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Freedom First

The Liberal Magazine

S.V.RAJU

1933-2015

**THE LONE
WARRIOR**



Dear Subscribers,

The untimely demise of *Freedom First* editor, Mr. S. V. Raju has left a deep void. He almost single-handedly managed to publish the monthly over the past few decades. Now due to the paucity of financial and personnel resources, it is no longer possible for the Indian Committee for Cultural Freedom to continue with the print edition. We appreciate that *Freedom First* readers will miss holding the physical journal, but we have to come to terms with the harsh realities of the day.

Freedom First will continue online. The past issues and archives of *Freedom First* can be accessed on our website, www.freedomfirst.in. A twin DVD pack of *Freedom First* and Quest's archives can be obtained from *Freedom First* office.

The Publishers

Freedom First

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In this issue ...

We dedicate this issue to our dear editor, S. V. Raju. As most readers would know, Mr. Raju was associated with the journal for many decades. This was not his job or a time-pass. This was his passion, his baby which he would cradle in his arms month after month when the bundle of the journal was brought by the printer to our office.

The glowing tributes paid to him bring out varying aspects of Mr. Raju's personality – simple and humble by nature, but not to be easily cowed down especially for causes which were close to his heart. Restless at times when things were not moving in the direction they should, he never gave up hope for a better future for the country.

And finally, like any other person, Mr. Raju was a family man, the doting husband and the caring father. His son Vivek shares with us a few events from their life. He is indeed "The Complete Man".

Our regular contributor on economic issues, Mr. Sunil Bhandare recounts the hitches slowing down the economy and offers some pointers for unhindered progress. Prof. Ramesh Babu simplifies for us the continuing conflicts between China and its neighbours in the disputed Spratly Islands and the role of the US in this fracas.

In our "Educating Adults" section, Mr. Firoze Hirjikaka's piece on Life and Death awakens the readers to the true meaning of a life well-lived. We also have Prof. R. W. Desai suggesting some examination reforms, while Mr. Cecil Parker's light-hearted banter will bring a smile to your face.

Among the two book reviews, we have Mr. Raju's last authored book published in November 2014 and Mr. Ashok Karnik relates in his book, his views as a part of the Intelligence community.

Information about the online edition will eventually be available on our website www.freedomfirst.in.

RS

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Truly, The Complete Man

Vivek Raju

Most readers of *Freedom First* as well as those associated with my father, S. V. Raju through his work will know him for his clear and astute insights into the world of political and social action. I shall not dwell on these as for the past four decades he has spoken and written about it extensively. I leave it to other tributes to him in this magazine to refer to his intellectual attainments. Rather, I would like to introduce you to a side of him, and perhaps a much larger one for us at home, that would complete the picture of the man you would have known as Raju. To us he was Dad.

So let's start with his name. Whether you were just out of college or an octogenarian, he liked all to call him 'Raju'. He was not one for the formality of being Mr. Raju. But he was not born 'Raju'. In his early 20s he changed his name officially to Raju since all his friends and people who knew him called him that. It just made sense to him to change it to that and not hold on to the identity given by his family. And most who know him will attest to this simple fact – that he was a friend first above all else.

Family was a non-negotiable element of his life. It was his security net. And the reason for this goes back to his early years. He was born and brought up in Bombay. He was the only child (his sister before him had died when she was just a year or so old). His Mother passed away when he was 4. He thought the world of his Mother who was a linguist. Within a few years his father remarried and his life took a turn for the worse for a few years before he finally broke down before his grandmother during one of his annual trips to his grandfather's home in Coonoor. Her directive was immediate. He was thereafter to be in the care of his uncle, who also lived in Bombay. Dad was 9 then, and for the next decade and more he lived with his uncle as one of a family that included 5 cousins. He shared close bonds with his cousins and his growing years with them took him through school and college. It was during this period that Dad was also exposed to the booming social and cultural scene in Matunga when he probably developed his uncanny ability to size up people from all walks of life who drifted in and out of his uncle's home. I also remember him telling me that he used to accompany his two cousins for Bharatanatyam practice. His knowledge and love of this dance form grew from here. This experience of not having his own mother bringing him up shaped his deep need to have a family and home

he could call his own to protect and nurture with love and care.

The story of his home and family, therefore, is at the very heart of who he was. And no story of Dad can ever be complete or have any depth of meaning without his relationship with Mom. She was Kumud to him among other terms of endearment. It is this relationship that was the backbone of all his intellectual and other attainments. This relationship allowed him to explore and pursue a vigorous work life and yet have an unshakable security net. No matter where he went or what he did, there was always Mom and home to come to. And the start of their tale is right out of the pages of a romance novel! Dad's first job was in Garlick and Co. By then he had moved out from his uncle's home to a dorm in Sodality House in Byculla. He travelled by tram and drew Rs. 15 / month. He then moved to work with another of his relatives in the area of labour relations. Here he dealt with unions and this is how he met Mom. He fell ill and was admitted to KEM where he met this fiery, gregarious, confident and highly intelligent nurse. She looked after him and the rest is history. He was a Tamil Brahmin and she a Protestant Christian. Their respective religions did not matter to either of them. Throughout his life he would shun all ritualistic tradition. But traditional he was. He remained an unapologetic Hindu. He loved mythological movies and TV serials. But I digress. Dad and Mom got married in 1961 and a small party was arranged by his two close friends – George Dewaji and V.P. Bhatia, who were his roommates at Sodality House. Marrying my mother got him a whole new family of 8. His mother-in-law thought the world of him and treated him as the eldest son. He shared a particularly strong bond with my eldest aunt Kusum or Akka (elder sister) as we all call her. Akka, who lives in Toronto, was instrumental in getting my Dad and Mom together and played a steady role throughout his life. Another of his close associations was with Dr. S.P. Aiyar who was a professor of political science at the Bombay University. It was at Dr. Aiyar's insistence that Dad applied and got a small 350 sq. ft. house as part of a Housing Board scheme on the then outskirts of Bombay near Chembur. He moved in with Mom, two mattresses and a kerosene stove. From this very humble beginning he built his home with much love, attention and care. He would live here for the rest of his life.

The love and affection between them lasted till his very end. He doted on her. Till the very last days when he returned from office, he would always carry something savoury for her. And there was always music at home. He loved a variety of music be it old film music played through the Binaca Geet Mala, Chaaya Geet or even the beauty of classical Carnatic violin. In fact he had a good voice and played the harmonica. Dad loved watching movies – Bond movies, old English, Tamil and Hindi classics, Amitabh Bachchan, new wave, etc. He would often regale us with anecdotes of slipping away from school to catch the latest Douglas Fairbanks or Errol Flynn movie running as a morning show at the nearby Aurora Theatre. I still remember with some envy seeing him laugh till he cried watching a Tamil comedy on TV. He had an excellent eye for sarees and the collection that Mom has was put together by him. Whichever corner of the country he went to, he would bring back the local specialty saree. However what he loved doing most was to read. When he was growing up and with all that was happening in his life, books were his best friends. They revealed a world to him that was beyond his existing, limiting condition. He was extremely well read, had a wide repertoire of taste and remained a voracious reader right through his life.

By the time he was married he was well entrenched in the Swatantra Party. To me there were two distinct happenings that shaped Dad. The first one was his childhood experience that shaped his character. In spite of his difficult childhood he never got cynical nor did he get consumed by blind ambition to be successful in the ‘traditional’ sense – money, material comforts etc. ‘Simple living but high thinking’ typified his life. In 1959 when, against several odds, he got the position of Executive Secretary of the Swatantra Party his resolve to be more than just a clerk, as some astrologer had told him he would become, would come to fruition. This was the second big happening and this shaped his intellectual life. At just 26 being in the presence of Rajaji, Minoo Masani, Narayan Dandekar, Sir Homi Mody, N.G. Ranga, Maharani Gayathri Devi and a whole host of other intellectuals had a tremendous impact on him and this experience gave him his *raison d’être* for the rest of his intellectual life. Of course his biggest influence was Minoo Masani for whom he had great affection and thought of him as having the highest level of integrity and clarity of thought.

In 1963 he had his first taste of fatherhood when I was born. He was very keen to have a daughter but as fate had it he had two sons! The story goes that when I was to be born he was electioneering in Rajkot for Minoo Masani. When he saw me he said I measured the length of his fingers span (I was born premature by many weeks)

and ‘looked like a rat’! He took off immediately after I was born but not before writing on a small sheet of paper the time of my birth. A few years ago he gave me that paper for my safe keeping. Three months later he got back from the elections and was stunned. I had tripled in size and when he picked me up he dropped me! Thankfully my Uncle’s lap cushioned the fall. My Mom told me that he would sit hours at a stretch with me cradled between his locked legs looking at me with dotting eyes. It seemed that he finally had something he could call his very own!

It’s difficult to capture my relationship with him through a single descriptor. He was much, much more than just a father, a guide or a friend. He was, above all else, a good human being. He gave both my brother Vinod and me much love and affection. I remember when we were driving back after a month long road trip to Kanyakumari and back (he loved to drive) we were on the outskirts of Poona and he turned around to go back to a Military School because I was keen to become an Air Force pilot. He did not hesitate to go along with my desire. I was all of 9 years. Of course I got into the school and spent a year there before being sent back home due to intense homesickness! Then there was the other time when for the first time he saw me playing a cricket match. I was in my 12th grade and he had fully supported my love for cricket from school itself. I was playing a quarter final of the inter-collegiate tournament at Matunga Gymkhana. He was to pick me up on his way from work after the match but I did not know then that he got there early and watched me play. In the car he told me that he did not realize I was ‘this good’. He later, without my knowledge, called his friend in London and in a few months time I was the ecstatic owner of a Duncan Fearnley bat. He supported both me and my brother in all our endeavours. And while he rarely imposed his will there were times when he did so but gently.

In my early 20s we were at loggerheads with each other. I was drifting and he, like any father, wanted me to make something of my life. In this situation of intense conflict I decided to write him a letter stating my position and how he was not being very understanding and supportive. I slipped this letter into his bag one morning. That evening he spoke to me on the way back in the car and said “I got your letter. You know son, you write really well when you are angry!” It just deflated the entire situation and communication flowed after that. He also valued my relationship with my brother. Whenever I came down to Bombay from Bangalore, which is where I have now made my home, he would always encourage the brothers to have their own space. He never got involved in our conversations or other activities unless we asked

him to. He gave each one of us the freedom to pursue our choices without the pressure of expectations from him. When in 2001 I decided to quit a lucrative Corporate career to work with non-profit organizations, he supported me fully. Freedom was truly First for him. And it was precisely this non-interfering nature that led to our family being so closely knit.

