

Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine



Clueless Uncle Sam

New York Times' faux pas on Modi once again shows how uninformed and biased the American view of India and its politics can be.

Freedom First believes in an open society based on minimum government and maximum freedom tempered by a sense of individual responsibility, in which the people's genius has a fair opportunity to develop and grow; we reject any ideology, movement or policy that sets one group of citizens against another be it based on class, caste, religion or envy.

Dear Freedom First reader, we need your assistance!

A DECLARATION ON CULTURAL FREEDOM was adopted by the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom (ICCF) at a Conference in Bombay on 31st March 1951 and published in the inaugural issue of *Freedom First*, June 1951.

62 years on, while the fundamentals of the Declaration remain relevant, there is need to examine it in the current context – the many issues impacting on cultural freedom – political, economic, social, cultural and spiritual. For instance the belief that political and economic freedom and individual liberty go hand in hand has not been quite borne out by time. The many struggles of the right to speak and write freely have not materialised as even free nations find free speech an encumbrance as revealed by the “Arab Spring” for instance. And then there is the huge impact of the information revolution giving rise to a furious debate on privacy and national security. There are many other concerns involving tolerance and cultural freedom that have surfaced in the past decades

The Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom plans a conference in Mumbai early next year for this purpose and would be delighted to have your written inputs initially and your personal participation at the proposed conference.

Declaration on Cultural Freedom

1. Culture has both an individual and social content. Individual culture is an attitude to life on the part of a human being who seeks awareness of himself and the world. Social culture results from the integration of the culture of the members of a community and of the social relationships emerging in the geographical environment and historical tradition which define the community.
2. Culture can only flourish, find its best expression and be secure in a free society. A society is free in which the integrity of the individual is recognised and respected as a primary ethical value, with all the guarantees of social justice, including equality of opportunity, which this principle implies. All spiritual pursuits and attainments arising from culture are rooted in this fundamental principle.
3. While culture has a universal basis, its expression is as particular and varied as communities themselves. This variety is inherent in the creative genius of peoples and enriches the content of human experience on which universal culture is based.
4. Each concrete social unit which has a geographical environment and a historical environment and a historical tradition must enjoy independence and be able to evolve its own culture and afford and maintain the necessary freedom for its members and for their individual cultural progress.
5. It is the duty of the individual to protect and develop the conditions, mentioned above, necessary for the freedom of culture.

Freedom of cultural pursuits is of intrinsic significance not only for the individual but for the individual as well as for the community as a whole.
6. The best expression of a free culture presupposes an attempt to widen, deepen and perfect the individual's awareness of himself and the world. In modern times civilization has been mostly governed by an undue emphasis on externalities and a tendency towards standardisation of human life. Totalitarianism, an extreme expression of this evil, has carried it into the social and political fields.
7. At no period of time and in no region has perfection of cultural freedom been attained. But the recognition of the integrity of the individual as a primary ethical value provides the basic condition for the march towards perfection. While social tyranny has existed in the past and continues to exist in greater or lesser measure today, it is obvious that in a society where the basic political, economic and social conditions have been denied or destroyed, even the possibility of a contemporary culture ceases to exist. The effect of modern tyranny is more insidious and destructive than any tyranny in the past, inasmuch as the modern tyranny of totalitarianism seeks to dictate not only the form in which, truth, both aesthetic and scientific may be expressed but truth itself. In such a tyranny truth itself ceases to exist and have meaning; it is made subservient to political belief, economic advantage and expediency.
8. The new tyranny founded on the theory and practice of totalitarianism is the gravest challenge man has faced in civilized history.

The defence of cultural freedom is, in the main, the defence of free society against this challenge.

Indifference or neutrality towards this totalitarian tyranny amounts to a renunciation of the Indian tradition and our human heritage, and a betrayal of all spiritual values.

Freedom First

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Between Ourselves...

Mrs.Indira Gandhi was fond of accusing opposition parties of being influenced or motivated by a “foreign hand” and generally that foreign hand belonged to the CIA. This is what led Piloo Mody a Swatantra Party MP to wear a chain with a medallion which said “I am a CIA Agent”. He was asked to discard it by the Speaker, which he did but that is another story.

I was reminded of this when we decided to publish M. R.Venkatesh's article (page 8) where he deals with another foreign hand only this time it happened to be the *New York Times*. The *NYT* is very worried and wants to “save” our democracy in general and the 180 million Muslims in particular from depredators of the Modi kind. *NYT* need not worry, we have lived with our Muslim brothers and sisters for over 600 years in harmony and this will be so for the next 600 years. Meanwhile we trust some of Venkatesh's home truths will ‘touch base’.

Incidentally a thought that has been nagging some of us after the first few Obama honeymoon years is whether the American people are getting some first hand experience of “Nehruvian socialism” no less – more state control even if it means inflicting pain on the American *Aam Admi* and spending money that is not there on grandiose schemes – their Obamacare like our Food Security Act for instance. The thought is amusing to those of us who lived through those years first under the father, and then under his daughter.

Yes, having entered the coalition years from the late eighties we are going through a difficult transition period but we will find a democratic way out. The struggle is to shrug off dynastic rule asap. Times, as it is well said, produce the events and events produce the men.

So *NYT* why not wait and see. Meanwhile we can assure them that our ‘minorities’ are very safe.

Editor

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To Minoo Masani on his 108th Birth Anniversary

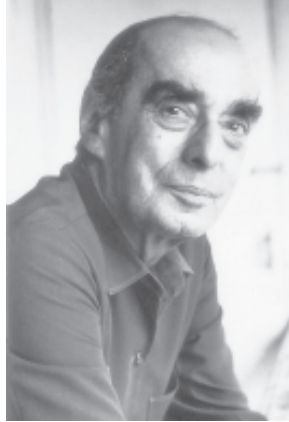
November 20, 2013

Kumar Anand

In the inaugural essay for *Profiles in Courage* aptly titled “Minoo Masani: The Making of a Liberal”, his long time associate S. V. Raju has described him as a man among those very few who kept alive the spirit of liberalism in India after independence.

Masani’s development as a thinker-philosopher and politician can best be described by the titles of different sections in S. V. Raju’s recollections of the man and his life. To a layperson, his evolving beliefs through the years may resemble that of a flip-flopper, but upon closer examination one will find that they were of a hero. From being an admirer of the Soviet Union to being a freedom fighter, from being a socialist in the 1930s to getting disillusioned with Soviet Communism, from a thoughtful reconsideration of Socialism in the 1940s to becoming an anti-communist crusader in the early 50s, Masani never took things lying down. With the formation of the Swatantra Party in 1959, his spontaneous journey to liberalism was complete.

Harold Laski, Britain’s most influential intellectual spokesman for Socialism in the interwar years and a professor at the London School of Economics where Masani also studied,



was a revered figure to Indian students in England at the time such as Jawaharlal Nehru and V. K. Krishna Menon. S. V. Raju writes that while Masani too came under his spell, he was fortunate and smart enough to soon see the contradictions in Laski’s thinking and move away.

The most inspiring thing about Masani (and others like him such as B. R. Shenoy and R. B. Lotvala) is that he was independent in his thinking and listened only to reason and evidence, even in the face of extreme opposition and adversity. When he saw that something is not working, instead of being stubbornly and blindly tied to a particular philosophy and method, he questioned the assumptions and kept his eyes and ears open to find something that did. Today when the ideas of free market and classical liberalism are more acceptable and gaining currency, we would do well to meet the standards set by Masani and other liberals of the planning era.

Indeed, his is a courageous profile and an awesome story of self-discovery.

Happy Birthday Minoo Masani!

KUMAR ANAND. kumar@ccs.in -

<http://spontaneousorder.in/happy-birthday-minoo-masani/>

December 10, 2013.

On the occasion of Rajaji’s 135th Birth Anniversary, Minoo Masani on Rajaji’s View of Life



“It was not the political or economic that was the starting point of his thinking. The Swatantra Party, its political and economic philosophy flowed from Rajaji’s understanding of Man. He saw man as a moral animal, something more than a mouth and stomach, something more than reason, in which he himself believed. He was a very rational person, but he realised that the complete man had an aspect that was spiritual or ethical. Political and economic thought which I derived from Western Liberalism, he derived from his traditional Hindu religious philosophy...

After the establishment of the Swatantra Party, Rajaji kept on referring to the Almighty in explaining the formation of the Party. Nehru made a joke of it, saying: “Obviously God is a partner in the Swatantra Party”. For Jawaharlal Nehru this was a joke, but Rajaji did not mind it.”

Excerpted from Minoo Masani’s Rajaji Memorial Lecture delivered in Bangalore on 22 December 1984.

From Our Readers

Nehru's Guilt

The article in the November 2013 issue of *Freedom First*, "Nehru's feeling of guilt for the 1962 Debacle" makes it clear that even fifty years after the war people have failed to understand Nehru clearly.

It should be clearly understood that Nehru was totally incapable of handling the border issue with China. Also, he was not going to give up his chair at any cost. Therefore, he decided to push the whole issue under the carpet as if the issue would evaporate. But that was not going to happen.

We have to see through Nehru's design. Nehru went to great lengths to divert the attention from the issue of Tibet in the Constituent Assembly / Parliament in 1950. Almost all members who spoke then on foreign policy spoke mostly about Tibet and China. Nehru was attacked strongly for ignoring Tibet. One member pointed out that as our border was not defined, we would have to go to war with China. Mr. Minoo Masani said we should join hands with other like-minded countries to face the Chinese challenge. Another member said a day would come when the Dalai Lama will have to leave Tibet. How is it that what was so clear to so many members was incomprehensible to Nehru, our greatest statesman?

We should also give a thought as to why Sardar Patel who was instrumental in solving many complex problems of this country was totally ignored on this issue. I presume Nehru must have asked him to keep away from the Tibet China issue. However, when Sardar Patel saw how Nehru was doing irreparable damage to India's and Tibet's interest, he was forced to write a long letter to Jawaharlal Nehru. Logically he challenged the nonsense of Nehru. He emphatically wrote that in no way could China be called a friend.

Because Nehru was incapable of facing the Chinese challenge, he went on claiming China to be a friend right from 1950 to 1962. Patel wrote that Tibet which depended on India and had been put into the soup. From the letter one can conclude that both had never discussed this topic face to face. He called upon Nehru to take immediate steps to face the Chinese challenge. Nehru had no such intentions. He never replied to the letter. On the contrary, he wrote a letter to the bureaucrats that China was a friend and it would never attack India. It was not China but Nehru who was deceiving India. Patel had written the letter after consulting bureaucrats. Nehru wanted to convey that what he wrote was the official position.

China started encroaching upon Indian Territory in the year 1954. Nehru did not do anything about it. He deliberately hid this fact from the Indian Parliament and people, claiming China to be India's friend and made Indians raise the slogan of "*Hindi Chini Bhai Bhai*".

Chinese continued encroaching on our territory and Nehru for years concealed this fact. In the year 1959, he was forced to admit in Parliament that China had encroached upon Indian Territory. In Parliament, Kripalani said that Nehru was concealing facts and even when he was forced to reveal the truth, he was not giving the full facts. Nehru claimed that no occasion arose for him to inform Parliament. He hoped to solve the impasse by speaking to the Chinese.

A member of parliament asked about Nehru's correspondence with the Chinese. What if he did not get a positive reply to his letters. Nehru replied that he could send only another letter!

IB Chief Mullick was asked to write his side of the story by the then defence minister Mr. Y. B. Chawan. Mullick has claimed that he had informed the government about Chinese encroachments many times. Had the government placed the forces on the border then, there would have been no way the encroachments could have been hidden from anybody. If the forces were not in place, roads were not in place, arms were not available with the forces, who was responsible? Nehru or Mullick or Krishna Menon? Had Krishna Menon ignored Nehru's instructions? The fact is there were no instructions.

No good will be served by blaming Mullick or Menon. Nehru only used them for his sinister designs. Nehru was the architect of defeat in the war. It is not surprising if he had feeling of guilt. He had turned a world-class army spineless.

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Asia's "other superpower"

The frenzied optimism of the past decade for the "Indian experiment" has now given way to disappointment among observers of India inside and outside the country. There is mounting frustration that India's promise could be fading. "Will India fulfill its true potential?" is the repeated refrain. Reimagining India – a collection of 60

original new essays featuring contributors such as Bill Gates, Kumar Mangalam Birla, Mukesh Ambani, Fareed Zakaria, Eric Schmidt, Anand Mahindra, Ruchir Sharma, Viswanathan Anand, Mallika Sarabhai, Harsha Bhogle, Suketu Mehta, and many more – explores the challenges and opportunities faced by one of the most important and least-understood nations on earth.

In *Reimagining India*, McKinsey & Company brings together the wisdom of experts from many corners, social and cultural as well as economic and political, with the aim of creating a platform for dialogue and launching a spirited debate about the global significance of India as Asia's next superpower. The book covers diverse voices, from business, academia, technology, the environment, and policy to culture and the arts provide rich, multidisciplinary perspectives on the country's open, bottom-up economic, social, and political model with all its challenges: from bureaucracy, corruption, environment, and political gridlocks, to the lack of social and physical infrastructure. Despite the doom-and-gloom prophesying for India's future, they argue that India - vibrant, chaotic, and operating simultaneously at multiple speeds - remains a genuine contender as Asia's "other superpower".

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Corruption – The Perspective from Folklore

Dr. R. Srinivasan's article on the folklore perspective on corruption is very perceptive and goes a long way in explaining how we look at the government (and the powerful). This is no justification for corruption, but alerts us to the deep-seated and ingrained tradition which needs to be tackled differently if the country is to succeed in curbing corruption

Ramesh Babu
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The November 2013 issue of "*Freedom First*" contains an excellent article by Prof. R. Srinivasan, on "Corruption – The Perspective from Folklore" seeking to explain why corruption is so deeply entrenched in our society.

The Panchatantra is quoted as an example; from which it is stated, "The total amorality of the power holder is laid bare and all social relationships are essentially exploitive. He who has power and those who have access to power will tend to use it aggressively with a total disregard for higher or nobler values." Also, "there is no

such thing as social improvement brought about by the king or the State." What follows is "The sun shines bright and the clouds pour their beneficence. So, why pay taxes?

Older than the Panchatantra and other folklore, is the history of mankind. There was a time when the human race knew only survival. The prevalent philosophy was "might is right". As the human race developed into societies, people realized that a higher level of conduct was necessary for the common good. Together with civilized society came the concept of the "rule of law". The world has witnessed many civilizations: Indian, Chinese, Persian, Egyptian, South American and lastly European. Each was a stepping-stone for development of the human race.

History gives us many instances of animal behaviour of conquering hordes and uncontrolled power, such as in Nazi Germany. Such aberrations are bound to occur since we cannot have a society of angels. However, they are certainly not results of folklore. From time to time, we hear excuses for corruption. Indira Gandhi told us that corruption was global. Our politicians justify corruption quoting the high price of elections. Bureaucrats quote high prices to be paid for getting their postings. Policemen quote collection targets given by higher officers. Doctors quote donations required for admission to medical colleges. Each is an effort to rationalize actions that are plainly abuse of power for personal gain.

While we should not forget lessons of history, the need of the hour is to look forward to elimination of this cancer from our society. The article mentions that only a Mahatma can practice this. We cannot all be Mahatmas and no Mahatma alone can solve our problems for us. If we want to enjoy the fruits of civilization, each of us has to make our own effort to "be the change we want to see".

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Reining in Politicians

I agree with the suggestion of Mr. Keshav Rao in the last paragraph of his article on the BJP and convicted MPs (*Freedom First*, November 2013) that the tendency of the politicians to rush to nullify the verdicts of the High Courts and the Supreme Court needs to be questioned.

Though they are the so-called representatives of the people, they should not falsely assume themselves to be the repositories of all the wisdom of the world. As against this, the judgements are delivered only after weighing in the specific arguments and counter-arguments presented, issues discussed threadbare and after

considering the legal and constitutional implications. Moreover, the judgements are substantive, not created in thin air!

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Rescuing the CBI!

It has been well said that when you're left with a lemon, make lemonade. The recent High Court order declaring the CBI as being without constitutional validity should galvanise all Parties to effect necessary legislation to validate the CBI's further life and legitimacy, and use the opportunity to extricate its new avatar from the strangulating clutches of the Party in power at the Centre.

