him for he was regarded as timid, socially conservative and equivocated on the support to the Indian National Congress though he was an early but guarded supporter of the organisation. This regular and faithful student of Herbert Spencer was regarded as a conservative statesman and was described as complaisant to British authorities and one who had mastered the art of publicity and self-promotion.

Not only he but others of his sect were criticised of promoting nepotism. The British government was constrained to write to him on this. Even earlier, charges of widespread nepotism were made of the higher authorities in Travancore, recalling the accounts mentioned in Guntur. "In 1843, the Madras government reprimanded Reddy Rao for employing his two sons in the *huzur Kuthery*. Madhav Rao himself drew a similar reprimand in 1858 when it was discovered that six of his relations including his son-in-law and Rama Rao were in posts with a salary of Rs.550/- a month.

This trend seems to have continued.

In the Rama Rao administration the Diwan's son was his private secretary. His brother found a post in the palace and his daughter-in-law's uncle a Zilla Court judge." (*Ibid*).

Ironically it was observed that "when any vacancy occurs one need only to refer to the long list of Raos to choose the right person and it's only a question between one particular Rao and another." (*Ibid*, pp.148-9).

Raghunatha Rao, the cousin of Madhava Rao, was for years associated with revenue administration; he was Revenue Minister in Indore (1878) and later accepted the Diwanship of that State. He later took to social reforms with zeal and was active in promoting the remarriage of girl widows. He tirelessly argued that the Hindu *sastras* sanctioned such alliances particularly of girl widows who

had not attained puberty. His endeavours in this direction were not successful. Interestingly, neither of them promoted the education of girls.

P. V. Madhava Rao was Diwan at Travancore and introduced the *Sri Mulum* Assembly (similar to an upper chamber) to discuss public issues. Later, he introduced the principle of election. In 1906 March, he was appointed as Diwan of Mysore and continued till 1909. He brought about far-reaching reforms such as the reorganisation of the Civil Service, the separation of the Executive from the Judiciary, promoted agriculture and cooperatives, overhauled the financial system and improved public health. Village self government was promoted and primary education made free. These were far-reaching changes.

It was at this time that new political currents were wafting throughout the State. *Swadeshi* and a new nationalist spirit were ushered in Madras and B. C. Pal with his speeches electrified Madras students and they began chanting political slogans. This was to disturb the placid waters of Mysore. The Diwan might have felt uneasy that Mysore would not be able to meet these changed circumstances. The Diwan was criticised for the Mining Regulation, which in fact was passed by the earlier regime but was published during his time. Another regulation was the one relating to Newspapers and this was regarded as draconian and the treatment meted out to newspapers was abominable and it was criticised as Czarist. This again was an earlier legislation and he had prepared an amended legislation "in accordance with a promise made to the Representative Assembly". Before it could be implemented, his term came to an end. On both these, he cannot be faulted. But he was criticised for another development: V. S. Srinivasa Sastri was to lecture in Bangalore and suddenly permission for this was withdrawn.

Mention has been made of three stellar names. But there were many others like B. K. Krishnaswamy Rao, Chief Justice of Travancore and later Diwan to the Scindias: B. C. Krishnaswamy Rao in the judicial service of Madras. There were eminent lawyers and professors, high officials in the Madras public service and famous teachers. R. B. Tandalan Gopal Rao along with Principal Porter raised the status of the Kumbakonam College which was called the Cambridge of the East.

In Madras, there were a number of Marathas who were in the army and gradually joined in the civil professions. Most of them had rudimentary education and a sizeable number took to the tailoring profession. They remained in the lower strata of society, the sinews of any metropolitan area. An extremely minute number took to genteel professions like teaching and the law but they

seem to have made no impact on the larger metropolitan society.

The *desasth* Brahmins occupied an intermediate position in the social structure and had a respected status. Individually, they had reasons for being satisfied with their position. The Raj gave them opportunities to better themselves and their offspring and they took full advantage of these. Once we remember that they had a dominant cultural presence in Maharashtra, their record in this region is distressingly arid. If in earlier centuries they produced a Jnaneshwar or a Ramdas we find no giants comparable to these.