How is one to encapsulate an entire lifetime in a few pages without mentioning so many with whom he shared rich and extremely vibrant relationships? My intent, however, through this brief article, was to leave behind the essence of the man people knew as Raju that was beyond his work and intellectual life. There was so much more to him than just Freedom First, Swatantra Party, liberalism or politics. He was a terrific listener, primarily

because he had that rare quality of listening without judgment. People naturally gravitated to him for advice. Of course when it came to his principles on liberalism etc. he came from a stronger, more defined position. On several occasions he told us that he generally ‘followed his nose’ in taking decisions. It was obvious that life’s energy ran through him with great force. He lived a full life with great heart and integrity and respected the individuality and needs of other human beings. I guess most people would say that he was passionate about politics and liberalism. But I would like to put it differently. He was a passionate man and that passion ran through all that he loved to do. As I look back and attempt to capture an entire lifetime with him, I can say, that to me, he was truly, The Complete Man.

S. V. Raju: A Political Rishi

Nitin G. Raut

Singanallur Venkatraman Raju, popularly known as S. V. Raju took to politics like a duck to water. He was Executive Secretary of the Swatantra Party since its inception in 1959 upto 1974.

As a student of Khalsa College in Mumbai, he took a ‘right turn’, literally and figuratively, in Indian politics at a time when leftist ideology and radicalism was more a fashion purporting to be a sign of ‘progressive’ politics. But what in common parlance was called ‘right wing’ politics was for him the path of distilled liberal democracy which was his guiding star, and coincidentally was also the election symbol of the Swatantra Party.

Therefore, it was not surprising when at the age of 26, he was appointed Executive Secretary of the fledgling Swatantra Party founded in 1959 by political luminaries and statesmen like C. Rajagopalachari, Minoo Masani, Sir Homi Modi, K. M. Munshi, V. P. Menon and R. G. Ranga.

The formation of the Swatantra Party was itself a historic landmark in the landscape of Indian politics awash with socialism – a word open to interpretation or rather misinterpretation – and was a passport for the illiterate political leadership to throttle liberal democracy, squander public money on uneconomical and unviable public enterprises designed on the disastrous Soviet Union model which Nehru pompously called ‘temples of modern India’. It was a path that ensured economic ruin and political chaos till 1992, when faced with inevitable bankruptcy and

sovereign defaults, India reluctantly opened its economy which more or less amounted to adopting the Swatantra economic policy, albeit in a limited way.

The impending economic collapse was foreseen by the Swatantra stalwarts. Swatantra liberal ideology – touted as capitalist by the ignorant – was precisely meant to abort this economic disaster. If the likes of Rajaji and Masani provided exemplary political leadership, it was Raju, who worked tirelessly behind the political battle-lines to provide invaluable administrative support for the smooth functioning required for a political party. He was indeed the unsung and unheard hero and lifeline of the Swatantra Party.

In the 1967 Lok Sabha elections, the Swatantra Party bagged 44 seats (the highest in its short lived history) and also formed a coalition government in Orissa with Utkal Congress. When Raju as Executive Secretary visited Orissa, he hired his own private transport and stayed in hotels at party expense. He even called ministers to the Party office to discuss Party matters. Not for him the government paraphernalia of cars and guesthouses, much less cars with beacons. He was never the one to succumb to the temptations of political power which could have been his for the asking. It was Rajaji’s belief that government money was for the welfare of the people and not for Party work even if the Swatantra was in power. He adhered to Rajaji’s advice out of conviction and faith. He firmly believed in value based politics; truly an odd

man out in Indian political and public life.

In 1971, flush with the Bangladesh war victory, the Indira Congress ordered snap polls. The Swatantra Party faced with a cash crunch called for a meeting to raise funds. Raju assured to contribute his mite. Unknown to the leaders, certain funds were still intact of which Raju was the sole custodian! In a way, he was also to become the moral custodian of Swatantra assets. When a section of the Swatantra Party was hijacked by the likes of Piloo Mody to merge with the Charan Singh led Bharatiya Lok Dal, the Maharashtra Swatantra Party, under Raju's headship refused to merge. It was Raju's undying hope that it would form the nucleus of a future liberal party, and retained the Maharashtra office premises while the national headquarters were lost.

Raju's equation with Minoo Masani is another facet of his intellectual integrity. Both had fiery debates and arguments, but on policies, issues, principles and ethics in public life, both had a healthy respect for each other and complemented each other. If Raju was Masani's confidante, it was because of his moral courage to call a spade a spade. This was mutual. Masani would never have trusted a sycophant or a 'yes' man. At a felicitation dinner held on Masani's 90th birthday at the Royal Bombay Yacht Club, Masani called Raju "an able political administrator", indeed a glowing compliment.

In the late 1980s, the ideal of a liberal party was rekindled when Shetkari Sanghatana of Maharashtra, which shared the same philosophy with Raju, formed the

Swatantra Bharat Party. Though he initially guided the formation of the party, he did not become a member as the Election Commission (EC) had made commitment to 'socialism' and 'secularism' a condition precedent for registration of a political party with the Election Commission. Raju challenged the constitutional validity of the EC's diktat by way of a writ petition and the same is pending in the Bombay High Court. Socialism being the antithesis of all that liberalism stood for, Raju refused to submit to the 'diktat'. Here is a living testimony to Raju's uncompromising commitment to liberalism.

Raju was pragmatic to the core and dropped the idea of a liberal party when the Swatantra economic policy of free market economy was, at least partially, embraced by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao in 1992, albeit under compulsion, and concentrated on Freedom First. In a way this also justified the Swatantra philosophy of a liberal free market economy as the only viable economic model for prosperity and job creation. Thereafter, Raju made Freedom First a voice of liberalism with a zeal and commitment that was the defining manifestation of his abiding faith in liberalism.

At a personal level, Raju led a simple and unpretentious life in a modest two and half room in a MHADA residential colony in the distant north-east suburb of Chembur with his family. He was a political rishi; simple living and high thinking. The only other person I can recollect who was inspired by such ideals and had a voracious appetite for public service was M. R. Pai.

Raju Lived for a Cause

Y. Sivaji

Dying for a cause in a fit of emotion is one thing. Dedicating one's entire life for a cause, however, is altogether another. It calls for passion, dedication and discipline. It is to the latter category that Mr. Raju belongs.

My memory takes me back 60 years. Raju in his twenties reached Bombay from down south to eke out a living and joined as executive secretary of the newly born Swatantra Party in 1959. Rajaji founded the party in which Ranga and Minoo Masani were the President and the General Secretary. Masani entrusted Raju in his formative years with the responsibility of running the back office. In the Fort area, in the heart of south Bombay, the Swatantra Party office was located at 143, M. G. Road, just

opposite Army and Navy Building at 148, M. G. Road where Masani's office of Personnel and Productivity Services was housed.

During the early 1950s, Communist ideological propaganda was sweeping the nation and Sardar Patel asked Masani to do something to counter it. Masani replied that he could do so if he had a place to sit and Rs.5,000 to run the show. Sardar Patel ordered Morarji Desai, the then Chief Minister of composite Bombay State, to acquire a place under the rent control law and offer Rs.5,000 to Mr. Masani to start this mission. With that petty amount, Masani brought out innumerable booklets on liberal philosophy and launched *Freedom First*, a monthly magazine. Raju took on the editorship of the magazine in 1985.

I came in contact with Raju as a medico of Guntur Medical College in the mid-sixties. Since then, I have maintained my friendship with him. I attended the National Executive Committee meeting of the Swatantra Party in Lucknow in 1974 following its debacle in the 1971 Lok Saba elections. Masani stepped down as President of the Swatantra Party and Piloo Mody succeeded him. Though he was about to be relieved by the end of the month, Raju worked with all his energies at the meeting in Lucknow. Raju guided us on the agitation against the 17th amendment to the Constitution during 1963-64 as well as the historic Jai Andhra movement of 1972-73.

When the Swatantra Party was merged with nine other parties to form the Bharatiya Lok Dal, Masani and his associates including Raju opted out. While we differed on this, our friendship continued. A very important trait of Raju's personality was his humility. Even though he dealt with stalwarts in the Swatantra Party, I found him to be very humble. He knew his limitations. That is the reason he always worked in the back office without exposing himself to the public domain.

In 1977, soon after the general elections, Raju co-authored with Dr. S. P. Aiyar, a voluminous book *When the Wind Blows*. He was so affectionate as to refer to me in his book.

Whenever I happened to be in Mumbai, I made it a point to spend some time with Masani, Pai, Nani

Palkhivala and Raju. Raju was always a source of inspiration. Under his guidance, we organized several workshops on subjects like education, agriculture and liberalism at Guntur, Vijayawada, Tirupati, Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Chennai and Coimbatore.

In 2004, Raju encouraged us to conduct a meeting at Guntur on agriculture and rural indebtedness. Mr. Dinesh Chandra, former Secretary of banks was invited. The meeting recommended that the Government of India waive farmers' debt. Our recommendation and continuous efforts resulted in the Government of India waiving debts to the tune of Rs.65,000 crore in 2008. This would not have been possible without Mr. Raju's perseverance.

I met him last in February this year at the seminar on 150th birth anniversary of Gopal Krishna Gokhale.

The unerring prophesy of Rajaji, Minoo Masani and Ranga on liberalism has come true with the entire nation embracing it for the last 25 years. Unfortunately, they were ahead of their times. Some of those who profess LPG (liberalization, privatization and globalization) these days are doing so only by compulsion and not by option. If conditions suit them, they will not hesitate to abandon LPG like a hot potato. Raju may be ruminating over the visionary thinking of stalwarts like Rajaji, Masani and Ranga in his Heavenly abode. He was a loner who carried the cause of liberalism till the end.

Dr. Y. Sivaji, former Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha

Memories of S. V. Raju

Sharad Joshi

I strained my memory as much as I could but still I have difficulty in remembering when I met Mr. S. V. Raju in the first place. Later on I have seen him at so many places in so many roles but I really don't remember where I saw him first. But, if my memory is correct, I think, I saw him first when he came to Ambethan driving from Mumbai on his own with his lieutenant Mr. L. R. Sampat and a bagful of documents and literature of the Swatantra Party and Mr. Minoo Masani's "Open letter to my younger friends" in January 1994.