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*

Priceless Gandhiji's Charkha and Last Will are Now Priced

Indian media reported, without regret, that Gandhiji's charkha has been sold in an auction in London for 1,10,000 pounds and Gandhiji's last will has also been sold for 20,000 pounds in the auction.

It is sad and distressing that no protest by any political party in India was reported on this priceless charkha and the last will being allowed to become commodities in an auction. Rather both the print

and visual media appeared to discuss about the realised price being double the expected price, as if it is a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi.

It appears that a large section of the countrymen do not seem to mind the charkha and the will of the father of the nation becoming products for sale. There are so many 'Gandhis' in India today who occupy much more space than Mahatma Gandhi but they have also not protested. Even the Government of India does not seem to be concerned. I wonder why the Government of India did not think it necessary to take steps to prevent this auction, and if it could not be prevented, why these items were not bought and restored with proper respect in a place like Sabarmathi ashram.

Mahatma Gandhi has become an irrelevant person for the government, politicians and media in India today. The government thinks that a national holiday on Gandhi Jayanthi Day on October 2nd is enough for this great Indian.

Selling away of Gandhiji's will and charkha in an auction and its accepting this sale is highly disturbing and heart breaking.

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Modi's Spectacular Rise Rattles the *New York Times*!

M. R. Venkatesh

While an average Indian is used, since independence, to this stereotyping ceaselessly within India by our media and 'intellectuals', what is galling to note is that of late a substantial portion of this 'idea' has come to be exported to other parts of the world, notably the US.

The 2012 Presidential election race between the incumbent President and Democratic Party nominee Barak Obama on the one hand and Republican Party challenger Mitt Romney on the other was a fight to the finish. Barak Obama, in the final analysis polled approximately 50 per cent of the popular vote while Romney ended up with 47 per cent. Yet both of them were not termed polarising personalities by the American media or for that matter by the Indian media.

That is not all. Romney in the run up to the US Presidential elections was caught by a hidden camera commenting that 47 per cent of the country was so reliant on Government services that such people would never vote for him. In other words, his own tacit admission, that a substantial section of voters were alienated from him. Yet, he was not termed as a polarising figure. According to reliable surveys carried in US, born-again evangelicals and White Protestants have predominantly supported the Republican Party from time immemorial, only to be counterbalanced by overwhelming support to the Democratic Party by Hispanic Catholics and Black Protestants. Yet the word 'P' is missing in the American political discourse.

It may be noted that California has invariably been voting Democrats since 1992 [just as Gujarat has been voting for Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) since the mid-1990s] so much so that it is now considered an impregnable Democrats fortress. But surely, California is not termed as a 'laboratory' for Democrats, a term repeatedly used in the context of Gujarat and the BJP!

***New York Times* gets it wrong**

While an average Indian is used, since independence, to this stereotyping ceaselessly within India by our media and 'intellectuals', what is galling to note is that of late a substantial portion of this 'idea' has come to be exported to other parts of the world, notably the US. In short, contrary to the popular belief that Indian media gets influenced by global media one could well ask the question whether international media is getting

increasingly influenced by the endless rants of our media?

Let me amplify. The *New York Times* in its editorial on October 26, 2013 while conceding that Narendra Modi "is a leading candidate to become Prime Minister of India" opines: "His rise to power is deeply troubling to many Indians, especially the country's 138 million Muslims and its many other minorities. They worry he would exacerbate sectarian tensions that have subsided somewhat in the last decade."

Is the *NY Times* seriously suggesting that sections of Indian voters carry a veto on a PM candidate even before India goes to the polls? Obviously, it fails to realise that democratic tradition is far too deep-rooted in India even to suggest that a Prime Ministerial aspirant should be rejected on a specious plea that his rise is 'troubling' a section of the population or that it "would exacerbate sectarian tensions".

Implicit in this argument is that Modi is anti-Muslim and by logic a good number of Muslims are threatened by his political rise. More to the point, such an idea to short-circuit democratic process is fascist – one that would do Hitler proud, not the *NY Times*. This news daily should know, as would the average reader that Muslims are at war all over the world. That substantially, if not wholly, explains why flash points of global conflicts invariably involve Muslims on the one hand and all other religions on the other.

Noted scholar author Samuel P. Huntington in his work 'The Clash of Civilisations and the remaking of world order' succinctly points out that for 1400 years Christianity has had a problem with Islam. Is the *NY Times* going to blame Modi for this too? Despite these historical facts and global phenomenon, the *NY Times* portrays as if only Muslims in India are having a problem and Modi as the villain.

Provocatively, the editorial adds, Modi's strident Hindu nationalism has fuelled public outrage. Barring the usual suspects one is yet to witness public outrage on

Hindu nationalism in India, it is indeed intriguing for the *NY Times* editorial team to selectively condemn Hindu nationalism. Surely, it has failed to realise that this era of globalisation has paradoxically given rise to nationalistic fervour including in communist China. Or is it worried about Hindu nationalism in the geo-political context?

Biased? Ignorant? Command performance?

Strangely, this editorial was a follow up of a piece in the *NY Times* by Gardiner Harris on September 17, 2013 titled, 'Campaign for Prime Minister in India Gets Off to Violent Start' implicitly linking the elevation of Modi as its PM candidate by the BJP with the Muzzafarnagar riots of September 2013.

For starters, the very title of the article is not only misleading but a concerted attempt in maligning Modi, the BJP, and of course, the whole of India as it seeks to implicitly link the ascendancy of Modi to these riots. Interestingly, in its unholy hurry to paint Modi black, the author seems to have glossed over certain fundamental facts. The Muzaffarnagar riots began in the last week of August, 2013 while Modi was elevated as BJP's PM candidate only on September 14, 2013! And this is what happens when an author first fixes his target and then scours for facts.

Needless to emphasise is the fact that to blame Modi for these riots retrospectively is bad journalism at best, biased reporting at worst. What the author failed to clarify is that Muzzafarnagar is not in Gujarat but in UP – a State that has witnessed over 100 riots in 2013 alone. The *NY Times* probably does not know that under the Indian Constitution, law and order is the sole responsibility of State Governments and that the State Government of Uttar Pradesh is headed by the Samajwadi Party – an avowedly pro-Muslim outfit. However, there is not even a whisper in the piece about the complete collapse of local administration in maintaining law and order in UP. And by the extended logic of *NY Times* if Modi, sitting a thousand kms away in Gujarat, can cause riots in UP, Modi must be blamed for killings in the Middle East too where Muslims are themselves killing Muslims by the dozen on an hourly basis.

The article goes on to add, "By choosing Modi, a fiery orator who once peppered his speeches with anti-Muslim slurs, the Bharatiya Janata Party has raised the prospect that this election could be the deadliest in decades." Without a spark of evidence for such a sweeping statement, in my considered view, this is mere speculation bordering on gossip.

The [mandatory?] reference to Gujarat riots was

equally sinister, "In 2002, less than a year after he was appointed the State's Chief Minister, riots swept Gujarat and killed more than 1,000 people, mostly Muslims," clearly forgetting for a moment that there was a carnage of innocent Hindus that triggered these unfortunate events in Gujarat. The article says that "...mass rioting broke out last week in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous and politically important State, after a legislator from Modi's party circulated a fake video of two Hindus being lynched by a Muslim mob." Fake video? How did the author come to that conclusion as early as September 17 that it was fake when its authenticity is not questioned even by local administration even to this day?

Gardiner crosses the impartiality line yet again when he calls Modi an "unapologetic Hindu Chauvinist." Is the author suggesting that Modi should apologise for being a Hindu? And what does he mean by chauvinist? Unnecessary hyperbole that demeans the stature of *NY Times* while conveying nothing! Importantly, does Gardiner Harris realise that one can be a Hindu or a chauvinist – not both? Does he realise that bigotry is the anti-thesis to Hinduism? Has he done any research on Hinduism before using such strong language? Or has his thoughts been fashioned by sections of Indian 'intellectuals' who are not favourably disposed towards India?

Finally, bereft of any specific arguments, the author states Modi never apologised for the 2002 riots. Frankly, one is appalled by this idea of apology for the simple logic that either Modi is guilty or he is not. If he is guilty, an apology would not do under the law of the land. Either way, an apology can be tokenism at best not atonement. Politicians in India, let us not forget, revel in tokenism and atonement whether one is guilty or not. In the context of the unfortunate happenings in Gujarat, the exemplary administrative track record of preventing such unfortunate events post-2002 speaks for its self.

After all, let us not forget that the Supreme Court of India has virtually absolved Modi of all charges against him in so far as being a willing party to the Pogrom – a fact lost on most including the author of this piece in *NY Times*. Given this paradigm, either the *NY Times* is biased against Modi, BJP, Hindus or India. Alternatively, it is ignorant of facts. Or is it a command performance by the venerable *NY Times*. Whatever it be, *NY Times* has become a prisoner of vote-bank politics, perverted secularism and divisive democracy practiced by sections of the Indian polity and media. What a fall for a media house that was considered a global benchmark till not so long ago.

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Who's Afraid of Opinion Polls?

Nitin G. Raut

On 20 August 2013 a section of the Press reported a statement by Information and Broadcasting Minister, Manish Tewari, calling for a regulatory authority for journalists. Earlier the same Minister had issued a warning in the guise of an “advisory” to television news channels to follow some regulation or face cancellation of their licence.

Opinion polls during or before elections are now sought to be targeted on the specious plea that they “are biased”, “not scientifically conducted” or are “misleading”.

On 6 October 2013, TV news channels received yet another “advisory” from the Information & Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry in the form of a complaint to the News Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA) – a broadcaster association to regulate news content and a forum to redress viewers’ grievances - on the issue of comparing Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s Independence Day speech with that of BJP Prime Ministerial candidate Narendra Modi.

The I&B Ministry’s contention that “... on such a solemn day to put him (PM) in an artificial competition with anyone is not appropriate” is not only misplaced but an opprobrium in the given scenario. Only in a fascist or authoritarian regime can the political head’s speech become the final word where no questions can be asked and no answers expected. The controlled media goes into an unrestrained publicity blitz. No one dares to analyse it much less criticize it.

Undisguised Threats to Freedom of the Press

These “advisories” are, in fact, undisguised threats to the freedom of the press as it has openly threatened to invoke Section 20 of the Cable Television Network (Regulation) Act, 1995, empowering the Central Government to prohibit the operation of cable television networks in the public interest. The key word is “public interest” which certainly cannot be identified with any Party interest. It is an attempt to misuse a legal provision to protect a partisan interest. It is clearly an attempt to control and/or regulate the news content of the print and electronic media and smother free discussion of subjects of public importance.

The Indira Congress is now canvassing a ban on opinion polls on the specious plea that it affects or

influences voters’ minds. The voters are not that naive. In 2004 despite widespread expectation of the BJP-led NDA’s return to power, the voters gave their verdict to the contrary. The Congress (I)’s demand is to deprive the citizens of their right to know the poll trends or even determine their choice.

In a democracy it cannot be considered sacrilegious to subject the Prime Minister’s Independence Day speech to critical analysis, and even compare it with a rival prime ministerial aspirant’s speech, especially during election season. In the U.S. Presidential elections, the incumbent President and rival Presidential candidate have nationwide face to face live televised debates that test, not only their administrative skills and acceptability factors, but also help the voters to dissect the political agenda of the respective contestants. It is accompanied by opinion polls and ratings of the candidates.

The “advisories”, however, couched as they may be in a semantic onslaught against opinion polls are yet ominous pointers of threats to press freedom. It smacks of attempts to regiment journalists and media to tow the official line or at least operate within the straitjackets of authorities or powers that be in the garb of ‘regulation’ or ‘responsible journalism’.

What Next

If the findings of opinion polls tend to create bias, then will the strength of an election rally also invite ban as it can be interpreted as a swing factor in the polls. The biggest corrupting factor of doling out largesse is not even referred to when it should be the first to be banned. With the elections approaching, the Congress Party in Madhya Pradesh has promised unemployment allowance to youth and waiver of farmers loan up to Rs.51,000. Such promises can be more misleading as it openly solicits votes by inducements.

Press freedom means certain rights claimed by journalists, editors, reporters and writers and opinion

makers to write, opine and analyse. It means the right to disseminate information, report events, expose misdemeanours in public life, and hold people in power accountable. It is the freedom to write without fear or favour. With any sort of official or State restriction the duties of journalists will be hampered and even the readers will be deprived of their right to know. Opinion polls are conducted to know the feel of voters and the trends of different sections. If the right to say or write is to become a subject matter of government regulation or restriction the immediate casualty will be the truth. Unwarranted interference in the Right to Freedom of Speech, which incorporates press freedom, will also be a violence of Article 19 of the Indian Constitution.

The tirade against opinion polls by political parties only betrays their insecurity and intolerance to anything that is published or found to be adverse to their entrenched power. It is an attempt to browbeat the press and opinion pollsters from publishing facts. Opinion polls are also a part of the democratic process because it enables the voters to weigh the pros and cons and determine the strengths and weaknesses as also the agendas of political parties. If there has to be any regulation in the conduct of opinion polls it should come from within the professional bodies or the TV channels without state interference. If opinion polls lack credibility or scientific methodology,

the readers and viewers should be the best judge.

India is one of the countries along with the United States, Canada, Europe, Israel and Japan where freedom of the press including conducting opinion polls is permissible something which is still not available even in Russia in spite of 'glasnost.' All democratic countries impose restriction only in the Public Interest and such instructions can be subjected to judicial scrutiny.

This is not to deny that there may be a margin of error in opinion polls; but that can be rectified by professional bodies and through public debate. Unfortunately even in the Indian Press, which is most affected by these arbitrary advisories, it has not triggered a debate on the attempts to ban or restrict opinion polls. Only the economic daily *Mint*, in its issue of 11 November 2013, carried a front page analytical article "The Effect of Opinion Polls on Voters" where the issues of "credibility gap" and the need for reasonable restrictions which are in force in other democratic States and that too only 24-72 hours before the polling day, are discussed objectively and dispassionately.

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India's Hypocrisy on Democracy Exposed

V. Balachandran

Gen. V. K. Singh (retd.) has confirmed that the “the world’s largest democracy” has been making secret payments to Kashmir politicians through our Army since 1947, exposing our hypocrisy.

This piece is not a dialectic on whether former Army chief General V. K. Singh should have addressed a political rally jointly with Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi in a pre-election year. I have no interest in that. My intention is only to argue that the Congress Party alone should be held responsible for the controversies that followed, exposing the rot in our intelligence management and the misuse of secret government funds. Despite ruling for the last 53 years, they have shown no interest in changing the most opaque and least accountable intelligence system we inherited in 1947, rejecting proposals even from their own party to bring in accountability and probity.

History tells us that intelligence was always used as a major tool for hegemonic purposes within a country or outside. The concept of patriotism and loyalty to the ruling monarch or junta was the justification for the use of deceit and chicanery in intelligence operations to suppress dissent. The earliest “honey traps” might have been Chanakya’s “*Vishkanyas*” (poison girls); a technology adopted 200 years later for physical immunity by King Mithridates of Pontus.

The earliest “sting operation” was perhaps in 1584 by Elizabethan spymaster Walsingham, who converted Gilbert Gifford to a double agent to involve Mary, Queen of Scots, in the “Babington Plot” to eliminate her from claiming the throne. British intelligence services gave priority in suppressing the growing discontent in the colonies by neglecting the neighbouring Nazi threat. Most European intelligence agencies practised Cardinal Richelieu’s dictum, “secrecy is the first essential in the affairs of the State” by employing “trusted” employees, who were accountable only to the rulers.

The United States tried using a different track in having more openness in their intelligence services, but ended up alternating between reticence (“Gentlemen do not read each other’s mail”) and giving an opaque military orientation to their intelligence during World War II. Creditably, President Harry Truman rejected the military model for peacetime intelligence by putting their civilian agencies under statutory obligations, with more openness and accountability. An aberration was US Defense

Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld’s “Strategic Support Branch” in Pentagon (2002), which, much like the “Technical Services Division” (TSD) of General V. K. Singh was unauthorised and was wound up by his successor Robert Gates in 2007.

The 1980s were a watershed in the history of British and Canadian agencies just as the 1970s were a “decade of turmoil and reform” for America after the Vietnam War and Nixon era abuses, when the US Congress wrested decisive control over their intelligence agencies, demanding more accountability from them.

