

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine



*For Our Country's Sake
The Commonwealth Games
Must Succeed*

*WikiLeaks
Exposes
Pakistan's
Duplicity*



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Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine – 58th Year of Publication
No.519 September 2010

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Between Ourselves...

The Editor Apologises

I have to apologise to readers for the very poor proofing of the August edition of *Freedom First*. There are more howlers than what could be attributed to the 'printer's devil'. Most of these are inexcusable. Almost all pages have printing errors. On page 2 the title of the letter from Mr. B. P. Rastogi should read: "I read *Freedom First* **for** (should have been **from**) cover to cover. On page 23 the last line in the box item on Jinnah should read: "This is an edited article from Gujarat Samachar and just **cleaqr** (should be **clear**) facts are **states** (should be **stated**)."
Most inexcusable is this one giving details of the book "Recolonisation..." reviewed by Brig. Sharma: ... "Pages" (has been left blank, and a query by the proof reader as a reminder to himself has got printed and not the price itself! There are many more, almost on every page. Your editor can give a dozen reasons how these misprints occurred but the fact is proofing was poor, for that I am responsible and once again I tender my apologies.

Readers might have noticed that the issues are now uniform i.e. there is no difference between the old quarterly and the intervening monthlies, the latter had fewer pages and the contents were listed on the front cover. With the August issue the format has been brought in line with the quarterly. The number of pages will range between 36 and 40 (including the cover pages). This has been made possible thanks to the generous response from a number of readers who have chipped in with cash or helped with securing advertisements. These have helped us to tide over the immediate financial crunch and we can look forward to uninterrupted publication for the next couple of years.

On Saturday September 4 *Freedom First* has arranged its fourth discussion in Mumbai, on troubled Kashmir. While we have carried articles and analyses of the smoking cauldron that has been Kashmir, we have not had a discussion since 1996. Then the subject was: Kashmir – "A Question of People not Real Estate". The situation has deteriorated with terrorism inspired from across the border leading to much violence and unrest. If any of you readers receive this issue by the 3rd and would like to participate please phone or email the editor at 9820016392 or jurasv@gmail.com for details of venue, time etc. The cover feature of the October issue will be a report of this seminar.

If any of you are interested in receiving a soft copy of *Freedom First* send us your email address. You will receive it on the first of each month. Anyone reading this can ask for a soft copy.

Have you renewed your subscription? If you have not received our reminder and are in doubt please email jurasv@gmail.com or drop us a postcard.

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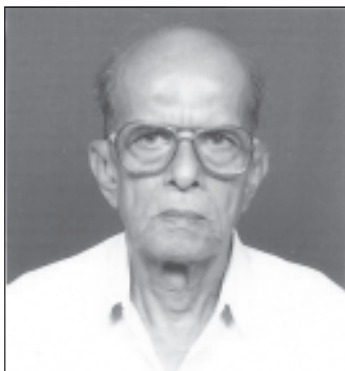
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Dr. S. H. Deshpande, R.I.P.

An Outstanding Liberal Intellectual and Economist



17.12.1924 – 29.07.2010

Sakharam Hari Deshpande known to all as Saha, passed away at the ripe age of 86, leaving behind friends, admirers and researchers pondering how such a loss could be withstood. Saha is used both as prefix and suffix in Sanskrit and in Marathi and Deshpande had a passion for both. Saha means 'with', 'together' or 'jointly' in both languages as coinages like *sahajeevan*,

sahavedana and *tyanchyasaha* (with them) would testify. Deshpande was an example of all three – he interacted with people all his life, worked with a significant number of them as colleague and scholar and shared his experiences and findings with all throughout his 50-year career as teacher, university professor, researcher, public speaker and writer. He informed, he documented, he analysed, he theorised, he opined, he criticized with an intellectual rigour and presentational skill generally in short supply amongst the post-independence intelligentsia in India and Maharashtra. In this exercise remarkably he made few enemies, earned the respect of most and struck warm relationships with many. His positive mindset and open attitude encouraged three generations of Marathi intellectuals – his contemporaries, his students and their students.

Deshpande was born into a traditional middle-class joint family of Marathi Brahmins from Shirwal (50 kms from Pune and in the historic Satara district) which had deep roots in the rural agricultural community. This Deshpande family has a *niche* of its own in Maharashtra; his eldest brother Pandurangshastry was Ayurvedacharya, his middle brother Wamanrao was a successful Chartered Accountant in Bombay but so great was his passion for Hindustani Classical Music that he was better known as a music critic, historian and connoisseur. (Satyasheel Deshpande is Wamanrao's son). It is no wonder that such rich ancestral tapestry provided Deshpande with the best of both the rural and the urban, traditional and modern, creative and critical streams.

The city of Poona where Deshpande had his schooling and college education in the late 1930s and 40s was a beehive of intellectual and patriotic activity. It was in Poona that he came across the social reformer-writer Shripad Mahadev Mate and was tutored by Puruhottam Ganesh Sahasrabudhdhe who was friend, philosopher and guide. It would be no overstatement to say that Deshpande carried forward their legacy of a pro-modernist, reformist, politically viable and socially liberal, forward-looking Hinduism during the years to come. Like most Brahmin boys of his time Deshpande did join the RSS and had

some exciting memories of those days. But thanks to the deep influence of Mate and Sahasrabudhdhe, Deshpande never really got converted to the RSS ideology (whatever it was); in fact he leaned more towards the rationalist Hinduism of Savarkar.

Deshpande never tired of telling how and why he took up Economics! His inclination was towards Sanskrit – he had scored very well in the Intermediate Arts examination in that subject. But Sahasrabudhdhe would not have it. In the cryptic wit which was his *forte*, Sahasrabudhdhe wryly remarked (said Deshpande) "Enough of the beauty and blushes of Shakuntala – we have to throw ourselves into the task of nation-building. Take up something that will contribute to this great venture." True to the wish of his mentor, Deshpande enrolled for Economics and later emerged as a rare species – a *Hindutvawadi* with sound knowledge of Economics. His whole career both during his working and retired life was to be an effort to amalgamate the various brands of Hinduism with the modern ideal of a civic society based upon democracy, liberalism and development of all.

The Deshpande cannon, though mostly in Marathi, is discrete and extensive and can be divided into three categories. The foremost, in my opinion, would be his evaluations and reports of various development projects in Maharashtra launched by development workers during the upsurge of genuine voluntary agencies (not the present day NGOs) during the 1970s where his documentational perseverance and analytical skills are adequately demonstrated. The second category covers his grand project on *Hindutva* where he traces the journey of political *Hindutva* from Savarkar to the Bharatiya Janata Party *via* the RSS. Deshpande kept going back to this project time and again and examined his own and others' positions in the wake of new developments – a testimony to his scholastic integrity. The last would be his miscellaneous writings – memoirs, personal sketches, and author studies to mention a few.

Deshpande lived a full life : a devoted husband, loving father, dedicated teacher, honest researcher, warm friend, unforgiving analyst, lucid writer, positive intellectual and ever-young traveller into the domain of ideas. He was choosy about company but those who had the good fortune to be his intimates will be proud. He enjoyed his smoke and his drink—though discretion was the watch word in both. Deshpande loved Shakespeare and Kalidas and other greats from both languages. He, when in mood, recited poetry, recollected for you many an anecdote in his own uncanny style. His sense of humour was ever present and his jokes used to be decent and intellectual. He will be missed – now and hereafter! It is for us to keep in mind W. H. Auden's obituary on W. B. Yeats:

*"The words of a dead man;
Are modified in the guts of the living"*

Vinay Hardikar, Pune.

From Our Readers

On *Freedom First*

This is to acknowledge yours of 27th July, 2010. You have done a commendable job of editing *Freedom First* for the last 25 years. Am pleased to attach my cheque for Rs.10,000/- as my contribution.

Minoo Shroff, Mumbai

I acknowledge your letter of 27th July 2010 and accordingly I am enclosing a cheque for Rs.30,000/- as part of my contribution towards support for publishing *Freedom First*

K. Rama Rao, Vijaywada

Freedom First gratefully acknowledges receiving contributions, from Mr. R. K. Marwah, Mumbai (Rs.2,500), Mr. Narayana Reddy, Tirupati (Rs.1000), Mrs. Gita R. Pai, Mumbai (Rs.1,000), Mrs. Meera H. Sanyal, Mumbai (Rs.5,000), Mr. H. R. Babu Satyanarayana, Mysore (Rs.10,000).

Thank you very much.

Editor

*

Only an independent Tibet can Guarantee the Survival of the Tibetan People

Hey Rangzen People,

Here is the memorandum we presented to the Indian Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao on her visit to Dharamsala. We petitioned India to review its decades old policy of One China and recognize at least the historical Independence of Tibet.

Bo Gyallo!

-tsundue

Dharamsala, 10 July 2010

When Tibetans first sought asylum in India following the footsteps of our leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan freedom struggle was in its formative phase; there was neither the international awareness nor was there political education and understanding within the Tibetan community. It was the kindness of India and her people who opened the doors of their homes to us and we made it our second home.

Today, after 50 years of being in exile, Tibetan youngsters grow up in India like most young Indians with modern education and outlook, but we are always aware of our identity and responsibilities towards our struggle and our leader His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is partly

because of India's support to our cause that the Tibetan struggle not only survived the difficult period but got resurrected to this level of international awareness and confidence within the struggle. We are grateful to the government and people of India. Please accept our deepest gratitude.

The Tibetan struggle is not just to find a temporary arrangement for the exiled Tibetans to return home, but to seek a long-term interest for the survival of the Tibetan people and the nation. And therefore whatever may be the policies being held by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the exile government, we believe very strongly that the goal of the struggle cannot be anything less than Independence. Only an independent Tibet can guarantee the survival of the Tibetan people, our culture and the nation. The 2008 uprising in Tibet is a clear public mandate that the Tibetans in Tibet are willing to even die, but not live under Chinese colonial rule.

We understand that His Holiness the Dalai Lama – the Buddha that he is – is guided by his universal concern and therefore he has not been insistent for the independence of Tibet, and the exile government's policy seeking autonomy within China is bound by its relationship with the Government of India which still supports the One China policy.

The difference in the political stands between His Holiness and us doesn't divide us on our principled belief in non-violence. The Tibetan freedom struggle is based on the Buddhist principles of non-violence, and when we hit the streets with our direct action campaigns we are inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha.

We understand that the Government of India is dealing with People's Republic of China as a neighbour today. We are also aware that the Indian government still holds its decades old policy on Tibet saying: "Autonomous Region of Tibet is a part of the People's Republic of China" and that has not been reviewed all this time while there is a mounting Chinese military, political and environmental pressures on India.

Between the 1947 founding of Indian independence and 1949 Chinese invasion of Tibet, India and Tibet shared two years of friendly relationship as independent nations. So long as China continues its occupation of Tibet, India will never be able to solve its border issues amicably with China. Therefore we urge you to take this petition to the Government of India - our plea for a review of India's policy towards Tibet. Only by recognizing the historical independence of Tibet – with whom the Himalayan borders were decided through bilateral treaties – can India validate its legal and historical claim over its Himalayan states which

have been challenged time and again by the People's Republic of China.

We the younger generation Tibetans see in India a significant role she can play in re-establishing the independence of Tibet and maintain a brotherly relationship with future Tibet.

Tenzin Tsundue; Lukar Jam; Shingza Rinpoche; Lobsang Yeshe; Lungrik Gyal; Phuntsok Wangchuk; Karma Sichoe; Tenzin Choeying; Karma Choekyi; Tenzin Choedon; Tenzin Chokey; Buchung D Sonam; Tenzin Nyinje; Namlo Yak; Yungdrung Tsering; Tenzin Norkey; Tseten Gya; Zung Zhuk Kyi; Drukhey Pema Choedon; Kalsang Rinchen. tentsundue@yahoo.com

("Rangzen" is Tibetan for 'Freedom' and "Bo Gyallo" is Tibetan for 'Long Live Tibet' –Ed)

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Letter from the Nilgiris

Tibetan Sweater Sellers in Ooty: I visited The Tibetan Centre at Garden Road, Ooty where about Tibetan refugees have been running 50 shops for more than 40 years. They sell sweaters and embroidery items – both men and women to earn their livelihood.

Till date the government has not issued them with ration cards as they are not Indian citizens whereas all Sri Lankan refugees are given ration cards. The Tibetans live in rented rooms and lodges. This is being unfair to them and their children who do not get admission in local schools.

Poor management of Ooty's infrastructure: There is a heavy flow of tourists to Ooty/Coonoor during the holiday season but the facilities are dismal. During the season, in a day, 90,000 vehicles arrive particularly during the flower show. Sanitation and drainage are in a deplorable state. Corruption is at a high. Both the DMK and the AIADMK have equal share in mismanagement and corruption. These parties get elected by giving lollipops like rice at Re.1 per kg. free colour TV, LPG Gas stove and the like during election-time.

Meanwhile farmers in the Nilgiris suffer because the price of tea (green leaf) has come down to Rs.7 per kg.

Raman Dharmalingam, Lovedale, Nilgiris

*

Will Indian Politicians Destroy Indian Democracy?

With the election season now commencing in several states such as West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, I would advise politicians to refrain from launching vituperative personal attacks on the politicians of other

political parties. The other side is capable of similar standards and this would bring the political culture in the country to new low.

The leading politicians, particularly belonging to the large parties, should exhibit maturity and refrain from indulging in political exchanges like street urchins.

The people are increasingly getting disenchanted with the personal behaviour and conduct of the politicians and now tend to think that almost all politicians are corrupt and dishonest. Most of the public attend political meetings not due to any great regard for any particular politician but because such meetings offer some sort of "entertainment"; and realising that they have no choice but to vote for the lesser evil, they treat their vote as a gamble.

Indian democracy is now at the cross roads. The technological and economic growth achieved by the country have not been matched by improvements in value systems in the personal and public life of individuals; corruption and immorality appear to be becoming the order of the day. The politicians have played a big role in uprooting the ethical and moral climate in the country by their corrupt, self-centred and family interests.

There are already disturbing signs that due to people losing faith in the politicians and the political system, extremist groups are gaining ground and people are taking the law into their own hands .

These conditions are not good for Indian democracy. On the 64th year of Independence, it is the right time for us to realise that the country has gone backwards as far as political standards and culture are concerned.

It would be a tragedy, if the younger generation start viewing Gandhian standards as utopian considering the low standards displayed by our politicians today.

One man who can play a decisive role in reversing this deteriorating trend in the political and moral climate is the Prime Minister of India who has the necessary power and authority. We, his countrymen, wish that our Prime Minister is able to see the writing on the wall and project himself as a role model for the youth in the country in terms of integrity and value systems by putting down the corrupt and dishonest elements with all the force at his command. If he were to lose the job in this process, let it be so but he would have reversed the trend and strengthened the moral and ethical forces in the country.

N. S. Venkatraman, Chennai.
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XIX Commonwealth Games

In the News for the Wrong Reasons!

Ashok Karnik

It is no longer Kalmadi vs Aiyar or XYZ. It is India vs its detractors. Little men's petty egos have no place when a nation's prestige is on the line.



The Commonwealth Games (CWG) are the flavour of the month. No day passes without CWG appearing on the TV or the front pages of the press. Nothing complimentary and every thing very disturbing! What was planned as a show-case event is fast becoming a show of all that is ugly in our system. The litany of allegations is endless.

The stadiums are incomplete; they are built shoddily and are leaking because of the heavy rains in Delhi. Roads are caving in. There are doubts about the material used in the new projects. The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) itself has pointed out malpractices in project construction. There is alleged corruption beginning from the Queen's Baton Relay function in London to air conditioners and treadmill machines purchased for Delhi. Then there are the Mani Shankar Aiyars of this world who are opposed to CWG *per se* and rejoice in the discomfiture of the organisers.