In 1991 some of the members of our Shetkari Sanghatana contested the Maharashtra State Assembly Elections on the symbol of the Janata Dal; five of them won. Shetkari Sanghatana advocates the system of free economy right from its beginning. In the period of

association with the Janata Dal, our MLAs gradually realized that the Janata Dal does not support the system of free economy. So, in 1993 the five MLAs separated from the Janata Dal and formed an independent group in the Assembly. To strengthen our fight for farmers' freedom by political representation, we were in search of a party that is truly liberal and, side by side, were preparing to form one. In this process I remembered Rajaji's Swatantra Party that had challenged Jawaharlal Nehru's socialism effectively in the 1960s. We searched whether the party was still in existence. One of our MLAs found that Mr. S. V. Raju, under the blessings of Mr. Minoo Masani, had kept the seed of Rajaji's Swatantra Party alive to be planted in a suitable fertile field whenever it is found.

And that made Raju rush to Ambethan in January

1994. The Shetkari Sanghatana was doing quite well at that time. We had already worked out its basic philosophy. The one stumbling block was who was to fix the agricultural prices. We could not trust any government body to fix them. The only solution was the open market; in the open market, the equation that the average cost is equal to the average revenue provides the best estimate of the cost of production. It was in this rugged way we became free marketists.

The Swatantra Party had practically perished for various reasons. It was Raju's privilege to preserve its seed and plant it wherever it is possible in various forms and organizations established and promoted.

I was fairly articulate in putting down all that I said when Raju and Sampat first came to Ambethan. I argued my case fairly strongly and, I think, Raju was quite impressed. One thing he appreciated about Shetkari Sanghatana was that, while Swatantra Party had seen stalwarts like Rajaji, Minoo Masani, N. G. Ranga, they were all loners while Shetkari Sanghatana had, on number of occasions, gathered masses of five to six lakhs.

As a first step, Raju arranged to publish a collection of my articles titled Answering Before God through the Project for Economic Education (PEE) of which he was the Executive Director. At the same time he helped us in organizing a meeting of Swatantra Bharat Movement, the founding gathering of Swatantra Bharat Paksha (SBP) on 28th May 1994 at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, in Mumbai where Minoo Masani was present, thanks to Raju. At that meeting, Advocate Ram Jethmalani could not agree with us on the exact meaning of the word socialism – inclusion of which we tried to oppose in the Preamble of the Constitution. Jethmalani was of the opinion that socialism could be interpreted in hundred and one ways and we should not insist on a strict rigid interpretation.

After this meeting I visited Raju's office in Sassoon Building in the Fort area. Before the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan meeting Raju assured himself of the mass support to the Shetkari Sanghatana by attending a farmers rally on the 8th May 1994 held at Akola (Vidarbha) by the Shetkari Sanghatana.

Raju was present at the Nagpur Convention of the Shetkari Sanghatana held in November 1994 where the Swatantra Bharat Party (SBP) was formally founded and the decision to contest Maharashtra State Assembly elections under SBP was taken.

Raju did not flee away by just planting the seed at Nagpur. He also helped us in contesting the Assembly

elections in 1995 under SBP by doing all the office work that a secretary of a party is expected to do. Both Raju and Sampat guided our new born party. We had issued an appeal to over 200 people requesting them to join the party. Unfortunately, many of them agreed initially but later on, for one reason or another, walked out. We had used the publicity material and the cartoons that Raju had prepared for the Swatantra Party, which were greatly useful for the purpose. We lost the election but were determined to keep the flag of free economy flying.

I have seen Raju in so many roles. He was convener, Indian Liberal Group, Executive Director, Project for Economic Education, Editor, *Freedom First*, and many others. It was on Raju's insistence with the Friedrich Naumann Foundation that I represented the Indian Liberal Group at the meeting of the International Liberal Organization held in Germany.

Raju always had a deep sense of affection for me. He valued the quality I had of gathering masses. He tried to supplement this by exposing my views to non-agrarian sectors. He helped us in organizing a workshop on Economic Reforms and Agriculture at Pune in November 1995 where renowned economists including the then finance minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh were present.

Later on, when I was MP in the Rajya Sabha, he continued to show keen interest in what I was doing and writing and would specifically ask for my articles ranging from subjects like euthanasia to women's reservation bill (where I was the only MP to vote against the bill a fact which Raju appreciated), as also my proposed amendment to the Constitution that the word socialism be removed from the Preamble of the Constitution. In fact, the SBP had also faced difficulties in registering itself as a political party owing to this provision in the Preamble.

I do not know in what way I will be able to repay Raju's affection and kindness for me.

Sharad Joshi, farmers' leader and Founder of Shetkari Sanghatana.

We are losing this older generation who are the embodiment of rare qualities. I also get the feeling as if pearls are slipping out of a necklace.

Geeta Luktuke

S. V. Raju: A Personal Tribute

Minoo Adenwalla

In 1967, as a member of the Lawrence University faculty, I was awarded an Associated Colleges of the Midwest Research Grant, funded by the Ford Foundation, to spend a year, in India, to study the Swatantra Party. The eminent Rustom Cooper, then Treasurer of the Party, introduced me to Raju, who was Secretary of the Party, at its Mumbai Headquarters. Russi told me that Raju's help would be invaluable. He couldn't have been more correct.

1967 was the heyday of the Party. If I remember correctly, it was the second largest party in the Lok Sabha. The Mumbai Headquarters was a beehive of activity. For the next eleven months, when I was in Mumbai, I became a constant visitor to the party office and formed a friendship that was to last all through the years.

In spite of a busy and heavy schedule, as Executive Secretary of the Party, Raju gave me all the time he could. He gave me party literature and publications. He told me about the short history and structure of the organization, its aims and the nature of its leadership. He evaluated individual leaders. He arranged for me to meet them in Mumbai, and later on, in New Delhi.

We also spoke, at great length about Indian politics, in general – the increasingly regulated, semi-socialist economy, and the hurdles to free enterprise and economic freedom.

A bare recital of the subjects of discussion does not do justice to my pleasure, at the growth of our personal friendship. Raju was warm, generous, articulate, and passionate about the aims and hopes of the Party. It also became clear that he idolized Minoo Masani, one of Swatantra's founding fathers, and leading parliamentarian. This tells us something special about Raju.

Minoo Masani and my father had known each other since the 1930s. It was Minoo who advised my dad, to enrol me in the New Era School, under the dynamic leadership of the London University trained principal, M. T. Vyas. Minoo was a supremely self-confident, intellectual, direct, combative, undiplomatic, demanding, political leader of the highest integrity. He did not suffer fools easily, and he spoke his mind. He was not a person with whom it was easy to get along. Only another self-confident, direct, honest, intellectual could have bonded with, and served under him. Only someone who was efficient, loyal, hardworking, prepared to stand his ground when necessary, could have won Masani's admiration and affection, as Raju did.

At the end of my stay in India, Raju asked me to contribute an article for Swatantra's 1968 Convention Souvenir. I did so with pleasure, entitling it: "Swatantra and the Open Society". It contained many ideas, we discussed during the year.

On my return to Lawrence, I kept in infrequent touch with Raju. When I revisited India in the 1970s, we met, on occasion. When Raju left for the Middle East in 1980, we lost touch completely. In 1998, on another trip to Mumbai, I asked Nani Palkhivala, whom I knew well, whether he had any news of Raju. Much to my delight, he told me, that Raju had returned from the Mideast, quite some time ago, and was now editor, of *Freedom First*, founded by Minoo Masani in the early fifties. The gap of many years seemed to make no difference to our relationship. Times had changed. Swatantra was no more. The 1990s had seen a dramatic shift in Indian economic policy under the guidance of Manmohan Singh.

Raju, now without Swatantra or Masani, who had passed away in 1998, continued the good fight, to keep the flag of free enterprise and political liberalism flying. Others have listed his myriad activities, regarding the India Liberal Group, the educational conferences, the attempt to revive Swatantra, which I will not repeat, in this personal reminiscence. Though older, he had lost none of his zest or optimism. And while India had moved a good deal in the direction recommended by Swatantra, he was not satisfied. He was critical of the slow pace of economic reforms, and the continuing dominance of governments in the economic policy. Raju invited me to contribute to *Freedom First*. Over the following years, I sent in a number of articles. We met again in 2004 and 2006, when I was in Mumbai, but, otherwise kept in touch on e-mail.

Reading his last editorials in *Freedom First*, it seemed that Raju, cautiously welcomed the sweeping victory of Narendra Modi. Here, at long last, is an opportunity for Swatantra's economic vision of a prosperous India, free of the grip of excessive regulation. An India, that Raju and a small group of determined leaders and intellectuals, like Minoo Masani, Rajaji, Nani Palkhivala fought for, against tremendous odds. I often marvelled at Raju's continuing optimism, and confidence that, someday, the tide would turn. I pray that he will be proved right.

Professor Minoo Adenwalla, Emeritus Professor of Government and the Mary Mortimer Professor of Liberal Studies, Lawrence University, U.S.A.

My First and Only Meeting with S. V. Raju

Ronald Meinardus

Long before I came to India as the Regional Director of my Foundation, I knew his name. For us at the liberal Foundation, S. V. Raju was the personification of liberalism in India. For many years a close partner of the Foundation, he and his fellows at the “Indian Liberal Group” represented India in various international and regional liberal fora – and left a mark.

“My association with your Foundation goes back to 1963”, Mr. Raju told me in our only meeting. Shortly after I arrived in India last August, I visited his modest office in South Mumbai. As a newcomer and curious amateur of Indian liberal affairs, the time spent with Mr. Raju over tea and cookies was a history lesson of a very special quality. He talked with patience and with passion, explaining the ups and downs of the liberal movement, the constraints – and also the difficulties – of a liberal resurrection in the present political situation.

Here was a committed liberal of the old school, an octogenarian with – this my impression – a zest for intellectual combat with the enemies of freedom. Mr. Raju shared his trials and tribulations as secretary of the Swatantra Party, his admiration for Minoo Masani whose memory he has kept alive through the writings in *Freedom First* magazine and other activities.

Mr. Raju believed in an open society based on minimum government and maximum freedom. To push these principles in the specific Indian context was the mission

he believed in. A restless promoter of liberalism, Mr. Raju continued the battle of ideas when others had long given up – or moved away to more comfortable environs.