What was their impact in terms of social change, intellectual innovations, economic enterprise etc.? Individually they did well in their chosen field of avocation, whether in law, education, services or profession. Except for those who retired as Diwans and who made a mark others were lost in the larger crowd. But not everybody could be a Diwan. There were lawyers among them but none reached the heights that the natives did. In the world of journalism too, one does not find any high eminence. They made no mark in literature or in classical music although there were performing artists among them of some standing.

Being superbly bilingual cultural amphibians they could have been brokers between the disparate regions of Tamilnadu and Maharashtra. For instance, T. Madhav Rao wrote poems in Marathi and Tandalam Gopal Rao was as proficient in Tamil as in his native Marathi. But they totally failed in being creative cultural intermediaries. They wrote nothing in Tamil about the Marathi culture that they much treasured. Neither did they interpret Tamil culture and civilisation to the Marathi reading public. With the rise of nationalist politics in the 1880s and later their pre-eminence was a thing of the past. They were at their creative best in working within the accepted social and political milieu and the rough and tumble of nationalist politics was not something that they could take in their stride.

They contributed little to the general leavening of the society in which they had settled. One does not witness any one like Ayyavaru, the Telegu in Maharashtra who championed the cause of the *Satyashodak Samaj*. It is likely that they lost touch with the deeper currents of Maharashtrian society. They identified themselves so much with the region they had settled in that they did not want to stress their district differences. This happened to other migrants as well. The Saurashtra community in Tamilnadu have totally identified with the larger society that they have almost lost their distinctiveness. Tamil

society absorbed them and completely nativised them as it nativised Christian groups and made them primarily Tamils and secondarily Christians.

What differentiates the modern world from the pre-modern is the opening of politics to new cohorts of citizens. Subjects now began to claim the status of citizens with all the rights that it entailed, primarily to participate in politics. Gone were the days when they were content to being left alone to practise their religion, to ply their trade or their avocations in peace. They now demanded privileges that were restricted to the few.

The position of the Marathi *desasth* Brahmins in South Indian society was replicated by other minorities in different parts of India and South East Asia as well as in Africa. Indians in East and South Africa no less than in other parts had settled for decades and yet maintained their distinct ethnic and cultural identities separate from the larger community. They could never be assimilated within the larger society. While in Western Europe the ideal and the aspiration was that distinct groups wanted to be assimilated, sink their distinct identities in the larger community (not always successfully) this was not to be so in these countries. The minorities held fast to their primordial loyalties and yet living completely within the larger entity and persisting in their difference. The contrast with the US with its ideal of the melting pot was striking.

In the nineteen-fifties, an eminent civil servant and student of South East Asia, J. S. Furnivall in studies relating to Burma and Netherlands East Indies came out with a theory of plural societies. Many of the countries of South East Asia were plural societies in contrast to western nations which were homogeneous in their social composition. Here society was a collection of many different groups and communities separated by language and ethnicity which were held together, not by common historical memories or by shared loyalties but by being subjects to an alien imperial State system subject to its law and ad-

ministration. Common bonds between the communities were loose and each small group lived its own life not very much in connection with the others. European nations in contrast were more homogeneous and a hundred years and more of history had welded them into a viable political community. This appeared valid in the 1950s but later deeper study and understanding of European communities have revealed that these committees too have dissensions. For instance, Jewish citizens were never fully integrated and this was true not only in England but in France as well. In France, the Dreyfus case exposed the deep fissures that were persistent in the society. The concept of a master Aryan race popularised by Nietzsche and later used to target the Jews exposed the sandy nature of well established European societies. The Sixties and the Seventies of the last century have witnessed considerable sections of Muslims living in France and Germany and their presence has been an irritant to the citizens in France giving rise to revanchist political parties. Europe presents today the political phenomenon of being a plural society with its attendant problems.

Is nationalism the sheet anchor of political communities or a passing political phenomenon and not a permanent political arrangement?

(Paper presented at a seminar organised by the SIES College of Arts and Science, Mumbai on 'Glimpses of Maharashtra – South India Interaction, in January 2010).

(Endnotes)

¹ R. E. Frykenberg, Guntur District, 1788-1848, Oxford 1965 (p.77)

² *Ibid*

³ *Ibid*, p.234

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ *Ibid*, p.206

⁶ R. Jeffrey, the Decline of Nair Dominance, New Delhi, 1994 (pp.7-8).

DR R. SRINIVASAN, is retired Professor of Political Science, Mumbai University and currently Associate Editor, *Freedom First*.