Allegations are flying thick and fast with news channels competing in producing so -called authentic documents to prove how clever they are and how stupid

the organisers can be made to look. There is no time to consider the damage it all causes to the entity called India. The old habit of pulling down everything that rises has come to the fore, aided by autocratic management and venial, lethargic bureaucracy. According to Murphy's Law, everything that could go wrong has gone wrong!

The problem with allegations is that these are generally half-baked and those responsible get away by picking out flaws in the charges, without really responding to serious doubts about their conduct. The haste with which officials are sought to be hanged for malpractices is disconcerting. The CWG Organising Committee (OC) is being held guilty of every little thing that is wrong but it transpires that 16 different agencies (CPWD, PWD of the Delhi Government, Delhi Development Authority, Municipal Corporation of Delhi *et al*) were responsible for various stadii and infrastructure work Each is trying to blame somebody else. It would require a major enquiry to decide who made the mistakes and then decide culpability. For the present, the OC and Kalmadi are the inviting targets as OC's officials have been caught with their hand in the till in the London function for the Queen's Baton Relay. Three persons have been removed from their posts in the OC (one of them had already left). Anil Khanna, the treasurer left in disgust as his name was dragged unnecessarily into controversy over the selection of surface for tennis courts. Unfortunately, many honest men suffer in the witch hunt started by the media. The question is not whether there were malpractices in the entire exercise but how to go about finding the guilty.

There is no need to get carried away by extraneous factors like leaking roofs and loose tiles or piles of rubble as these defects would be fixed in time. Indians are capable of achieving great things in the final hours. We need to be pushed into a corner to get out of our lethargy. Even in South Africa, serious doubts were raised about the nation's ability to conduct the Football World Cup. South Africa's acute economic disparities, its crime rate were all quoted to prove that it could not hold the World Cup. Look what SA achieved!

All the allegations and apprehensions can be listed and kept pending till the Games are over. After October 2010, all the 'miscreants' can be called to account and put through a wringer, if necessary. It is no longer Kalmadi vs Aiyar or XYZ. It is India vs its detractors. Little men's petty egos have no place when a nation's prestige is on the line. Their greed is well known and so is their habit of dipping into the public pockets for personal gain. The issue is much larger. Kalmadis may come and go but where does India stand? Are we to be put to shame or can we emerge without a black face? All attempts are being made to show how incompetent we are. India has to prove that it is amongst the best in organising international events.

The most important consideration is whether we want the CWG to go through or we want the world to get so alarmed with our inadequacies that the Games get dumped and India is listed as an irresponsible host, incapable of holding international events. The prudent thing would be to put all these controversies aside and stand as one to make the Games a grand success. Afterwards, the hunt can begin in earnest, not to be sidetracked or forgotten as we usually do. The guilty must be punished but the time is not now.

MR. ASHOK KARNIK is formerly Deputy Director, Intelligence Bureau, Government of India. Email: ashokkarnik2001@yahoo.co.in

An interesting question with no answers.... In the India-China war of 1962.

- Pt. Nehru, the architect of modern India suffered a severe stroke of depression from which he never quite recovered. He died in May 1964 at the comparatively young age of 73.
- V. K. Krishna Menon was removed from the post of *Raksha Mantri* for his incorrect assessment of the situation.
- Gen Thapar, the COAS was sacked. The careers of Lt.Gen. Kaul and scores of other military officers took a "U" turn.
- A few thousand soldiers died; many more were wounded and some were taken prisoners.
- The psyche of the country received a severe blow. It was considered a 'National Shame' The question was, "Who was the Defence Secretary? And what was the punishment meted out to him?" In all probability nothing was done to him, because he had no role in this!

During the recent attack on Mumbai

- dozens of soldiers and policemen were killed. The whole nation was shaken. Mr. Shivraj Patil lost his prestigious job.
- The Chief Minister of Maharashtra was axed.

Can some one tell us what action was taken against the Union Home Secretary or the Chief Secretary of Maharashtra?

The Civil Servants rule the roost. In terms of promotions and status they are ahead of every one else by miles. They are central in the Pay Commission and the Cabinet Secretary is involved in every major decision making process. Yet, when things go wrong, they wash their hands off so clean that one wonders how! A slightly closer examination reveals the secret.

- They never do anything themselves. They always find some one else to be the head, and they know how to reduce him to be a 'figure head'. (In the Pay Commissions, they have a retired Judge). However they place themselves in a spot which has the maximum opportunity to influence matters.
- After the event, they never face the Press or the Media. Their role is amorphous.
- The senior amongst them rarely signs a letter or order. The Soldiers's pension letter is signed by a Director, who is not a directly recruited IAS officer. Only rarely do you find a paper signed by a Joint Secretary. Officers above that level do not sign any document.
- They have a strong association. It protects the interests of its members dutifully and diligently.

So we have our Defence Headquarters in which the postings, promotions, rewards and punishments of all senior officers are controlled by the civil servants; and they also have the final say in the process of procurement of weapons and equipment, but they are not "responsible" if things go wrong! It is authority without responsibility. (For those who may not know, a lowly officer in the MoD can have a Deputy Chief posted out, but a Service Chief cannot get even a Desk Officer moved)

What sort of system have we evolved? And how has it survived all these years? It is a bit like a unit in which the clerks are running the unit and the CO is so dependent on the Head Clerk that he cannot move without their help!

Anonymous

The Afghanistan Papers

– How USA Condonates Pakistan's Duplicity

Firoze Hirjikaka

The US is desperately looking for a face-saving exit strategy from Afghanistan; and Pakistan is happy to oblige as long as it is left alone to subvert the legitimate government in Afghanistan and instal its own puppets.

As reported in the *New York Times*, classified military documents concerning the war in Afghanistan, spanning a period of six years, were made public.. The documents are often at variance with official accounts of the war and are bound to stir up considerable controversy and debate.

The documents were probably procured and revealed illegally, but are too important to be discarded casually. Primarily they detail how the American military and establishment have deliberately winked at Pakistan's duplicity in its dealings with both America and Afghanistan, all at the altar of political expediency. For example, there is growing evidence that the cozy relationship Pakistan's military intelligence agency, the ISI, has long had with the Afghan Taliban and even some elements of Al Qaeda has been instrumental in killing and maiming American troops.

The George W Bush presidency was routinely criticized for its handling of the war in Afghanistan, but the reality is that there have been more American troop casualties since Barrack Obama took office. In fact, Obama himself admitted that he knew what was going on: and the problem with Pakistan was the reason he took so long to decide on a troop surge last year. So was the US constrained to allow the Pakistan military help the Taliban blow up American soldiers because it needed to truck NATO supplies through their country?

Americans troops in Afghanistan have long suspected that Pakistan's military spy service has orchestrated the Afghan insurgency to serve its own ends, while at the same time, that country has been receiving more than \$1 billion a year from Washington. The irony is that these funds are ostensibly in appreciation for Pakistan's help in combating the very militants they are secretly helping.

The leaked documents, put out by WikiLeaks, suggest that Pakistan, while loudly proclaiming itself as a trusted ally of the United States, allows their ISI to have direct contact with the Taliban in secret strategy sessions,

whose purpose is to organize networks of militant groups that fight against American and NATO soldiers in Afghanistan, and even hatch plots to assassinate Afghan leaders. The network of Pakistani assets and collaborators is said to extend from the Pakistani tribal belt along the Afghan border, through southern Afghanistan, and all the way to the capital, Kabul.

The information contained in the leaked papers comes from raw intelligence and threat assessments gathered from the field in Afghanistan. Naturally not all of it can be verified since official clandestine agencies are hardly likely to be forthcoming, but many of the reports rely on sources that are rated as reliable by the military.

None of this is exactly new, of course; reports describing how Pakistani intelligence has been working alongside Al Qaeda to plan attacks have been around for a long time. Even US senators and Congressmen have cautioned that Pakistan's militant groups and Al Qaeda are working together; and are being guided by the ISI. Sure, American government officials have expressed anger at Pakistan's unwillingness to confront insurgents who launched attacks near Pakistani border posts, moving freely across the Afghanistan-Pakistan border; and then retreating to Pakistani territory, where they find a safe haven to regroup and plan fresh attacks.

What puzzles many ordinary Americans – and infuriates Indians – is that, in spite of being presented with growing evidence of Pakistani skulduggery and the frustrations of American soldiers on the ground, the US administration routinely comes out with rosy public pronouncements of Pakistan as an ally. It's all about political expediency, of course. The US military needs Pakistan's permission and cooperation to sustain a drone campaign targeting Al Qaeda havens near the frontier. Moreover, the most feasible way to resupply US and NATO troops in Afghanistan is through routes that cross Pakistan to Afghanistan. Therefore it should not come as a surprise that, during a very recent visit to Islamabad, Hillary Clinton was all bonhomie, praising the Pakistani government and

pledging a further \$500 million in development aid.

The painful reality is that the US has realised that the war in Afghanistan is not winnable in the conventional sense. It has also dawned on the White House that President Obama's public declaration that US troops will start coming home after July 2011 was perhaps premature and over-optimistic. The US is desperately looking for a face-saving exit strategy from Afghanistan; and Pakistan is happy to oblige as long as it is left alone to subvert

the legitimate government in Afghanistan and install its own puppets. After all, Pakistan has made no secret of its ambition to achieve what it calls "strategic depth" against its number one enemy, India.

In war and politics, the only ethics that apply are those of expediency and self interest.

MR. FIROZE HIRJIKAKA a retired engineer and freelance writer and blogger can be contacted at **leonardo8_99@yahoo.com**



This month in September 1953

Freedom First This Month September 1953

The lead story in the September 1953 issue was the completion of two years by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF) (titled "Another Landmark"), and the publication of its Annual Report for the period May 1952 to August 1953 (titled "A Year of Achievement") on the occasion of its Annual General Meeting in Madras (now Chennai) on September 13, 1953. Also organised for the occasion were seminars, a cultural show and a public rally!

Birth of Freedom First

According to the Report, "At the end of the discussion (regarding the programme of work for the ensuing year -1953-54), a resolution was passed that membership of the ICCF should be open to those who adhere to the Declaration on Cultural Freedom and pay a subscription of Rs.3/- a year. This subscription was to include the free supply of the bulletin proposed to be published."

An Executive Committee was elected, which at its first meeting "decided to publish a monthly bulletin to be called *Freedom First*, in the English language, and appointed an editorial board consisting of Mr. M. R. Masani, Mr. Prabhakar Padhye and Prof. J. C. Daruvala. The first issue was published on June 1, 1952. The editorial board appointed Mr. Aziz Madni to act as editor in January 1953."

*

Autonomy for Radio (*Excerpted from "Notes"*)

The only way to solve the present muddle in the A.I.R. (All India Radio) is to set up a truly autonomous broadcasting corporation free from political nepotism....

It is undeniable that the present administrative set-up of the A.I.R. abounds with vice. Nepotism in appointments, political interference, Government propaganda, dull and stereotyped programmes, an indifference to the time and convenience of listeners, and an absence of realism and common touch with the masses are some of its shortcomings

The formation of an independent corporation like the BBC responsible only to Parliament would rid us of this stagnation in reviews and discussions by making audible the "opposition" view point...

Commercial Broadcasts?

...This naturally raises the question of introducing commercial broadcasting and giving full scope of operation to private limited companies. There are some definite reasons for not favouring such suggestions with zest. As in the case of the USA it is undeniable that excessive commercialisation results in a vulgarisation of the art.

There are, however, some distinctive advantages of sponsored programmes...private capital can be the only answer to the setting up of a chain of medium wave transmitters..."

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Are You A Tired Nationalist?

- Now that India's struggle for national independence has concluded, do you feel at a loss for a cause to live and work for?
- Do you feel dispirited in the endless maze of conflicting reports, claims, and
- Are you going to let the totalitarians win by default?

Join the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom and read FREEDOM FIRST.

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS:

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Food Inflation And Sharad Pawar

– Is There an Equation?

Neelakant Patri

That Sharad Pawar has decided to give up the ministry of consumer affairs and food distribution should be most welcome and let us wish that whoever is going to succeed him would take greater interest in the acute problems faced by the common man.

It took a surgery of the throat and a stinging rebuke from a foreigner to make India's non-performing food minister realize that he has failed the people. Agriculture, Consumers Affairs and Food minister Sharad Pawar has been the target of criticism for the rising food inflation in the country that had not seen any let up even when the government food stocks have been rising.

An adroit Mr. Pawar has been able to ward off much of the criticism by declaring that whatever decisions have been taken that might have triggered inflation were taken collectively by the UPA coalition government and he cannot be singled out for the consequences of those decisions. He, of course, has been very vocal about the need to ensure higher prices for farmers but has been rather silent on protecting the consumers from runaway prices even though his charge includes consumer protection.

Now according to news reports he wants the prime minister to divest him of the burden of food and consumer affairs. He has had an operation of the throat in Mumbai even as the cricketing body that he is associated with was in turmoil. He has now become the president of the International Cricket Council and the throat operation did not prevent him from travelling to Singapore to attend the ICC meeting that decided to reject the nomination of former Australian prime minister John Howard for the vice-president's post of that august body. Howard, whose record of supporting the racist regime of South Africa came in the way of his nomination, and other like-minded Australians were angry with the African and Asian members of the ICC. Another Australian, the former CEO of ICC, Malcolm Speed, who was as much a controversial figure as Howard, lashed out at the only visible symbol of ICC, Mr. Sharad Pawar. He said Pawar has a bigger responsibility of feeding one billion Indians than playing cricket politics!

Coming from an injured Aussie, the comment may at first seem outrageous and uncalled for. But looking at the Indian situation, perhaps Speed is right in demanding that Pawar pay greater attention to his own people's basic needs. That he has decided to give up the ministry of

consumer affairs and food distribution should be most welcome and let us wish that whoever is going to succeed would take greater interest in the acute problems faced by the common man. The freeing of fuel prices from government control that has begun with the free pricing of petrol is definitely going to further push up of all items of consumption across the board. The one-day *Bharat Bandh* that the Right and Left opposition held earlier this month in protest against the government decision may have caused disruption for only a day but it is a welcome reminder to the coalition government that it cannot take the people's support for granted. The Congress-led UPA may be thinking that elections are still far off and people's anger may dissipate once the price rise is contained. But will food inflation decelerate from the present 16% plus to 5 or 6% by the end of the year as the ministers and government officials are predicting? And will the public distribution system be strengthened further as the consumer organizations are demanding when the finance ministry seems to be hell bent on cutting down the burgeoning food subsidy that now works out at more than Rs.47,000 crores?

The Congress party, as distinct from the UPA government, is committed to making available food grains at reasonable prices. There are about 450,000 fair price shops selling food grains at less than market prices. The Food Corporation of India and other state agencies together hold some 20 million tonnes of wheat and 24 million tonnes of rice as buffer stocks while the stock norms for this time of the year are about 4 million tonnes of wheat and 12 million tonnes for rice. The stocks are set to rise further when the rabi 2010 crop comes into the market. The media is full of stories about rotting foodgrains in the open while some of the warehouses built to stock food grains are housing liquor! Naturally, one is tempted to ask: Is allowing food grains to rot and go waste more important than quickly divesting the stocks at cheap prices to control inflation? This reminds one of the old days when the US would rather destroy surplus wheat stocks to shore up international prices to help its farmers! And we are copying that in a rather clumsy way.

Squeezing liquidity by the Reserve Bank may be one option but as RBI deputy governor Subir Gokarn says monetary policy will not rein in inflation. Raising interest rates may come up for consideration at the RBI's July 27 policy review. Gokarn has pointed out that "there is a significant structural driver to food prices and the policy approach to that is not going to be confined to the working capacity of monetary policy."