“It takes immense moral courage to fight a battle you know you are almost destined to lose”, writes Niranjan Rajadhyaksha, the editor of *MINT* newspaper, in a beautiful obituary to our liberal friend. When I read this, my mind drifted back to our meeting on that November morning last year in the window-less office with the huge Tibetan flag at our back. Support for Tibet was one of those seemingly losing battles he believed in. “It’s a matter of principle”, he explained – not more and not less.

“My idea is to keep the liberal idea alive”, he said and proudly presented the series of magazines, which in recent editions – how could this be different – dealt also with the phenomenal rise of Narendra Modi and the BJP. “We need somebody who after years of inaction is giving us action”, he said. “Modi is the right man for India at this time. We’re giving him support”, he added. “But not his party” was the immediate qualification.

We at the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom express deep sorrow at the loss of a good political friend and a great liberal of India. We will contribute to the efforts to keep his memory and the ideas he strived for alive.

Dr. Ronald Meinardus, Regional Director, South Asia, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, New Delhi.

My First and Last Meeting with S. V. Raju

V. Krishna Moorthy

My association with *Freedom First* goes back to over five decades since my college days at Mysore in the early 1960s. I thus have an emotional attachment with the family of *Freedom First* and the principles the journal stood for all these years. Having joined the State Bank Group I moved to Bombay in the early 1970s and had the occasion to meet the Founder, Minoo Masani. He asked me to review a book and that’s how my association with the journal as a contributor started. But after that, I had no occasion to write for *Freedom First* for the next 25 years.

After my retirement, I started writing off and on, and in the last three years, more often. That is how I came in contact with Sri S. V. Raju. I started by writing on topics of current interest – one such was on the topic of black money. Following its publication Raju asked me to review S. Gurumurthy’s book on the subject which was published in the journal. Subsequently, he e-mailed me names of three books on economics and finance, which I had to politely decline pleading that I could not adhere to his deadline. When any of my writing was found to be too lengthy, for constraints of space, he would seek my view and I

invariably gave him the full authority to use his editorial scissors without mercy. The outcome in print invariably added more value to the piece; such was the quality of his editing.

Last year in November-December, I came down to Mumbai to spend some time with my son's family and took that opportunity to meet Sri Raju. I had never met him all this while and he happily agreed offering me an open invitation to come to his office any time before 4.00 p.m. when he left for home. So, around noon on 29th November 2014, I called him up from the Jehangir Art Gallery seeking directions to his third floor office. I reached within five minutes, climbed up the classic building in that old time elevator and entered his compact office cum workstation. Though it was the first time I was meeting Raju, the welcome was such that I felt as if I have known him for decades. Soon thereafter he called his colleague Kashmira Rao and introduced me to her. We spent nearly two hours discussing various topics of current interest including the PM's Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. While I shared my association with *Freedom First* narrated earlier, he shared his experiences with the founding of the Swatantra Party and his role, how he came about to handle the affairs of *Freedom First* and finally as its editor for over three decades. It was nice listening to him and the times he spent with the great and mighty persons like Rajaji, Masani and others and the period when the Swatantra Party had a

significant number of representatives in the Parliament and the quality of parliamentary debates of that time. He complained about his eye sight and the problem of commuting these days and how he proposes to bring out the future issues of *Freedom First*. After nearly two hours of intimate discussion on topics of varied interest with an ace editor, it was time for me to take leave of him.

When I was about to leave, Raju offered me to pick up two books for review in *Freedom First*. And, I again pleaded with him that it would take time. He then gave me a parting gift – a book titled “*How Businessmen Can Enrich Public Life : D. N. Patodia – Reflections*” authored by him which contained a bookmark with his name and signature which I would treasure as a remembrance of a great soul. Thus ended the two hours I spent with Raju for the first and last time, not long back, and recalled it when I learnt the sad news about his sudden demise.

The last time I heard from him was on 2nd May forwarding the soft-copy edition of the May 2015 issue of *Freedom First* on Subhas Chandra Bose with his covering note which had a tinge of humour about his sudden sickness and feeling bad to be away from his adopted child *Freedom First*. Thus, the April issue was the last of his editorials in *Freedom First*.

Mr. V. Krishna Moorthy is C.E.O., Parivarthan, Mysore.



A young Raju speaking at an ICCF seminar with two past editors
- V. B. Karnik (extreme left) and Minoos Masani

Tributes from Friends

Raju was quite a character with strong views and a bit of an autocrat, though well-meaning, as far as running the Indian Liberal Group and Freedom First. He was a great story teller and to hear him talk about the history of Rajaji, Masani and the Swatantra Party was always a great pleasure. What I found fascinating about Raju was how dedicated he remained till the very end about making sure that the various activities that he was managing were done in a regular and timely manner. His dedication and persistence should remain an inspiration for all of us looking to build a better India.

Sameer Wagle, New Delhi

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Raju was an inspiration and a mentor in the early part of my career. I will always remember him as an intellectual with unflinching integrity, resolute in his fight to uphold liberal values, always ready with sound advice and a helping hand whenever needed. Am sure Raju has left behind many admirers.

Keki J. Patel, Mumbai

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I knew Raju from the days I was a student of the Department of Civics and Politics, University of Bombay. Reading his views in *Freedom First* (whether one agreed with him or not) was always educative and I have learnt a lot from him. He was a great editor; greater still he was a fine man and friend. We shall all miss him tremendously.

Adi H. Doctor, Goa

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I first came into contact with Sri S. V. Raju through late Prof. A. B. Shah and Sri Hamid Dalwai both great rationalists and true secularists. Sri Raju's interests were varied – all in the propagation and promotion of the right ideas about rationalism, liberalism, secularism and true welfare. He imbibed from Minoo Masani, sense of time and discipline and decency of behaviour. He put in immense labour to see that the journal *Freedom First* continued to be published despite financial constraints. His commitment to liberalism, freedom and liberty appealed many who supported the journal in its difficult times.

Dr. T. Hanuman Chowdary, Hyderabad

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Though I have been a life subscriber to *Freedom First* for more than two decades, I met Mr. Raju for the first time in 2010. Our college was organizing two seminars and I approached him for academic collaboration of *Freedom First* with our college. I cannot forget his enthusiasm and willingness as he arranged for some

excellent guest speakers. I discovered in him an intellectual par excellence, a liberal mentor and guide who was firm but understanding in his advice and discussions on various issues. Each of my visits to his office thrust on me a magnetic pull to meet him again. Visits would be short, but pleasant and gratifying. What I found most appealing about him was his respect for individual viewpoints and contentions. He had the charm to win the hearts of the young and encouraged our students and teachers to write for *Freedom First*. Raju spoke earnestly without pretensions and that was his asset.

Dr. Jyoti Marwah, Navi Mumbai

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Raju, as we all fondly addressed him, was a pillar of the Liberal movement. He kept the flame of the Indian Liberal movement alive through the Indian Liberal Group and oversaw its transformation into LiberalsIndia for Good Governance. We are indebted to him for his guidance and unstinting support in the formation of this non-profit organization. His wise counsel at all our meetings and active participation in spite of his frail health and other commitments was a source of inspiration to us all. We wondered at his perseverance when at the last Board Meeting held a month before his untimely demise, he walked all the way from his office at Kala Ghoda to Wodehouse Road, a distance of about two kilometres! Raju was truly a one of a kind Liberal, who dedicated his entire adult life in the service of the Liberal cause, without expecting any personal reward, whatsoever. His breadth and depth of knowledge were as remarkable as his deep humility. He was the true successor to Rajaji and Masani, whose legacy he nurtured, and whose memories he kept alive through the fond anecdotes that he shared often. He handled his responsibilities in a business-like, efficient, forthright, open, and cordial manner. We will miss him deeply - he has left a void that will be hard to fill.

**Board of Directors, LiberalsIndia for
Good Governance, Mumbai**

Masani was flamboyant, Ranga one-dimensional, and Rajaji often cranky. But Raju was the patient, hardworking backbone of the idea of Swatantra. People came and went. It was he who singlehandedly kept the flame alive. A hundred years from now, when future historians assess and re-assess the quality of *Freedom First*'s editorials under Raju, is when we will fully understand the man's importance in India's history.

Jaitirth (Jerry) Rao

Economy's Trouble Spots and A Way Forward

Sunil S. Bhandare

India's economic recovery continues to be in a state of flux – and that the current performance is much below its potential growth rate!

Three major events have embroidered the economy in the early part of the second year of Modi Government's tenure: first, the Central Statistical Organisation's [CSO] release of the comforting growth numbers of the economy for the year gone by; second, Reserve Bank's [RBI] as ever "cautious" growth and inflation outlook for the current year, and hence, "conservative" approach to reduction in key policy rates; and third, the most disturbing forecast by Indian Meteorological Department on likely severity of rainfall deficiency. The sum total of all these is the "certainty" about uncertainty in the emerging economic scenario; and hence, the imperatives of strategizing the way forward.

The RBI's Perspective

Let us begin by reflecting quickly on the RBI's second bi-monthly monetary policy [BMP] for the financial year 2015-16. It has reduced the key policy rates by 25 basis points for the third time in a row, taking the cumulative cutback to 75 basis points. Illustratively, the repo rate – rate at which banks borrow funds from the RBI against eligible collaterals, which in turn transmits signals for changes in the interest rates scenario in the economy – has been reduced since January 2015 from 8% to 7.25% now. In turn, this has enabled banks to ease the lending rates by about 30 basis points. Surely, this has not been commensurate with what the RBI Governor as well as the Finance Minister have been wanting the banks to do. Consequently, the continued weakness in the transmission mechanism of the RBI's action is becoming increasingly apparent.

From our perspective, the BMP's far more significant dimension is its comprehensive overview of current and emerging global and domestic economic scenario. Coming as it does after the CSO's recent release of national accounts data for 2014-15, this overview offers some valuable leads about shape of things to come. Specifically, the RBI has marked down its earlier forecast of real economic growth rate [measured in gross value added = GVA] from 7.8% to 7.6% for 2015-16 as compared

to the growth rate 7.2% in 2014-15. Contrast this with the government's estimate of 8.1% to 8.5% real GDP growth rate in 2015-16! At the same time, the RBI has upscaled the inflation projection from its earlier 5.8% to 6% by January 2016. What transpires, therefore, is that economy's top-line performance would be delicately poised.