We laughed when we heard the then Pakistan’s Interior Minister, Naseerullah Babar, telling their National Assembly in August 2009 that the Inter-Services Intelligence had collected Pakistani Rs. 140 million from the Habib Bank to distribute among politicians prior to the 1990 elections to “manipulate the results in favour of the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad” to prevent Benazir Bhutto’s success. We wondered what type of democracy they had when former Army chief General Aslam Beg admitted in his affidavit that “it had been a routine for the ISI to support the favourite candidates in elections under directives of the successive chief executives”.

Now Gen. Singh has confirmed that the “the world’s largest democracy” has been making secret payments to Kashmir politicians through our Army since 1947, exposing our hypocrisy.

VAPPALA BALACHANDRAN formerly Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat. Excerpted from his article in the *Sunday Guardian*, 29 September 2013.

Fathom the hypocrisy of a government that requires every citizen to prove they are insuredbut not everyone must prove they are a citizen.

And now ,any of those who refuse, or are unable to prove they are citizens, will receive free insurance paid for by those who are forced to buy insurance because they are citizens.

Ben Stein from the Net.
Contributed by Melanie Silveira

Point Counter Point

Ashok Karnik

Every issue has at least two sides. A wise person 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.

Warning Signals in Kashmir

1. In spite of the meeting between Dr. Manmohan Singh and Nawaz Sharif (September 29, 2013) the LOC intrusions by Pakistan continue. The meeting was not expected to deliver much, but as a face saver it was announced that the two DGMO would meet and lower the border heat. The PMs' meeting was conceived in possibly the worst of circumstances and came out with inanities. The Pak PM harped on Kashmir and India talked of terrorism. While India continues to be in the Panchsheel mode, Pakistan's tactics are difficult to gauge. Repeated shelling of Indian posts on the LOC in Kashmir keeps peace out of reach. It is known that Pak firing on the Indian posts is a diversionary tactic to push fidayeen across. There is no shortage of fidayeen as more than 300 are reportedly waiting to cross over and about 2500 are in their training camps. While talking of peace with India, Nawaz Sharif is also trying to internationalize the Kashmir issue by appealing to the US to intervene. Nawaz Sharif is shrewd enough to guard his flanks by playing the Kashmir card. He is a master at playing two ends against the middle. As long as he shows to his constituency that he is trying to deliver Kashmir, he is safe. He misses no opportunity to needle India. Our refrain that we must help Nawaz Sharif to safeguard Pakistan's democracy is a delusion at best.

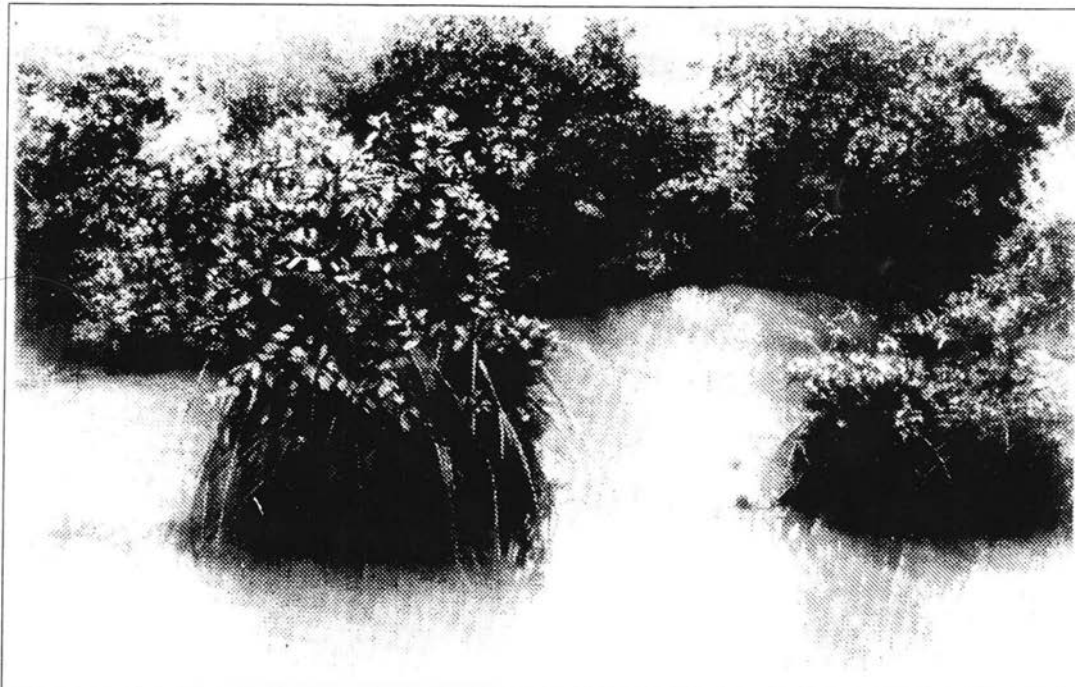
1. It is a given that the Pak army and the jihadis would want the talks between India and Pakistan to fail but there is more to it. Nawaz Sharif obviously has his own agenda. He is as much involved as the Pak army in the strategy to keep the border uneasy. In international relations, it is wise to work on the worst case scenario while hoping for the best. Pakistan's strategy has to be gauged without wishful thinking about a grand peace. Pakistan would like to: (a) send in hundreds of militants to ensure that Kashmir bursts into flames in the summer at the time of India's next general election; (b) renew the LOC skirmishes to alarm the international community to a possibility of a war between two nuclear powers and (c) talk of peace to make it appear that it is India which is threatening war. It could then draw the US into the dispute which it has failed to do so far. India has to calculate that Nawaz Sharif is possibly planning greater violence to get the US to intervene. India must oppose war, but arrive at an action plan that would penalise Pakistan for its transgressions. So far India has shown no such plan except for vacuous posturing. The serial bomb explosions in Patna (October 27) are just a reminder that we are bleeding internally too, because we are undecided on how to tackle terrorism.

From Caged Parrot to a Predator

2. CBI's transformation from what the Supreme Court described as a 'caged parrot' to an unbiased investigative agency would be welcome. It could be worrisome only if it runs amok to prove its autonomy and be capriciously selective in determining its targets. Its new found 'autonomy' can become a problem unless it is bound by a code of conduct; its practice of leaking damaging 'secrets' of ongoing investigations is alarming. The atmosphere of suspicion and antagonism makes the country a hotbed of perceived conspiracies, corruption and irregularities of all kinds. Nobody is considered clean; in people's perception, everybody needs to be investigated and prima facie every one in any position of power is suspect. The exposure of huge scams in recent years justifies people's skepticism. Usually there are anonymous applications against all and sundry and in the present climate, the CBI's intervention is always sought. There are a lot of PIL warriors too, who would like to enquire

2. There is a cry for building confidence among the Indian Corporate Houses that their investment is welcome and that they would get a fair deal. Yes, there may be a fair deal ultimately but how long would an industrialist face public inquisition just because he is a successful man? We have reached a stage where we want to protect the honest businessman and encourage him to invest in this country but also want him to undergo an 'Agni Pariksha' every time he opens a new venture. If the Government offers him protection, the Government comes under suspicion; if it does not, the economy suffers. We have created a Frankenstein of the puritan kind where nothing is above suspicion and nothing is sacrosanct. It is a reminder of the socialist utopia we rejected in 1991. The CBI was supposed to be the Government's hand-maiden, so we were happy that the Supreme Court ordered it to be freed; various Government schemes were faulty and we got them scrutinized; Babus were rulers unto

CONCERN FOR THE ENVIRONMENT



A unique feature of the Industrial Garden Township, Pirojshanagar, is a large expanse of swamp, one of the very few such areas existing in the city under original mangrove forests.

At a time when mangroves are being destroyed at an alarming rate in the process of excessive and damaging reclamation..., Godrej has taken steps, at considerable care and expense.

to preserve and protect this Nature's gift in the awareness that mangrove destruction leads generally to loss of food, breeding grounds and shelter for numerous forms of life.

It is almost unbelievable that, like the Sanjay Gandhi National Park in Borivli, such a mangrove still exists in the excessively congested and polluted megapolis that Mumbai is

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into every contract. We are buffeted by corruption and the consequent all consuming suspicion while simultaneously hoping for a great leap in the economy. The FIR against Kumarmangalam Birla and Parakh in the Coalgate scam is a case in point. Did the CBI jump the gun in search for glory or did it make enough pre-FIR enquiries to ensure that it had an iron clad case? The PM's advice that investigating agencies must distinguish between policy errors and criminality is timely.

themselves, so we got their decisions examined in trying to make them accountable for every word they wrote. The Government is so much on the defensive that it fears to act. The result: everybody hesitates taking any decisions and the country threatens to come to a halt. How can anything move if every move is viewed with suspicion?

“The Siege”

3. “The Siege”, a book co-authored by Adrian Levy, a British journalist, on the 26/11 Mumbai attack caused a sensation as the subject is of emotional concern to all Indians. The armed intruders fought till death and put the Indian security establishment to shame. Levy needs to be congratulated on his perseverance and scholarship. He has made several sensational claims in his book. This can be expected as such books are intended to make an impact and do not necessarily provide documentary proof of events. Since no security agency like the CIA, IB or R&AW is likely to offer any comments, the truth will remain unknown. Levy claims that the US had given 26 warnings to India prior to the attack but the R&AW and IB had failed to act. He also claims that the ISI had a source called the ‘Honeybee’ positioned in Delhi who provided ISI vital information. ‘Honeybee’ gave information about the NSG training and also suggested the spot where the terrorist could land. Most of the information presumably came to Levy from David Headley. He has also revealed that the L-e-T had 16 agents in Mumbai.

3. All these claims look impressive but, on close scrutiny, are not such earth shaking revelations. There is no doubt that there was gross failure of anti-terrorism operations. There is no explanation as to who failed and what exactly should have been done to prevent over 200 deaths and massive property damage. It is known that India had advance intelligence about the attack; whether it was in the form of 26 warnings or much fewer is not important. It is presumptuous to claim that nobody heeded the warnings. Levy should have examined the possibility that action was indeed initiated but still failed to stop the terrorists. In fact, it is worse that the attack could not be stopped despite advance warning. Levy's claim about ‘Honeybee’ is somewhat dubious; it is not known how exactly ‘Honeybee’ helped the terrorists. Information about NSG training is no great secret and suggestion of a landing spot for the terrorist by a man sitting in Delhi is implausible. The presence of L-e-T agents in Mumbai has been speculated for a long time. Irrespective of the credibility of Levy's revelations, it is certain that the doubts raised by him need to be investigated.

Shinde's Muslim Card

(This “point-counter-point” comment was written for the November issue of our journal. Unfortunately due to a proofing goof-up, the “Point” got printed on both sides and the “Counter-point” was lost in the process. We reproduce both the “Point” and the “Counter-Point”. Our apologies to our readers and to columnist Ashok Karnik, the writer, for this error. – Editor.)

4. Sushilkumar Shinde, our usually floundering Home Minister, boldly took a political position on a law and order issue by asking all the Chief Ministers to ensure that Muslim youths were not unjustly detained in cases of terrorism. Indeed, there has been a clamour from minority groups that Muslim youth were being targeted whenever there was a terror strike. This is a genuine issue but it relates to inadequacies of our criminal justice system and not necessarily to the communal bias of police officers. Even if the police pick up a wrong person for detention, should the courts not be vigilant enough to release him? The laxity of our criminal justice system sees thousands of under-trial prisoners rotting in jail even beyond the sentences they would have suffered if found guilty. The trial that never

4. The Home Minister's letter amounts to interference in a law and order matter. Shinde tried to backtrack by claiming that he had referred to all minorities and not only to Muslims. The argument that the police deliberately target a particular community for terrorism is based on half knowledge. The issue has another dimension, often ignored. A group gets targeted because it falls in the suspect category. Why a particular group gets identified with a particular type of crime is unscientific. If nomadic tribes come under suspicion for petty thefts, it is the modus operandi that comes into play; if right wing groups come under suspicion for attacks on churches, it is their ideological inclination that is responsible; if a minority group comes under suspicion, it is again its perceived

takes place penalizes thousands. All detainees need to be released quickly if there is no evidence against them. The Home Minister needs to find an answer to a systemic problem rather than use it as an electoral gimmick. His intentions became suspect because he failed to analyze the problem and forgot to suggest solutions worthy of a Home Minister and not a politician.

predilection that is at play. During the Khalistan movement, Sikhs were the targets for obvious reasons. Even an advanced country like the US goes for racial profiling despite clamour against it. The police in India still operate through this antiquated system. There may be the odd officer who allows his biases to govern his decisions but it is unfair to damn the State machinery. The Home Minister, of all persons, should have been aware of this investigative dilemma.

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

Readers who do not have the facility of a computer can also post (mail) their points of view on serious issues of the day to “Point Counter Point”, c/o Freedom First, 3rd floor, Army & Navy Building, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai, 400 001.

The Irresponsible Executive

Some senior ministers have, in the recent past, said that ministers only sign files created by their secretaries. “If we begin to read the file, no decision will ever get taken.” This is what Salman Khurshid suggested, while defending the prime minister against the alleged irregularities in the coal block allocations..... presumption that it is the serving bureaucrat who is responsible for examining a file and that the minister has little training, or responsibility ...

Ministers ... exercise authority on most matters... on so-called independent corporations or autonomous bodies with relatively narrowly defined remits. the minister is its [autonomous bodies] chairman. In this role, the minister has even greater direct executive authority, because he is routinely involved in large tenders and all manner of financial decisions, quite apart from the transfers and postings. The more pro-active ministers even manage to set the agenda for the body they chair.

The catch is that there are no rules governing the manner in which the minister is expected to exercise his authority. It is this lacuna that allows a minister to maintain that he cannot be held responsible for the actions of his personnel, even though he might regularly interfere in their day-to-day functioning.... anomaly that allows ministers to say they cannot be expected to look through files.

Most of us know about the sins of commission... there are many sins of omission as well... there are no timeframes within which decisions are expected to be taken. Ministers can simply delay a decision they do not want to take, and can avoid recording their views on it by keeping the decision pending.... Dismissing the collapse of government corporations

as “bureaucratic lethargy” and “corruption” would be missing the wood for the trees.

None of this lessens the responsibility of the bureaucrats for the decisions that they have taken... however much we may like to express our frustration against an unresponsive and often arrogant officialdom, the fact remains that it comprises persons hired to advise on ... policy-making. The final decision rests with the political executive. That is the structure of parliamentary democracy in India.

Institutional structures need to be taken seriously. As important as individual leaders might be, they are only as good as the institutions in which they work. If we are unable to hold ministers responsible for their executive decisions, then they can and will behave irresponsibly...

Where the minister exercises executive authority, he is in fact the CEO of his ministry and as the CEO, he must accept responsibility for the actions of his department. In the case of Jeffrey Skilling, ex-CEO of the Enron Corporation, who was charged on several counts of fraud and insider trading – and was held responsible for the collapse of the corporation – he claimed not to have known about the illegalities taking place. His own mother reportedly told a US newspaper, “When you are the CEO and you are on the board of directors, you are supposed to know what’s going on with the rest of the company.” That is the bottom-line.

Extract of article that appeared in the *Indian Express*
<http://www.indianexpress.com/news/the-irresponsible-executive/1185505/>

M. Rajivlochan : *The Indian Express*, Tue Oct 22 2013
Contributed by Hina Manerikar



Cornucopia

Firoze Hirjikaka

Modi Bellows to Conquer

A leopard cannot change its spots. Modi may have started life as a humble chai-wallah, but he now exhibits behaviour that would put a seasoned autocrat to shame.

I don't know if Narendra Modi has ever read Oliver Goldsmith's play "She Stoops to Conquer", but if he has, he has not taken it to heart. Narendra Modi does not stoop. He smirks, he raises a supercilious eyebrow to express disdain or derision; and above all, he bellows. He believes in the dictum: if you shout loud enough and long enough, people will start believing whatever you dish out. Modi is the consummate thespian. He expertly adapts his speech and tone to his target audience. In air-conditioned surroundings, he dazzles corporate bigwigs with his vision of hassle-free and corruption-free governance. In open air venues, he reverts to his humble origins and in a voice dripping with sarcasm, he lambasts and ridicules the Congress Party in general and the 'First Family' in particular. The cheering throngs are enthralled. They applaud the form and ignore the substance.