Gokarn's remarks at a seminar organized by the RBI surprisingly remind one of what the former US President George Bush had said about the Chinese and Indians eating more and driving up food prices worldwide. "The dynamics of food prices is not the result of one or two failed monsoons," Gokarn went on. "As affluence spreads, there is diversification in food consumption patterns. There is a greater emphasis on protein-rich items, resulting in higher demand for pulses and milk. The significant part of the rise in food prices was structural in nature." True, there are structural problems but what about the man-made problems that seem to recur time and again. A decade earlier, we had a similar problem of plenty in godowns on the one hand and spiralling prices of food prices on the other. Just in the two states of Haryana and Punjab, some 80% of the 15 million tonnes of wheat stocks was in the open because the warehouses were full and as a result, nearly 750,000 tonnes of wheat got damaged and sold as feed

stock. The FCI and the two states together lost some Rs.650 crores in the process. That much for our food stock management then! But what about now? You have nearly 10 million tonnes of wheat lying in open CAP storage and unless these stocks are moved fast to the consuming centres, they would again be fit for cattle only.

It is not that the politicians and officials are not aware of the solution. One can invoke the Essential Commodities Act to discipline hoarders but what if the government itself has turned into a big hoarder? There is also this element of corruption in implementing right decisions. The FCI has been selling wheat at controlled prices at around Rs.12.40 a kilo to select flour mills. This is supposed to lower market prices but the wheat that was milled which should have been available in the open market for a price of around Rs.14 a kilo, you will not get at less than Rs.20 a kilo.

Post-fuel price decisions, prices of almost all commodities, particularly vegetables and fruits have skyrocketed while the prices of cereals and pulses remain where they are and the government's response has been very poor to say the least.

Mr. Neelakant Patri is Associate Editor, Southern Economist (SE). Courtesy: Southern Economist.

Education the "Parikrma" Way

We live in a world where communication and technology has shrunk distances in every possible way. Our endeavour at Parikrma is to bring this new 'world' to the poorest from the slums of urban India so that they can equally access the best opportunities anywhere. Read on to find out how we are making it happen.

Getting ready for Global Living with the 'Final Leap': A key element of the Parikrma Model is its end-to-end (e2e) feature, where a child comes into Parikrma at age 5 in kindergarten and goes through school at the Parikrma Centre for Learning, pre-university (11th and 12th grades) at the Parikrma Junior College and then through professional college or vocational training before being placed in a job. The phase where a child will go through higher studies is called the 'Final Leap'.

This year our first batch passed the 12th grade examinations. Two children have got into engineering with one in a top school in Bangalore doing Telecommunications, 3 into hotel management, 8 into commerce and the rest into science. One child, a gifted footballer, will try for local clubs and pursue a career in football. Many of these children who came into Parikrma at age 12-13 had either dropped out of school or had never been to school.

Parikrma Children wow TED audiences: When India's first TED(Technology ,Entertainment and Design) conference was held in November 2009 at Mysore, our children were invited to participate in a global project managed by Cisco for the TED University session. It was a project that demonstrated the power of technology for collaborative work. Our children represented India and collaborated with children from The International School, Songdo, Korea as well as Silverton Primary School in Melbourne, Australia on an environmental sustainability project that was presented to a live audience of TEDsters in Mysore using Cisco's Webex technology. In preparation for this our children produced a 7 minute film on environmental issues important to them. This film was presented at the TED session. Education at Parikrma is not just about completing school. It's about preparing children to live in this 'globalized' world. This preparation was put to test at the TED conference and our children came out with flying colours!

Excerpted with permission from *Parikrma News*, August 2, 2010

To know more about the Parikrma Humanity Foundation, visit <http://www.parikrmafoundation.org>

We Want Their Blood!

M. B. Damania

Would the outcome have been different if the gesture of Warren Anderson in coming to Bhopal immediately, was taken in a spirit of cooperation instead of confrontation?

Management gurus have a mantra, “There are no bad workmen; only bad managers.” By accepting this proposition, responsibility for proper working of any organization has been laid squarely on the managers or leaders at every level of the organization. Ever since this was accepted early in the 20th century, management science has taken wing and progressed to the levels we see today.

According to our former President Abdul Kalam, leaders should also know how to manage failure. He tells the following story:

“Let me tell you about my experience. In 1973 I became the project director of India’s satellite launch vehicle programme, commonly called the SLV-3. Our goal was to put India’s “Rohini” satellite into orbit by 1980. I was given funds and human resources – but was told clearly that by 1980 we had to launch the satellite into space. Thousands of people worked together in scientific and technical teams towards that goal. By 1979 – I think the month was August – we thought we were ready. As the project director, I went to the control center for the launch. At four minutes before the satellite launch, the computer began to go through the checklist of items that needed to be checked. One minute later, the computer program put the launch on hold; the display showed that some control components were not in order. My experts – I had four or five of them with me – told me not to worry; they had done their calculations and there was enough reserve fuel. So I bypassed the computer, switched to manual mode, and launched the rocket. In the first stage, everything worked fine. In the second stage, a problem developed. Instead of the satellite going into orbit, the whole rocket system plunged into the Bay of Bengal. It was a big failure. That day, the chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization, Prof. Satish Dhawan, had called a press conference. The launch was at 7:00 am, and the press conference – where journalists from around the world were present – was at 7:45 am at ISRO’s satellite launch range in Sriharikota [in Andhra Pradesh in southern India].

Prof. Dhawan, the leader of the organization, conducted the press conference himself. He took responsibility for the failure – he said that the team had worked very hard, but that it needed more technological support. He assured the media that in another year, the team would definitely succeed. Now, I was the project director, and it was my failure, but instead, he took responsibility for the failure as chairman of the organization.”

Dr. Abdul Kalam, being a great man and a great leader, admits his mistake. Fortunately, apart from the loss of funds and efforts, there was no mishap. But instead of falling in the Bay of Bengal, if the rocket had fallen into a densely populated area and caused thousands of casualties, would our nation have hanged Prof. Dhawan or Dr. Abdul Kalam, or both?

Recently there was the disastrous air crash at Mangalore. NGOs had drawn the attention of the authorities concerned to the hazards. They had even gone to the Supreme Court, which dismissed their petition on an assurance from the government that everything was fine. According to recent press reports, over 40 airports are running without a safety licence. The last airport in India to see its licence lapse was Bajpe in Mangalore. Who do we hang? The government authorities who gave false assurance, the Supreme Court judges, or all of them?

Several horrible railway accidents have happened and keep happening because lessons have not been learnt. In a recent press report the count was 14 accidents in 12 months. Has any railway minister been held responsible?

One day after the Bhopal verdict, a person was electrocuted while operating an electric lawn-mower. Newspaper photos showed several priests looking on. Obviously the accident took place in a temple; but we will not see any priest charged with manslaughter or even arrested.

From time to time, we find the general public, fuelled by the news media, baying for the blood of persons who are said to be guilty. We have seen this in examples

of drunken driving, corporal punishment of students, sexual harassment, shooting of stray dogs and recently in the Union Carbide case.

It is not the intention of this note to judge the guilt or innocence of accused persons. That is for the courts to decide. Likewise the penalty will also be decided by the courts. But is the voice of the nation, as reflected in the news media, justified in demanding the harshest form of punishment? Why different standards for Union Carbide and others who were in similar position of authority and responsibility. Even convicted terrorists have their share of sympathizers.

In the Union Carbide case, Warren Anderson, chairman of the parent company, immediately came to India with his full medical and engineering team. The medical team was under Dr. Avasia, one of the world's leading authorities on toxic damage. Warren Anderson was assured of safe passage by the highest authorities in the government of India. And what did we do to him? We arrested him as soon as he landed. His team was not allowed to go anywhere near the plant. He is said to be rude and arrogant. Would you not be thoroughly annoyed if you came trying to do humanitarian work and as a result got arrested and declared "absconder"? And now we want to extradite him. Do we want to display to the world that a solemn assurance from the government of India is worthless and cannot be trusted?

Keshub Mahindra was the chairman of Union Carbide India. As in many large public limited companies, the chairman looks after general guidance, conduct of meetings and business performance. He had very little to do with day-to-day working. He has been sentenced to two years and we are asking for more.

No industry can be run in the country without a Factory Licence and regular inspections. There are also controls from Pollution Control Boards under five, or more, legal enactments. In 1984, "Inspector Raj" was so pervading, that no industry could move a step without some licence, permit, no-objection-certificate or some form of government blessing. Our authorities cannot claim ignorance of the hazards at Bhopal. Why has no one said anything about accountability of these government servants who received salaries to do their job and payments for not doing their duty?

Union Carbide has been accused of ignoring safety. Their manuals are available on the internet. Warren Anderson sitting in USA cannot make sure day-to-day, that the manuals are followed in Bhopal. Nor can Keshub Mahindra, who heads several large public limited

companies, do so.

After any accident, it can always be claimed that the person in control was negligent. How many of us have experienced a child or motor-cyclist darting across the road without warning? And if there is an accident it is the car driver who is accused of negligence; not the person who has acted irresponsibly.

In fact, there is nothing like "absolute" or "fool-proof" safety precautions. No matter how diligently precautions may be taken, there is no guarantee against unforeseen circumstances.

It is said that the compensation paid by Union Carbide is paltry and humiliating to our nation. Would the outcome have been different if the gesture of Warren Anderson in coming to Bhopal immediately, was taken in a spirit of cooperation instead of confrontation? And have we made good use of funds already paid? Our Supreme Court has passed some remarks on this subject.

In 1984, the global sales of Union Carbide was several billion dollars. The Indian business would be comparatively small. Their major business was batteries; so out of the total Indian business, pesticides may be a small fraction. While accusing Union Carbide of greed, let us realize that no large multinational corporation would be foolish enough to risk a disastrous operation to boost sales by a figure which would be insignificant compared to total sales.

In conclusion, do we say that Union Carbide, the corporation and its top managers are without blame? If they have received a fair trial and are convicted, we must accept the decision. But let their fate not be decided by pressure groups or the news media. Let us behave as citizens of a country which has mechanisms for judging crime and disputes. Let us not have different standards for easy targets. Let us exercise our discretion when goaded by people who are called "activists" and news media eager to boost circulation.

Who knows? Tomorrow, any one of us may be similarly accused in some matter which we least expected. We may be too small for news media to take interest; but there remains the activist who will say "*We Want Their Blood*".

"There, but for the grace of God, go I."

MR. M. B. DAMANIA is a lay person with no financial interest in Union Carbide, nor any connection with a concerned NGO, or any government department. Information contained in this article is based on press reports and the internet.

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.

The Myth of Gotra : Khap Panchayats

1. 'Gotra' has been much heard of but little understood. Astrologers, who need the 'Gotra' for the smallest religious rite, are of no help in explaining the concept. The *Khaps* who went to Court to seek amendment to the Hindu Marriages Act (HMA) to ban 'Sagotra' (intra-gotra) marriages could not provide any scriptural reference to their demand and had to withdraw their petition. As is the wont these days, all traditions are sought to be explained in terms of modern science. The opposition to 'sagotra' marriages is also justified as prevention of consanguineous conjugation. People of the same 'gotra' are believed to come from the same genetic material, like brothers and sisters. Sounds impressive but it is nothing of the kind. Originally, 'gotra' was a device to categorise families and all Brahmins supposedly came genetically from eight *rishis*. That was a numerical impossibility and the scope was widened to cover all those who revered those *rishis*. They could then belong to different families and even different castes. There is no common genetic line in the 'sagotra' group. There goes the scientific camouflage! Even the 'Gotra' adherents allow marriages between cross-cousins.

1. A more rational explanation of the 'gotra' mystery is that the tribal man while settling down to agrarian living, valued his wealth in terms of cows. A common 'cow pen' (*gotra*) tied a family together; outsiders were not welcome and division of wealth was to be avoided. Marriages were permitted within the 'gotra' only. (Reverse of what is supposedly a divine order today). As tribal customs met the advancing Aryans, the custom came in for criticism and stout opposition for inbreeding and the new authority of the Vedas (?) possibly disallowed 'sagotra' marriages. This order, whose origin is only a guess, is what the *khaps* are enforcing – and killing the deviants to preserve family honour! Unfortunately, there is no honour to defend and no scriptural edict to blame.

(An attempt is made to find a way through the darkness of *Khap* justice. The rational explanation emanates from Veer Savarkar's modern outlook on Hindu traditions/culture. Reference: "Our Ancient Customs" by Sudheer Birodkar). Can somebody throw more light?

Indo-Pak Talks : Aman Ki Asha or Ashes?

2. The Indian Foreign Minister S.M.Krishna's visit to Pakistan (July 15) had raised high hopes; it looked like the beginning of a thaw in the frozen relationship and start of a dialogue all over again. The visit yielded nothing – not even platitudes but enough controversy to defeat the most optimistic adherents of 'Aman ki Asha' (Hope of Peace). Krishna rejected speculations that the visit was a disaster and claimed that there were positive gains as the two sides understood each other's point of view. He argued that the fact that they had met, discussed and decided to meet again was an achievement by itself; he believed that incremental steps would be taken in the future. Congress spokespersons were a little more cautious in their assessment and stressed that the talks would continue as no talks was not the answer. In effect, India was willing to talk in spite of everything that went wrong. Why it went wrong has an intriguing answer. It is believed that India's determination to bring the ISI into the 26/11 culprits' list on the basis of Headley's interrogation upset

2. India should no longer be surprised by the undiplomatic conduct of Pakistani representatives during and after every such dialogue. It is their compulsion to prove to their countrymen that they have not succumbed to Indian pressure. This began with the infamous Agra summit when Gen. Musharraf buried all protocol and indulged in a propaganda offensive. Foreign Minister Shah Mohd. Qureshi revealed the same smooth obnoxiousness, first attacking the Indian Home Secretary for pointing out the role of the ISI in the Mumbai attack; he then questioned Krishna's mandate alleging that during their talks Krishna had to go out repeatedly to talk to Delhi; that India had a very narrow focus etc. Such shocking discourtesy to a visiting dignitary is rare in diplomatic annals but it is clear that Pakistan treats all such meetings as a platform for propaganda. With this kind of attitude towards a serious dialogue, are any results possible? Krishna was obviously disappointed with his failure to emerge as a world statesman and took out his frustration after returning, by blaming

the Pak army who pressurised the Pak Foreign Minister to scuttle the talks. After ruining the dialogue, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan brazenly declared that they were keen on continuing discussions with India. The FM reserved a sting in the tail as he declared that he would not visit India unless there was guarantee of a result! What does one make of these somersaults?

the Home Secretary of talking out of turn. India's External Affairs and Home Ministries were obviously working at cross purposes. With this kind of confusion within our ranks, how can we tackle an enemy? However, the question remains: how long can Pakistan be treated as a truant child? A modicum of etiquette is expected during an international dialogue. Otherwise the trust deficit which is sought to be reduced would increase. Wikileaks have provided 90000+ Red flags of Pakistan's perfidy.

Hooliganism or Argument?

3. Our democratic traditions are not very old and these get frayed very frequently. A political argument getting out of hand is the norm as sundry political groups believe more in muscle power than civilized discourse. On July 16, a TV station was attacked for showing some Hindu leaders (RSS) being close to suspected Hindu militants. The same night a Kannadiga supporter was beaten up by Shiv Sainiks during a TV debate on Maharashtra's claim over Belgaum. Both the attacking groups may have had their own arguments to offer but these need to be articulated in words not through fists.

3. TV channels are coming in for hostile attention as people's faith in their impartiality is non-existent; their bonafide are questioned. There is no guarantee that an opposite view point would get equal coverage on the channels. The Channels opt to air what is sensational and cause damage to the absentee party. If newspapers and TV channels make it a practice of inviting the 'other' sides to air their views as a matter of course, there would be fewer such attacks. This does not absolve the miscreants but is a way out of hooliganism as a form of protest.