Lokpal as an Antibiotic

“...we would do well to recognise that no one institution, no one law can put an end to India's deeply entrenched culture of extortion, bribery and tyranny. That task requires looking at and reforming each department of the government - each *sirkari* institution that is engaged in public dealings or assigned the responsibility of providing public services ...”

The Lokpal can at best play the role that antibiotics do when our bodies catch an infection. But antibiotics work only if delivered in emergencies, and in judicious doses; an overdose can act as a toxin, or even kill the patient. Anti-corruption institutions work only if carefully crafted systems are put in place that shift the balance of power in favour of citizens, providing them powers to demand transparency and accountability.

Madhu Kishwar, founder-editor *Manushi* and professor at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi. Excerpted from her article “Just one law won't do it” *The Indian Express*, August 26, 2011

Self-reliance : the keynote of our independence

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

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

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

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

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

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

Self-reliance is both a means and an end.

For Godrej it is the essence of independence.



A Free or Regulated Press

by V. B. Karnik

Democracy is a rule of the people by the people. But the people cannot rule themselves properly if they are not adequately informed about public affairs. It is the task of the press to make that information available to the people in an objective and dispassionate manner. The press cannot perform that task successfully unless it is free from official control.

In no county is the press free from abuses. Many a time it gets under the control of a few financiers, who then utilise it for advancing their own interests as against those of the society as a whole. Many a time it gets into the hands of unscrupulous persons who specialise in arousing the passions of the people or in dishing out for their so-called entertainment stories of crime or sex.

These are grave abuses which require to be remedied. But the remedy against them is not the strait jacket of governmental control. In the first place, governmental control is ineffective. Ways can be easily found to circumvent the regulations that may be prescribed. In the next place, the remedy against the evil gives rise to another evil of an even more malignant character. It is the evil of the subservience of the press to the government

N O T E S

Carbon Copy

Yet one more douche of cold water is on its way from Mao Tse-tung to the thick skulls of those who insist on seeing in him a potential Tito. While the Yugoslav Government is busy dismantling the structure of collective farming and is endeavouring to put the peasant on his feet as a free farmer, the Chinese Government is accelerating the tempo of collectivisation.

In an important article in *Pravda*, Liao Lu-yan, Deputy Head of the farming division of the Chinese Communist Party's Central Committee, has unfolded plans which reveal that "in less than ten years, a hundred million families farming on a peasant scale will have been pressed into collective agricultural units." So far, laments Liao, only 2% of peasant holdings have been collectivised, but by 1957 he promises that just over a third will receive this treatment. It is recorded in the article that the first big

push has already taken place between October 1953 and April 1954, during which period the number of families herded into collectives rose from 273,000 to 1,660,000.

"Over the same period, collective farms increased from 14,000 to nearly 100,000."

*

Breaking The Human Spirit

by Nissim Ezekiel

Igor Gouzenko is well-known as the person in the Soviet Embassy, Ottawa, whose defection in 1945 with top-secret documents revealed the Russian spy-network in Canada. He wrote *The Fall of a Titan* in hiding, protected by the Canadian Government. Presumably, it is his first novel, and the impulse to write it seems to have arisen from a desire to tell the truth about day-to-day life in Soviet Russia. The result of this endeavour is interesting in its own right, apart from the author's technique of fiction, the intrinsic dramatic appeal of the story and the prose style.

As fiction, *The Fall of a Titan* is no ordinary performance. The open narrative form is kept firmly related to a single theme, thus achieving both, organic unity and panoramic range. The plot follows a lengthy (680 pages) and at times tortuous courses. The author's obvious intention is to take in as many aspects of Soviet life as possible. Having grown up with the Soviet State, as the blurb states, and "subjected to the full blast of Communist doctrine," he is thoroughly acquainted with its effects on human personality. His choice of methods for portraying the "new Soviet Man" is of a blandly prosaic realism.

*

With Many Voices

Communism was a forest fire. Could India, which was near the fire, talk of co-existence?