The RBI finds that the global economic recovery is slow and increasingly differentiated across regions in the wake of [a] the US economy shrinking in the first quarter of 2015; [b] the EURO area desperately combating economic slowdown through quantitative easing and with depreciating euro; [c] China's continuing deceleration in spite of monetary easing; and [d] challenging macro economic conditions in most Emerging Market Economies on account of domestic fragilities and bouts of financial market turbulence. Further, oil prices appear to be volatile; so also are the global financial markets. The latter is governed largely by changing expectations around the reversal of US Fed's interest rate cycle and likely unwinding of European assets by investors due to the Greek crisis.

The domestic economic situation looks no less daunting thanks to [a] worsening of the agricultural situation in 2014-15 and the outlook for the current year being clouded by the latest prediction that the south-west monsoon will be 12% below the long period average and the threat of El Nino phenomenon; [b] uneven industrial recovery manifesting in sustained weakness of consumption spending, especially in rural areas, disappointing corporate sales and earnings performance, and falling capacity utilization in several industries; [c] revival of investment demand constrained due to stalled investment projects; [d] mixed signals of services sector; and [e] weakening of merchandise export growth. The BMP points out that net foreign trade is "unlikely to contribute as much to growth going forward as they did in the past financial year. Consequently growth will depend more on a strengthening of domestic final demand".

In substance, the BMP per se and the subsequent

interactions of the RBI Governor with the media tend to suggest that India's economic recovery continues to be in a state of flux – and that the current performance is much below its potential growth rate!

A Growth Turnaround!

Against this backdrop, let us now proceed to reflect upon what the recently released CSO's provisional estimates of national income convey about the state of the economy. The comforting fact is that the macro economy [real GDP] has cruised at an impressive rate of 7.3% in 2014-15 – that is in the first year of the Modi government as compared to the lower growth rate of 6.9% in 2013-14, which it inherited from the UPA government. Hence, it is quite justifiable for the government to proclaim that there is a significant turnaround in the economy. If there had been no major setback to the agricultural sector due to the wayward monsoon behaviour, then the growth rate could easily have surpassed 7.5% in 2014-15.

Interestingly enough, some official spokespersons waxed eloquent that in the last quarter [January-March] of 2014-15, India's growth rate at 7.5% has overtaken that of China. Surely it has; but the government needs to be cautious that this is not a transient triumph. What matters most is to ape China not only in a singular quarterly growth rate, but also in her unprecedented quarter century of miraculous double-digit annual growth! Therefore, the immediate challenge before the government is how to take forward such moderate growth momentum and strategize a longer-term aspirational target of 8.5 to 9% sustainable growth rate? Hopefully, this aspect would now be the primacy of focus in the government's economic policy formulations.

Areas of Concerns!

A careful evaluation of crucial trends from the CSO's national accounts data unfolds many trouble spots in the current moderate growth recovery. First, the setback to the agricultural sector is an area of huge concern. Indeed, the agricultural GVA growth rate turned negative in the last two quarters -1.1% and - 1.4% in Q3 and Q4 of 2014-15, respectively. The worsening of agrarian crisis is certainly associated with this dismal performance. Needless to say, for stable, stronger and sustainable economic recovery, it is imperative for the agricultural sector to secure at least 3.5% to 4% annual growth rate. But this now seems most unlikely even in 2015-16.

Second, there is a noticeable turn-around in the manufacturing growth rate, which accelerated to 7.1% in 2014-15 as compared to 5.3% in the previous year. But neither industrial production nor infrastructure industries

production numbers give credence to such manufacturing recovery. Surely, this sector has to expand consistently at a much faster rate to make a strong positive impact on current industrial and investment outlook.

Third, a predominant part of growth recovery has also been made possible by the services sector scoring a little over double digit growth. But most of it is attributable to stronger performance of the sub-sector "financial, real estate and professional services", which gathered momentum at the rate of 11.5% in 2014-15 as compared to 7.9% in the previous year. The sub-sector "trade, hotels and transport and communications" also scored growth rate of 10.7% in 2014-15, albeit it was slightly lower than 11.1% in the previous year. However, to sustain such high services sector performance, the commodity sectors like agriculture, mining, quarrying and manufacturing as well as construction have to expand at a much faster pace.

Fourth, an important revelation from the national accounts data is that foreign trade [imports + exports of goods and services] as percentage of GDP has been shrinking progressively – the share was 55.6% in 2012-13; 51.3% in 2013-14 and has dropped to 47.1% in 2014-15. The fall in international crude oil and commodity prices offers one explanation, and is most welcome. But more worrisome factors are: [a] contracting exports, perhaps indicative of falling export competitiveness; [b] subdued global export markets; and [c] decelerating capital goods and project imports, reflecting stagnant investment activity. Does this mark a retreat of globalisation for the Indian economy? This issue must exercise the attention of the policy makers and the RBI – the latter specifically on issues concerning appropriate exchange rate of the rupee.

Last, from the macro growth perspective what matters most is [i] consumption demand; and [ii] investment demand. Concerns of fiscal consolidation have caused some slowing down of government's consumption expenditure growth, which is most welcome. But stagnation of private consumption expenditure growth is a matter of great concern. This seriously impairs the fortunes of manufacturing sector. Even more worrisome is a continued drift in the investment ratio, manifesting in gross fixed capital formation to GDP ratio, which declined from 31.9% in 2012-13 to 30.7% in 2013-14 and further to 30% in 2014-15. In a perspective of longer term scenario, the collapse of domestic savings and investment activity becomes far more conspicuous. Effectively, the economy has seen a contraction of as much as 6 to 8 percentage points in both savings and investment ratios. For the economy to expand at a faster pace, the savings ratio has to surge from its current level of about 30% to 35%; and investment ratio from 30% to 37 - 38% over the next three to four years.

The Way Forward

In substance, the growth recovery of 2014-15 hangs on a balance. In the context of bleak forecast of south-west monsoon, the struggle for sustaining [leave alone accelerating] the economy's growth momentum is going to be hugely formidable. What is the way forward? First, there is a growing perception that "seeds are sown, shoots are awaited" – "foundations have been laid, structures can be built up". If this is so, then the implementation of 2015-16 budget proposals and various other policies [including the pursuit of game changing reforms like GST] must now gather greater momentum. Second, after a year long aggressive diplomatic initiatives, the Prime Minister will now have to consolidate the gains based on promises of economic cooperation, including various project related investment agreements – and all that would surely add up to tidy potential investment activity.

Third, the RBI has so far done its bit in cutting the interest rates, but further monetary easing would inevitably depend more on effective inflation control by the government. In turn, this would depend more on how supply and distribution management of food grains and other essential commodities is going to be managed. Besides, it has also to organize extensively the support system for farming operations by making special provisions of extra seeds and other essential inputs, including water in the wake of likely severity of monsoon failure. For a longer-term sustainability of the agricultural sector, it is imperative to expedite expansion of irrigation [including micro irrigation and watershed development], consolidation of land holdings, and rural infrastructure development as well as improvement in quality and effectiveness of

schemes like MNREGA (The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act).

Fourth, key infrastructure ministries dealing with roads, railways, power, etc. have in recent months been sounding eloquent about their ambitious programs of expansion and new investments. Now is the time for execution of such projects. Fifth, so much has been said about the "Make in India" mission. The government would now be expected to strategize and implement many of its policy pronouncements on this count. At the same time, it must also respond to the issues raised by business and industry and also by its own Chief Economic Advisor. The latter has offered some well-meaning suggestions: [a] scrap the proposal to impose 1% tax on inter-state sales as an integral part of GST; [b] calibrate the exchange rate – don't allow the rupee to become more uncompetitive; [c] reduce the key policy rates in conformity with falling inflation rate, improved fiscal management and the global environment; and [d] liberalize FDI norms in multi-brand retail.

Finally, in the prevailing style of governance, the most powerful driver of a more balanced and sustainable growth, infrastructure investment, and series of social security programs would be the concerted and coordinated efforts under the PMO's direction. Most keen observers are surely willing to wait for some more time for the government to deliver development with good governance. But patience certainly has its time horizon – it would start tapering rapidly beyond the second year of government's tenure.

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Twin DVD pack of *Freedom First* and QUEST

We are happy to inform our readers that the work of digitizing *Freedom First* and QUEST is now complete. The twin DVD with the search function contains archives of

- *Freedom First* starting June 1952 upto June 2013 (61 years)
- QUEST starting August 1955 upto May-June 1976 (22 years)

While readers are aware that all issues of *Freedom First* are available on its website www.freedomfirst.in, the work of uploading QUEST is on and it should be available online very soon.

For more information, kindly get in touch with the office. You can e-mail, telephone or write to us.

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.

Modi's Year in Power

Point

1a) Numerous opinion polls and scholarly discussions have pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has retained people's faith despite unfulfilled promises. The opposition, particularly the Congress, went at him hammer and tongs with Rahul Gandhi showing rare aggression. Dr. Manmohan Singh's bid to defend his Government by denying all scams was counter-productive as it recalled everything that was wrong with UPA II. The opinion of media scholars were slanted due to each scholar's ideological predilection and got confusing in the end as they out-shouted and contradicted each other. Modi himself started the ball rolling by pointing out what would have happened if the previous non-functioning regime of UPA II had continued. He avoided responding to each incomplete task he had promised to finish. Election hype had made the BJP/Modi promise the unachievable as if they had the magic wand. No serious thinker accepted these promises but the common man does get carried away and expects miracles. Modi's achievement was that he managed to put it across that he was trying his best. The Modi euphoria has dissipated but the hope in Modi is alive.

Counter Point

1b) The incomplete tasks are many and there is no possibility that any Government – Modi or no Modi – can deliver everything. For example, agriculture will take decades to become profitable, corruption can be slowed but not eradicated, prices would depend more on international developments rather than internal controls, black money generation can be impeded but black money in foreign banks cannot be brought back readily, foreign investment would be welcome but Sangh Pariwar itself would oppose some of it; rabid Hindu fanatics would continue to embarrass the Government through 'Ghar Wapsi', Ram Mandir, beef ban; Land Acquisition Bill would continue to divide the country. The expectations are huge and achievements cannot keep pace. There are signs that Modi has managed to get the RSS to back him fully and blunt the Pariwar's attacks but can Nagpur rein in all the hotheads? Modi's successes on the foreign front are spectacular but would it matter to the common man ultimately? One year is too early to write an obituary or a certificate of excellence for a Government which has just made a beginning. We are moving through interesting times with great possibilities but will it all end in disillusionment?