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

The Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture (ISSSC)

<http://www.trincoll.edu/secularisminstitute/>

International Essay Competition, India 2010

"Secularism in the world today: Challenges and prospects."

On a request by Dr. N. Innaiah, Chairman, Centre for Inquiry, India, we are happy to share information about this competition with our readers. This is meant for all college students pursuing a degree course.

Fact Sheet: The Institute for the Study of Secularism in Society and Culture (ISSSC) was established at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, USA, in 2005 to advance understanding of the forms and roles of political secularism and personal secularity around the world. As part of its goal of identifying and encouraging scholarly excellence concerning secularism and secularity, ISSSC is sponsoring an essay competition.

Topic of this year's essay competition: "Secularism in the world today: Challenges and prospects."

Length of essay: Up to 2,000 words.

Questions that may be addressed: Are there distinguishable forms of secularism and/or secularity in the world today? What are the cultural and social consequences or outcomes of (various forms of) political secularism, personal secularity, or secularization? What are the cultural and social functions of a distinction between the "religious" and "secular"?

Qualities the reviewers will be looking for: Originality, insight; cogency of argument; clarity of exposition; strength of evidence.

Eligibility:

- Any student who is currently enrolled in a program of study leading to an advanced degree in an accredited institution of higher learning in India
- The study may be enrolled in any field of study
- Each applicant may submit only one essay
- The essay must be an original work and one that has not been published
- All quoted, copyrighted, or previously published material should be properly cited and reference in accordance with standard scholarly practice. Failure to do so will result in disqualification
- There is no cost to enter the competition.

Submission Deadline: No later than October 31, 2010.

Cont'd. on page 24

Manohar Malgonkar



12.07.1913-14.06.2010

Jagalbet near Belgaum.

A Liberal and active in the Swatantra Party in

Well known Novelist Manohar Malgonkar passed away on 14th June this year. He was 97. Born into a royal family and educated at Bombay University, he was a Lieutenant Colonel in the Maratha Light Infantry. A big game hunter turned wild life conservationist and a farmer he lived in a bungalow in the village of

the sixties he contested the elections to the Lok Sabha from Karnataka. He was best known as a novelist. His first book *Distant Drum* was about the spirit of the Indian soldier. He dealt with the freedom struggle and Partition in *A Bend in the Ganges*. Other works include *Combat of Shadows*, *The Princes*, *The Devil's Wind*, *Kanhoji Angrey*, and the *Chhatrapatis of Kolhapur*. The socio-historical milieu of those times form the backdrop of his novels, which are usually of action and adventure. He also wrote non-fiction, including biography and history. He wrote a number of articles and reviewed books in *Freedom First*.

As our tribute to a thorough gentleman, a great writer and a good liberal we reprint below a review article by him and published in our issue No. 265, June 1974.

Extinction Through Accession

Manohar Malgonkar

“We are doing a good turn to the princes by taking away their money and privileges. We are giving them an opportunity to be men” – Indira Gandhi

After a well-rounded career in journalism which was climaxed by the editorship of two national dailies, Mr D. R. Mankekar has recently retired to become India's most prolific purveyor of instant-history books. 'Accession to Extinction', subtitled 'The Story of Indian Princes' (Vikas, Rs 35), is his latest offering. Mr. Mankekar lingers a little too lovingly over the dead ground of the 'Accession' part of his story and devotes a paltry ninety or so pages to the 'Extinction' part. Also, possibly for reasons connected with the mechanics of book publishing, he does not bring the story up to date, or even up to a year ago, for his chapter 'The Final Act' deals with the passing of the 26th Amendment to the Constitution and makes no mention of a subsequent catharsis, the Supreme Court's ruling on the Parliament's amending powers and the supersession of judges who were not pliant.

Mr. Mankekar has done his homework well in that he has strung together most of the published evidence and buttressed it by his personal talks with several of the princes and at least two of the ministers, Mr. Yashwantrao Chavan and Mr. K. C. Pant. At that, those who expect to find some real inside dope – some delectably slanderous remarks dropped by the lions of either side in closed-door sessions – will be disappointed.

The resolution of the Congress Working Committee of June 1967 which started it all is presented without background, as though it was not the outcome of a good deal of behind-the-scenes horse-trading. But from here onwards, Mr. Mankekar proves convincingly that the princes were sacrificed not so much for the sake of any hallowed principle as for pandering to the newly face-lifted party image; that, to those in power, the manner of finishing off the princes was far more important than the act; that in the process, the Government had to appear all-

powerful, ruthless and yet somehow righteous; that the victims had to be made to squirm and the audience made to share in the consummation and to emit a collective gasp; that no matter what they did, the princes could never have got the Government to agree to a mutual settlement because that would have deprived the party of the anticipated standing ovation for which it had prepared the audience; that it was not enough merely to win a victory for socialism but that such a victory had to be seen to be won.

Mr. Mankekar's prose style is straight out of the front page of the *Times of India* and his self-professed preoccupation with objectivity deprives his writing of a sense of involvement. Indeed he seems to give the impression that he sees nothing particularly reprehensible with the abolition of privileges and pensions except the manner of its doing. But even his journalist's ambivalence seems to find it difficult to swallow the peculiar altruism of the ruling party that it was somehow done for the good of the princes themselves, as the Prime Minister told the Parliament: "We are doing a good turn to the princes by taking away their money and privileges. We are giving them an opportunity to be men."

For people of Mr. Mankekar's generation and mine, these words have an ominously familiar ring. They were used by Clive and his successors, who ruled us "for our own good," and more recently by the Russians, who took over several small countries in Europe for their own good. Now the words have been adopted by our rulers and harnessed to serve a domestic purpose, to take away from the citizen what is lawfully his, for his own good.

Source: *Freedom First* No.265, June 1964



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Salaries and Perks of Members of Parliament

The Cost to the Nation

Sharad Bailur

As usual it called for the sanity of the Prime Minister and Mr. Chidambaram to call a halt (even if temporary) to the move to raise the salaries of MPs to Rs.60,000 plus perks. Consider what they are getting at present.

The *Mail Today* newspaper, on 17 September 2009, provided a brief sketch of the salaries and benefits our Members of Parliament enjoy.

“Basic salary: Rs.1,92,000 per annum plus dearness allowance.

Constituency allowance: Rs.2,40,000 per annum (for Lok Sabha)

Daily Allowance: Rs.1,000 (when Parliament is in session)

Gadgets: Laptop

Benefits: House, Air travel, Train travel, Telephone, Medical facilities

Benefits Enjoyed by MINISTERS

Extra Salary: Rs.24,000

In addition,

- * A Type VIII bungalow, estimated 900 sq metres (including surrounding grounds)
- * Salary and allowances worth more than Rs.11 lakhs per month
- * Staff (for Cabinet ministers): 16 staff members, including private secretaries, officer on special duty (OSD), messengers, peons, drivers,
- * Staff (for deputy ministers): 13 staff members
- * Security: At least 3 Delhi Police constables on daily basis
- * Vehicles: A car to be used in Delhi, and one in the state to which the minister belongs (including free petrol); vehicle and driver for private secretary.
- * Telephone connection: With unlimited ISD and STD and local call facilities
- * Flights: 48 free ticket in flights
- * Health benefits: Free of charge accommodation and treatment in hospitals maintained by the government for the minister and family
- * Furniture and electrical equipment worth Rs.2.5 lakhs”

Era Sezhiyan (former Member of Parliament) wrote an article for *Frontline* on September 22, 2006 on this issue titled “By the Members, For the Members”. This is what he said:

“The Salaries and Allowances Act has been amended 27 times since 1954. The Joint Committee on Salaries and Allowances for MPs was constituted in September 1954 to frame the rules under the Act. The Committee consists of ten members nominated by the Lok Sabha Speaker and five nominated by the Rajya Sabha Chairman.

“The Committee determines its own rules of procedure and is empowered to make, after consulting the government, rules on matters specified in Sub section (3) of Section 9 of the Act.

“Its reports are not presented to Parliament. The rules do not take effect until they are approved and confirmed by the Rajya Sabha Chairman and the Lok Sabha Speaker, and are published in the Gazette. Such publication, under the Act, is the conclusive proof that rules have been duly made.

“In India, the members of the Central Assembly received Rs.20 per diem in 1921. In May 1945, they were paid a daily allowance of Rs.30 and a conveyance allowance of Rs.15, which were consolidated to Rs.45 and continued to be paid to the members of the Constituent Assembly from December 1946 onwards.

“Mahatma Gandhi insisted that persons in public life should take a minimum salary, just enough to maintain a simple life. Some members of the Constituent Assembly chose to draw only Rs.30 and several others surrendered their allowances to the local Congress committees and took smaller amounts fixed by the party.

“When the Draft Constitution provision on the salaries and allowances of the MPs came up for discussion on May 20, 1949, a suggestion was

made to pay between Rs.750 and Rs.1,000 as monthly salary. There was strong objection to this high amount and the Assembly retained the daily allowance of Rs. 45. Even this was considered too much in the context of the extent of poverty prevailing in India. On October 17, 1949, V. I. Muniswami Pillai (Madras) moved a resolution to reduce the daily allowance to Rs.40. He said: 'I know as a matter of fact that this is a small sacrifice. This august body has to give a lead to the country to improve the economic conditions that prevail today... I contacted many members of this august Assembly and found that they are all unanimously of the opinion that a five-rupee cut in the daily allowance will not be a hardship.' The amendment was accepted unanimously and the daily allowance of Rs. 40 was in force from that date in the Constituent Assembly, the Provisional Parliament and the First Lok Sabha until 1954.

"Article 102 of the Constitution provides that members shall be entitled 'to receive such salaries and allowances as may from time to time be determined by Parliament law'. Accordingly, Speaker G. V. Mavlankar appointed a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC), which recommended a daily allowance of Rs.35 without any salary or other remuneration. This meant a reduction of Rs.5 in daily allowance, which was not acceptable to the post-Independence MPs. After some animated discussion, the Members returned the proposal to the JPC for reconsideration. In its second report, the Committee recommended either a monthly salary of Rs.300 plus a daily allowance of Rs.20 or Rs.40 per diem.

"In his introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution by A.V. Dicey, E.C.S. Wade cautioned: 'It must not be forgotten that the inevitable consequence of the supremacy of Parliament in the legislative field is that there can be no check upon the unscrupulous use of power by a government which finds itself in command of a majority in the House of Commons. This should serve as a warning to the Members who succeeded in establishing a temporary majority in Parliament in order to effect a steep hike in their pay and perks. A political decision should be backed by political morality. Without morality, no decision lasts long in a functioning democracy.'"

Personally I find it stupid that MP's should not be paid well for the work that they do. The issue seems to be not what they get but how they get it.

Having worked for one of the most cost conscious private sector companies in India (Reliance Energy), I can testify from personal experience that they look upon the services of their employees as "Cost to the Company". In similar manner the services of our MPs to the nation should be computed on the basis of "Cost to the Nation".

The easiest way to do this would be to compute the cost (at market rates) of the benefits that they enjoy. Add that to the "Cost to the Nation" (figure over and above their salary and dearness allowance) and other perks like phones, medical benefits and the services of policemen and come to a total figure. That would be what they are getting now.

To this figure should be added the percentage of increase in their "Cost to the Nation" package that is being envisaged. That would be the figure that they are aspiring for, which the Prime Minister and Mr. Chidambaram disagreed with. And to sweeten the deal, add another ten percent as an incentive. That would be the final package that an MP should get. That will be the carrot. It will come to a figure that will astound the ordinary man in the street. No matter. That is what we should be paying our MPs.

But then remember:

1. No government cars
2. No security
3. No salaries and allowances for staff
4. No flights or train travel
5. No health benefits
6. No furniture or electrical equipment
7. No laptop.

If they want any, or all, of the above, they pay for it at market rates for which they are already being paid a salary as their "Cost to the Nation" package.

Now for the stick: To ensure discipline among MPs a set of rigid rules regarding attendance and behaviour in Parliament should be set down and enforced.

The country has a right to know what it pays for disorderly behaviour in Parliament, bullying, breaking the law, and breaking equipment like microphones and furniture, and corruption that involves being a Member of India's main institution of democratic representation.

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Come On, Liberals: Let's Change India!

Religious Freedom in the Free Society

Sanjeev Sabhlok

During India's independence movement, a few unthinking statements and actions by the leaders exacerbated the existing rift. This led to the partition of India on religious grounds – a grievous blow to liberalism, formalising as it did, at least implicitly, a place for religion in the affairs of the state

Tolerance and respect for others' opinions is the basis of religious freedom – the distinguishing hallmark of the free society. This month I briefly review how mankind discovered tolerance. I then ask whether India is tolerant. Finally, I outline the religious freedom policy of the Freedom Team of India (FTI: <http://freedomteam.in/>).

The History of Religious Freedom

Intolerance has been the norm throughout most of human history. Organised religions have spearheaded this intolerance, their surface claims of love for humanity masking their support for brutal violence against those who hold different views. Collectivist, even tribal in their origin (often geographically localised), organised religions think of life as a zero-sum game with the loss of one 'soul' from a particular religion being seen as another's gain. There is, in consequence, a ferocious competition to harvest our souls.

It is true that, as Vivekananda noted, it is not necessarily the founders who stoked intolerance, but their followers. "The disciples of all prophets have always inextricably mixed up the ideas of the Master with the *person*, and at last killed the ideas for the *person*". But it hardly matters to the innocent child killed in religious violence whose ideas killed him – the founder's or a follower's.

The modern conception of tolerance has taken an inordinately long time to develop. Nascent forms of tolerance arose in ancient Persia and India. Thus, "[t]he Hindus had one peculiar idea – they never made any doctrines or dogmas in religion; and the latter has had the greatest growth" (Vivekananda). In its policy on religious tolerance, FTI accepts that India should be proud of this history of tolerance. It is important to remember, however, that the ancient Hindu conception was not a theoretical formulation but an experiential practice, a loosely defined way of life. Hindu tolerance therefore frays easily when stressed, often being skin-deep. On the other hand, religions now often classified as intolerant, like Islam, had some

episodes of (relative) tolerance in the past.

But it is Christianity that makes the loudest claims about its "contributions" to tolerance. Robert A. Sirico goes further, claiming that "[i]t is Christianity that lies at the root of the body of ideas we know today as classical liberalism"¹. This view is factually incorrect. In my draft manuscript, *The Discovery of Freedom*² (DOF), I show clearly that the modern conception of tolerance was a *reaction* to internecine massacres within Christendom, not a consequence of its positive advocacy of religious harmony.

The credit for laying the theoretical foundation for tolerance must go squarely to liberal philosophers like John Locke (1632-1704). Locke cited a few never-practiced elements of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to advocate "[t]he toleration of those that differ from others in matters of religion"³. Voltaire (1694-1778) shamed Christendom with his commentary on the massacre in Béziers. Only then did Christendom begin to move away from its 1,500-year history of mindless brutality.

The modern liberal voice has been institutionalised through constitutionally protected tolerance. Even Christianity now speaks of tolerance. In the 1965 *Declaration of Religious Freedom*, Pope Paul VI wrote that "the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits." One only hopes that all organised religions will one day internalise this idea of the philosophers of liberty.