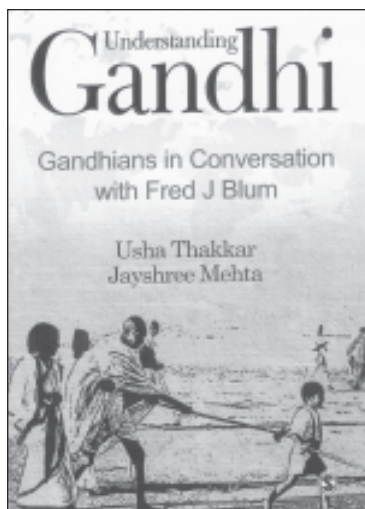
— Dr. Ambedkar quoted in *The Examiner*,
September 4, 1954

It would not matter a jot if three quarters of the human race perished; the important thing was that the remaining quarter should be communist.

— Lenin, quoted in *Encounter*, September 1954.

*

BOOK REVIEWS



UNDERSTANDING GANDHI – GANDHIANS IN CONVERSATION WITH FRED J BLUM, edited by Usha Thakkar and Jayshree Mehta ● Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd, B1/1-1 Mohan Coop Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110044 ● sagepublications.com ● 2011 ● Pp 551 ● Rs 550.

Reviewed by Adi H. Doctor, Retired Professor of Political Science, Goa University.

It has been said that Gandhi may have been assassinated in 1948, but he continues to live in myriad ways. The book, under review edited by Usha Thakkar and Jayshree Mehta amply proves this,

despite the lament of Bhikhu Parekh in his Foreword that “the process of de-Gandhification” began immediately after Gandhi’s death and “is not easy to explain”. Some of the reasons why, despite Gandhi’s many fads and idiosyncrasies, a complete de-Gandhification is not possible are provided by the editors themselves, in the Introduction viz. “various divides which are getting wider, political unrest and social discrimination which characterize many contemporary societies”. If Gandhi continues to appeal even today it is because he taught us by word and deed that we may never be able to avoid being in politics, but while being in politics, we must always think and act only in terms of ethics. Our failure to do this has made politics today a dirty word and a dirty game. Visiting Gandhi again and again helps us renew our idealism even as we may remember Bhiku Parekh’s wise observation that it may not be possible to always sustain politics at idealistic heights and that it often tends to become pragmatic and realistic.

The book under review is a collection of interviews conducted by Fred J. Blum with six of Mahatma Gandhi’s closest associates who outlived him by several years. The six “Gandhians” in conversation with Fred Blum are J. B. Kripalani, Raihana Tyabji, Dada Dharmadhikari, Sushila Nayar, Jhaver Patel and Sucheta Kripalani and they have certainly helped us understand Gandhi better on many of his key ideals, especially *ahimsa*, satyagraha and fasting which are currently much in the news thanks to Anna Hazare.

Of all Gandhi’s ideas, perhaps none has appealed more to contemporary India than the idea of satyagraha

and fasting. Fred Blum’s interviews seek to find out from each interviewee what he/she understands by satyagraha and why he/she took part in it. The responses/answers reflect Gandhi’s well known thinking on this subject. For Gandhi satyagraha was a way of life. It was “an eternal principle” of life based on love which seeks to establish an agreement with the opponent on the basis of reason and persuasion. Bringing out the finer distinction between the person who followed it as a way of life and one who adopted it as a strategy, Raihana Tyabji observes that the true satyagrahi abstains from power and gives the example of Vinoba. J. B. Kripalani on the other hand seems more inclined to view satyagraha as a technique and strategy.

Sardar Patel who was put by Gandhi in charge of many a crucial satyagraha was frank enough to admit this and even say so to Bapu. The Sardar saw satyagraha essentially as a way for a militarily weak nation to fight the mighty British Empire. Today we find Anna echoing a similar sentiment while urging his followers to remain non-violent. He reminds the frenzied crowds that if they resort to violence the state will have an opportunity to hit back harder with its arsenal of police and military force. Another interviewee, Jhaver Patel, is frank enough to admit that some form of violence was built into satyagraha. This violence may not have been physical, but was subtle and emanated from the fact that Gandhi was so “dogged at a point which he thought was true”.

Another interesting aspect of satyagraha the interviewees’ mention is that a true satyagrahi is never angry, never impatient. A satyagrahi, Gandhi had said, seeks to liberate the oppressor and the oppressed as well as dissolve the conflict. If he finds the opposite happening (mob frenzy getting out of control, violent destruction of life and property) he needs to re-think his strategy and if necessary even temporarily withdraw the movement. The ultimate goal always remains to peacefully win over hearts and reach a moral consensus, never to increase division and bitterness in society. All these are points that all those involved in the ongoing Anna movement would do well to bear in mind.