Narendrabhai's all too familiar tirade against the Congress head honchos at Delhi, soon after Rahul Gandhi's "nonsense" bombshell, was vintage Modi: full of bombast, double entendres and his version of humour. Trivialities like checking facts before mouthing off never seems to bother him. I suspect he sometimes deliberately misrepresents facts to suit his rhetoric. He gets away with it because the crowds don't come to hear a reasoned discourse. They come to be entertained and Modi never fails to disappoint them. Besides, even if his statements are later proved to be erroneous - as many have been - he has got his point across to the crowds thronging his speeches. He knows that very few will read the rebuttals. He gives essentially the same speech every time, with slight variations in the form of attack. The crowd does not care. He could read a passage from Shakespeare - incomprehensible to the multitude - and they would still applaud him. In the words of Irving Berlin "There's no business like show business"; and Modi is a master showman.

Modi's Delhi speech was a masterpiece of double-speak. His take on Manmohan Singh was classic. In almost the same breath, he defended the PM's honour, commiserated with him at the shehzadah's surprise ambush; and made a tasteless joke about his turban. The hoi-polloi love tasteless jokes; and they lapped it up. Modi's forte is that he speaks extempore. Unlike other ministers, he

does not read from insipid prepared notes which are obviously scripted by an assistant. Also unlike other candidates, he does not make grandiose promises or dole out freebies. He tells farmers and small traders that he will make it easier and less costly to get their goods to market by providing good roads. He gladdens the hearts of manufacturers by guaranteeing 24-hour electricity. He reminds them that these are not empty promises because he has already performed these minor miracles in Gujarat. He is like a whirlwind that is sweeping through the stagnation of Indian politics.

I am not an avid fan of Narendrabhai, but I have to give him credit for packaging himself brilliantly. Almost everyone I meet seems to regard Modi as an instant panacea for the ills that plague the country. They seem to believe that they have merely to elect him PM and he will sweep away the corruption, lethargy and indifference that is endemic in our political system. I am not quite so optimistic. True, his development record is praiseworthy, but then it is relatively easy to push through a development agenda in a state where he has no credible opposition. If he were to become PM, he would have to contend with, not only the opposition, but recalcitrant allies and even coalition partners demanding their pound of flesh. The politics of accommodation is an art Modi has never learnt, mainly because he has hitherto not needed to. He will have to learn on the job, but I am not sure how successful he will be. A leopard cannot change his spots. Modi may have started life as a humble chai-wallah, but he now exhibits behaviour that would put a seasoned autocrat to shame.

If one were to go by the euphoria exhibited in the print and electronic media, Modi's ascension to the top job is virtually inevitable and a mere formality. To a certain extent, their optimism is justified. The Congress has shot itself in the foot so many times in the past two years that any opposition unable to defeat the party could be justifiably declared as criminally incompetent. However, in my opinion, Modi has committed a tactical error by peaking too soon. After all, the general election is at least six months away; and there is a limit to the number of variations he can fabricate on his stump speech. There is a very real possibility of people of tuning off the Modi

radio after some time. Besides, the Congress seems to be finally getting its act together. Rahul Gandhi's bleeding heart for the poor may not be finding much resonance among his target audience, but his handlers are savvier. They realise that the way to the common man's heart is through his purse; and they are rushing to revive the

economy. A rise in the nation's GDP and the share market is good not only for the urban middle class. Rising prosperity levels benefit all sections of the population and in the final analysis, it is this aspect that is most appreciated and suitably rewarded. All in all, the general election may yet turn out to be a close contest. We shall see.

Corruption of the Heart

We cannot grow as a nation until we learn to grow as a people.

Indians are justifiably outraged and disillusioned with the humungous corruption that has long been perpetrated by our politicians and government agencies; and that shows no sign of abating. There is, however, another more insidious and prevalent form of corruption for which we the people have no one but ourselves to blame. I am talking about corruption of the heart; that innate cruelty and callousness that seems to be ingrained in so many of us. I can cite innumerable examples, but a few will suffice to illustrate my point.

Consider the recent tragedy at a temple town in Madhya Pradesh, where hundreds of pilgrims panicked by a false rumour of collapse, jammed a bridge, crushing many to death in the stampede. The police arrived promptly but only made matters worse. Employing their unique method of crowd control, they charged the bridge with flaying batons thereby adding to the crush and the casualties. The most shocking aspect, however, was they allegedly tried to clear the bridge by merely throwing the dead bodies into the river. Even worse, even the severely injured met the same fate.

There was another instance where a man running a so-called rehabilitation clinic practically starved the inmates and often kept them manacled to their beds. There are also numerous cases where the people running orphanages put the children on a starvation diet, force them to perform menial tasks and routinely thrash them. In the "rescue homes", the so-called fallen women receive similar treatment in addition to being sexually exploited. In all these institutions, the sole motive is to make the maximum profit. The primary function of care-giving never enters into the calculation. One also reads of high society couples literally treating their underage maids like slaves, including the infliction of physical torture. There are numerous instances of doctors taking full advantage of the highly subsidised medical education offered in government colleges; and then skipping their obligation to serve in rural hospitals for a year. Obviously the Hippocratic Oath is merely a nuisance that interferes with their primary aim of making money.

Then there is our infamous police force. Collecting hafta from every conceivable source, including the lowliest

beggar, has become so commonplace that it hardly registers on our consciousness. It is regrettable, but does not occasion too much outrage. They are only keeping company with millions of their countrymen who have a penchant for making a quick buck; and if legal niceties come in the way, they can be dispensed with without any significant attack of conscience.

In my opinion, what is more reprehensible is their attitude towards those they consider inferior. A poor man or woman approaching the police station to register a complaint is invariably treated with disdain, contempt and sometimes downright hostility. They are totally unmoved by the anguish of these unfortunates; and when compelled by superiors or activists to file an FIR, give the impression of having granted a huge favour.

It is a cliché that life in India is cheap, but the malaise goes deeper than that. There seems to be a callous indifference bordering on cruelty in the Indian psyche, especially when dealing with those who are deemed to belong to an inferior caste, or lower economic strata. The characteristic individuality of our people often deteriorates into a complete lack of feeling, even of basic human values. As long as I'm OK, who cares if others are not?

As for those under my care, I am doing them a favour as it is. I am feeding and clothing them. Surely I have a right to expect something in return. Above all, it is the sense of entitlement; the conviction that people of a certain status and birth are inherently superior to the less privileged; and the latter therefore do not merit any consideration. This is unacceptable and self defeating. We cannot grow as a nation until we learn to grow as a people.

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Who wants Rahul Gandhi as India's Prime Minister? The prime minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, the first and foremost. He has already shot off the first application for a job under him! Who else?

**S. Viswam, *Janata weekly*,
November 3, 2013**

‘Privatizing’ Sugar Co-operatives

Sharad Joshi

Often the chairman and board members of a cooperative sugar factory, who are responsible for making it sick, turn out to be the prospective buyers of the factory! First they make a sugar factory they are interested in a “sick unit”; then determine the price of its assets arbitrarily and sell it to the buyer at a meagre price. This is what they mean by “privatization”.

Way back on November 10, 1980 the Shetkari Sanghatana organised a historic agitation by sugarcane growers demanding remunerative prices for their produce. Farmers gathered in the thousands to stop rail and road traffic. It came to be known as the ‘Rail Roko and Rasta Roko’ agitation. Traffic on the highways moving in all directions came to a standstill.

Preceding this agitation, I recall the many discussions I had with Madhavrao Boraste, the then President of the Maharashtra State Co-operative Sugar Factories Federation, particularly on the arbitrary manner in which prices paid to farmers for their sugarcane were determined at meetings of officials of the Federation, some bureaucrats and politicians. He was surprised when I told him that if in a particular year a higher price was paid for levy sugar, the next year a lower price would be paid. Levy sugar is a certain percentage of the produce (quota) the sugar mills have to supply to the Government at lower than the market prices which would then be sold to the public at subsidized prices. Thus the prices were distorted and were determined by a few and not by market forces.

Today the very leaders, who had opposed the Sanghatana-led farmers’ agitation for remunerative prices, are now in favour of privatizing the Sugar Mills Cooperatives. Why? It is imperative to understand the background to this change of heart of what is described as “privatization”.

Both Madhavrao Boraste and I were arrested and jailed on the very first day of the November 1980 agitation. Madhavrao as president of the Maharashtra

State Co-operative Sugar Factories Federation was naturally worried over his incarceration as he was anxious about a possible adverse impact on sugar production. Therefore when we were set free, while I rushed to Kherwadi (in Nashik District in Maharashtra) where there had been police firing, Madhavrao rushed to the sugar factories to check if sugar production had been adversely affected. When we met the following day he said with some surprise, ‘so far I had thought that sugar production increased because of supervision by the Directors, but I found that though the Directors too had been arrested and were in jail for over three days, sugar production had actually increased.’ Increase in the production of sugar when all directors of the mill are in jail – there is a lesson in this for those who fall prey to the game of opposing privatization of co-operative sugar mills.

You cannot undermine the importance of “management”. The management of sugar mills rests with its Board of Directors. The Board of Directors plays a vital role in the employment of workers and other employees, awarding contracts for transport and purchases. In the early years, the Management, who also happened to be



sugarcane farmers, may have accomplished this job keeping in mind the interests of the sugar mills, but gradually this gave way to the recruiting/ hiring of 'favourites' rather than competence. Those who took advantage of their appointment in this manner did not protest even when they were offered lower prices over the years but kept supplying sugarcane to the factories at low prices. Even farmers who did not benefit from contracts or employment also accepted the lower prices out of helplessness and continued the cultivation of sugarcane in the hope that they would get better prices in future.

The irregularities and scandals in the recruitment and the award of contracts have increased so much that expenditures on this account far exceed the compensation paid to sugarcane farmers. Making huge losses, most cooperative sugar factories are facing closure. However, factories which were on the verge of collapse are revived temporarily by the sugar barons who deceive the farmers by diverting their sugarcane proceeds, towards interest free and perpetual (without maturity) deposits with the factories.

The role of the State Co-operative Bank (SCB) has become important as never before. The amount of advance the SCB pays to the co-operative sugar factories determines the quantum of advance to be paid to the farmers. The privilege of determining the amount of advance to be paid to the Co-operative Sugar factories also lies with the SCB. When so much power is vested in an institution which has politicians at the helm, politicians will be inclined to misuse it.

There is a large time lag between a factory starting to show signs of sickness and the time it becomes a sick unit. During this time lag, the sugar experts in the SCB start searching for suitable buyers of the factories concerned. In short, the State Co-operative Bank has started intervening in the management of the co-operative sugar factories. Often the chairman and board members of a cooperative sugar factory, who are responsible for making it sick, turn out to be the prospective buyers of the factory! First they make a sugar factory they are interested in a "sick unit"; then determine the price of its assets arbitrarily and sell it to the buyer at a meagre price. This is what they mean by "privatization".

The Shetkari Sanghatana's stance is very clear. Farmer members of sugar cooperatives must be able to participate in the decision making process of the co-operative system. If a number of cooperative sugar factories have fallen sick it is because the bureaucrat-politician nexus have taken advantage of their control of these factories and deliberately made them sick.

Some leaders of the co-operative movement challenged the agitating farmers to come forward and run a sugar factory. Welcoming this challenge on behalf of the Shetkari Sanghatana, I told these 'leaders' that we would want control not only of the co-operative sugar mills but also control of other co-operatives as well, more particularly the co-operative banks. Secondly if the Sanghatana were to take control, many staff members generally friends and relatives of the directors would have to be retrenched. It is only under these conditions that the Shetkari Sanghatana would be able to buy sugarcane at a rate demanded by the farmers and sell the sugar at a reasonable price in the market. This counter challenge was never accepted by the 'leaders'.

In reality, these cooperative sugar factories are not motivated by commercial considerations. Though the farmers, the sugarcane producers, are part owners of a co-operative sugar factory they have no say in the management of the cooperative enterprise concerned. They have no opportunity to put forward their view at general body meetings. In case someone dares to do so the directors hire thugs to intimidate him and thus suppress dissent. In any institution, power and accountability should go hand in hand. If there is an imbalance between the two, it will only ensure irresponsible behaviour by the management. When this happens it is only a matter of time before the institutions concerned fall 'sick'.

I had predicted in 1980, that all co-operative institutions run in this manner would inevitably close down. Now, 30 years on, we see it happening.

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An Einstein Anecdote

One day during a speaking tour, Albert Einstein's driver, who often sat at the back of the hall during his lectures, remarked that he could probably give the lecture himself, having heard it so many times. Sure enough, at the next stop on the tour, Einstein and the driver switched places, with Einstein sitting at the back in his driver's uniform.

Having delivered a flawless lecture, the driver was asked a difficult question by a member of the audience. "Well, the answer to that question is quite simple," he casually replied. "I bet my driver, sitting up at the back there, could answer it..."

From the Net.

Contributed by Khorshed and Khurshed

The Glory of GOLD and its Different Avatars

V. Krishna Moorthy

Dr. I.G. Patel had made a valid observation, “In prosperity as in the hour of need, the thoughts of most Indians turn to Gold.”

Why This Craze for Gold?

India's Gold appetite is legendary. Her penchant for the yellow metal has led to smuggling in the past. Many experts feel that regular and continuous import of gold in such huge quantities for so long is the main culprit behind the country's burgeoning current account deficit (CAD). Macro-economists in India consider gold as a wasteful asset and the villain of the present situation of the Indian economy, besides the questionable policies of the FMs, present and past. The latest Economic Survey noted that “the rise in the imports of gold is one of the factors contributing to India's high trade deficit and current account deficit in 2011-12 forming 30% of its trade deficit.”

Gold Production

India's domestic production of gold has stagnated at around 2.8 tons per year compared to China's around 370 tons. At one time, gold mining in India was synonymous with the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) in Karnataka. The history of gold mining can be traced to the Indus Valley Civilization. The Guptas, the Cholas, the Vijayanagar Empire and Tipu Sultan, all laid their hands on the golden land during their rule. There are only three main production centres at present, viz., Hutti, Uti, Hirabuddini.

In modern times, large-scale gold mining took place only in the 1850s under the British firm John Taylor & Company. They did much of the prospecting and mining using sophisticated machinery with skilled manpower drawn from the erstwhile Madras Presidency. After independence, the mines were taken over by the Government of Mysore in 1956, thereafter by the Ministry of Finance, GOI in 1962. Subsequently, the mines were handed over to Bharat Gold Mines Ltd., (BGML) when the company was formed in 1972 under the Ministry of Mines.

The BGML could not attain any respectable level of production, though the company had assembled a workforce of around 3,000 and incurred huge infrastructure cost. The gold mines of the company were closed down in 2001 due to uneconomic production costs and significantly reduced reserves of gold mineral. At present, a long-drawn legal battle is on between the ex-employees of BGML and the Ministry of Mines.

In September 2003, the Karnataka High Court directed the Government to hand over the mines to the employees and, in December 2006, the Ministry undertook to do so at a market-determined price. In July 2010, after protracted litigation, the Karnataka High Court finalized the terms and procedure of transfer, which again went into limbo. In July 2013, the Supreme Court approved the Centre's plan to float a global tender to revive the gold mines, a full 12 years after they were closed. Presently, Vedanta Resources, a company in the Vedanta Metals Group is eyeing expansion into gold mining and looking at bidding for the assets of BGML. In addition to the KGF mines, there are about 40 other mines where prospecting has been done.

The only operating gold mine of India is The Hutti Gold Mines Ltd. According to its 2012-13 Balance Sheet, in spite of processing more ore tonnage than last year, gold production was only 1.58 tons and gold content is getting lower day by day. According to its MD, A.K. Monappa, the Company earned a net profit of Rs. 35 Crore, a decline of 17 % with EPS at Rs. 5 as against Rs. 6, the previous year.

Gold from Eucalyptus Leaves!

Now, there comes some more good news for the ‘Gold Greedy’ whether they are persons, or nations. A Sydney dateline report states that Australian scientists from the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (CSIRO), Sydney, have found minuscule nuggets of gold hidden inside the leaves of eucalyptus trees in the Kalgoorlie region of Western Australia. Kalgoorlie was the site of a major gold rush in the late 1800s. This discovery, they say, could help prospectors discover new deposits of the precious metal. According to a research report published by Geochemist Mel Lintern in the journal ‘Nature Communications’ it appears that the trees sucked up the gold particles from 30 meters (100 feet) below the ground through their roots. The eucalypt acts as a hydraulic pump – its roots extend to tens of meters into the ground and draw up water containing gold. As gold is likely to be toxic to the plant, it is moved to the leaves and branches where it can be released or shed to

the ground. It is hoped that hilly places like Ooty which is replete with age-old sky-touching eucalyptus trees – a beautiful sight – vandalism won't take place and spoil the environs and wonderful views of the hills in their greed of gold.