Religious Freedom Under Siege in India

The level of religious freedom in India declined precipitously with the advent of Islam, particularly in reaction to fanatics like Aurangzeb who overshadowed relatively benign kings like Akbar; a bitter taste from

religious excess disrupted relations between Hindus and Muslims. During India's independence movement, a few unthinking statements and actions by the leaders exacerbated the existing rift. This led to the partition of India on religious grounds – a grievous blow to liberalism, formalising as it did, at least implicitly, a place for religion in the affairs of the state

Post-independence, India's major political parties did not try to clearly separate the jurisdictions of the state and religion. Instead, our lawmakers enacted laws for specific religious communities in the Indian Parliament. Our major political parties identify themselves with religion: one provides state-based subsidies for Muslims; the other insists on a greater role for Hindus. Communal tensions continue to fester below the surface, ready to explode at the slightest provocation. Religious freedom is under siege in India. This has had adverse impacts on freedom of expression as well, as I discussed in my article in *Freedom First* in July 2010.

One would even suggest that religious fundamentalism is stronger today than it was ever before. Believers in *Hindutva* reject the idea of religious freedom altogether and want to re-open ancient wounds (at least that is the inference one draws from the writing and actions of those who claim to follow this ideology). Therefore, even after living in India for nearly a thousand years, Muslims do not always feel welcome – which is not to say that they have always helped their own cause.

Firmly separating the domains of religion and the state by enforcing law and order and bringing about a sense of common national purpose requires leadership of a calibre that India has not yet produced. Only liberals can provide such leadership, but India's liberals have deserted the battlefield – or they had until now when FTI has started assembling.

FTI's Position on Religious Freedom

FTI is a group of leaders unambiguously committed

to freedom including religious freedom. Its members firmly believe that religion is a personal matter to be practiced inside our own homes, temples or churches, not something on which governments should create policy and enact laws. Governments should never get involved in any religious activity (such as through subsidies) unless it trespasses others' liberties. FTI therefore does not inquire into or ask its members to alter their personal religious beliefs. Simply speaking, their religious beliefs are not the business of FTI.

FTI believes that once the rule of law is enforced, religions will thrive on their own merit. FTI policy asks everyone, including religions, to be given complete freedom of speech – subject to accountability. This includes the right to preach one's religion and convert others to one's faith. (I have reservations against the use of foreign funds for such advocacy, but this concern is not FTI policy at the moment.) FTI requires such freedom to be exercised with care since freedom is never license to cheat. To the extent that religious activity leads to conversion, the state has an interest in ensuring that no coercion, bribes, or misleading conduct is involved.

Freedom Team of India

It is abundantly clear that no major political party in India cares about our liberties. The only way, therefore, to foster religious freedom and tolerance is for liberals to assemble and seek a mandate from the people through the hustings. Please therefore join or otherwise support FTI. Become a Freedom Partner!

(Footnotes)

¹ Robert A. Sirico, *Must Religion Be a Threat to Liberty?* Sydney: Centre for Independent Studies, 2008, p.12.

² Available for comment at <http://discovery.sabhllokcocity.com/>

³ Locke, John, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, 1689, [<http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/l/locke/john/l81t/>]

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Arab Autocracy

The fate of the Arab world's two most important states lies in the hands of ageing autocrats. Hosni Mubarak, an 82-year-old air-force general who has ruled Egypt since 1981, is widely reported to be grievously ill. King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, who assumed the throne of the Arabs' richest country five years ago but has run the show for longer, is reckoned to be 86. The grim reaper will bring change in both places soon.

Maybe the old men will manage to control their succession. President Mubarak has been preparing the ground for his son, Gamal, to take over. King Abdullah's anointed successor, Crown Prince Sultan, one of his 18 surviving brothers, has long been poorly, but there are plenty more where he came from. Decades of repression have ensured that the opposition is quiescent in Egypt and virtually inaudible in Saudi Arabia. But they have also made these countries vulnerable to violent disruption. Transition in autocracies often means instability.

The Economist, July 15, 2010



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjika

Iran And Pakistan – America’s Double Standards

America is punishing the pupils and rewarding the teacher. Is it any wonder that America’s foes don’t take her seriously?

One country is on America’s hit list; and the US recently succeeded in persuading the United Nations to impose sanctions on it. The other is America’s close ally, on whom the US showers billions of dollars in aid and military hardware. The irony is that both countries are ideologically much closer to each other than either is to the United States. I am talking, of course, about Iran and Pakistan.

Let’s start with their official titles. Both nations label themselves as The Islamic Republic of...; and they truly are. Both follow the repressive Sharia Law; Iran as official policy and Pakistan in everything but name. The sanctions against Iran are in retaliation for that country developing nuclear weapons technology. The fact is that Iran is still years away from having the capability to manufacture a nuclear weapon. Pakistan already has an established nuclear weapons stockpile, is well known as the biggest nuclear weapons proliferator on the planet and, furthermore, is home to a rogue scientist against whom charges have been proved that he sold nuclear technology to America’s biggest foes, such as North Korea, Iran and Libya. In effect, America is punishing the pupils and rewarding the teacher. Is it any wonder that America’s foes don’t take her seriously?

So is it OK for America to exhibit such blatant double standards? Sure it is, if you believe the words of US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael Mullen. He says it’s fine for the U.S. to support Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal, while condemning the nuclear ambitions of what the US considers rogue nations. He also mentioned in passing that Pakistan’s need to use nuclear weapons against India, in order to feel safe, was justified.

Perhaps the admiral has not heard the views of Majeed Nizami, a Pakistani media mogul who owns two national newspapers and a television channel. During a recent speech at a function given in his honour, he openly advocated unleashing nuclear war against India. “Don’t worry if a couple of our cities are also destroyed in the process,” he casually remarked. Incidentally, one of his papers publicly declared that the United States government was behind every terrorist incident in the world, including the Times Square attack. And don’t think Nizami is just

an isolated fruitcake. His opinions are shared by millions of Pakistanis and, more importantly, by that country’s military establishment and intelligence service, the ISI. But, apparently, that is not worrying the US government or the American media. What does worry them is the danger of an Iran that may or may not develop a nuclear bomb sometime in an undefined future and bad guys like Al Qaeda then getting hold of one. The thought that Al Qaeda is much more likely to acquire or steal a bomb from Pakistan, which already has more than 70 of them, does not occur to them because, hey, Pakistan is an ally.

Recently, the US media has got justifiably agitated at the sentence of death by stoning of two women – one a mere teenager – for the crime of adultery. “Bloody barbarians”, they fulminate; and quite rightly too. Now get this. The Pakistani government sanctions stoning deaths for the same charge in Pakistan and also prescribes the death sentence for blasphemy, which needs nothing more than criticizing Muhammed or Allah. Although the establishment claims that the average Pakistani is against religious extremism, a survey has found that two-thirds of the population favoured Sharia law and giving power to “religious” judges. Other poll findings: 78% favour death for those who leave Islam; 80% favour whippings and cutting off hands for crimes such as stealing.

There are more examples of America’s double standards, but you get the gist. What I find particularly lamentable is that, apart from a handful of American blogs, like Jawa Report and Jihad Watch, the electronic and print media in the United States has been largely silent on this anomaly. It is only very recently that some American lawmakers have openly spoken out about Pakistan’s duplicity in sponsoring certain extremist groups that they use to pursue their own political agenda *vis-à-vis* India and Afghanistan; and steadfastly avoiding US efforts to brand them as terrorist organizations. One can only hope that America, even belatedly, remembers that it is the purported champion of what it touts as its “values”; and that the ends – anyway dubious in this scenario – do not always justify the means.

*

It's Not Their Problem

The tragedy is compounded by the reality that we, the people, pride ourselves on living in a democracy without having any notion of what that entails.

A few weeks ago, a foot overbridge (FOB) at Santa Cruz station(in Mumbai) gave way and hung precariously over the railway tracks. Providentially, it did not collapse entirely, thereby avoiding a potential tragedy. Far from owning responsibility, or even expressing any remorse, the Railways shrugged their shoulders and brazenly admitted that they knew the FOB was in a precarious condition, but chose to do nothing because the BMC was tardy in paying them the maintenance charges due to them.

The excuse given by the Railways is staggering in its callousness and criminal indifference to the likelihood of members of the public sustaining serious injury, or even losing their lives. It is a measure of the disastrous extent to which bureaucracy and red tapism have infected our public servants.

And what will the general public do? A few of us will write angry letters to the editor, but the rest will merely shrug our soldiers and dismiss the incident as an inevitable manifestation of living in Mumbai. And that is the problem? Why should such near-tragedies be inevitable? Why are we so reluctant to bring the erring officials to task?

The sad answer is that apathy, callousness and wasteful profligacy in spending public money by government agencies has become so commonplace that it hardly registers on the public consciousness. Even worse, our “leaders” are so shameless that they are least bothered by frequent exposure of their wrongdoings in the media. They carry right on with business as usual. The tragedy is compounded by the reality that we, the people, pride ourselves on living in a democracy without having any notion of what that entails. We accept the sloth and rampant corruption prevalent among our public “servants” to be as inevitable as death and taxes; and something we have no control over. We allow the babus to lord over us like Roman emperors exacting tribute from their subjects.

That is our first mistake. We are not subjects, we are citizens. In a democracy, power is supposed to flow from the people to elected representatives. In India, however, it happens the other way round. The people we elect ride roughshod over us because we let them. As long as we continue to behave like docile cattle, we have no real right to complain.

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Governance Through Institutions

– Karnataka, A Caste Study

Sadanand B. Kumta

To improve governance, there is urgent need for systemic changes that are currently being opposed by the political class.

Good governance is brought about through well functioning healthy institutions whether provided under the Constitution or established by acts of legislatures. These may be the Supreme Court, the High Courts, the Lokayukta in the States, CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation), CVC (Central Vigilance Commission), consumer courts, services tribunals, *et al.*

Once established, there is a whole process of institution-building. The quality of an institution depends on the competence and integrity of the men at the helm who run it and the traditions they set up or leave behind. Institutions become effective when there is societal support and also the backing of the government and legislatures in crunch situations of governance.

The scenario that exists today is that even well known institutions with good track records are not only being dented but undermined by incompetent heads, vested interests, power equations, money and muscle power. The functioning of investigative agencies like the CBI and even the CVC has affected their credibility. Whistle blowers and RTI activists are still being murdered since the days of Satyendra Dubey. There is urgent need to underpin such affected institutions as is being done for weak structures.

A very glaring recent example is that of the office of the Lokayukta (Ombudsman) in Karnataka. Justice Santosh Hegde who had earned high regard for nearly four years, for his hard work, resigned on 25th June 2010. He said he was fed up, feeling himself helpless and useless. His report on recommendations of how to plug administrative loopholes in preventing illegal mining had been ignored by the Karnataka Government which harbours a powerful mining lobby. The last straw on Justice Hegde's back was the impending suspension of a duty conscious brave officer of the forest department who dared to investigate illegal transport of iron ore through Belikeri and Karwar ports for export. He also found that officers who were caught for corruption and suspended were being reinstated without consulting the Lokayukta, despite assurances from the CM (Chief Minister).

The Lokayukta was of the opinion that people in

politics are not bothered about corruption. He found that some eight thousand cases were pending as a result of keeping the Lok Upayuktas post vacant. The latest news at the time of writing, is that a Lok Upayukta has been appointed and that he has taken over. It only proves that governments can move fast when needed.

After the Lokayukta's resignation, there was a big commotion in both the print and electronic media, sympathy totally in favour of Justice Hegde. The party which was most embarrassed was the BJP and even Delhi was shaken. Shri Advani intervened and on his request and assurances for his unfettered functioning, Justice Hegde, both on considerations of public pressure on him and also his father's close relations with Shri Advani, retracted and withdrew his resignation.

Even though the curtain has been drawn over Act I, the Karnataka drama has moved on to Act II. The theatrical scene has begun with opposition MLAs sleeping for five days in the Vidhan Soudha while being amply served with chicken and mutton biryani on the floor of the assembly. I am sure Shakespeare would have been immensely pleased to know about the *dramatis personae* of this theatre of the absurd and left one more play to posterity.

Even the Governor of the state in obedience to his constitutional obligations overshot his limit and jumped into the fray. He put himself, even in his advanced age, to the trouble of flying to Delhi and meeting all authorities concerned.

The beleaguered CM, who must have been waiting to see light at the end of the tunnel through a maze of fast developing events must have felt relieved with the press conference of the mining magnate and his minister, who declared that he is as pure as 24-carat gold and is ready to face any inquiry. We still have to wait for Act III to unfold, before the curtain is finally rung down.

There is demand from the opposition for handing over the case to the CBI but the CM of Karnataka is opposed to this, as he has expressed doubts about its impartiality. Even Justice Hegde in a 'Walk the Talk'

interview to *The Indian Express* has aired his reservations about the CBI because it has a history of closing many cases which ought to have ended in conviction.

Justice Hegde wants more powers to be able to act against powerful ministers and higher bureaucrats. The *suo moto* power he had asked for to investigate has not been given to him. There are however press reports that he has been given a free hand in investigating into illegal mining. Justice Hegde has stated that many departments are involved in this muddle and as there are widespread vested interests involved, he is getting little, if any, cooperation.

The opposition has its own apprehensions when it comes to inquiry by the Lokayukta. Justice Hegde feels that in the mining muddle, there are no saints in any party whether it is JD (U), Congress or the BJP. There is one scandal involving 35 lakh tons of iron ore costing about Rs 1600 crores having been illegally exported. There is a lot of environmental damage being done both to the flora and fauna of the forests where mining is taking place. The ecology of Bellary is being destroyed. The government itself is getting nothing by way of royalty from the mining though it is State property.

In the midst of this unfolding drama, let us be reminded that the Lokayukta Act expects his office to oversee good governance, prevent corruption, nepotism and arbitrariness. The handicap is that nobody dares to complain against the bigwigs in Karnataka. It is

encouraging however, that though Justice Hegde doesn't want to go beyond Lokayukta's legal potential, he is bent on seeing that the authority of his office is not diminished in any way and he is ready to take it further.

In conclusion, the Karnataka case study sends a strong message that institutions concerned with governance should be primarily headed by persons with the highest level of competence and integrity, preferably with vision and a sense of mission. Such men should be ready to take hard knocks, not only from the political class but also from powerful vested interests with money and muscle power.

To improve governance, there is urgent need for systemic changes that are currently being opposed by the political class. Some of these changes include provisions in law for confiscation of property of those involved in corruption, police reforms as presented to the Supreme Court, electoral reforms to exclude persons with criminal record from contesting elections, taking concrete measures to implement administrative reforms and enacting of the Lokpal (Ombudsman) Bill.

There is need for strong public opinion to be built up and also to have men and women in office who are ready to function boldly with resignations in their pockets.

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International Essay Competition, India 2010 *(Cont'd. from page 14)*

Awards: ● First-place winner will receive \$500 US ● Essays considered worthy of Honorable Mention will be published on the ISSSC Web site. The essayists will receive book prizes of ISSSC publications.

Essay submission and use: ● Presented in Times New Roman 12 font or comparable type ● Double-spaced.

● In English ● A separate cover page should include: Title ● Author ● Academic department (of degree program) and college/university ● Degree program in which enrolled ● Contact information (email and mailing addresses, telephone number) ● Age ● Gender

Contents of text: ● Should include a 100-word abstract. ● Not include or make direct reference to the author's name/identity/affiliation (to ensure impartiality in the review process) ● Include the title on the first page, followed by the text, double-spaced ● Include title (or title phrase) and page numbers at the bottom of each page.

Each submission must include two files: ● The cover page/application form. ● The essay text.

The essays should be submitted electronically to: Secularism.essay@trincoll.edu.

Additional information:

● The decision of the contest committee is final, and no appeals will be recognized ● The ISSSC reserves the right to edit, publish or otherwise duplicate any submitted essay (in full and without editorial modification, unless made with the applicant's approval) ● The awards will be announced in early 2011.

Award procedure: The essays that meet the above mentioned criteria will be examined by a review committee consisting of Trinity College faculty and ISSSC fellows. The authors' identities will be concealed to ensure impartiality among reviewers.