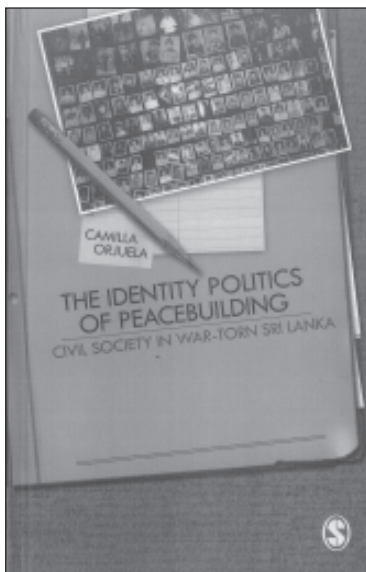
With regard to Fasting as a non-violent technique, Gandhi would never tire of saying that his fasts were undertaken for self-purification and for the moral persuasion of the oppressor through “self-suffering” (that is suffering inflicted on the self rather than the opponent). He was never prepared to accept that fasts had an element of coercion. However, his associates whom Blum interviewed strike a more realistic note. Jhaver Patel, honestly admits that fasts are meant primarily to put “moral pressure” on the opponent as well as the general public, thereby admitting that violence, albeit in a measured form, was an integral component of a fast. Dada Dharmadhikari is more brutally frank when he states that fasts are not only “a sort of coercion” but also may not change hearts at all, unlike Gandhi who believed that no man (not even Hitler) is above moral appeal. Raihana Tyabji likewise draws attention to “Muslims under Jinnah” who wanted Pakistan and power and not spiritual transformation. It is clear that many of Gandhi’s close associates did not always see eye to eye with him.

A globalized, free enterprise India might find J. B. Kripalani’s understanding of Gandhi’s views on capitalists, capitalism and Trusteeship interesting. On capitalists Kripalani observes, “Here he (Gandhi) could not liquidate the capitalists, because it was foreign rule and he did not have the power. He (therefore) wanted these people (capitalists) to act as trustees” (p.123). When Blum puts a pointed question, “But you feel in free India Gandhi would not have wanted the capitalists?” Kripalani replies “You cannot avoid capitalism...Either the state becomes capitalist, or you have individual capitalists....The question

is are you going to have individual capitalists, or the state as capitalist? In communist society, the state is the capitalist. And it is more difficult to act against that state than it would be against a private capitalist.” (p. 125) Gandhi was convinced that if economic power is given to the state, it becomes totalitarian. It is in this context that Kripalani tells Blum that you can never escape from the idea of individual capitalists acting as trustees: “You will have to entrust the task of managing things to some people, and though some people may prove to be dishonest, then in an organized society you have the government to deal with them.....” (p.124).

Readers will also find in the book interesting interpretations given by interviewees of two other Gandhian ideals, *Brahamacharya* and Role of Women. Tyabji explains *brahamacharya* as “loving somebody without lust”. While on the role of women, Sushila Nayar notes how Gandhi facilitated gender equality in India by successfully driving home the consciousness of the great “inner strength” that women possess and which they have particularly shown as educators of children, as participants in satyagraha, as caretakers of the sick and needy etc.

All in all, the book is a must read for modern Indians concerned with building a non-exploitative society in India in which even the poorest will have an effective voice and in which the primary concern is not only the freedom of all humans, but also the freedom of the whole human. The book is aptly dedicated to “all those who struggle for a just society and in particular to the late and much missed Usha Mehta”.



THE IDENTITY POLITICS OF PEACE BUILDING – CIVIL SOCIETY IN WARTORN SRI LANKA by Camilla Orjuela ● Sage Publications India Pvt Ltd, B1/1-1 Mohan Coop Industrial Area, Mathura Road, New Delhi 110044 ● sagepublications.com ● 2008 ● Pages 271 ● Rs.575

Reviewed by Brig. S. C. Sharma (Retd.) adviser to the telecom industry and freelance writer. brigsccs@gmail.com.

The author is a peace researcher at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden and has special interest in conflicts due to identity politics in Sri Lanka. The book is based on material from 150

interviews with policy makers and actors involved in the conflict.