AAP's Ambition?

2a) A media expose indicated that the AAP Government in Delhi had ambitious plans to expand its Anti-Corruption Unit (ACB) ostensibly to fight corruption. It was contemplating an increase of Rs.35 crore in its budget for the ACB. A very laudable objective at face value as corruption needs to be eradicated quickly. There was a further expose about the Punjab Government buying such equipment for 'snooping'. If investigations went further, it might reveal that most state governments are buying state of the art equipment for surveillance, eavesdropping, bugging, debugging, explosives detection *et al.* It is necessary to differentiate between the Delhi Government and others. The issue is why this equipment is needed. For the AAP Government in Delhi, the real scope for its use is extremely limited as most security needs of the state are taken care of by the Central Government. Even law and order (Police) is not with the State Government. AAP's

2b) Since the AAP has no control over the Delhi Police, the ACB is the only unit it can use as an offensive arm. It has already declared that the ACB has the powers to cover even Central Government staff in its anti-corruption drive; the claim has been legally challenged but it is ominous as even the Union Ministries and Ministers cannot escape the ACB's reach if Mr. Kejriwal has his way. Is AAP trying to raise a parallel police/intelligence wing for itself? Anti-corruption drive would rarely need such devices as anti-corruption cases have to be fought in courts where evidence of phone taps, bugs, etc. is not admissible. The location of Union Government offices within the target range of the ACB therefore makes the entire exercise hugely dangerous. The AAP has denied that such a proposal was under Cabinet consideration but the fact remains that the proposal was in the pipeline. Good that the AAP has been made to rethink the idea. The question about misuse of

Point

only excuse is the need to remove corruption; other state governments need to fight terrorism, infiltration, and espionage as also corruption. AAP's plans become suspect in the background of its fight with the Lt. Governor and the Centre.

Counter Point

the equipment by other state governments remains. While the states cannot be denied the latest technical equipment, its misuse is a distinct possibility. The only way to check this is to bring all intelligence agencies, Central or State, under the oversight of legislative bodies.

Cricket with Pakistan

3a) Preliminary talks between the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and the Board of Control in India (BCCI) set off debate whether cricketing ties between the two countries should be resumed. It may all be premature but the PCB is keen to resume cricketing ties for two reasons: it wants to end Pakistan's exclusion from countries hosting international cricket and more importantly to shore up its financial position. India is one country that guarantees huge revenue in any match that it plays. Pakistan-India matches, even if played in UAE, will guarantee enough broadcasting revenue for the PCB. The BCCI has agreed, in principle, to resume cricketing ties but its decisions are wholly dependant on what the Government of India thinks. It is doubtful if the BCCI is itself keen on immediate resumption of cricketing ties as it has to reckon with public reaction to this decision. The GOI in turn has also shown reservations about the enterprise.

3b) It is a truism that sports and politics should be kept apart. Everyone accepts the notion but reality steps in very rudely. Sports serve a great purpose in lessening friction between countries. This applies to countries that have occasional irritants affecting their relations. It is different with Pakistan. It is fighting an undeclared war with India; there are daily incursions in which Indian soldiers are killed routinely. The atmosphere gets vitiated from day to day. It is naïve to hope that nothing will happen from now till December 2015 when the tour is scheduled. Any small incident will mar the tour. The furore that it will create can damage the BCCI and also the GOI. The Pakistan Government, which might guarantee security, is not capable of controlling the situation even if it is sincere. Do the GOI and the BCCI want to take a chance in the fond hope that everything will be fine?

Facts & Rumours

4a) We tend to believe in rumours that reflect badly on our administration because we do not trust our public servants, be they politicians or government employees. The rumour factory is constantly fed by TV channels who survive on digging out one scandal after another. Sometimes rumours turn out to be right and we are shocked into disbelief. One such expose is doing the rounds. It claims that Mustaffa Dossa, henchman of Dawood Ibrahim, accused in the Mumbai bomb blasts of 1993, is active from Mumbai's Arthur Road jail while awaiting trial. It was alleged that while being produced in court from time to time he interviewed and selected 3 models out of 8 applicants for his jewellery shop in Dubai. One of the models accosted by bogus police officers outside the Court seized her token payment and left her without job or money. She realized the trick and registered a police complaint. The dubious business activity would not have come to light otherwise. Dossa would have run his jewellery business profitably from jail or may be doing so even now.

4b) This is unbelievable; it implies that the police escorting party facilitated the business of a terrorist; the models were so desperate for work that they did not mind being auditioned by a jailed terrorist and the accused had the audacity to carry on his business from Court premises. The jail authorities would wash their hands off saying that they hand over the accused to the police escorting party to take him to court and what happens outside the jail is not their responsibility. The anti-terrorist squad which nabbed the accused would feel that their job is over. The escorting party which is possibly headed by a lowly official gets the axe! It is common practice to leave the accused to the escorting party unless they are Kasab or Afzal Guru who may be rescued by their brothers in terror and therefore, need special attention. Dossa is a smaller fry! Is it a systemic failure or human greed that makes this possible? In how many places can we darn the tattered fabric of our morality?

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“Manufactured Sovereignty” in South China Sea: Sino-American Confrontation Heats Up

B. Ramesh Babu

Will the US and her allies around the world act in time and on the scale needed to curb the dragon is the most urgent question confronting the world today.

China created a 2000 acre island in the disputed Spratly Islands. It was an audacious reclamation operation of dredging sand on a gigantic scale to ‘manufacture’ an artificial island located in what is aptly called Mischief Reef. Reclaiming land from the sea is not necessarily a violation of international law when it is done within the territorial limits of a country. Nariman Point, off South Bombay, is a vast land mass reclaimed from the Arabian Sea housing offices, skyscrapers, theatres and posh apartments. But, the massive engineering marvel China has built is in the midst of an archipelago with a long legacy of territorial and jurisdictional disputes among several countries in the Asia-Pacific region. These have been dormant till recently. Overlapping claims of at least five other countries, namely Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei, Philippines, and Taiwan, make this part of the South China Sea a hotbed of seemingly irreconcilable conflicts. Aggressive expansionism of China in recent decades and the latest frenzy of massive dredging operations and the creation of a ‘manufactured island’ are upsetting the post-war balance of power in Asia-Pacific along unpredictable lines.

Before going further, it is relevant to add that China is not alone in reclaiming land from the seas in the region. Taiwan, Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam have undertaken similar reclamation and military construction efforts in their claim areas in the Spratly Islands. For example, in 2008, Taiwan announced the completion of a new 3,900-foot airstrip in Itu Aba Island that could support military aircraft. To prove it, the President of the country landed a C-130 transport plane on the island the same year. Vietnam has been expanding its holdings on Sandy Cay and West London Reef, just seven miles east of Itu Aba Island. In 2014, Philippines announced an allocation of \$11 million to upgrade the 4,200 feet runway and navy port facilities in the Spratly Islands.

It is pertinent at this stage to briefly refer to the diplomatic background to the activation of the long dormant disputes over the overlapping claims of nations in the region. After blatantly announcing its sovereignty over the South China Sea, China began to press each of

her neighbours in South East Asia to settle their jurisdictional disputes bilaterally. The idea was to forestall the ASEAN nations from ganging up against her. Sensing the dangers inherent in China’s tactics and the dragon’s expanded militarization activities in the disputed seas and islands, all the ASEAN countries including China signed a non-binding agreement in 2002 “to exercise restraint and refrain from occupying any features that were uninhabited.” Subsequently, there was relative quiet on this front for some time. However, soon after President Xi Jinping assumed power in 2009, the dredging operations in Mischief Reef and elsewhere in the Spratly Islands were scaled massively. By 2011 the Chinese intentions and designs to create an artificial strategic staging point in the South China Sea with docking facilities for its navy and build airstrips for its air force became obvious. At this stage the ASEAN nations including China adopted a unanimous resolution on a Common Code of Conduct (COD) on the territorial and jurisdictional disputes. But, China defied it even before the ink was dry.

China’s aggressive rise and its determined bid to control nearby seas, the preposterous “nine dash claim line” enveloping 90 per cent of the South China Sea, and the raking up of the long dormant territorial and jurisdictional disputes with all her neighbours in South East and East Asia rang alarm bells in Asia-Pacific and beyond. Japan responded by disavowing the post-war constitutional shackles of self-defence imposed on her. Under Prime Minister Shinzo Abe’s “patriotic” and popular leadership, the country began to adopt a “proactive” role in the region. Japan empowered itself to deploy its armed forces in Asia-Pacific to counter China. After the Second World War the US handed over the Senkaku islands to Japan. China calls them Diaoyu islands and accused Japan of “stealing her islands.” China claims sovereignty over all territories, islands, adjoining seas which were within the ambit of China’s Emperors at any time in the past! Naturally, this preposterous claim is angrily rejected by all her neighbours, including India, Russia, Mongolia, and Tibet. The tug of war over Senkaku/Diaoyu islands is a part of the much larger battle over the shifting power balance in Asia.

Under Prime Minister Abe's brave policy dubbed as "proactive pacifism," Japan's strong and powerful Maritime Self Defence Force (MSDF) chases away the Chinese aircraft intruding over the islands on a daily basis. In April 2015, US-Japan defence alliance was renewed for ten years during Prime Minister Abe's State visit to the US. After signing the Treaty, President Obama declared that the US-Japan defence treaty is no threat to China. In fact, he insisted that China benefits immensely from American presence in the region. He made it a point to add that China was "bullying" smaller nations to accept its sovereignty over disputed islands in the South China Sea.

In 2013, China unilaterally declared an air defence identification zone over much of the South China Sea including the islands controlled by Japan. As per the declaration all airplanes (military or commercial) flying over the zone should identify themselves to the Chinese authorities in advance. Japan is an alliance partner of the US and the Americans responded by flying two B-52 bombers through the zone in defiance. China opted to be prudent and not escalate it into an active conflict with the US, a far superior military power.

The Showdown Heats Up

As the 'manufactured' island gets ready to equip itself with docking bays for the navy, airstrips for military jets, lighthouse towers, and other strategic facilities, China upped its stridency. On 31 May 2015, China's top diplomat declared that if the dredging is obstructed or the island is endangered in any way "there will be war." He was addressing the Shangri-La Dialogue of the International Institute for Strategic Studies, Singapore, which is an annual gathering of security officials of all major countries in Asia. China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi declared that her country's claims over the South China Sea were "unshakeable." It must be added that the recent surge of land reclamation in the atolls of Spratly Islands is 1000 miles from China's southern most point (in Hainan Island) and just off the coast of Philippines, which has claims of its own in the region. Moreover, the country is also a treaty ally of the US.