Role of Gold

Gold, from an economic perspective, represents stored value for future use. Unlike the Eastern societies, particularly India, Gold plays a very small role in the culture of Western society. Hence the economics of gold differs in these two societies. Economics being a science of human behaviour and a dismal science, the laws won't hold uniformly relevant to every society. Hence the economic laws lose their universal character. The case of Gold is a good example, and as an asset its value differs from society to society.

In India, from childhood, a girl child develops a special love for the yellow metal in the form of jewellery which adds beauty to their physical looks. No marriage in India can take place, even in the poorest family, without a piece of gold ornament, particularly 'Mangala Sutra' or 'Thali' which is a symbol of a married woman. Irrespective of the religious distinctions, be they Christians, Jains, Muslims, Buddhists or Hindus, a gold ornament has to be part of a marriage celebration in India.

Gold, diamonds and other precious metals, are the bounty which kings used to carry back whenever they defeated an enemy country. This has happened throughout human history, whether it was Aztecs, Greeks, Incas, Romans, Spaniards, Vikings, British or Muslims, and within the Indian territory amongst the thousands of rulers who ruled the country. In Mahabharata also, when Dharmaraja planned a Rajasuya Yaga, his valiant brothers went to the four corners of the country defeating the other kings and carried bounties of gold and other precious metals with them for the Yaga. Coming to modern times, the Muslim rulers who ruled the country for a considerable length of time did the same, destroying Hindu temples carried back with them precious gold jewellery of the gods.

Coming to the Gold with the temples, only last year it was revealed that the Padmanabhaswamy temple in Thiruvananthapuram held a treasure trove of thousands of crores of rupees worth of gold and precious stones. The rumour was that at the instance of the UPA government, the RBI intended to seize the temple's gold stocks and pawn them to raise foreign exchange in order to pay off international debt. RBI had reportedly asked the three Devaswom Boards of Travancore, Kochi and Guruvayur and the Attukal Bhagawathy Temple Trust to

provide details of their gold stocks since it was in the process of collecting statistics on the quantum of gold available with the various places of worship. Several Hindu organizations condemned the move, asserting that it was an attack on Hindus' religious freedom. For the UPA government, politically the measure turned out to be a hot potato. None of the temple authorities responded. RBI took no further action and the sustained stone-walling by temple authorities forced the RBI to freeze its move to build a database of gold held by Kerala's major temples.

It is not Kerala alone. The centuries old Golden Temple of the Sikh community and the recently established Sripura Mahalakshmi Temple near Vellore in Tamilnadu has a close connection with gold. It is common knowledge that the Tirupathi Hundi invariably contains several pieces of gold jewellery which come as offerings from the devotees. Therefore, the Government has to realize, however secular it may be on paper, the faith of the people about the value and divinity of gold is such that it cannot be controlled by law the way they did in the US, at least for a while.

In India, irrespective of the social status, everyone likes to possess some quantum of gold in some form or other. Gold has been an asset only for the elite in the Western society. Many wars have been fought and much violence has taken place for gold. Decorating achievers in international sports events and academics with Gold medallions is a common feature in national and as well as in academic circles

Economics of Gold

Contemporary economic history tells us that in the wake of the Great Depression of 1929-30s, the US President, Franklin Roosevelt, outlawed private possession of gold in 1936, nationalized gold turning it into a state asset. However, by 1950 the US government had built up stocks of over 20,000 tons of gold, making it a global economic power. This helped the Bretton Woods Conference to accept the US Dollar – a gold-backed currency – as a global reserve currency. Later in 1976, the private possession of gold was restored by the US government. US citizens normally prefer to put their household savings in stocks, which increased from 17% in 1953 to 35% in 1968. 58% of US households which held their savings in stocks increased to 67% by 2002.

In India the position is quite different and holding of gold in one form or other by the people is a cultural phenomenon unlike the West. Over half a century ago in 1958, India's well known economist of yester years Dr. I.G. Patel had made a valid observation, "In prosperity as

in the hour of need, the thoughts of most Indians turn to Gold.” Marco Polo’s travelogues indicate that in the 13th century, India had huge stocks of gold. Lately, India imported 933 tons of the precious metal in 2011-12 up from 110 tons some 20 years ago to boost its gold reserves. The present gold stock of the country in various forms is in the range of 20,000 to 40,000 tons due to trade and culture, and not by loot!

Gold the Saviour

Way back in 1962, at the time of the Indo-China War, Morarji Desai, then FM, under the Gold Control Order, banned private ownership of pure gold bars and coins and new jewellery could be made only with gold of 18 carat or less purity. Gold became an emotive issue on two occasions (once in March 1991 and again in July 1991). To tide over the balance of payments crisis in 1991, a part of our gold reserves were pledged – about 20 tons of gold with UBS, and a second time about 47 tons with Bank of Japan – to raise \$200 million and \$405 million respectively to save the country from certain default. By September 1991, the loans were repaid and the pledged gold recovered. That is the value of gold that saved India’s prestige in the international arena!

Gold Prices

A range of factors affect Gold prices and the impact of each of the factors is not always uniform. Besides behavioural, other factors include:

- * Strength of the US Dollar against a basket of major currencies;
- * Interest rates in developed economies;
- * Inflation;
- * Global security; and

- * Financial stability, particularly of the world’s reserve currency, US Dollar.

While these factors are dynamic in nature, the market perception at any point of time decides which factor or a combination of factors would be dominant. However, all these factors are inexorably inter-linked. For example, a regime of low interest rates can trigger inflation, which could weaken the currency and push up gold prices. In recent weeks global gold prices have come down, both due to profit booking and a stronger Dollar Index which has been putting further pressure on prices. Gold prices are expected to move down further due to optimism over economic recovery in the US, a stronger Dollar and lower inflation expectations.

However, in India, the price of the yellow metal is surging. According to media reports, a cartel is said to be at work in the Gold trade to keep prices in the domestic market at an artificial high. Traders and some big exporters are reportedly shipping abroad gold meant for the home market when there are now several curbs on import. This has, in turn, resulted in premium for physical delivery to be as high as \$100 or Rs.1800/- to Rs.2000/-. Consignments for shipment are also reportedly going to third parties for a premium. It is here that the hawk’s eyes of the Government’s Agencies should focus to bring the culprits to book and not tarnish the image of century old organizations like ASI and GSI and its people who have been doing an excellent professional job over the years in spite of restricted budgets, and whose services are being much sought after by other nations in restoring their heritage structures.

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Politics of Cricket Bharat Ratna for Sachin Tendulkar – A Dissenting Note

How serious is this nation about true service to the nation. Those who truly serve die in anonymity and those who entertain are eulogized for having served the nation. This country marks entertainers and has Bharat Ratnas thrown at them for what? It’s a wonder how quickly this nation of 1.27 billion swings from frenzied match fixing debates to anger over players wrapped up in drug trafficking and then forgetting everything to an unprecedented frenzy over Sachin Tendulkar retiring from cricket.

Each time there is a hue and cry over match fixing accompanied by laying bare the filth that has crept into it one feels that the game would crash under its own weight of misplaced interest and inappropriate position of importance in today’s world. Then what brings it to life again and again?

Why is it that we understand everything but are unable to strike an appropriate balance between a realistic state of mind and the world of fascination. The mood swings that the people of this country take are precariously dangerous and based on shifting sands. Is it because what history records is true that the people of India are too naïve and can be easily maneuvered. The politics of cricket and media leadership benefits both, as cricket is big money and big deals for itself and the media.

His ability to compete with himself and to maintain a steady performance needs to be appreciated. His well-balanced persona without any reckless display of emotions or anxiety displays his maturity. And it did!

The famed CNR Rao stands isolated in anonymity for his contributions to chemistry.

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Son-Stroke Politicians

T. H. Chowdary

The UPA-II's move (fortunately aborted by an outburst of Rahul Gandhi against it) to nullify through an ordinance the Supreme Court's judgment that those MLAs & MPs convicted for more than two years of imprisonment should, notwithstanding their appeal to higher courts, cease to be Members of the Legislatures must shock every Indian who still hoped that one day corruption would be contained.

During the struggle for freedom there were great leaders who set examples of noble public life. Acharya J. B. Kripalani and his spouse Sucheta, Jayaprakash Narayan and his spouse Prabhavati Devi, Prof. N. G. Ranga and his spouse Bharati Devi and Puchchalapalli Sundarayya and his wife Leela were great patriots who dedicated their entire life to the freedom of India and for the building of a just society and moral government thereafter. In the 1930s itself, they decided not to have children. The reasoning was that political life was a full-time engagement, they would not have time to bring up their children properly and when freedom comes, if they have children, they might be tempted to acquire wealth for the sake of their children by using their political positions. What a great resolution it was!

Another set of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Tanguturi Prakasam, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari and Morarji Desai were married but they never allowed their children to come into politics. They thought that allowing them to enter into politics would lead to many temptations and many compromises they may have to make to nourish their political ambitions. In fact, some of them have been living in penury and very few know who they are and how they are living. Such was the rectitude and standard that these great leaders set.

In contrast to all these great men, we have the Nehru Dynasty. There was a deliberate effort to build up a Dynasty. Motilal Nehru was a very successful lawyer making huge money. His son Jawaharlal Nehru entered politics. Motilal Nehru got into politics after his son took to politics. Once Mahatma Gandhi exclaimed to Lokamanya Tilak that Motilal made a great sacrifice in the interest of the country by giving up his lucrative law practice; the Lokamanya replied, "Are you sure whether it was the love of the country or love of his son's career that brought Motilal into politics". Motilal Nehru became a top leader of the Congress, a mantle which his son Jawaharlal inherited.

Jawaharlal Nehru did want that his daughter Indira

Gandhi should one day succeed him. At the Nagpur session of the Congress (1962) it was almost decided that Nijalingappa should become the next Congress President. This announcement was to be made by Kamaraj Nadar in Chennai. But in the early night hours, some Congress women were incited to propose Indira Gandhi as the next Congress President instead of Nijalingappa. An emergency working committee meeting, asked for Y. B. Chavan, was called at the instance of Pandit Nehru. Indira Gandhi's name was suggested for the Presidentship of Congress instead of Nijalingappa as already decided by Pandit. At this meeting Govind Ballabh Pant protested and said, "Indu's health is not good. Nijalingappa is alright. He has been in the Congress for a long time and deserves to be the Congress president". Pandit Nehru protested and said, "Indu is alright. There is nothing wrong with her. Her health is not good because she has no work. So she is not well". Once members came to know of Nehru's mind, they fell in line, and it was agreed that Indira Gandhi would be the Congress President.

This is not the first instance when the Nehru Dynasty asserted their authority over the Congress. Nijalingappa writes, "There is still another instance of Nehru's blatantly supporting members of his own family. This happened in 1929. That year Sardar Patel's name was on every body's mind for the Congress Presidentship as he was the hero of the 'No Tax Campaign' in Bardoli. But Pandit Nehru's father, Motilal Nehru went to Gandhiji and insisted that his son Jawaharlal was young and very enthusiastic and it would be desirable that he be made the Congress President for that year. Gandhiji acceded to Motilal's request and ordered Sardar Patel to step down as a candidate for Congress Presidentship and Nehru became the Congress President.

One more attempt of the Dynasty's assertion happened when Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan was the President of India. This is what he told Nijalingappa. One day, Nehru comes to me and wants me "to make his sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit the Vice President of India. I had to tell him, 'you are the Prime Minister of India, your daughter

is the President of the Indian National Congress and you want your sister to be vice president. What would people say? I cannot have it. I put my foot down and sent him away'. (Source for paras 4 to 7: P101 & 102 of the Book, *'My Life and Politics'* by S. Nijalingappa).

And we know that after the short interlude when Lal Bahadur succeeded Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi became the Prime Minister in 1966. So that nobody would challenge her and she could have perfect control over the party, she split the Indian National Congress in 1969 over the issue of Sanjeeva Reddy as the candidate for Rashtrapati. She nominated him but on the sly, she got V. V. Giri put up against her own nominee, Sanjeeva Reddy and got the latter defeated! That was the reassertion of the Dynasty's supremacy in the Congress. She threw out all the elders, calling them the Syndicate comprising Kamraj Nadar, Atulya Ghosh, S. K. Patil, Sanjeeva Reddy and Nijalingappa.

She became the virtual proprietor of the Congress. She renamed the party as Congress (I) ('I' standing for Indira). A class of flatterers flocked to her. Hem Barua was one such who became the President of the Congress (I) before and during the Emergency that Indira Gandhi declared in 1975. Barua sang the song, *Indira is India: India is Indira*. She became his Bharat Mata. After the Emergency, to a question by journalists, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Indira's aunt and Jawaharlal Nehru's sister said "that her family has received more than what it gave to the nation. My father was President of Congress; my brother was President and Prime Minister... I myself was an Ambassador and my niece is now the Prime Minister of India." This opinion was flashed by the press. Indira was shocked and furious. She asked her aunt, "Did you say what was reported in the paper about our family." Her aunt replied, "of course, I said that and that is a fact." From that day onwards, there were no relations between the niece and the aunt.

When Indira died Rajiv Gandhi, her son, while returning from Calcutta to Delhi had on the flight itself said that he would have to take over and he did take over as Prime Minister to succeed his mother. Without the formality of the Congress Parliamentary Party electing him as its leader, he got himself sworn in as Prime Minister. So it was taken for granted in that family that the Prime Ministership belongs to them.

After Rajiv's death, Sonia wanted to give up politics. After Rajiv's assassination, she led the public to believe that she was not interested in politics as she would be busy bringing up her orphaned children in safety and security. But in 1998 she was egged on by the family's

flatterers to take over the Presidentship of the Congress. The story goes that when poor Sitaram Kesari, the then Congress President left his chair to go to the toilet, she was led to occupy the chair and Sitaram Kesari thereafter died of heart attack. Over the years, she contrived to become the unquestioned proprietor of the Congress Party. Just like Indira inducted and groomed Rajiv, Sonia has been grooming the reluctant Rahul for Prime Ministership. She has been the President of the Congress for the last 15 uninterrupted years, a distinction that no Indian, not even Jawaharlal Nehru ever had.

The example set by the Nehrus-Indira-Rajiv-Sonia line is what is followed by other political parties in the country justifying the truth in Lord Krishna's lesson to Arjuna – as the leaders in society act, so will the common people. The standards that the leader sets are what will be followed by others". That is how we have come to have the political dynasties.

Dynastic Politics in Other Parts of India

Rahul Gandhi belongs not only to the Indian class of Dynastic leaders and rulers but also to an international class of hereditary rulers like North Korea's Kim IL Sung and Syria's Bashar al-Assad. Here in India, he has the further distinction of setting the example for Akhilesh Yadav, the son of Mulayam Singh; M. K. Stalin, Azhagiri and Kanimozhi, sons and daughter of M. Karunanidhi; Rabri Devi and Tejaswi Yadav, respectively the wife and son of Lalu Prasad Yadav; Sukhbir Singh Badal, son of Prakash Singh Badal of the Shiromani Akali Dal; Supriya Sule, daughter of Sharad Pawar; Sandip Dikshit, son of Sheila Dikshit, Chief Minister of Delhi and grandson of Uma Shankar Dikshit, a cabinet minister in his time, and Navin Patnaik, son of Biju Patnaik (Chief Minister of Odisha). It is quite obvious that in India, politics is feudalised and all this in the name of Nehruvian socialism, secularism, social justice, aam aadmi, garibi hatao and inclusive growth, all sloganised and popularized by members of the Nehru Dynasty and its flattering flunkies.

This Gandhi Dynasty is particularly fraudulent because, they append the name Gandhi even though they are not related in any way to Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, The Mahatma. The son-stroke is indeed real among the political class in India.

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India and Latin America: The Big Thing in the Making

B. Ramesh Babu

They are discovering that the world is larger than the IMF and the World Bank put together.