After Independence, Tamils in Sri Lanka faced discrimination in university admissions and employment which led to the demand for self-determination. The response by the security forces resulted in a civil war. More than 70,000 people have been killed and many more displaced in thirty years of violent conflict. The basic reason for the conflict was denial of opportunity to the minority and not ethnic divide. Uneven development had led to an insurrection by the youth in the South resulting in the death of about 60,000 people. Armed intervention by external agencies has limitations. It has occurred only when the geo-political or economic interests of big powers

are threatened. The international actors have instead engaged with local civil society to broker peace. Between 1989 and 2005, 144 peace agreements were signed covering one-third of the 121 armed conflicts. Democratic processes and free trade formed part of these agreements.

Civil society is often mistaken to be ordinary people or NGOs. The book considers civil society to be composed of voluntary civil and social organizations and institutions as distinct from the State. People get together to promote ideas outside the State politics and profit seeking market. Civil society gets support from international actors like the UN or foreign NGOs and can play a key role in arranging negotiations and providing humanitarian assistance. In Sri Lanka, civil society developed in the form of trade unions and NGOs independent of the State and temples. Foreign NGOs sometimes ignore the local environment of ethnic divide or sensitivity about integrity of the State and can be misunderstood to be supporters of terrorists or tools for promoting international interests. In Sri Lanka some of them had recommended armed intervention by foreign countries and limiting the role of the Sri Lankan Army. In Sri Lanka peace movements failed to mobilize mass support against the war. It was considerably weakened by war and political patronage.

Identities are dynamic and are a process rather than a product. Creation of identity is based on differences. It turns the merely different into an absolute other. In violent struggles whether against the State or against a rebel group, construction of an exclusive identity is vital. Attacks on places of worship or civilians are part of strategy to highlight the division between friend and foe. Peace movements aim at building dialogue and understanding amongst the groups. The author has explained how in Sri Lanka ethnicity became an issue. The colonial government had introduced the recording of ethnic identity in a 19th century census. This systemized the idea of ethnic categories and the practice grew of mentioning it in documents like police reports and communal representation in the legislative assembly. The ethnic or caste identity is more about the consciousness and communication of difference than about the difference itself.

Efforts to resolve the ethnic conflicts failed not due to distrust between the leaders of the two parties but due to the inability of the Sinhalese leaders to control their own nationalist community. The demonstrations against the Indo-Sri Lanka accord were massive and violent. During 2002, highly respected Buddhist monks carried out demonstrations and hunger strikes against the cease fire agreement. They considered it to be a concession to the terrorists. Civil society did succeed in arranging ne-

gotiations through Norwegian NGOs but were not permitted to join the talks. The strength of the peace movement has been their foreign connections. The author has mentioned that in a poll survey, eighty percent of the people polled, expressed themselves against the war. This could be misleading. Every one wants peace but on one's own terms. We witness similar sentiments in Pakistan about Indo-Pak conflicts.

Most of the peace organizations are Colombo-based and perceived to be Sinhalese dominated. The killing of leading Tamil leaders by the LTTE, the Government and the Karuna faction gave a clear message not to question the activities of armed stake holders. During war time all Tamils visiting Colombo were obliged to report to the police. The result was that only a few Tamils joined the peace movement. Muslims have been even less represented in peace work. Muslim civil organizations tend to be formed around religious issues rather than political or social ones. Prominent leaders in the peace movement are Christians and there was considerable flow of funds from overseas churches. Many Hindus and Buddhists looked at churches as a tool for conversions.

In the Sri Lankan civil society, there was tension between the Sinhalese nationalist movement and peace movement. Sinhalese nationalist movement has long historical roots that worked to preserve Buddhism against colonial domination and to promote democracy and religious values. The State has attempted to control NGOs. Control by LTTE is even more extreme. There is lack of funds for NGOs in Sri Lanka and the peace movements are increasingly tied to foreign funding. In the Western countries, the social movements draw support from the middle classes. In the global South, the movement must mobilize the lower income groups which make it even more dependent on foreign aid. This dependence makes them liable to act according to the whims and interests of foreign donors, increasing the vulnerability of peace movements to local critics. Sri Lankan intellectual, Susantha Goonatilake, has questioned the role of foreign funded NGOs, particularly the ones associated with the church.