For additional information, contact: Secularism.essay@trincoll.edu **and/or** Dr. Innaiiah at innaiahn@yahoo.com for additional information.

From Ram Narayanan

“Why is India’s Foreign Office sleeping? Please Wake Up!”

The Other Border

Excerpts from an editorial in The Indian Express

Rising powers need friendly neighbourhoods. A relationship with our neighbours that is supportive, or at least cordial, would free us to think on a larger scale. Of course, India’s western border shows no signs of being unproblematic any time soon. But, to the east, an election in 2008 in Bangladesh that brought in the Awami League – which does not subscribe to the anti-India rhetoric that is characteristic of the other main party there, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party – should have been an opportunity seized with both hands. And, indeed, the visit of Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina last January seemed to indicate movement. Five joint agreements were signed, especially on cooperation against terror and on electricity, but even more – on transit rights, extradition, and boundary disputes, for example – seemed in the works. The political will clearly existed on both sides. It seemed just a matter of time.

It is particularly shocking, therefore, that India seems to have dropped the ball. In case after case, the Bangladeshi side has done its bit, laying the groundwork for further agreement, or implementing what was already signed. And in case after case, the Indian side has not reciprocated to any reasonable degree. On boundary demarcation, for example, the Joint Boundary Working Group is yet to meet. On trade, the exception raj that seems to have replaced the licence raj for the UPA has scuttled any meaningful progress towards an agreement on freeing imports and exports. On transit issues, too, India hasn’t matched the Bangladeshi side – though movement on that is colossally more politically sensitive for Bangladesh than for India.

visit: <http://www.indianexpress.com/news/the-other-border/655258/0>.

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Are Indian think tanks driven abroad for funds by an unhelpful bureaucracy and miserly Corporates?”

Indian minds, Foreign funds

Sanjay Baru writes of governmental bureaucratism and niggardly corporates drive think tanks abroad for funds

India’s best-known “think tanks” are becoming increasingly dependent for their funding on foreign benefactors. In economic policy, national security and foreign affairs, India’s premier think tanks and research

institutions find it easier to raise funds abroad than at home, be it from a bureaucratic and feudal governmental system or from a miserly and disinterested corporate sector.

While some ministries, like external affairs, defence and commerce, have their own government-funded think tanks, others have their favourites in the non-governmental sector. Both are required to kowtow to the extant dispensation in the respective ministries – and many of these institutions have become sinecures for retired or retiring civil servants.

Indian corporates, on the other hand, have never been a major source of funding for research, even if they are increasingly funding education. Thus, Bharti’s Sunil Mittal, the only Indian mentioned in a Wikipedia list of world’s 100 top philanthropists, has liberally funded school and college education, including institutions like the Indian School of Business, but when it comes to supporting think tanks, he has so far preferred to help the Carnegie Endowment rather than any policy think tank in India. Same applies to most of India’s celebrated billionaires.

While India’s billionaires give away millions to Yale and Carnegie, India’s own think tanks are increasingly forced to turn to foreign funders because neither the government nor Indian corporates are willing to offer them untied funding.

There was a time when, in fact, India’s premier social sciences research funding institution, the Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR), was itself receiving more funds from the Government of Netherlands than from the Government of India. Today, few foreign funding agencies bother routing their funds through the ICSSR, they do so directly.

Before worried nationalists raise a cry against this trend, they should find out what shape and condition of disrepair the ICSSR itself is in. Not only does the ICSSR have an officer of the Indian Administrative Service as its member-secretary, it has more than one council member without even a doctoral degree! Indeed, even radical social scientists who don’t like either government or corporate funding find it alright and easier to approach global non-governmental organisations for financial support.

Excerpted from Sanjaya Baru’s article in the *Business Standard*, New Delhi, August 9, 2010,

Sanjay Baru is on the governing board of Centre for Policy Research.

Mr. Ram Narayanan is an American of Indian heritage who promotes US-India friendship and cooperation a a 100 per cent not-for-profit labour of love. <http://usindiafriendshipnet/>.

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There is No Aryan-Dravidian Divide

– Historical Evidence Proves Otherwise

Eknaath Nagarkar

“Poor chap this Eevera doesn’t know that Ravana was a Brahmin!”

- C. Rajagopalachari

Noted Finnish Indologist Prof. Asko Parpola was in Coimbatore recently to receive Kalaignar Mu Karunanidhi Classical Tamil Award from the hands of the President of India Ms. Pratibha Patil. The award constitutes a cash prize of Rs.10 lacs, a citation and a memento. Earlier his nomination was selected at a meeting chaired by Mu Karunanidhi himself out of 230 nominations received from various countries. Prof. Parpola has done research for 30 years on the subject ‘A Dravidian Solution to the Indus Script Problem’. He is a leading authority on the Indus script and Professor Emeritus of Indology at the University of Helsinki, Finland.

However the conclusions of the research presented by him must have had the effect of pulling the carpet from under the feet of octogenarian Dravidian patriarch Mu. Karunanidhi who left the proceedings half-way; news of the unfortunate news of CLP leader Sudarshanam having been hospitalized must have come in handy for the old man.

In order to place the subject in perspective we need to go back in history:

Aryans are aliens – Came from somewhere north of the Himalayas

This was a lie cunningly planted and assiduously nurtured by the British merely in order to further divide the Hindu society; a part of their divide & rule policy continuum. When excavations in progress at Harappa and Mohenjodaro came out with evidence to the contrary the entire project was shelved.

E. V. Ramaswamy Naicker (Eevera) the founder of Dravida Kazhagam fell for this lie. Rather he capitalized on it and became an Icon during his life-time. Besides being a hard-core atheist he was an iconoclast. Eevera was a simple man and his approach was quite simplistic as you shall presently see.

For Eevera all those who were fair-complexioned were Aryans! ‘Brahmins are fair so they must be Aryans’

he theorized. Obviously he had not seen any Brahmins beyond his immediate circle. Had he done that he wouldn’t have come to that rash judgment. Because as everyone knows there are many among Brahmins who were and to this day are, as dark as Eevera was, if not darker.

Eevera was at his mightiest best when the Chief Minister of Tamilnadu was Dr. C. Rajagopalachari. His volunteers started attacking *purohiths* (priests) while engaged in religious practices and would cut their sacred thread. Brahmins feeling unsafe in Tamil Nadu started shifting to neighbouring states.

Early in life Eevera was led to believe that Tamilians are Dravidians least ‘contaminated’ by Aryan-influence among all Dravidians of the south. The Tamil language like any other Indian language had its share of words derived from Sanskrit. Over the years all such words have been removed from Tamil in a bid to make it as authentic a Dravidian language as humanly possible.

Meanwhile this man came up with the idea of *Ravanayana* - A drama depicting Ravana as the Hero and Rama a villain! The masses comprising the socially handicapped whose passions had been whipped up by his ‘Hate-Brahmin Rhetoric’ were agog with the idea of *Ravanayana*. – a repudiation of the *Ramayana*.

Ramayana and *Mahabharata* happen to be the two most important epics of Hindu mythology and an attempt was being made to show Lord Rama in very poor light in fact as a villain, in a drama about to be staged with much fanfare and that too at a time when the state was under the stewardship of Chief Minister C. Rajagopalachari – a Brahmin. This news had monopolized the front page of all leading newspapers. The possible social upheaval was unimaginable as felt by most learned persons of the time, and this was being highlighted by the media. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was keeping a close watch on the situation and was constantly urging Rajagopalachari or Rajaji as he was better known to somehow prevent this drama from being staged. Rajaji however did nothing of

the sort and maintained a stoic silence throughout. Predictably with just another week to go for the great event Chief Minister Rajaji was approached by the press for his reactions to this drama *Ravanayana* being staged. Rajaji merely said, “Poor chap this Eevera doesn’t know that Ravana was a Brahmin”

This one-liner was a bolt from the blue for Eevera the Brahmin-hater. Forthwith the drama *Ravanayana* was cancelled without giving any reasons! And it is this incident that earned Rajaji the sobriquet – the cunning fox.

Delivering the Kalaignar M. Karunanidhi Classical Tamil Research Endowment Lecture on “A Dravidian solution to the Indus script problem” at the World Classical Tamil Conference here, the Indologist declared that ‘an opening to the secrets of the Indus script has been achieved’

He said, “These readings have been achieved with strictly adhered methodology which is in full agreement with the history of writing, methods of decipherment and historical linguistics including the comparative study of Dravidian languages.” Displaying nearly two dozen illustrations of Indus seals and inscriptions, he dwelt upon the topic by explaining two broad aspects – underlying language and type of the script – that were essential in the decipherment of an ancient script. He also substantiated his thesis with an etymological analysis of certain Tamil words such as ‘muruku’ and ‘meen’.

In doing this he effectively demolished the Aryan-Dravidian divide as a myth. And the forum he chose to do that was the World Classical Tamil Conference in progress and that too before the octogenarian Dravidian patriarch himself!

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Asian Entrepreneurs Are Bullish on the Future

Ryan Streeter

While commending this article to Freedom First, reader Sardul Minhas writes: “Here is a very interesting article comparing the entrepreneurial classes in India and China. The differences are startling. The Indians rely on start-up money from family and friends; the Chinese get theirs from Government banks. The Indians attribute their success to creativity and ability to cope; the Chinese credit government’s efforts to support and promote enterprise.

Here is an excerpt:

A new survey of more than 4,000 entrepreneurs, business managers and aspiring entrepreneurs, conducted by YouGov and released this week by the Legatum Institute, sheds light on the countries’ respective enterprising classes – and raises some questions for policy makers and investors.

Entrepreneurs in both countries are bullish. Nearly half of the respondents believe their societies are more welcoming of entrepreneurial activity today than 10 years ago, and only one-quarter in India and one-third in China believe the global financial crisis has seriously hampered the prospects for new businesses. The vast majority believe their lives will improve dramatically in the next five years.

But the survey reveals two different styles of entrepreneurship have emerged. The differences start with why entrepreneurs launch businesses. Asked about their main motivation, the overwhelming majority of Indian entrepreneurs name “being my own boss,” while the most popular response in China is earning more money.

When asked what other factors inspire them to start businesses, nearly half of Chinese entrepreneurs give answers related to the state’s efforts to promote and manage enterprise. Compared to just 9% in India, 23% of Chinese entrepreneurs say that what they learned in school or at university prompted their decision. This presumably reflects the government’s strategy of using universities to promote entrepreneurship. Chinese business owners cite pro-business actions by the government or pro-business messages in the media (which in China are state-controlled) at three times the rate of their Indian peers.

Twenty-one percent of Indian entrepreneurs cite family expectations as the source of their entrepreneurship, compared to 9% of Chinese. Twenty-seven percent of Indian entrepreneurs cite the inspiration they glean from knowing another entrepreneur, compared to 18% of Chinese.

So far, our findings suggest entrepreneurship in India is marked by a kind of sustainability that is less evident in China. Because India’s entrepreneurs have succeeded amid dysfunctional government and financial institutions by developing a kind of independent and experimental ingenuity, it stands to reason that the enterprising class would prosper even more were India to reduce barriers to business and clean up corruption.

(For the full article, visit.....)

The Glory of Nalanda

B. M. N. Murthy

Right from the Vedic Age, ancient India has been a trend setter and role model in moulding the character of its citizens by training them in established universities of excellence called ‘Gurukulas’, analogous to modern universities. In fact, the very first university in the world was founded at a place called Takshashila [now in Pakistan, about 35 kms from Rawalpindi], followed by the second university in the world at Nalanda., about 90 kms from Patna in Bihar, nearly 2,500 years ago. Both Takshashila and Nalanda were the Oxford and Harvard of those ancient times.

Founded by Buddhist monks, Nalanda was an extraordinary centre of excellence for learning and remained so for nearly 700 years between the 6th and 13th century A.D. The name ‘Nalanda’ is a Sanskrit word, a combination of three words *Na + Alam + Daa* which means ‘no stopping of the gift of knowledge’. In other words, the spreading of knowledge should be eternal. This is exactly what Nalanda University did for 700 years, attracting prize students from even such far off places as China, Indonesia, Korea, Persia, Japan, Sri Lanka, Tibet and Turkey. At its peak Nalanda played host to nearly 10,000 students —not just Buddhists but of various religious traditions. In its heyday Nalanda had on its faculty nearly 2,000 world renowned teachers. The education was completely free. That is why even while naming the place as Nalanda, the word ‘*Daa*’ was used which is a shortened form for ‘*Daana*’ which means ‘gift’. Nalanda’s aim was to create the most intellectually and spiritually mature individuals who would be qualified to contribute to every aspect of the society for its overall being.

Unfortunately there is no systematic historical account from which we could glean the different stages of its growth. Even to this date, archaeological research has been unable to fully explain how the different aspects of Indian culture were accommodated, assimilated and disseminated from one generation to the other through several centuries. However, for whatever information about Nalanda is now available, we are primarily indebted to the Chinese pilgrims Fa-Hien (5th Century A.D.), Hiuen Tsang (7th century A.D.) and I-Tsing (7th Century A.D.). The recordings of these Chinese pilgrims have given us an inestimable character of Nalanda during its glorious epoch.

As Dr. Ravindra Pant, the current Head of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara observed in a newspaper interview sometime in December 2007, “we know only 10% of Nalanda. We have to find the remaining 90% of the

campus. We have to properly map it to rebuild. Right now these mounds are like a jigsaw puzzle.”

Fa-Hien, the Chinese monk, was a sincere seeker of knowledge who toured India from 673 A.D to 687 A.D studied at Nalanda as a student and subsequently worked there as a teacher spent about 6 years at this University. According to estimates he returned to China taking back with him 657 volumes of sacred texts and spent the last years of his life translating and interpreting them. Even today he is highly respected as a great scholar in China and all his works and writings are carefully preserved by the Chinese Government. According to the present Director of Nalanda Campus, China has now agreed to present to the resurrected Nalanda University Hiuen Tsang’s Chinese translations and some original volumes that he had taken with him.

Nalanda’s site was possibly 35 acres or 10 sq.miles according to the archaeologist Sir Alexander Cunningham who first identified the ruins at Bargaon in 1861-62. His location of Nalanda corresponds exactly with ancient Pali texts, Jain literature and Hiuen-Tsang’s description. Its vast population of around 15,000 lived in seven monasteries and eight great halls, with their upper rooms towering above the clouds like pointed hilltops, according to Hiuen-Tsang.

Nalanda was founded by Buddhist monks with the basic purpose of making it a fit place for meditation. At the instance of Lord Buddha, various education centres were erected in the premises so as to provide the monks with a congenial and conducive environment for meditation in the safety of the Viharas. From such conceptual and humble beginnings emerged the patent nuclei of the later Buddhist University destined to play its glorious role in the intellectual and spiritual life of India. In course of time, Nalanda expanded the scope from being a purely monastic university to one that included non-monastic students. In addition, the University introduced

the study of non-secular subjects and threw open its doors to all philosophical studies and several schools of thought and belief. Admission was open to all seekers of knowledge irrespective of sect, religion and belief.

The rise of the Gupta dynasty in the 4th century A.D. brought royal patronage to Nalanda and heralded the Golden Age of Indian History and Culture. Besides royal patronage, the University was also patronized by several of its enlightened citizens who contributed, both in cash and kind, towards the development and growth of the University. According to Hiuen-Tsang “Two hundred villages in and around Nalanda University contributed freely the requirements of ghee, butter, milk and such other daily provisions needed for the entire population of the University”

Admission to Nalanda was based strictly on merit and the aptitude of the student. The minimum age of admission was 20 years and was based on a written test and an oral interview. According to the Chinese pilgrims only two or three could get selected out of ten candidates who applied for admission. Before final admission, every eligible student had to appear before the Chief Examiner called ‘*Dwara Pandita*’ [Guardian of the Entrance Gate] and satisfy him. In spite of this hard and rigid test, at its heyday Nalanda had on its role nearly 10,000 students from all over the world. The teacher student ratio was 1: 5. Even ladies were admitted and they stayed in separate accommodation. According to both Hiuen-Tsang and I-Tsing, even though there were several men and women in the University belonging to different nations, there was not a single case of misbehavior or breach of rules and regulations. This shows the high moral fibre of the students who studied at Nalanda.