In the third week of May 2015, American P-8A Poseidon aircraft flew near the Chinese construction site in Mischief Reef. The Chinese navy told the plane to leave eight times. Each time the American pilot responded by asserting that the aircraft was flying over "international air space." Chinese termed the flight a "potential threat to the security of the Chinese island and reef." Similar threats were issued to the Philippines aircraft. A few days later (26 May 2015), China issued a policy document outlining the country's future strategy. The Chinese navy

would expand its focus from "off shore waters defence" to a greater emphasis on "open seas protection." Chinese Air Force would shift its focus from "territorial air defence to both defence and offence," the statement declared. Patrick Cronin, Director of the Asia-Pacific Security Program at the Center for New American Security, called the policy statement "a blueprint for achieving slow motion regional hegemony." The policy document "asserts a confidence backed by growing capability on land and increasingly at sea," he added.

As an integral part of the long-term strategy of emerging as a global superpower capable of challenging America's global hegemony, China recently ended its policy of maintaining minimal nuclear force. The country has re-engineered many of its long-range missiles to carry multiple warheads. Such a technology making the missiles more potent and capable of penetrating through the enemy's anti-missile defence shield called multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) was launched by President Xi around the same time as building the airfields and submarine docking facilities in the disputed Spratly Islands. China declined to discuss the issue of MIRVs with the US. The Chinese were always fearful of America's nuclear advantage, estimated to be 8:1 at the present. The latest strategic shift is "obviously part of an effort to prepare for long-term competition with the United States," according to Ashley J. Telis, a senior associate at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, DC. Telis served as a senior national security official in the George W. Bush administration.

The US Defence Secretary Ashton B. Carter said that China's rapidly expanding building projects in the South China Sea have raised tensions and caused concerns among the US and its regional partners. Carter was speaking at a stop-over at a Vietnamese naval base in the wake of reports that China had placed two militarized artillery vehicles on one of the reclamation sites. He urged all nations to halt their reclamation efforts.

When last reports came in (3 June 2015), the US has decided to send a contingent of ships into the international waters close to the dredged and reclaimed islands. China termed such measures harsh and American criticism as "a military threat" and pointedly asked, "Do these measures help to resolve the dispute in the South China Sea and maintain peace and stability?"

On the American side security experts are convinced that "such measures" will not halt the Chinese operations. At the most they will send a strong signal to the Chinese leadership and reassure American allies regarding the nation's commitment to peace, security, and freedom of navigation in the Asia-Pacific region.

It is clear that the Dragon and the Eagle are at loggerheads and America's allies in the region are acutely concerned over the aggressive rise of China. It is interesting to watch out for India's response to the growing threat of protracted confrontation between China and the US in Asia-Pacific. "Pivot Asia" and the Chinese expansionism in the region and beyond are at loggerheads. As the Japanese security official at the Shangri-La Dialogue remarked: "If we leave any unlawful situation unattended, order will soon turn to disorder and peace and stability will collapse." Even as China continues to repeat its shrill claims over Arunachal Pradesh, in recent months President Xi has responded positively on the economic cooperation front, two-way trade expansion, large scale investments on both sides, trilateral cooperation among China, India and Sri Lanka in the island nation, and invited India to join her and Russia in a trilateral partnership against the global hegemony of the US. Do we see a signal of sorts seeking peace and stability on the Himalayan front, even as China focuses on expansion in the South China Sea and East Asia? Is China seeking a period of quiet on the Tibetan front and restive Xinxiang province on the west adjacent to the Muslim republics of Central Asia? Should we stay aside as the dragon swings its claws in South China Sea and East Asia!

I will not trust the dragon even for a moment. China

has a long legacy of blowing hot and cold on the Himalayan frontier. Watching the Dragon is not enough. Containing it with counter-force is called for. Will the US and her allies around the world act in time and on the scale needed to curb the dragon is the most urgent question confronting the world today.

There is a key Chinese internal equation to all this at this juncture. President Xi has launched a new initiative to focus on domestic development and smooth rise of China. How this plays out in the next few years will determine China's future course of action in the South China Sea. He will bide his time before he takes on the US. If the experiment succeeds he may be emboldened to challenge American hegemony. If he fails at home, he may indulge in a foreign adventure to mobilise patriotic support for the regime. Either way the next few years will see a more active confrontation between the old Super Power on the retreat and the aspiring global Super Power in the wings!

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The Swatantra Party in Gujarat:

A Shooting Star (Part III)

Usha Thakkar

Unfortunately from its very beginning Party-building was neglected in its passion for rapid growth....Strong personalities of the leaders and their inability to take important decisions collectively took toll on the Party.... Within a short span the Swatantra Party lost its strength and vitality.

This is the third and concluding part of the three-part article on the history of the Swatantra Party in Gujarat.

Decline of the Swatantra Party

The rise of the Swatantra in Gujarat was impressive. However, with its victory cheers there were also murmurs that soon became loud voices of dissent and dissatisfaction. The Party had adopted intensive strategy for the elections with the sole aim of winning. Personal ability as well as the capacity to finance the elections were the main criteria of selection of the candidates. Entrance of the ex-rulers brought some electoral victories. The Swatantra was able to capture all the seats in the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies in 1967 in Sabarkantha district mainly due to the support of the ex-ruler of Idar. However, except the ex-rulers of Idar and Devgadhi-Baria no ex-ruler of Gujarat spent his own money. (Sharma, 1976: 260).

The elite and the ex-rulers had their own way of working. They had little respect for the Party discipline. To favour them many senior and sincere workers of the Party were neglected while giving Party tickets. Himatlal Mulani and Chimanlal Patwa (Banaskantha), Chunilal Chudgar (Surendranagar), and Maganlal Joshi (Jamnagar) were ignored (Sharma, 1976: 259). The Party also gave tickets to some Congress dissidents. All this disheartened loyal Party workers. There was also a feeling that some persons like Minoo Masani, Dandekar, Piloo Mody, C. C. Desai, Viren Shah, and Manubhai Amersey were outsiders. The state leaders did not like interference from the central body in the selection of candidates for elections. Moreover, the Gujarat unit of the Swatantra was not financially sound even in its best days. Gujarat was not a self-sufficient unit and the Central office did not give grants when required.

The traditional enmity between the Kshatriyas and the Patidars took its toll. The antagonism between the two communities interfered in taking decisions of vital importance. During the monsoon session of the assembly in 1967 an idea to take short-cut to power was floated by toppling Hitendra Desai's Congress government. But the Kshatriyas and the Patidars in the Party were divided. The

former wanted Jaydeepsinhji or Fattehsinhji (he could be asked to cross over) as Chief Minister. The latter group wanted H.M. Patel. Due to this rift they could not topple the ministry. There were too many internal divides and conflicts. Even the no-confidence motion in February 1968 could not bring all the Swatantra members together in the Assembly. Efforts of Bhaikaka and others could not succeed to prompt Vadibhai Mehta and Jaydeepsinhji to remain present when the motion came for discussion on February 9, 1968. Complaints about Masani's dictatorship and working style of Bhaikaka as well as the defections from Swatantra to the Congress and vice versa continued. Internal conflicts weakened the Party and tarnished its image.

A crisis rocked the Party in 1968 when a candidate had to be elected to the Rajya Sabha. Babubhai Vaidya was selected by the Party as its candidate for the Rajya Sabha by the state leaders in consultation with the national leaders. Masani, General Secretary of the Party at that time, had made his commitment for the help he received during the elections. Many Swatantra leaders, especially the Kshatriya leaders and a few Swatantra MPs from Gujarat like Ramchandra Amin, R. K. Amin, Pravinsinh Solanki, Dayabhai Parmar, C. C. Desai and Manubhai Amersey jointly informed the Swatantra leaders like Ranga, Masani and Dandekar that they did not support the candidature of Vaidya for the Rajya Sabha from Gujarat. In his place they supported U. N. Mahida who was faithful to the Party. However Vaidya was selected for election to the Rajya Sabha; and he faced open challenge from U. N. Mahida. Bhaikaka issued a whip to MLAs to support the candidature of Vaidya. Yet U. N. Mahida, a Swatantra rebel, won. This displayed the lack of cohesion in the Party and inability of the leaders to strike a formula to work as a unit. Soon thereafter, anguished over indiscipline of the members, Bhaikaka, the leader of the opposition and Jaydeepsinhji, the deputy leader, resigned from their posts. Masani also resigned from membership of the National Executive and Central Parliamentary Board.

Some politicians regarded the Party as a vehicle

of power. Vadilal Lallubhai Mehta joined Swatantra in May 1966 and did not get along well with leaders like Bhaikaka. He had joined the Swatantra with the hope that he would be made the Party President after Bhaikaka or the leader of the opposition in the Assembly. When he was made the Vice-President, he was sure of fulfilling his ambition. There was, however, some ambivalence about his appointment among the Party leaders; this was mainly because of lack of consultation and communication. When Vadilalbhai was appointed as the Vice-President, Jaydeepsinhji, the then General Secretary of the Party, took it as an addition to the existing four vice-presidents, but Vadilalbhai thought that he was given the second rank in the Party. Later frustrated, he joined hands with the Kshatriyas like Thakore of Dhrol and complained of weak leadership of the Party. Finally he left the Party in February 1968.

Strong personalities of the leaders and their inability to take important decisions collectively took toll on the Party. C. C. Desai, sitting MP from Sabarkantha and a senior member, was charged that his behaviour and expression of views were regarded contrary to the Swatantra policy. Desai retaliated by criticising Masani. H. M. Patel cautioned against any move opposing Desai. Still Desai was expelled. Many members in Gujarat felt that the National Executive did not take into account the feelings of Gujarat MLAs. There was a rift between the Central and State units. Jaydeepsinhji was shocked; he left the Party in August 1970 in protest against the 'dictatorial attitude' of Masani. According to him, the ouster of C. C. Desai was engineered by Masani. H. M. Patel requested him in vain to reconsider. Nearly 26 MLAs resigned within a week of Jaydeepsinhji's resignation. Jaydeepsinhji, with the support of the Swatantra rebels, formed a new Party 'Praja Parishad'. This was a big blow to the Kshatriya-Patidar alliance and the strength of the Party.