In conclusion, the author has identified the shortcomings of the movement in Sri Lanka. Peace programmes do not automatically have a positive effect. A poorly organized programme may reinforce prejudices. Seminars and courses are sometimes organized not due to their impact but because they present an easy way of doing something. Extensive network of the movement had potential, but it suffered due to lack of well-established contact between the war zone in the North East and the South of the country. The need to reach out to the hardliners was left undone. The peace workers mainly

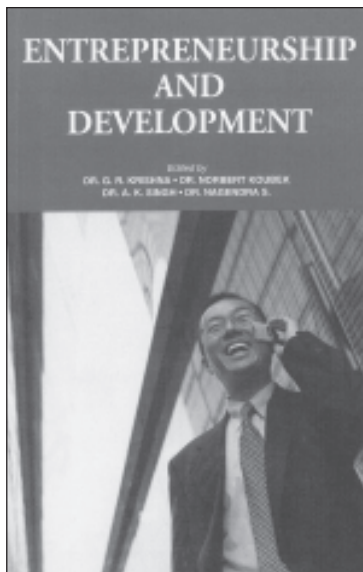
reached the supporters who were already convinced of the message. Another drawback was the low level of voluntary participation. The initiative for peace did not trickle down to the rural areas. While understanding polarization between ethnic groups is vital, it is equally important to bridge the divide between cosmopolitans and nationalists. The peace workers need to see beyond ethnic divisions.

The victory of the Sri Lankan Army in 2010 has ended the war. In my view, the failure of the peace movement was due to ignoring the degree of intensity of ethnic division and the sensitivity of people for the integrity of the country. The Indo-Sri Lanka accord was based on

similar errors.

There is no evidence of efforts by the civil society for reconciliation and reconstruction.

The book highlights the role peace organizations play in providing alternatives to dominant discourses of militarism. It demonstrates why civil society groups engaged in peace activities fail to enhance the sense of security amongst civilians and are unable to challenge the underlying structures of war. The book is useful to students involved in Conflict and Peace studies as well to donor agencies and NGOs.



ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT edited by G. R. Krishna, Norberty Koubek, A. K. Singh and Nagendra S ● Sita Publications. 2132/B-Wing, Arjun Centre, Govandi Station Road, Mumbai 400088 ● 2011 ● Pp.188 ● Rs.325

Reviewed by S. Arunajatesan retired Deputy General Manager, Banking Operations, State Bank of India. He has been a faculty in different training institutions of the bank and also vice principal of the The State Bank Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad.

The book makes interesting reading. It is useful in understanding the importance of entrepreneurship in the economic development of the country and also the problems faced in

imparting the required skills to deserving people. The first three chapters by way of general introduction contain useful information on the subject. Women Entrepreneurship is as important as male entrepreneurship. The two chapters covering these issues are informative and interesting.

The details on developmental training facilities are exhaustive and very useful. The difficulties faced by SME Entrepreneurs in getting funds or loans are dealt with lucidly. The relevance of the chapter on global crisis to the subject is very limited. The chapters on assessment on entrepreneurial activities running in loss leading to default lacks clarity. Microfinance is a very popular and important mode of funding. However the self help groups ability to choose the right persons and develop the entrepreneurial talents in them are limited. Appendices 1 & 2 are a summary of the key issues hence very useful. On the whole the book is a very good attempt in delineating different dimensions of entrepreneurial development and it makes good reading and reference material for all those involved in these activities.

Keeping Even a Memorial Service Truly Secular

On Sept. 11, 2011, New York City will mark the 10th anniversary of the 2001 terrorist attacks with a memorial service at Ground Zero featuring guests such as President Barack Obama and former President George W. Bush. New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, staying with his tradition of keeping annual 9/11 ceremonies secular in nature, has announced that the service will not include clergy.

Bloomberg's decision has drawn heavy criticism from various religious groups and leaders who maintain their religious beliefs should be featured at the ceremony. The Center for Inquiry (CFI) firmly believes that any official remembrance of the 9/11 attacks should represent all American citizens, regardless of their religious beliefs, or lack thereof. In other words, it should be a secular ceremony, as Mayor Bloomberg has decided. CFI urges its members, as strong advocates for the separation of church and state, to show their support for Bloomberg's decision.

Center for Inquiry | Office of Public Policy, Brooklyn, N.Y.

Freedom First

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

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

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

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

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Freedom First

Digitisation Project

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

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

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

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

Editor

THIS CHILD'S ART WAS DISPLAYED AT A GALLERY IN NEW YORK.

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