The curriculum for study included both sacred and secular learning [*Para and Aparā Vidyas* as they are known in Sanskrit]. Study of Sanskrit grammar was compulsory. In addition, there were five more compulsory subjects which included: 1. *Shabda Vidya* [Science of sounds and words; otherwise called Grammar and Lexicography] 2. *Shilpasthana Vidya* [Arts and Crafts] 3. *Chikitsa Vidya* [Science of Medicine] 4. *Hetu Vidya* [Logic] and 5. *Adhyatma Vidya* [Philosophy]. According to I-Tsing, there was an additional compulsory subject namely spinning and weaving since the students felt bored without the use of some handicraft. Hence, they were given access to looms and had to weave their own cloth. Besides, other trades like carpet-weaving, painting, sculpture were also taught.

Nalanda contributed to Indian thought and culture throughout the three periods of its development namely,

its rise between during 325 B.C to 320 A.D, its eminence between 320 A.D and to 750 A.D and decline 750 A.D. to 1250 A.D. By about the 12th century A.D when there was political instability in the country after the end of the Gupta and Harsha Dynasties, Nalanda’s slow decline started, particularly with the deprivation of royal patronage. Muslim invaders from Turkey, taking advantage of India’s weakest political fibre, destroyed many of Nalanda’s monasteries, burnt most of the libraries and all the books they contained. One of the Chinese pilgrims has written that the soldiers used the books and manuscripts of the library as cooking fuel for a period of six months. With the advent of the Muslim force, some monks fled abroad while some were slaughtered. The Persian historian Minhaz has corroborated in 1243 A. D. through his account of an eye witness, to the slaughter of the monks and the burning of the libraries.

Nalanda is not completely lost to posterity. Though its libraries and the manuscripts were destroyed, the Chinese and Tibetan translations remain. Plans are on to resurrect the ancient University and make it a world-class institution, under the Indo-Chinese Friendship Project. The Archeological Survey of India has already begun excavations to unearth the campus. The first President of the Indian Republic, Dr. Rajendra Prasad laid the Foundation Stone of the Nava Nalanda Mahavihara on 20th November 1951 which was formally inaugurated by the then Vice-President Sir S. Radhakrishnan on 20th March 1956. This institution is founded on a site close to the ancient Nalanda, about 100 kms from Bodhgaya and Pataliputra. For the past six decades, this Institution is sparing no efforts to re-establish the glory of Nalanda.

It is no wonder that the world famous *Hibbert Journal* from London which is a Quarterly Journal on Religion, Theology and Philosophy, published in one of its issues an article on Nalanda under the title ‘An Experiment in Liberty of Teaching’ “Some day perhaps the great Universities of the West may deem these voices of the dim and distant past from India yet worthy of attention. They are more than curiosities of literature. They are witness of the East to the abiding principles that the “first condition in the quest for Truth is Liberty”

MR. B. M. N. MURTHY is a retired Chief Engineer, LIC. After retirement Mr. Murthy decided that he would devote his time to inform “the younger generation of the spiritual wisdom of India, reminding them of the great traditional lineage to which we all belong.” He has been writing weekly articles for over a decade with a mailing list of over a hundred. *Freedom First* is now on his mailing list and we shall from time to time share his articles with our readers. Email: bmmurthy@vsnl.com

Kyrgyzstan: From Tulips to Turmoil

P. L. Dash

Five plus years ago, in the Spring of 2005, when the Tulip revolution swept Kyrgyzstan and deposed Askar Akayev, the first president of independent Kyrgyz republic, the country lost its aura of being touted as the Switzerland of Central Asia.

Kyrgyzstan in post-Soviet Central Asia was the first country to have introduced sweeping reforms and the first country to have experienced a revolution. Its reforms credentials were so good, both in political and economic realms that, a few years later it was admitted to the WTO - a credo that Russia has failed to achieve.

The country was the forerunner in many respects. Its then president Askar Akayev was a non-communist academic unlike all his counterparts in neighbouring states. His visionary zeal in a country of 4.5 million people endeared him to the public, both urban and rural. However, within a span of five years, what went wrong was Akayev's unpopular moves far away from the Kyrgyz reality and still farther away from what he promised to his countrymen to achieve. A Kyrgyz journalist, very critical of Akayev, who was living in Moscow in asylum, told this author in 1998 that Akayev's *forte* was his family, and not popular support. His policies were geared to self aggrandisement and not to serve the country. He distributed lollypops to his cronies, lucrative business deals among his relatives and plum diplomatic postings to his near and dear ones. He leased out military bases to the Americans and the Russians to curry their favour, apparently hoping that in the event of a crisis, they would salvage him and Kyrgyzstan. He struck a land deal with China and gave away a big chunk of Kyrgyz territory in the Naryn oblast to China without consulting his parliament. People disliked these moves, despised him to be autocratic. The result: the Switzerland of Central Asia passed through Tulip revolutions. Akayev fled to Moscow, took political asylum and has been teaching Mathematics ever since in a Moscow higher educational institute.

His successor, Kurmanbekl Bakiyev, came to power on two planks. He promised to fulfil the aspirations of the people by remedying all the wrongs his predecessor had done. Then there were two programmes: minimum and maximum facing Bakiyev. The minimum programme implied that he should stamp out corruption in the country. The maximum programme was aimed at future political space he promised to create, drive Kyrgyz republic away from

foreign interventions and raise the salaries of employees to improve the living standards in the country. A more democratic process was presumably the answer. However, over the course of five years, Bakiyev failed to deliver on his promises. As a result, willy-nilly, he pushed the country to another phase of political crisis.

Roza Otunbayeva, Akayev's past ambassador to both USA and UK, and Bakiyev's foreign minister opposed Bakiyev, overthrew him in April, 2010, while arson, rape, looting and violence wrecked Osh city in the Ferghana valley in southern Kyrgyzstan - Bakiyev's stronghold from where he hailed. Bakiyev fled to Ferghana, endeavoured to mobilise his supporters, but in vain. Finally he took political asylum in Belarus, where he has been living.

The third Kyrgyz president, Roza Otunbayeva, is the first female head of state in post-Soviet Central Asia. She has inherited a trouble-torn country with plenitude of problems, some of them intractable and others solvable. However, she has a vision to reshape the contour of Kyrgyz politics. Despite Bakiyev's criticism and his supporters overtly encouraging violence, kudos to Otunbayeva to have conducted the 27 June referendum on future political orientation of Kyrgyzstan as a parliamentary democracy. The results of the elections have given Otunbayeva the mandate to continue in power as caretaker president until the end of 2011. The parliamentary elections are slated to be held in October this year. Otunbayeva has declared that she will not contest for any slot and admonished her ministers to quit their swanky ministerial premises, go to the people to serve them and seek electoral mandate of the people rather than currying favour of the president in Bishkek. She seems serious about her political business.

Otunbayeva or no Otunbayeva, no president can alter the geography of Kyrgyzstan. A mountainous country intercepted by fertile river valleys, Kyrgyzstan is home to one of Central Asia's two large rivers – Syr Darya that originates from upstream Kyrgyzstan and flows down to the plains of Ferghana valley, where it enters Uzbek territory, touches at one point Tajikistan and veers to Kazakhstan

all the way to fall into the Aral Sea. Thus a majority of the population of Uzbekistan (26 million) and Kazakhstan (12 million) depend on potable fresh water that flows from the mountains of Kyrgyzstan. On the way the river has many Soviet era reservoirs that generate electricity. It is reported that Bakiyev had increased electricity tariff early this year and that had triggered the movement to dethrone him. The countries are fighting for the riverine resources in an unprecedented water war, never seen earlier in Central Asia. The irony is that two of Central Asia's five poorest states are very rich in hydro resources, thereby making others dependent on them for fresh water. Tajikistan is the other country with upstream Amu Darya, originating from its mountains and flowing down through Afghan-Tajik borders and Uzbek-Turkmen border right up to the Aral Sea, where it falls. Nobody can change this geography and Otunbayeva has to find an amicable solution to the water crisis wrecking the region for two decades now.

Secondly, geography has put Kyrgyzstan on the geopolitical map of the world in a renewed Great Game. Kyrgyzstan is the only country in Central Asia where the US and Russian Federation have obtained lease rights to Manas and Kant military bases respectively. Their very presence catapult Kyrgyzstan to geostrategic competition in a space called the heartland of Asia. Kyrgyzstan is surrounded by such powerful countries as Russia and China, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Other extraneous powers such as the USA, Turkey, Iran, India, Japan and countries of the European Union are all vying to gain a foothold in this country. That automatically answers why Osh, why Ferghana valley and why Kyrgyzstan?

Thirdly, Ferghana valley is ethnically the most fractured place in Central Asia deliberately designed by Stalin to keep fighting ethnoses at bay and away from the Kremlin. This time, when the echo of Stalin's legacy reverberated across three countries bordering the Ferghana valley – Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan – Moscow sat cool and did not come to help resolve the crisis facing Osh. Overlapping population of one country living in the territory of another neighbouring country is an obvious phenomenon in the Ferghana valley, but killing the Uzbek minority living on Kyrgyz territory is no solution to the ethnic strife facing the valley.

Roza Otunbayeva has visited the hot spots, urged upon people to remain calm and non-violent and asked all other to exercise restraints and tolerance. Fortunately this time around Russia, US, China, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and members of the SCO have exercised utmost restraint and not intervened in the Osh crisis. Ironically, the June violence in Osh erupted just around the time the SCO was meeting in Tashkent. Facing the crisis, Otunbayeva was

repeatedly pleading with Russia for help. But no military help came.

Fourthly, the political situation is in ferment. Hundred political parties in a country of 4.5 million people is itself the ground for enough political proselytizing. The country has a clear north-south political divide. However, the current crisis has created another north south divide: Bakiyev with his supporter and security forces based himself in the south and pitted it against Roza Otunbayeva, who based herself in the north. The US, the Russians and the Uzbeks all stood by her. Uzbekistan officially did not cry foul although hundreds of Uzbeks were killed. The ethno-political divide is thus sharp and intensely disturbing. Kyrgyzstan has also an urban rural divide: the Uzbeks mostly live in cities and the Kyrgyz in villages. Besides, there is a mountain and valley divide, an upstream and downstream divide. Kyrgyzstan is full of divides.

Finally, Kyrgyzstan's economic crisis is unlikely to be overcome soon. With oil prices up and gold prices down, Kyrgyzstan's external debt has soared to \$ 2 billion, which it sought to resolve by seeking Russian help. When promise came for the desired billions on the condition that he would not extend the Manas lease to the USA, Bakiyev bargained with the US for lease rent hike for Manas and extracted a rise from \$17 million to 60 million thereby incurring the wrath of Russia.

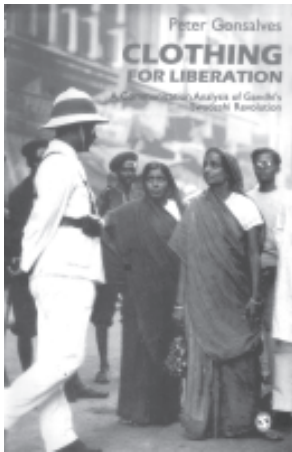
However, these billions will not help Otunbayeva, harmony and peace. She has to ensure stability of Kyrgyzstan in the midst of crisis. The memory of 300 officially declared dead and 2500 houses burnt, hundreds of official establishment torched and \$71 million lost in damages in a few days of violence have shaken the people, whose faith Otunbayeva has to win. Weaning away those from the memory of violence whose kith and kin have died is no easy task. Besides, there are 100,000 displaced, living in temporary tents who have to be settled before the onset of autumn rains. Many more thousands have fled to safer areas. Precisely, Roza Otunbayeva's cup is full and the world looks at her to deliver what her predecessor presidents have failed to.

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The Congress Party's Rajya Member Mani Shankar Aiyar in the course of a speech referring to the Commonwealth Games to be held in Delhi this October wondered why 150 condom vending machines are being installed at the Games venue. He asked: "What games are these people coming to play?"

Report in *The Statesman*, 28 July 2010

BOOK REVIEWS



CLOTHING FOR LIBERATION: A COMMUNICATION ANALYSIS OF GANDHI'S SWADESHI REVOLUTION by Peter Gonsalves ● Sage Publications, B 42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi 110017. Website : www.sagepublications.com ● 2010 ● pp.163 ● Rs.495

Reviewed by Dr. Adi H. Doctor, retired professor of Political Science and currently visiting faculty at the University of Goa.

Peter Gonsalves is a well known media educator, author of the book *Exercises in Media Education* (1994) and currently teaching the Sciences of Social Communication at Salesian

Pontifical University, Rome. The book under review is his latest publication in the field of communication analysis. Describing Gandhi as a communicator par excellence Gonsalves elaborates on how Gandhi made use of verbal and non-verbal communication (cloth and clothing) to effectively mobilize and lead the Indian masses in their struggle to non-violently liberate the country from foreign rule.

As a verbal communicator, Gandhi's language was simple, direct and precise. A thoughtless word hardly escaped his tongue or pen. Gandhi communicated as if he was conversing with the crowd and he was always didactic in intent. Commenting on his own style of communicating Gandhi once wrote, "To be true to my faith (in satyagraha) therefore I may not write in anger or malice. I may not write idly. I may not write merely to excite passion. The reader can have no idea of the restraint I have to exercise from week to week in the choice of my topics and my vocabulary". Gandhi was dedicated to letter writing and he wrote to Queen Victoria and Adolph Hitler just as he did to children and adolescents. He was never condescending, presumptuous or condemnatory. In his verbal communication Gandhi admitted that he often appeared inconsistent, but brushed aside all perceived inconsistencies by saying he was concerned only with being consistent to truth as he saw it at the moment of writing/action.

The significant non-verbal communication techniques Gandhi adopted included silence, fasting, clothing and physical presence. Gandhi often went on "speech fasts" (silence) and as Tagore remarked on Gandhi's vows of silence, "such silence amounted to speech stronger than any uttered word." Gandhi used

fasting to influence policy and social attitudes by appealing to the heart of opponents through self-suffering. Gandhi also made use of his mere physical presence as a method to communicate. Thus he would be present midst rioters to calm them and preach Hindu-Muslim unity. Similarly he stayed in a 'bhangi' colony to preach against untouchability. However it was clothing that Gandhi made the most effective use of in order to communicate with the masses. And, it is clothing that Gonsalves takes up for detailed analysis in chapters 2, 3 and 4 of the book. He does this with the help of three western theoretical frameworks viz. the semiotics of Roland Barthes, the anthropology of performance of Victor Turner and the dramaturgical analysis of Erving Goffman. The three chapters are highly technical in language and do make for uncomfortable reading for those not initiated in the science of communication. However, shorn of their technical jargon what Gonsalves wants to convey regarding Gandhi the communicator in these three chapters is fairly simple.