Post-cold war globalization triggered revolutionary changes in the strategic, political/ideological, and economic context of world affairs. Inter-National Politics were transformed into Global Politics. With the demise of the Soviet Union, communism (i.e. centrally planned command economy) lost its credibility as a model of development around the world. Capitalism gained ascendancy and ruled the roost for over two decades. However, the early euphoria of globalization eroded rather quickly because the phenomenon in actual practice led to the enrichment of the few at the expense of the poor and the marginalized millions. The steep recession of 2007-2008, which began in the US and engulfed the rest of the industrially advanced western countries (including Japan) soon exposed the inherent contradictions and the essentially cyclical nature of liberal capitalism.

Economic and political decline of the West opened up an opportunity for the expansion of the commercial and economic relations between India and Latin America on a large scale. Close cooperation among the 'Emerging Economies' around the world is a long recognized avenue to counter the inequities inherent in the North-South equation. Liberation from such "dependency syndrome" calls for policy coordination and concerted action on the part of the Third World countries. They need to work closely at the bilateral and multilateral levels with patience and perseverance. This is a complex challenge for India and Latin America in the near and long term future because the embedded complementarities between and among their economies have to be utilized with vigour and nurtured with vision. At the same time many hurdles at the bilateral and multilateral levels have to be ironed out, if the vast potential is to be harnessed in full.

However, South-South cooperation remained more like a good idea rather than an effective strategy in operation on the ground for a variety of reasons. In a short article of this kind it is not possible to discuss the many underlying causes even briefly. For the purposes of this analysis, it is adequate to list the following as the key constraints: the colonial legacy of their integration into the economies of their former masters over centuries, persistence of conceptual colonialism, near total absence

of direct and meaningful bilateral relations among them, and the consequent lack of unity in the Third World countries.

The recession of 2008 and the continuing economic and political decline of the West in an era of globalization and the recent advances in technology and communications enable trade and commerce across the seven seas to overcome the traditional hurdles of inter-continental distances and high transportation costs. There are no direct shipping lines between India and Latin America. Yet, Chile's exports to India were greater than those of Bangladesh or Pakistan in 2007. Thanks to the advances in container technology, Chile's exports included fresh fruits like apples, grapes, and pears!

Far more crucial is the increasing realization that the emerging economies of India and Latin America complement one another to a great extent. The potential is enormous and remains to be tapped enthusiastically and efficiently with an eye on the long-term future. Latin America has vast energy sources and abundant fertile land, which provide opportunities for India to invest in infrastructure and agriculture on a large scale. India is strong in IT and health sectors, which have great scope for expansion in Latin America. India can import raw materials from Latin America (copper from Chile, edible oils from Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, and minerals from Venezuela). In return India can export commodities, technology, financial services, pharmaceuticals, and automobiles.

Like us, the Latin American countries have the advantage of a youthful population ("the demographic dividend"), and a growing and affluent middle class, which is a natural market for our exports (consumer goods, electronics, and automobiles and IT services). Many countries in Latin America see India as a welcome and alternative source of Chinese-style investment in infrastructure, mining, agriculture, and manufacturing, etc. For example, Reliance, Essar, Renuka Sugars, and United Phosphates account for investments in the order of 15 billion US dollars as of 2013. It must however be added quickly that China is miles ahead of us as a player in Latin

American countries. As far as India is concerned, the scope for cooperation in the farming sector is literally limitless. In this context, our recent experience in Africa could be a model to build on.

Mutual Empathy

India's diplomatic tradition of being on the side of the colonial liberation struggles around the world is generally appreciated in Latin America. The country's innate tendency of empathizing with nations and countries wary of global strategic and military ambitions of the US and the West strike a chord with the Latin American people in general and welcomed by most of the governments across the continent. Most Latin American states and India have similar views on Iran, North Korea, Iraq, Libya, and Syria, which are seen as "problem" and "rogue" states by the US and the West.

India "understands" Argentina's claims for sovereignty over Malvinas (the Falkland Islands). Multi-State organizations like BRICS and IBSA launched by "middle powers" across the three continents are devised to counter the western dominance of "global governance." They signify the shifting of the global centre of gravity from the Atlantic to Asia-Pacific. India and Latin American countries have shared stakes in revamping and restructuring of the extant global monetary, banking, and trading system, which is tilted in favour of the western countries. That is why at the recent G-20 Summit in St. Petersburg, Russia, the BRICS Bank, which was conceived as an alternative to the dollar centric global financial order, saw forward movement. The emerging economies need an alternative global financial and monetary system to fall back on, especially in the context of the economic decline of the West. Such a Bank would go a long way in negating the ill effects of the sanctions the US unilaterally imposes on Asian and other nations.

Lessons for India

Latin America has learnt much from the success of Castro's Cuba in defying the 'Colossus of the North' and also taking care of its people despite heavy odds. Chavez's Venezuela and Lula's Brazil in recent times inspire the other Latin American leaders and people to confront American hegemony with hope and confidence. The common people are behind the democratic rise of the continent. Their belief that a better world is possible and their determination to support this goal constitute the foundation of the transformation sweeping Latin America today. The new crop of leaders and their genuinely inclusive politics are proving that capitalism can and must be regulated and kept under control. They are discovering that the world is larger than the IMF and the World Bank

put together. India can and must learn from Latin America at the ideological/pragmatic level as well as from "the best practices" in the actual implementation of social welfare projects. In this context, we can learn much from Brazil's 'Fome Zero' (Zero Hunger) launched in 2003. This has three integrated constituents: Conditional Cash Transfer, School Meals, and Strengthened Family Agriculture. This ambitious programme is considered a success story and is rated highly in terms of transparency and achieving the declared objectives.

In order to realize the potential of the 'new big thing in the making', India has been following the conventional route of forging bilateral trade and investment agreements with as many of the Latin American countries as possible. The External Affairs Minister Khurshid's participation in the India-Brazil Joint Commission meeting in Rio de Janeiro and Vice President Ansari's trip to Venezuela and Cuba last month (October 2013) indicates the importance given to the bilateral approach in our foreign policy.

While this is good in itself, of late, a better and more inclusive multi-state route is being pursued with greater vigour. Multilateral agreements will naturally cover more countries and larger number of areas of mutual interest. Latin America has many such regional and sub-regional international bodies of different degrees of importance. However, their very abundance and their overlapping and at times conflicting agendas pose a delicate challenge to our diplomacy. This dimension and the current state of our bilateral relations with selected major countries of Latin America will be the subject matter of the second part of this article to be published next month.

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Now Foreign Policy too is Paralysed

"With the Congress red flagging Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's participation at the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting out of populist electoral considerations the country's foreign policy has hit an all time low. Under pressure from the DMK as well as ministers within the government, a divided Congress core group has impressed upon the PM not to visit Sri Lanka. This utter capitulation to domestic political sentiment - months before the General Elections - exemplifies an infirm government whose creeping paralysis has affected its foreign policy as well.

**From an editorial in *The Times of India*,
November 11, 2013**

Role of Mukti Bahini in the Liberation War of 1971

Suresh C. Sharma

*You trained our boys, gave them arms and joined in our struggle.
I have no language to express my gratitude.*

– Mujibur Rahman

After the general elections in 1971, General Yahya Khan, the military dictator of Pakistan, declined to invite the majority leader Mujibur Rahman to form the government. Sensing trouble in the law and order situation, Pakistan inducted four infantry divisions into East Pakistan and General Yahya Khan ordered a military crackdown. Mujib was arrested.

Direct air traffic between the two wings of Pakistan, using air space over India, had been ruled out due to hijacking of an Indian Airlines plane earlier. The planes had to fly via Sri Lanka. Chittagong port had to handle twice the cargo shipped before the unrest to meet the requirements of increased military strength. The Pakistan Army was sent to Chittagong to crush the dock labour that declined to unload the arms from the ship MV Swat. Major Ziaur Rahman of East Bengal Rifles [EBR] opened fire on the Pakistan Army soldiers.

Formation of Mukti Bahini

Earlier a large contingent of EBR was embarked to go to Karachi. They protested and the ship had to come back to Chittagong. The thirteen thousand strong East Pakistan Rifles [EPR] also rebelled and killed their West Pakistani officers. There was a general surge of patriotic passion to free themselves from the colonial rule of West Pakistan. Major Ziaur Rahman, later President of Bangladesh, declared independence in a broadcast on 27 March 1971. A Provisional Government was declared on 13 April and Colonel Usmani was appointed C-in-C. Mukti Bahini, a liberation force, comprising EPR and EBR was formed to achieve independence. A large number of students joined the liberation army. The fighting in Chittagong, Saidpur and Kushtiya resulted in a large number of casualties and the Mukti Bahini withdrew to places near the Indian border.

The EPR was employed on border security and the task of EBR was to check smuggling. These paramilitary forces were not trained for conventional war to engage the Pakistan Army. The students who joined the Mukti

Bahini were enthusiastic and keen. Arms and training were provided to them. The emphasis was on quantity and not quality. About one hundred thousand arms were handed over to them. This large quantity of arms without record was to pose a problem for law and order in Bangladesh after victory. The Mukti Bahini established a few posts near the border and had to retreat into Indian Territory when attacked by the Pakistan Army. The local population, particularly, the Hindus suffered great hardship.

The media had depicted the Mukti Bahini as romantic heroes. The story of frightened Pakistani soldiers was unrealistic. The Mukti Bahini's attempt to capture Pakistani posts was a failure. It was not capable of a conventional war and was not trained to wage a guerrilla war. Guerrilla war can succeed only with the active support of the local population. The Pakistan Army inflicted brutal punishment on anyone suspected of providing shelter or food to the Mukti Bahini. The local population did not actively support them even though sympathetic to them. A professor of a medical college was heard saying that he was not sure whether he would come back home alive in the evening after a day's work. Such was the fear created by the Pakistan Army. The Mukti Bahini lacked skills and leadership. A smaller, well motivated and skilled force could have inflicted more damage on the Pakistan Army. Enthusiasm cannot be a substitute for skills. They made exaggerated claims of killing enemy soldiers which could not be verified.

Mukti Bahini's achievements

The major achievement of the Mukti Bahini was to impose a faulty disposition on the enemy. The Pakistan Army had to disperse its soldiers all over the area due to insurgency spreading all over the country. They could not present a strong defence even at critical points. The task set for them demanded contradictory solutions. They had to fight insurgency across the entire country, protect important places, ensure that the freedom fighters did not dominate in the border pockets to declare provisional government which may be recognized by foreign powers and be ready to face a major attack by the Indian Army.

Mukti Bahini managed to keep the hope of freedom glowing amongst the masses and to create apprehension amongst the Pakistanis. When the Indian Army launched operations, the Mukti Bahini's help in providing intelligence, guides, interpreters, repair of tracks and labour for transporting materials was of great value in ensuring quick victory.

Commandos in Riverine Area

Cargo unloaded at Chittagong port had to be ferried to the various cantonments via river transport. The Pakistani Commodore of East Pakistan was concerned about the safety of the river craft and the route that they took. On his persistent demand, a marine battalion arrived at Chittagong. It had not brought any weapons and took rifles from the police and the naval base. Their task was to man the special boat sections, protect vital defence installations and carry out amphibious assaults. After a brief action against the Mukti Bahini near Jaldia, it took up position in Patanga beach and remained there till the surrender.

The Mukti Bahini commandos, called frogmen, comprised of rural and urban proletariat. They were tough physically and mentally and had a burning desire to avenge the atrocities committed by the Pakistan Army. The nucleus of the frogmen was provided by eight sailors who had deserted the Pakistani submarine, Mangro, and a dozen sailors who had been convicted in the Agartala conspiracy case. Three merchant seamen who were Hindus also joined them. Students from various universities joined them. These young men had the stamina and swimming prowess to swim a dozen miles in complete darkness, plant limpet mines breathing through a reed and swim away before the explosion. It was a daunting task even for well trained

commandos. The students had the mental and physical stamina to carry out these tasks and soon assumed the leadership of the frogmen. Their raw courage matched that of the US Seals. The few Hindus who were part of frogmen circumcised themselves to have a better chance of survival if captured. No sophisticated underwater breathing equipment or scuba diving sets were used by them. They continued to wear their lungis and vests. The frogmen selected for a target generally belonged to that area which facilitated intelligence collection.

The tasks of the frogmen were to damage military establishments and neutralize ports to prevent supplies from reaching the military. Additional tasks were to disrupt inland waterways system and prevent the Pakistan Army from escaping via sea routes. To carry out these missions, about 200 frogmen were organized into four task groups. Each group was divided into task elements of three men each. An element carried one or two limpet mines, a rifle and a wrist compass. Over 100,000 tons of shipment was sunk or damaged by them, a unique achievement in the history of similar movements. A coordinated attack was carried out on Chittagong and other ports by 176 frogmen on the night of 15/16 August. The attack on Chittagong was led by a former submariner and a medical student who knew the area well. They carried out reconnaissance during the day moving around with a basket of vegetables on their heads. They selected the targets and then walked upstream. With bamboo reeds in their mouths to act as breathing snorkel, they floated down stream in swimming costumes with the tide ebb and planted limpet mines on two Pakistani ships. The mines exploded after 30 to 40 minutes sending the vessels to the bottom. Similar attacks were carried out in other ports. At Khulna, a frogman was

When Captors Become Prisoners

The 17 Kumaon captured Bhaduria on 11 December 1981 with heavy casualties on both sides and the 340 Infantry Brigade commenced advance on the Pyrganj-Bogra axis. 5/11 Gorkha Rifles [GR] with two troops of PT 76 tanks cut the road South of Gobindganj. The threat from the rear caused confusion among the Pakistani soldiers who fled. 5/11 GR established another road block about two kms south of the bridge on River Ichamati. One platoon of Gorkhas slipped into the position held by the 32 Baluch of Pakistan.

Two Gorkha soldiers entered a dimly lit bunker occupied by the commanding officer [CO], adjutant and medical officer of the Pakistan unit. Both the parties were surprised. The two Gorkha soldiers agreed to share the bunker as prisoners while the rest of the platoon took position around the bunker. The platoon kept on asking for artillery fire which kept the Baluchis at bay. Moreover they did not attack in order not to hurt or kill their own CO. The main battalion crossed the river and formed up to attack before morning. The enemy scattered, leaving their CO in the bunker. The two Gorkha soldiers were free and the CO's party was taken prisoners. The captors had become prisoners.

detected. He claimed to be a fisherman who was swimming to the bank. He was pulled up on board and given tea in the traditions of sailors. He drank his tea and jumped ashore a few minutes before the mine went off.

Hardinge Bridge over river Padma is vital for communications between the North and South parts of East Pakistan. Thirteen frogmen reached this bridge on 30 August and made an unsuccessful attempt to blow it up. Attempts on two successive nights also failed and they gave up the mission as the sentry fired at the boat during the third attempt. Twenty one frogmen were killed in attacks on Pakistani patrol boats. They restricted their targets to underwater operations. Attacks on ships and installations continued in September, October and November. The entrance near the Pusur River was mined and the first casualty was the Greek freighter, Chrysovalendu which was carrying military supplies at lucrative rates. The explosion by mines sent the vessel to the bottom which blocked the navigable channel. Another Greek ship met the same fate. The inland waterways transport system was paralyzed by the guerrilla actions. The UK had dispatched the Aircraft Carrier HMS Bulwark and one destroyer to

evacuate their citizens. They were advised that it may send a wrong signal to the Bangladeshis and the ships turned back from Maldives.

The naval guerrillas had inflicted crippling damage on the East Pakistan ports and held East Pakistan in a state of siege. Only one Pakistani craft PNS Rajshahi managed to escape. It hugged the coast and reached Penang where it was put on board a freighter and transported to Karachi after the surrender. This blockade was achieved without having any ocean going ship. The operations of the Mukti Bahini had serious repercussions on foreign shipping lines. They increased the insurance fees from five shillings to one sterling pound. To this was added additional 20% risk pay for crew. Totally committed to the cause of freedom, they had no political or post-insurrection ambitions and were content to go back to their old way of life. The saga of their courage, heroic deeds and sacrifice has remained untold and unsung.

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Children First Party of India Launched

On October 7, the first shot of what promises to be a protracted war for the hearts and minds of the Indian people was fired at a sparingly attended media conference at the Press Club, Bangalore. The Children First Party of India (CFPI), registered by the Election Commission of India – promoted by your editors after a long and arduous process spread over a year – on August 7, was publicly proclaimed. We have begun a national campaign to enroll 100 million primary members to mobilise a mighty army to lead the betrayed people of free India out of the wilderness of neta-babu socialism, which has reduced the vast majority of citizens to humiliating poverty, ignorance and beggary.