In his semiology model, Barthes begins with the idea of a real manufactured object (clothing in Gonsalves's study) which at the time of distribution or sale becomes "the represented object" (the new fashion) which in turn, after use by consumers, becomes part of accepted ideology (that is, ceases to be fashion and becomes routinely accepted for consumption/use. The crafty British took Indian cotton and at their mills in Lancashire made it into clothing (the real object), which they then presented as "fashion object of mass culture" via a network of distribution and consumption. Colonized Indians lapped up the new fashion and in course of time the Lancashire cotton mills products became part of standard use in India, part of India's accepted "ideology" or way of living and doing things. Gandhi as communicator, in order to destroy the sway of British culture over Indians, focused on khadi, a garment made in India and by Indians, as the real object, and sought to distribute/market it by his volunteers or freedom fighters/Congressmen. Khadi thus became the new fashion competing with Lancashire cotton clothes and when it would become accepted ideology, then the British "profiteering interests" would be badly hurt. Since

the British had come to India for profit this new ideology would contribute to their being forced to leave. Khadi would thus achieve non-violent freedom for India.

Turner's model made an advance over Barthes by viewing communication by symbols as a continuing process, a dynamic process. Adopting Turner's model Gonsalves shows how the Gandhian freedom struggle could be viewed as a social drama in which Congress and Gandhi communicated using varied symbols, not only khadi but even the designing of the national tricolour flag. The first Congress design of the flag chose the colours white to represent the weakest sections of society, followed by the Islamic color green, while the Hindu colour red came last. In the centre was the charka meant to indicate to the world that in matters of food & clothing India would be self-reliant. Then in 1924 the All Sanskrit Congress redesigned the flag, replacing red by saffron in order to better reflect Hindu ethos while it suggested replacing the charka by Vishnu's gadha (mace). The Sikhs wanted yellow colour to be inserted to represent them. In 1931 the Congress appointed a special committee to once again to re-design the flag. A single colour was rejected for the communal overtones. Finally at the Karachi session the tricolor was approved – saffron on the top, white in the middle and green at the bottom. To rule out any communal interpretation it was explained that saffron stood for courage, white for truth & peace while green represented faith & prosperity. Congress and Gandhi successfully communicated the message of unity and freedom through the continuing process of designing and re-designing the flag.

Finally, Gonsalves applies Goffman's theory of "Presentation of Self in Everyday Life" to prove the point that Gandhi was indeed the communicator par excellence. We use varied expressions in everyday life to communicate more effectively and Hoffman calls these acts "impression

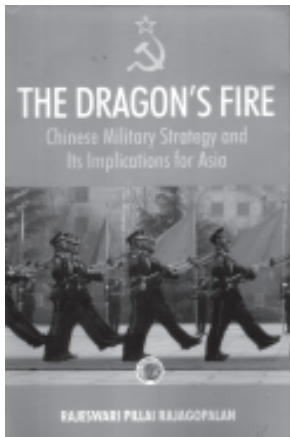
games". Gandhi "played" many such impression games with regard to clothing. On first returning to India from England in 1915 he landed wearing a "a kathiawadi dress". But very soon Gandhi found the dress was too localized and limited to make him an all India acceptable figure, Thus began a series of experiments from 1917 onwards – khadi, woven kurta-pyjama, kurta-pyjama worn with a turban/topi. Soon Gandhi found that even these pan Indian costumes did not sufficiently reflect the poverty of the majority of Indians, many of whom had literally nothing to wear. This finally made Gandhi take his boldest step. In 1921 he decided to divest himself of "every inch of clothing as far as decency permitted". Now Gandhi's sartorial revolution was complete. He finally succeeded in conveying the message that he represented all Indians but especially the poorest of the poor. By appearing in this semi-naked attire even before imperial audiences, Gandhi most effectively conveyed the disturbing message that "the imperial show could go on no longer at the expense of millions among the colored races of the world who were rendered naked starving and enslaved". As Gonsalves concludes Gandhi won because while the British government was adept at banning newspapers it considered seditious, it was unaccustomed to censoring clothing that was subversive.

If the book proves heavy reading, this reviewer suggests that the reader can simply read Chapter 1 and the concluding Chapter 5, ignoring the technical chapters 2, 3 and 4. The book is useful since Gandhi as a symbol maker has a lot to teach contemporary symbol makers like parents, educators, social workers, activists and politicians how to go about working for a better world, making effective use of non-verbal symbols. The book has a bibliography and index which should be of help to future researchers wanting to work on Gandhi and/or communication technology.

The Great Indian Stimulus

That India has one of the best demographic advantages heading into the next couple of decades is now perhaps well known and extensively documented as well. And when you talk about this advantage, one tends to think about higher productivity nine times out of ten. What escapes one's attention is the fact that this advantage coupled with an age old Indian tradition is also capable of injecting some pretty big dosages of economic stimulus for a long, long time to come. And this is no ordinary stimulus. According to a leading daily, even a conservative estimate of this stimulus could make it the fourth largest contributor to India's GDP. The stimulus that we are referring to is nothing but a collective muscle of the big, fat Indian weddings. With nearly half of the country's population below the marriage worthy age of 29, the wedding scene in India is likely to be a huge beehive of activity for many years into the future. And since a good part of an average Indian's wealth is spent towards wedding, this could easily translate into an economic stimulus to the tune of Rs.2 trillion to Rs.6 trillion. Thus, while experts may play a guessing game over whether India's finance minister may roll back its economic stimulus or not, this is one stimulus that they can happily count upon year after year.

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THE DRAGON'S FIRE by Rajeshwari Pillai Rajagopalan ● For the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) by Rupa & Co, 7/16 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110 002. Website : www.rupapublications.com ● 2009 ● pp.212 ● Rs.395

Reviewed by Major General (Retd.) E. D'Souza, PVSM, Polish Army Gold Medal, Military Historian.

The title of this well researched book should not be confused with *Dragon Fire* albeit a novel based on China's expanding interests and thirst for oil in West Asia and drawing US Forces deployed near

Taiwan to the Gulf of Hormuz. The flexing of China's muscle power as manifest in the rapid expansion and modernization of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), Navy (PLAN) and Air Force (PLAAF), is well known and is being taken serious note of internationally. But the extent of this expansion both monetarily and arms-wise needs to be noted, especially in the Sino-Indian context. As of today China's main defence problems are Taiwan across the China Sea bolstered militarily by the US, Republic of Korea and Japan, and India to the West with a long land border stretching from Aksai Chin to Myanmar; China's territorial claims in NEFA North of the MacMahon Line are well known. And then there is the Tibetan question with borders with India and the exiled Tibetan Government in Dharamsala, India.

As the writer rightly states "its intense nationalist sentiments could cause its sensitive and assertive stand to harden further and clash with the emerging powers on the Western land frontier and to the East and the South China Sea reputed to have substantial oil reserves in the Spratley Islands claimed by other ASEAN Countries. In this context China's insatiable thirst for energy is too well known to be spelt out. For China to attain its objective of being among the top two world powers with the USA – even the pre-eminent one, it needs modern muscle power to go "well beyond its defence requirements". As the author correctly points out China is way ahead of India in military expenditure both in terms of dollars and Purchasing Power Parity (PPP), this despite the fact that Chinese territorial integrity is not under threat. The two appendices indicate the comparative defence budgets of 15 international powers and their PPP. A quick comparison may explain why China has pretensions to be the world's leading power in the foreseeable future not only economically but militarily as well. In 1991 the defence budget in billions (\$) was \$3.92; in 2007 \$44.94 and in the current year \$90. And this does not include additional undisclosed sums, a habit the Chinese use. Compare this with India. This is what this slim but well researched book is all about- a storm warning to India to get its act right.

In the six chapters the author logically covers: An Historical Overview; Evolution of Chinese Military Strategy; Evolution of Chinese Security Environment; Chinese Military Objectives and Drivers of China's Military Strategy; Capability requirements and China's responses and Chinese Military Strategy Today and its impact on Asian Stability and Indian Security. But what is noteworthy in this context is the depth of research carried out by the author to support her conclusions as manifest in the extensive end notes at the end of each chapter; Chapter 2 has 84, Chapter 3: 110, Chapter 4: 477, Chapter 5: 101 and Chapter 6:18. Among the interactions she has had include such eminent China watchers as R. K. Mishra founder of ORF, Gen. V. P. Malik ex Army Chief who has also written the foreword, Ashley Tellis, D. S. Rajan, Prof. Raja Mohan, Dr. Huang Jing and Bo Zhiguo of the National University of Singapore, and Air Marshal A. V. M. Kak. What is surprising is that the author has not discussed the problem with any Indian Naval experts, considering the Chinese "Strings of Pearls" Strategy, for instance Admiral Arun Kumar Prakash, a well known Naval expert on maritime warfare and national security. Chinese expansionism and spreading of its influence in the Bay of Bengal, Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea both through economic exploitation and establishing its military presence, are too well known to be repeated particularly the establishment of a naval presence in Myanmar and Gwadar, Pakistan. Nor has the author mentioned the strategic importance of the US' Naval and Air presence in Diego Garcia and how this should be linked to India's defense against Chinese expansionism in these three important water bodies, both from the economic view point and maritime security.

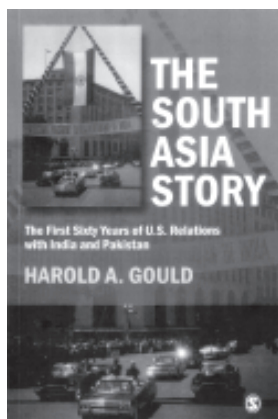
In presenting this important subject, perhaps the author could have dwelt more upon China's nuclear capability and extending its nuclear hand of friendship to Pakistan and its attendant dangers. Readers of this very informative and knowledgeable book should bear the consequences in mind. The author ends on a very pragmatic note that the quantum of defence expenditure and its military modernization suggest that other powers need to be cautious in estimating the consequences of China's rise militarily.

This handy book is recommended reading for all those interested in national security, Chinese economic and military expansionism in West, South and SE Asia and China's repeated claims on NEFA and its aggressive stance

in our strategically placed neighbour Tibet.

This reviewer faced the PLA on the East Sikkim Watershed at the high altitude passes of Cho La, Yak La,

Sebu La and Natu La during the 1965 War with Pakistan and his mountain brigade was involved in four skirmishes with the PLA without losing any territory.



THE SOUTH ASIA STORY: THE FIRST SIXTY YEARS OF U.S RELATIONS WITH INDIA AND PAKISTAN by Harold A. Gould ● Sage Publications, B 42, Panchsheel Enclave, New Delhi 110017. Website: sagepublications.com ● 2010 ● pp.135 ● Rs.295

Reviewed by Dr. Ramesh Babu is a Visiting Professor at the Institute of Public Enterprise, Hyderabad. He was formerly the Sir Pheroza Shah Mehta Professor of Civics & Politics, University of Bombay.

This well written small book by a distinguished American specialist on South Asia is a welcome addition to the growing literature on the US policy in the region. In about 100 pages Dr. Harold Gould

of Center for South Asian Studies, University of Virginia, USA, makes the complex story comprehensible. The author rightly points out that the “unique personalities, levels of awareness, and intellectual gifts (or lack of them)” of the Presidents played an important role in choosing “the options that history and immediate circumstances conferred on them”.

There have been twelve American Presidents and fourteen Indian Prime Ministers at the helm of affairs on the two sides since the Second World War to the present. Their personalities and the chemistry of interaction with their counterparts on the other side certainly influenced the bilateral equation between India and the US to a significant extent. For example, Nixon and Kissinger did not jibe well with Indira Gandhi. Yet, Lyndon Johnson and Indira Gandhi, the most unlikely pair you could think of, had “hit it off well.” However, the broad pattern of the bilateral relationship was governed by the Cold War context and the concomitant American military alliance with Pakistan. As a consequence, America’s relations with India and Pakistan ended up as a sterile ‘mutual hostage’ equation.

What is of interest to us in India today is how President Clinton succeeded in disentangling America’s South Asia policy from the long established and frustrating legacy of the Cold War. At the same time Clinton pressed India hard to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), as Gould points out. Nations cannot be “charmed” away from their deeply held convictions. It is important to note that it was President George Bush who carried the India-US equation forward and steered it into a “strategic partnership”. He visualised India as a counter balance to China in the global scenario. The historic India-US Nuclear Deal fructified primarily because of the sustained personal interest of President Bush. But for his recurrent intervention

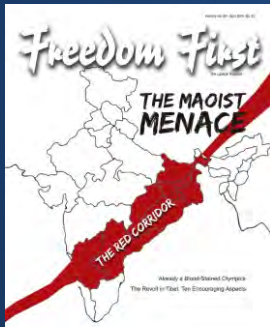
and the support of his key aides at different stages of Congressional consideration of the legislation, the Deal would not have seen the light of the day. Equally crucial was the determination of Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh, who risked the future of his Government. The Deal certainly marked a paradigm shift in India-US relations.

Since then, there has been a distinct slide back on this score. Obama’s priorities are at variance with those of President Bush. Obama’s preoccupation with the Afghan war, the Taliban, the Al Qaeda and his agenda on the economic and social front at home are understandable. Equally understandable is his anxiety to get out of Afghanistan quickly so that the albatross is out of the way long before the 2012 presidential elections.

However, it is difficult to appreciate his “helplessness” and that of his Administration vis-à-vis Pakistan, which had been playing a double game all these years. The cruel irony is that the American side is fully aware of the Pakistani perfidy. The latest revelations only brought into the public arena what is well known to one and all for long. It may be recalled that soon after assuming office President Obama declared that he is not naïve and would hold a tight leash on Pakistan. This indeed is a clear case of the tail wagging the dog!

Be that as it may, Gould has “the tiger by the tail” so to say in delineating the broad contours of America’s South Asia policy and in explaining the complex array of forces at work. He brings the narrative up to date by discussing the impact of international terrorism and Islamic jihad in the Muslim world on Obama’s foreign policy in general and the Af-Pak region in particular. He tells the long story of how the two “estranged democracies” became “engaged democracies” with his heart in the right place, on the left side! Despite Obama’s “authenticity” and “multi-cultural and multi-facial credentials,” Gould is rightly apprehensive of “re-hyphenation” of America’s South Asia-policy underway at the present. Let us hope that wiser counsels will prevail in the long run. The key lesson we in India should learn from all this is that in the ultimate analysis we have to take care of our interests ourselves and nobody else takes the chestnuts out of the fire for us, especially in foreign affairs.

Is economic freedom of a few, *Freedom*?



1991 heralded an economic change that **Freedom First**, India's only Liberal Magazine had been advocating since 1952. Over the last 15 years, while economic liberalization has gained slow momentum, governance has been abysmal. Safe drinking water, basic healthcare and decent education have yet to reach more than 60% of our billion plus population. The economic boom that was to transform India has reached just a small minority and with continued poor governance, will remain so. Are we then truly a free society?

Freedom First, the Liberal Monthly, now in its 58th year of publication, 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 himself 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 at times when it was politically incorrect or 'unpopular' to speak up for Liberal Values not to mention Liberal economics. Today when India is subjected to Maoist (Naxalite) insurrection, **Freedom First** is clear that the primary concern of the State is to ensure the Rule of Law by enforcing law and order and putting down the rebellion even while attending to the long neglected grievances of the disadvantaged particularly the adivasis whose cause is cited as the reason for the Maoist's violent insurrection.

Over the years **Freedom First** has emerged as the only journal in the country viewing and interpreting events and policies from a Liberal perspective. In addition to its white collar readers, **Freedom First** is also read by professionals, intellectuals, bureaucrats and academicians and those in the establishment. We would dare to submit its influence is wholly disproportionate to its circulation.

With the increasing heat of today's politics where public morality has reached an all time low, **Freedom First's** stance on secular liberalism is perhaps getting unfashionable. As a result, it is having to struggle to survive even more than it had to when it was ploughing a lonely furrow. Increasingly, eroding advertising and other support could well result in **Freedom First** closing down.

If you feel the cause of wider 'Freedom' is critical today and **Freedom First** has to survive, then we need your support. Do give it your serious consideration.

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