The body of evidence testifying to the beggared status of this high-potential nation is overwhelming. By every yardstick – food intake, clothing, shelter, public education and healthcare, corruption, ease of doing business – India, which less than 400 years ago generated 20 percent of global GDP, is bottom ranked among the world's 20 worst performing economies. And perhaps the most shameful statistics of all are that 46 percent of India's 158 million hapless children under five years age suffer severe malnutrition, and 53 percent of children drop out of dysfunctional

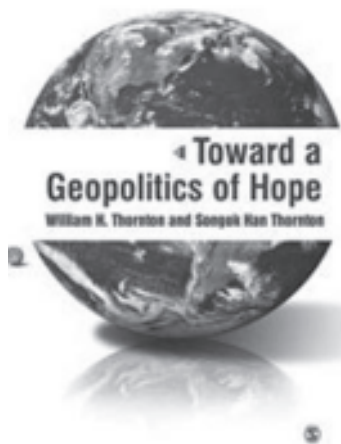
government schools before completing elementary (class VIII) education.

The party's comprehensive manifesto (see www.childrenfirst.in) details a strategy to reduce gender crimes by 75 percent within a year; legislate Anna Hazare's Jana Lok Pal Bill in toto; urgently legislate comprehensive police and justice system reforms; freeze defence expenditure; resolve the long-festered Kashmir dispute while negotiating Indo-China border issues; drastically reform agriculture by integrating it with industry; and release the entrepreneurial drive of Indian business.

All these initiatives are not only possible, but imperative to save Generation Next. Our appeal is to all right-thinking people, and especially the nation's 120 million youth voting for the first time next year, to register as CFPI members. Together it is possible to build a new Second Republic and realise the noble aspirations of Mahatma Gandhi and founding fathers of the Constitution. The quality of your life – perhaps life itself – depends upon deep reflection and firm resolve to make a new beginning. It's a challenge, but also an opportunity.

Dilip Thakore's editorial in *Education World*, November 2013. www.educationworld.in

BOOK REVIEW



TOWARDS A GEOPOLITICS OF HOPE By William H. Thornton and Songok Han Thornton • Published by Sage Publications India, New Delhi • 2012 • Pages 261 • Rs.750

Reviewed by Brig. Suresh Sharma (Retd.), adviser to the telecom industry, freelance writer, and member of the Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. Email: brigscs@gmail.com.

“Civilizations are more likely to die from suicide than murder” - Toynbee.

The authors are members of the faculty, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan and have put forward their

organization – the showpieces of China – may hide the shoddy construction of twenty school buildings which collapsed in the earthquake in Sichuan in 2008 when the surrounding buildings suffered no damage. Interestingly, the people demanding investigation were arrested. China can hide bad news more effectively than an open society like India. Washington’s interest is to promote democracy while China aims to undermine it and suppress human rights.

Economic reforms in Russia and India were ushered in about the same time. These did not lead to liberal democracy in Russia and the hopes of the Russian people for economic uplift were belied when Government’s share of Gazprom valued at USD 119 billion were sold for USD 20 million. The authors’ comments that both the countries shift towards religion is contrary to facts in the case of India and doubtful for Russia. Categorizing BJP as a fascist organization is wrong. Their main difference with Congress has been on the issue of free trade. They stand for true secularism and not merely sops to minorities. One of the important ingredients of a democratic society is a free press. It is so in India. In Russia, Putin’s message was clear. Life expectancy of journalists depended on their reports on sensitive issues. The book makes the usual mistake made by liberals in not appreciating the need for strong action against domestic violence, be it Chechnya or Kashmir.

China is an example of development through political underdevelopment. Enforcement of political silence is called harmony. The blackout of the news of Tiananmen massacre was a complete success. After this event, the share of State in business ventures increased and the number of bureaucrats increased from 20 million in 1980 to 46 million in 2010. Religious groups like the Catholics are not trusted due to their international connections and organizing ability. The weak points of the Chinese economy are land grab by officials, decline in education and health care in rural areas and migrant slums. The country once had almost complete literacy. Today, 30% rural children are illiterate. In Shanghai 170,000 students enrolled in schools in 2010, while three times that many children -

view that globalization or capitalism does not necessarily lead to democracy. Unrestrained capitalism is as likely to magnify conflicts of interest as to diminish them. Intense competition for raw materials is already leading to resource wars. With almost religious faith in the power of market forces to pacify world affairs, the West has largely supported the shift of power to the East by funding authoritarian capitalist regimes. In the recession of 2008-09, the US looked East for a bail out, signifying a paradigm shift. The book makes a plea for political reforms in the RIM countries where economic progress was accompanied by political oppression.

The Cold War was not fought on political front alone. It was fought and won on the economic front as well. The economy of the US has since declined. Will China take up the role hitherto played by the US? The RIM countries desire to be close to the US but are not sure whether the decline in the US economy will permit counter-balancing the Chinese threat. There are attempts on evolving EU-Russia solidarity based on the rise of China.

Charles de Gaulle had commented that “Europe will be united by China.” Even the geopolitically inert Europe got nervous when China demanded that EU governments should boycott the ceremony for award of the Nobel Peace prize to the Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo. The Chinese Vice- Foreign Minister warned that the countries attending the ceremony would have to “bear the consequences.” The ASEAN and Pacific region is also being united by the rise of China. There are weaknesses in the Chinese development. The bullet train and Olympic

570,000 migrant children aged 15 to 19- were unable to attend schools. During the last 20 years, the government paid \$ 326 billion less than the market rate to farmers for acquired land. Social pressure is building up. The authors do not believe in the peaceful rise of China as it is translating the economic power into military might with which her neighbours are certainly not comfortable. China talks against use of military in international agenda, labeling all problems with her neighbours as internal issues.

The popular belief that globalization benefits all trading partners came tumbling down due to US housing bubble. It was fuelled by undervalued imports from China. China did correct the currency value under pressure but increased rebate on exports. China has an advantage over India for attracting foreign capital as China enforces stability. China has been careful not to encroach on Russian influence in Central Asia and US interests in South America. This is not true in the case of Venezuela. China has a strong presence in Africa where its trade touched USD 100 billion in 2010. There have been cases of small Chinese enterprises not paying due wages to labour. There is also resentment against exploitation of natural resources. Due to lack of action by the West, the Chinese model may be the winner in Africa.

China lost its legitimacy over Tibet after the revolt of 1959 and has put down all dissidence harshly. In 2010, thousands of monks rushed to the quake hit Qinghai area to provide relief much before officials reached there. It proved that the Tibetans were not hopelessly backward people and have an independent culture. The Chinese hold over Tibet is secure but is contested globally. In 2009, both the houses of USA passed resolution condemning repression in Tibet. China is aware of the lack of support from the Tibetan population and yet blames India for hosting the Dalai Lama.

Sanctions by the USA helped China acquire influence in Myanmar. China is building a pipeline from the coast to Yunnan and has invested in energy sector. India, Japan and the USA have also invested in Myanmar to counter Chinese influence. China's exploitation of natural resources has created an adverse feeling in Myanmar and the President has cancelled the China-aided Irrawady power project. This measure has been welcomed by the people who resented flooding of villages and large scale displacement while a major part of the power generated would have gone to China. With two hostile neighbours, India has to ensure good relations with Myanmar.

Social priorities are more important than growth in GDP. 800 million people in India continue to live as they did during Gandhi's life time. The trickle-down effect is a

myth. Nehru's non-alignment attracts admiration but in actual practice India was aligned with the USSR. Nehru dynasty has been a beneficiary of the modernization process in India. Another legacy of Nehru is the license raj. The authors display lack of knowledge about the political process in India by relying on utterances of Arundhati Roy.

The harsh reaction by the police is a legacy of the colonial rule. AFSPA is a necessity in combating insurgency. The Western countries had to frame laws for anti-terror operations which earlier we considered draconian. Globalization has brought some miseries on people. In the USA, 5000 plants closed down between 2004 and 2008. Unemployment increased and so did corporate profits. In India, 180,000 farmers committed suicide and industrial jobs declined from 55 million in 2004-05 to 50 million in 2009-10. The trickling effect claimed by the establishment is a myth. In China, rural incomes have declined. China recommends export of cheap products to India as poor people can get items at lower price. The consequences on employment cannot be ignored.

China has kept its ultra-nationalist objectives out of sight. In 2010, RIO was forced to sign a mammoth deal with Aluminum Corporation of China to co-invest in Africa and elsewhere. Such moves are being followed in other countries. China's rapid rise may guide other countries also to follow that model. It would be a mistake to give up democratic process.

The authors conclude by placing emphasis on democratic process and importance of social objectives rather than on GDP growth. They have questioned the claims of China on literacy and rural incomes. India is the most solidly democratic country in Asia and should guard against China's military might. The domestic violence in India is a result of brutal police repression against demands for social justice. Commitment of the people of India to democracy can be seen from the increase in voting from 45% to 70%. The strength of Indian democracy can be gauged by the defeat of Indira Gandhi after the Emergency. A major setback is the rise of regional parties and lack of national vision. Corruption is a serious obstacle to progress. The book brings out the adverse consequences of authoritarian rule and globalization.

Black money is essential to finance elections. Without large expenditure programmes guaranteed to leak, the Indian democratic system would collapse. Poverty and corruption are the twin pillars of Indian democracy. They are sacrosanct. If thanks to them the economy collapses, touch luck.

**Meghnad Saha in his column 'Out of my mind',
The Sunday Express, September 1, 2013.**

Educating Adults

The Right to Education Act (18)

This is eighteenth in a series, examining the various aspects of the Right to Education Act (RTE).

Recognition of Schools

Suresh C. Sharma

*The Government certainly has the authority not to recognize profit making schools.
The Government and the socialist intellectuals want education to be run like a charity.*

Section 1.1 [a] of the Model Rules and Regulations of the RTE Act states that any school run for profit by any individual, group or association or any other persons shall not be given recognition by the Government. It further states that only schools run by a society registered under the Societies Registration Act or Public Trust Act can be recognized. Most of the schools making large profits are registered under the acceptable categories.

These rules suffer from two drawbacks. Firstly, this provision of not making profits has not been included in the main body. It is part of the rules and regulations which are not binding on the states. The states may or may not enforce them. Most of these profit making schools are run by state level politicians or enjoy their patronage. It is unlikely that the state governments will abide by them. Secondly, it has not been clarified how the government is going to deal with the problem and the specific authority responsible for it.

Mushrooming of Budget Schools

A large number of these schools, called budget schools, have mushroomed in slums, small towns and rural areas due to low quality of education in government schools. The entrepreneurs have established these low-fee institutions to meet the demands of the public with low income and high aspirations. The government schools are characterized by crumbling buildings, unsanitary toilets, aversion for English language and chronic absenteeism of teachers. Even the not so affluent parents want to give a good education to their children since it is an instrument

of empowerment and a vehicle for upward mobility in the society. Some of these schools are run by families. The easiest and an economical method to start a school is to hire family members as teachers and administrators.

A typical example is a school up to 10th class in Rajasthan where the head of the family is the headmaster and three teachers out of ten are family members. The institution does not have to pay high salaries and the loyalty of the family members on the staff is assured. They will willingly and enthusiastically cover any vacancy arising from the absence of any staff member. Managements of some of the profit making schools have claimed that Article 19 of the Constitution gives citizens the right to carry out any occupation, trade or business. Article 19.6 places a restriction on specified activities like setting up nuclear energy plants or satellites. Education may not qualify as a business unit but it certainly is an occupation. The Government certainly has the authority not to recognize profit-making schools. The Government and the socialist intellectuals want education to be run like a charity. We have to accept that teachers and administrative staff have to be paid and investment required in infrastructure.

It is difficult to determine whether a school is making profits or not. Further, there is no clause in the Act which disallows schools to charge students for activities like laboratory fees, computer fees and so on. The quantum of charges on these accounts may add up to more than the standard fees. Some of the teachers recommend guide books authored by them or their friends.



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Role of Coaching Classes

Coaching centres are thriving due to the poor quality of teaching at schools. Even students of primary school take private tuitions. This may not necessarily be a deficiency of education at schools but reflects the students' aspiration to move ahead in society. The competition for professional education is severe and students have to work for success right from an early stage. Like budget schools, private coaching has a role to play. For example, the value of private coaching can be seen in South Korea where sixty years ago, most of the South Koreans were illiterate, but today it is the highest in the world. 93% citizens are matriculates. South Korean students have achieved outstanding performance in mathematics

and science. The right course of action should be to employ all available resources to provide a sound education to children and not be guided by ideology.

The UNESCO report in 2001 placed India 105th out of 128 countries in educational development. Budget schools are meeting a need to pull India out of the 105th position. The state of education did not improve even after the government spent over Rs.3 lac crores in the last decade. The enrolment rose significantly but so did the dropout rate.

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Exploring Other Worlds: A Good Idea?

Arvind Ananthanarayanan

Going into space has resulted in many benefits. These include enhanced medicines, improved drugs and technological bonuses that come with space exploration.

On the 5 November 2013, a PSLV C-25 launch vehicle lifted off from Sriharikota at 1430 hrs Indian Standard Time (IST) carrying India's first mission to Mars. With this, India has joined an exclusive club of nations capable of sending probes to other planets. The spacecraft to Mars was launched at a cost of Rs. 450 crores (about 75 million US dollars). In the context of the cost of the mission, there have been several questions regarding why we even have to explore space? Could not the money have been used for better pursuits? Perhaps it could have been used to eradicate hunger or poverty? What exactly has exploration of space contributed? More to the point; is the exploration of space relevant and what do we want to gain from this pursuit? Let us attempt to answer this:

1. Better Understanding of Our Place in Nature and How Special our Earth is

By exploring space, we understand not only how our planet has evolved and more to the point why the earth is the only seat of life we know of. By exploring space and visiting other planets such as Venus or Mars, we can observe firsthand the hostile conditions on these planets. For instance, Venus has a runaway greenhouse effect caused by a thick, choking atmosphere of carbon dioxide and sulphur dioxide that continuously rain sulphuric acid on to the surface of the planet. Moreover, the rain evaporates before it

even falls on the baking hot surface of Venus, which is at a hellish 450°C. The greenhouse on Venus that is the cause of the hot surface temperatures serves as a warning that human-caused greenhouse effects on the Earth can also lead to significant problems.

Where Venus is fire, Mars is ice. Mars has a very thin atmosphere and freezing temperatures. Mars is much less massive (about 1/10th) than the earth. Owing to its smaller size, it does not have a life sustaining atmosphere like the earth. Looking at these worlds lets us know that our Earth is special and we must take care of it.

2. Possibility to Colonize Other Worlds

By travelling to other planets such as Mars, humans can better understand such worlds and perhaps in the future set up settlements on these worlds. These will be the first halting steps in the human quest to venture into space. After all, as a species, venturing into the cosmos is a necessity to ensure the long term survival of our species and also prevent the destruction of Earth through overcrowding.

3. Spin-off Technology

The space programs have always been high

technology endeavours. The technologies developed for space exploration have had several useful implications:

Communications

Satellites have revolutionized the way we send messages and communicate with each other. For example in the 1960s, AT&T and RCA in partnership with NASA began placing communication satellites into orbit. Such satellites are now the backbone of telecommunications, television broadcasting and audio broadcasting. GPS also relies on satellites in earth's orbit.

Environment

At NASA, the launch gantry used for the Saturn 1b launch vehicle was protected from corrosion by a paint that contained polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). PCBs are thought to be carcinogenic and when it was found too difficult to repaint the entire launch gantry, NASA developed an activated metal treatment system; a paste that could be applied to the gantry. The paste binds the PCBs into a harmless compound, while leaving the paint intact. This system has been used extensively in stripping PCB from structures, buildings or objects painted in the past when the effect and health implications of PCBs were not fully understood.

Transportation

Space exploration is directly responsible for the radial tyres that your car probably rolls on. The Goodyear Tyre and Rubber Company used a new fibrous material in their tyre manufacture that is five times stronger than steel, giving it a life greater than a normal tyre by about 10,000 miles.

This high strength fibre was first developed as a parachute shroud material used to safely land the Viking orbiters on the surface of Mars.

High Speed Pumps for Fire Fighting

The high pressure pumps and nozzles designed to bring fuel and oxidizer into a combustion chamber rapidly for rocket propulsion have found an application in fire fighting. The high speed pump technology has been used to make high speed, high pressure turbo pumps to quell large forest fires. These pumps can discharge a high pressure jet of water that can blow out most fires while using less water than conventional hoses.

Memory foams

Have you enjoyed a comfortable night's sleep on a foam mattress? Seen how it moulds itself to your shape? Or have you seen the soft foam saddle on your motorcycle or bicycle? This is polyurethane foam that was first developed to cushion the landing of space vehicles on other planets. For example, the American space craft Mars pathfinder landed the Sojourner rover on the surface of the red planet ensconced in a cocoon of airbags and memory foam.

Food Processing

Astronauts carry all the food they require from the Earth. When doing so, it must be ensured that the food is free from bacteria that can grow in the food and render it unsuitable for consumption. Further, the food must not produce crumbs that will float in the interior of space vehicles and possibly damage internal equipment. A new food monitoring and packing protocol was developed by Pillsbury to address these points and was then used for general food packaging.

Exotic Alloys and Biotechnology

Certain exotic alloys cannot be produced on earth. They can only be produced in zero gravity (this means zero acceleration due to gravity, not no gravity). The realization that such metals can be produced under zero-g conditions has led to a development of exotic alloys of metals of highly different densities such as lead and aluminium.

At the same time, zero 'g' processing of drugs and protein molecules has the potential to lead to cures for cancer and HIV.

So, we see that going into space has resulted in many benefits. These include enhanced medicines, improved drugs and technological bonuses that come with space exploration. We as humans always want to explore and develop. The exploration of space and other worlds is a natural progression of human curiosity. So in a word, yes, it's worth the spend on exploring space. What are your views?

Posted on www.creativespur.com by ARVIND ANANTHANARAYANAN a young scientist and reproduced in *Freedom First* with his permission.

The Cyrus Edict

Aspi D. Moddie

“Cyrus, king of the world, king of Anshan, son of Cambyses, King of Anshan. The great gods delivered all the lands into my hand, and I made the land dwell in peace”

From an inscription on a brick excavated in 1922 in UR, in present day Iraq”

In 1971, the then United Nations Secretary General, U Thant said in a press note, accepting from the Shah of Iran – a duplicate of the original clay Cyrus Cylinder on which was written Cyrus the Great’s edict on the conquest of the city of Babylon, described it as “a historic gift” considering it as an example of “Man’s early attempts to establish peace in the world.” U Thant also observed that in creating the ancient Persian Empire 2500 years ago, Cyrus the Great “displayed the wisdom of respecting the civilizations and peoples whom he unified under his sway. He conquered discreetly, sparing capitals, leaders and officials. His clemency in victory and his understanding of the wishes of the people under his rule were unprecedented in the annals of the ancient near East.” The deduction from the former text inscribed in the clay cylinder portrayed Cyrus, as a “liberator” of Babylonians. It reflected Cyrus “desire to establish peace in his vast empire by allowing its varied peoples to keep their own customs and beliefs.” All plausible remarks reflecting his unique reputation as one of the great liberal rulers in early centuries.

But then the Secretary General concluded: “Since the General Assembly is currently seized with the question of respect for human rights in Armed Conflicts, this ancient legacy could not be more timely”. Was this a clear UN recognition of the general human rights claim of the Shah of Iran? Not so. It was obviously a ploy by the Shah of Iran, a PR policy if you will, to draw attention to “the celebration in Iran of the 2500th anniversary of the foundation of the Persian empire”. The person who presented the Cyrus Edict to the UN General Secretary was the Shah’s sister Princess Ashraf Pahalavi and also the Chairperson of the International Conference of Human Rights held in 1968 in Tehran – a coincidence which naturally lent credence to the Iranian claim of the Cyrus Edict being the first ever on Human Rights. The reputation of the Shah’s regime, and especially that of secret services, hardly supported any claim of the regime in Human Rights

The Cyrus Cylinder is now the property of the British Museum which puts the Cylinder’s date of origin between 539-530 BC. It was discovered in the ruins of Babylon in Mesopotamia (Modern Iraq) in 1879 during a program of excavations by the Museum.

In K. E. Eduljee’s “Zoroastrian Heritage”, the translated portions show a strong emphasis on the god Marduk’s approval of Cyrus as a ‘rightful prince’ looking to the needs of Babylon, with no mention of human rights. The Cyrus Cylinder came out of the British Museum and archive with its promotion by the Shah of Iran since the 1960s as “the world’s first charter of human rights”. This was part of the Shah’s policy to link his rule to the 2500 year monarchy of Iran, going back to Cyrus the Great as its founding father!

The Cyrus Cylinder on loan from the Museum is currently on a nine-month, five city tour of the United States. Reporting this, *Hamazor*, a publication of the World Zoroastrian Organisation, in its Issue number 3 of 2013, reports with satisfaction that this tour of the Cylinder “has created heightened awareness of the thinking, motivations and governance mechanisms of monarchs of ancient Iran in modern day America.”

Freedom First reliably understands that the Cyrus Cylinder will be in Mumbai at the Prince of Wales Museum sometime in January or February next year and give us Mumbaikars the opportunity to see for ourselves the Cylinder and the accompanying objects from Achaemenid Persia.

MR. A. D. MODDIE, is a well known retired civil servant, a senior corporate executive, a historian and author of several books the most recent of which are “*The Failed Mahabharata*” and “*Geo-Strategy in the Realm of the Blind*”.

Pandit Nehru's Unjustified Criticism in Parliament of the ICCF and the DRS

Prime Minister Nehru believes we are in bad company. In the course of his speech replying to the debate on foreign policy in Parliament, he mentioned the Hungarian incident as having "gone into wrong hands" and complained of "intereference" in such matters by associations such as the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom and the Democratic Research Service. He accused these of being merely political organisations comparable to the fronts put up by the communists. According to him, these organisations are "closely associated with the Praja Socialist Party" and they serve "as a convenient handle to run down our government."

The Prime Minister, when he brings down on the heads of small groups of Indian citizens the full weight of his authority and prestige owes an obligation to the country to be properly informed and to get his facts straight. It is a pity that he should have spoken on this occasion in ignorance of the facts. It therefore becomes necessary to enlighten him by a brief recital of these two organisations.

To commence first with the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom, it may be explained that this is the affiliate of the World Congress for Cultural Freedom, a world-wide non-partisan organisation of thinkers, writers, scientists and artists whose object is the defence of intellectual liberties against all encroachments on the creative and critical spirit of man. The headquarters of the organisation is in Paris. Among its Honorary Chairmen and members of its International Executive are men of the highest international renown such as Bertrand Russell, Salvador De Madriaga, Karl Jaspers, Jacques Maritain, Reinhold Niebuhr, Denis De Rougemont, Raymond Aron, Sidney Hook, Ignazio Silone, Stephen Spender and Nicolas Nabokov, its Secretary-General. When some of these gentlemen have visited New Delhi, the Prime Minister himself has been good enough to entertain them at his residence.

Among members of the Executive of the Indian organisation are persons such as Dr. Sampurnanand, Chief Minister of U.P.; Mr. Asoka Mehta, M.P.; Mr. Jaipal Singh, M.P.; Mr. M. Bhaktavatsalam, a Minister in the Madras Government; Mr. Eric da Costa, Editor of *Eastern Economist*; Mrs. Rukminidevi Arundale, M.P., Mr. Laxmanshastri Joshi, Marathi writer; and Mr. V. B. Karnik, a veteran Trade Unionist.

The Indian Committee is an independent body controlling its own policy and it does not accept either instructions or funds from its international organisation beyond the payment it receives for literature supplied and other expenditure undertaken within India for the international organisation. The Indian Committee publishes a literary bi-monthly named *Quest*. It is concerned primarily with the problems of writers, educationists, and other intellectuals and with the maintenance of intellectual freedom. A few weeks ago, it joined the All India PEN Centre (of which Dr. Radhakrishnan, India's Vice-President is the President and

Pandit Nehru the Vice-President) and the Indian Institute for Intellectual and Cultural Co-operation in preparing a Memorandum on the Copyright Bill at present before Parliament and its representatives appeared before the Select Committee, which we are glad to see has accepted several suggestions made by the Indian Committee and the other two organisations for improving the Bill.

Just to show how ridiculous is the suggestion that the Committee exists to run down the Government, it may be mentioned that a year or two back Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan conveyed to Mr. Nehru the unanimous invitation of the Committee to inaugurate its Annual Conference. The Prime Minister, however, excused himself on the ground that it would not be proper for him, in view of the official policy of non-alignment, to identify himself with an international organisation with a distinctive ideological orientation.

In so far as the Democratic Research Service is concerned, it may be recalled that this organisation was established in November 1950 with the blessings of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, then India's Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister. Its purpose has been to contribute towards the education of public opinion in India to a fuller realisation of the need to defend India's national independence and her culture and of the possibilities of social and economic advance through democratic processes. Amongst its purposes also is the combatting of mendacious communist propaganda and infiltration in our national life.

Jayaprakash on D.R.S.

In the course of a press statement issued from Madras, the full text of which was published in only a few papers, Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan has commented as follows on the work of the Democratic Research Service:

"Mr. Nehru has particularly picked out the Democratic Research Service for his wrath. The object of this organisation is not to run down the Government as Mr. Nehru says, but to educate the people of this country in democracy.

"The D.R.S. has done particular service in exposing the dangers and nature of Russian communism, and curiously enough some of its exposures have now been endorsed by communist leaders themselves, such as Khrushchev, Gomulka, Imre Nagy and others.

"Every communist now talks of the 'mistakes' and 'crimes' of the past, but when the DRS talked of them some years back, it was condemned by the communists and by men like our Prime Minister as a fascist organisation or as an organ of foreign imperialism."

The members of the Executive Board of the Democratic Research Service are Mr. Purshottam Kanji, a veteran Congressman and a Gandhian constructive worker, who is also currently Chairman of the Bombay State Industrial Financial Corporation and of the Wage Board; Mr. D. P. Sethna, a senior Solicitor of the Bombay High Court; Mr. M. R. Masani, author and publicist; Mr. L. Sawhny, a business executive; Mr. H. R. Pardiwala, Barrister-at-law.

Among the members of the Advisory Committee of the organisation are Mr. Purshottam Trikundas, who was a member of the Indian delegation to the U.N. a couple of years back; Mr. Rohit Dave, editor of *Janata*; Prof. Anant Kanekar, Marathi writer and educationist; and Mr. J. B. H. Wadia, a film producer.

The Democratic Research Service has, apart from routine activities such as meetings and the publication of *Freedom First*, published a series of pamphlets, among the latest of which are *The Truth About Stalin*, which contains the full text of Khrushchev's secret indictment of Stalin. Other titles are *Chinese "Panchsheela" in Burma*, *How We Took Over Hungary* by Matyas Rakosi, *Why Communism Must Fail* by Bertrand Russell and others.

The organisation has also made available for the information of the Indian Government, press and public, the text of secret documents relating to the Madurai and Palghat sessions of the Communist Party of India, which have been quoted with approval by Congress Ministers in more than one State.

At the time of the Andhra election campaign, the DRS, at the invitation of the AICC Secretariat "prepared a series of leaflets which were widely used by the Andhra Congress organisation, who expressed their appreciation for the co-operation they had received from the Democratic Research Service.

It will thus be seen that the organisation has endeavoured, with the limited resources it possesses, to carry out its purposes. It does not "run down" the Government of India, nor is it primarily concerned with governmental policies. When – as in the case of Tibet, Hungary, or the glorification of Bulganin and Khrushchev during their visit to India – it has been felt that the policy of the Government has been such as to give comfort to international communism and unwittingly to aid its activities in this country, the Democratic Research Service has exercised its democratic right to criticise such policies.

The Democratic Research Service functions openly and says publicly what it feels on issues as they arise; its views and its activities are open for all to see and to assess.

The funds of the DRS are wholly raised within this country and none of them come from foreign sources or organisations. Our first Honorary Treasurer was Mr. Shantilal Shah, at present Education Minister in the Government of Bombay, who resigned because of his taking up a Cabinet appointment. The present Honorary Treasurer is Mr. N. R. Modi, a member of a respected firm of auditors. We do not disclose the names of our donors so as to protect them from vituperation from communist journals and harassment by the communists

and trade unions controlled by them. But our funds come from the same patriotic sources from which the Congress Party obtains its contributions. If the Prime Minister cares to ask Mr. Dhebar, the Congress President, to satisfy himself on this score, we shall be glad to open our books to him after obtaining our donors' permission, which we feel confident will be given.

In the present world crisis, we have equivocally condemned in a public meeting in Bombay, aggression both in Egypt and Hungary. We are thus in the good company of the vast majority of the members of the U.N.

In so far as Hungary is concerned, we find ourselves in the company not only of the respected individuals in India and abroad whose names have been mentioned above, but of millions of decent human beings who have been outraged by the brutal massacre of thousands upon thousands of Hungarian men, women and children, whose only crime was the desire for freedom and their resistance to communist tyranny. We are in the company of Habib Bourgiba, Prime Minister of Tunisia, who has indicted Russia for "waging a pitiless war against a weak country", and of Mohammed Natsir, Masjumi leader of Indonesia. We are in the company of 123 members of the South Vietnam Legislative Assembly who paraded through the streets of Saigon wearing mourning white in sympathy for Hungary, and of Hugh Gaitskill, the British Labour Party leader who handed to the Soviet Ambassador in London a statement denying the lies with which Bulganin's apologia was packed. We are in the company of the people of Denmark who expressed their anguish by five minutes of silence. We are even in the company of Jean Paul Sartre, till recently a consistent fellow-traveller; of the Budapest correspondent of the *Daily Worker* who threw up his job in disgust, and of Pietro Nenni, fellow-travelling Italian socialist, who has now returned his Stalin Peace Prize.

We apologise to our readers for inflicting on them, this recital of facts; but we think it is due. For many months now, the Democratic Research Service has been the victim of vilification and slander at the hands of the Communist Party weekly *New Age* and the yellow crypto-communist journal *Blitz*. All kinds of fantastic nonsense has been published by them but, in view of the colour and character of these journals, we have treated these babblings with the contempt they deserve.

It is distressing for those who are engaged in this work only to protect the free institutions this country enjoys and the democratic values on which our Constitution is based to be attacked by the Prime Minister of our country for doing what we consider to be in the national interest. We are therefore consoled to know that, in the course of a tribute to the work of the DRS, Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan has reminded the Prime Minister that "there are other men in India who love their country no less than he does and whose integrity of character is unquestioned."

What you have just read are excerpts from the comments in *Freedom First* in its issue No.56 of December 1956. You will find the full text of these comments and more in our archives – www.freedomfirst.in

A PICTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Narendra Modi's public rallies draw mammoth crowds each time. The sheer scale of these gatherings boggles the imagination. As the images below demonstrate, this is one aspect of Modi's public appearances that goes largely unmentioned in mainstream media accounts.



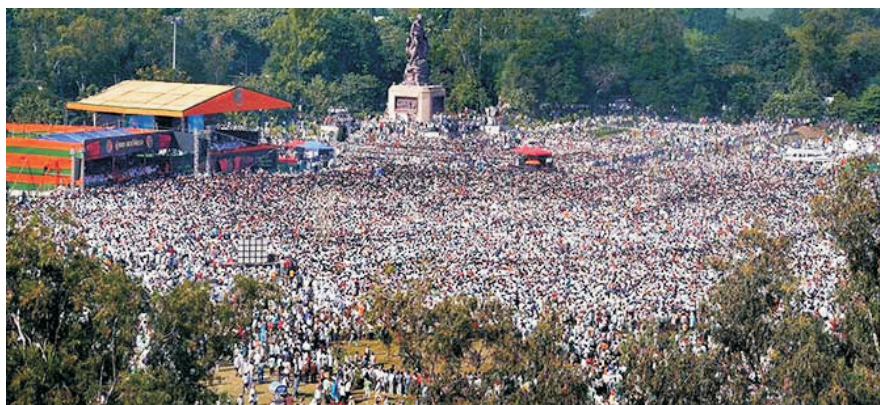
Mumbai



Rewari , Haryana



Hunkaar, Patna



Tamil Nadu



Delhi



Jaipur



Udaipur



Bhopal