The split in the Congress in 1969 had changed the complexion of Indian politics. The Congress (O) had suffered a blow. However, it was still in power in Gujarat. The official policy of the Swatantra was to support the Congress (O) because Swatantra was a partner of the 'Grand Alliance' against Indira Gandhi. In 1967 the Congress and Swatantra were opposed to each other. But in 1971 they were forced to be friends against the ruling faction of Congress headed by Indira Gandhi. But many members of the Swatantra in the assembly did not like the official policy of the Party to support the Hitendra Desai ministry. Defections started trickling in. On November 14, 1970 Congress (R) became official opposition instead of the Swatantra. Some Congress (O) MLAs defected to Congress (R). Hitendra Desai, the Chief

Minister, resigned in March 1971, but there was a dramatic development in a week. Some MLAs of Congress (O) returned to the Party and with the Swatantra support, Congress (O) formed the ministry on April 7, 1971. Swatantra acted with political restraint, but could not be the official opposition. Hitendra Desai resigned on May 12, 1971 and Gujarat came under the President's Rule for the first time. At the time of the dissolution of the assembly in May 1971, the Swatantra strength had dwindled to 11 against 66 in 1967, Congress (O) had 68 and the Congress (R) 67, PSP 3, SSP 1, independents 13 and 5 were vacant (Sharma; 1976; 764)

Within a short span the Swatantra Party lost its strength and vitality. Unfortunately from its very beginning Party-building was neglected in its passion for rapid growth. The Party did not create its own base but chose to make use of the available leaders, support and networks. The goal of electoral victories led to the accommodation of some feudal elements. Its alliances with Jana Sangh came under criticism. Instead of being the Party with a difference, political compulsions led it to the same mode of working as the Congress. Ironically the reasons for the rapid rise were also the causes for its rapid decline. Leaders like Rajaji, Masani, H. M. Patel and Dandekar were aware of the need to build the Party at the district and taluka levels, but not much could be done mainly due to lack of finance and sincere workers. Moreover, time factor was important; leaders at the top level like Rajaji were old and could not wait very long for electoral victory. In addition, the electoral victory, wherever secured, gave rise to expectations that were difficult to be fulfilled. Masani chalked up a spectacular victory in Rajkot constituency; but this, in fact, started the process of downsizing the Party in Gujarat; the Party acquired an image larger than life and expectations soared very high.

Many had joined the Swatantra, because they thought that the Party was winning. However, when hopes to capture power crumbled, they started deserting the Party. A leader often came with a group, and in case he left, the group would leave with him. Loyalty to the individual could not be converted into organisational loyalty. The short-lived victory was not ideological but based on compromises and groups. In its anxiety to win elections the Swatantra welcomed persons from diverse categories like ex-rulers, retired bureaucrats, merchants, mill owners, industrialists, disgruntled Congressmen and various caste groups. Often their interests were not compatible. People joined the Party for different reasons; some wanted power at the state level, some wanted to go against the Congress and some wanted to do good work for the people. Consequently, it was difficult to have cohesion in the Party.

Added to this were the issues of electoral adjustments and compromises. There was a momentum for the two-Party system, but the hope was short-lived. Internal dissensions and quarrels had corroded the base of the Party.

The leadership of the Party could not grasp the changing dynamics of socio-economic conditions that required new ideas and new strategies. Leaders at the central level of the Party were mostly urban with their eyes on power at Delhi. However, the base of the Party, to a large extent, was not necessarily urban. Consequently, there were differences between their perceptions of issues at the local and the national levels. In addition, personalities of some leaders like Masani, Dandekar, H. M. Patel and Bhaikaka seemed to be over-powering, and there was, at times, a personality clash among them.

The National Executive of the Party on January 8, 1971 decided to join the front consisting of the Congress (O), Jan Sangh and SSP against Indira Gandhi. Now the aim was 'Indira Hatao' against her Party's declaration of 'Garibi Hatao'. Politics at the centre was changing. Voters wanted a strong government and Indira Gandhi had emerged as the strong leader. Feudal grip on votes was declining. The Swatantra Party suffered a total debacle in the mid-term elections as Indira wave swept across. Leaders like Masani and Ranga lost the elections. Only two members of the Swatantra from Gujarat, Piloo Mody and H. M. Patel, could go to the fifth Lok Sabha. After the mid-term poll results, Masani resigned as the President of the Party in April 1971. He said that fresh leadership was needed.

In 1972 assembly elections, the Swatantra contested 47 seats from 14 districts; candidates were from many professions and communities. It did not get a single seat in the assembly of 168 and lost its deposit in most of them. The rank and file of the Swatantra got disheartened with the election results at the central and state levels. Ex-rulers like Jaydeepsinh from Devgad-Baria who were elected on Swatantra tickets in 1967 contested in 1972 as independents.

Over the years the exit of powerful members had taken its toll. Raja of Ramgarh had to be expelled in 1964. Paliwal in Uttar Pradesh had resigned in 1963 due to his differences with Raja of Mankapur. Raja himself died two years later. V. P. Menon, A D Shroff and Udham Singh Nagoke of Punjab also died. K. M. Munshi had, by supporting S. K. Patil of Congress against a Swatantra candidate in a Gujarat by-election, incurred criticism from many quarters, and drifted away in 1969. Bhaikaka's death on March 31, 1970 and Rajaji's death on December 25,

1972 were big blows to the Party. A section of the Swatantra finally merged with some other opposition parties in Bharatiya Lok Dal, led by Charan Singh in 1974. It is interesting to note that a writ petition was filed by the late L. R. Sampat and S. V. Raju in the Mumbai High Court on January 20 1996 against a major change in the election law with the inclusion in 1989 of Section 29(A) of the Representation of the People's Act. This change compelled political parties to swear to socialism if they wish to be recognised by the Election Commission of India as a political party. This is challenged in the writ petition that is yet to be heard. The Swatantra Party, in principle, is opposed to socialism. According to S.V. Raju, a comatose Swatantra Party, Maharashtra, is breathing on this life support system – the writ petition. (Raju, 2009:6)

Conclusion

The Swatantra Party, despite its short span of working, did have some achievements to its credit. The Party had become the recognised national Party at its very first elections in 1962. Gujarat was a major Swatantra stronghold (For details see Erdman, 1967). The Swatantra played a positive role as the opposition in the Gujarat Assembly. The performance of the Swatantra was commendable in the assembly with V. V. Mehta as the Deputy Speaker, and H. M. Patel as the chairman of the Public Accounts Committee. Its members made useful contribution to debates on the issues of trade, industries, panchayats and cooperatives, power projects, and asked relevant questions. The Party raised the issues of cooperative farming, food production, Narmada project, drinking water facilities in villages, rights of farmers and consumers and attempted to abolish land revenue and zonal system as promised. The leadership of the Party in Gujarat, unlike that in Rajasthan or Orissa remained with the middle class. The Party had a wide social base: it had garnered support of various sections like landlords and peasants, urban and rural, and small and big businessmen. Leaders like Bhaikaka, H. M. Patel, Dayabhai Patel, Piloo Mody, and C. C. Desai, Homi Mody, A. D. Shroff, Narayan Dandekar were recognised at the national level.

The brief account of the Swatantra in Gujarat catches glimpses of changes in politics and society. It also draws our attention to an important reality at the ground level. When democratic norms are translated into practice through elections in India's traditional hierarchical society, traditional forces reassert in a different way, and caste identities get reinforced at the political level. The functioning of the Swatantra in Gujarat gave legitimacy to the role played by castes in politics. Castes have always exercised their pulls and pushes, like the Kshatriyas in Gujarat and the Marathas in Maharashtra; now they have

become a part of the main political current. Leaders of the Swatantra at the top had their political ideology, but ultimately political power is gained through elections, so elections had to be won, and in this game castes became important political players. Castes were used by the political parties to win seats, and political parties were used by the castes to get power.

The Swatantra Party, though short-lived, has left its indelible imprint on politics. It is fondly remembered by its sincere members, office bearers and those who have realised the importance of economic liberalisation, deregulation and effective opposition. According to S. V. Raju, "There were a number of political parties that were born after independence and disappeared. The Swatantra Party was one of them. While many of them disappeared without a trace, the Swatantra Party has not - at least not yet. Why? Because it was the original 'Party with a Difference'. We, its members, even claim 'Victory in Defeat'."

(I express my gratitude to Mr. S. V. Raju, (Executive Secretary, Swatantra Party at national headquarters), for his support and valuable inputs without which this paper could not have materialised. I sincerely thank Prof. John Wood for making available the findings of his own research including the transcripts and notes of the interviews that he had conducted of the Swatantra MLAs. I thank Prof. Ghanshyam Shah, Prof. Howard Erdman, and Prof. John Wood for their insightful comments. This paper was presented at the International Conference on Gujarat Society after Five decades: Retrospect and Prospects, 18-20 January 2012, Centre for Social Studies, Surat. I thank the organizers of the Conference.)

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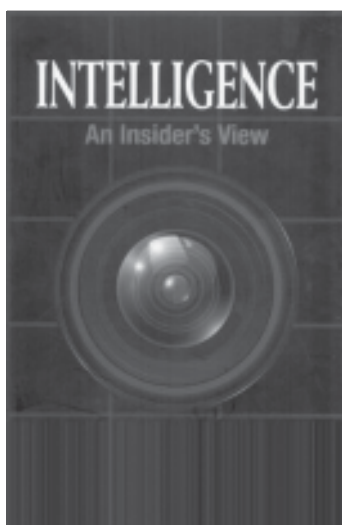
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CONCLUDED

BOOK REVIEWS



INTELLIGENCE – AN INSIDER’S VIEW By Ashok Karnik, published by Forum for Integrated National Security [FINS], Mumbai ● Pages 228 ● 2015 ● Rs.300.

Reviewed by Brig. Suresh C. Sharma, advisor to the telecom industry, freelance writer and member, Advisory Board of *Freedom First*. Email: sureshsharma236@yahoo.com

The author served in the Intelligence Bureau [IB] for 37 years and has narrated events based on his experience on issues ranging from terror and corruption to relations with neighbouring countries. India does not follow the practice of declassifying the

The Intelligence agencies are often blamed for serving the interests of the ruling political party by rigging elections and surveillance of opposition leaders to keep them in line. The author has categorically rejected these allegations. Intelligence is the shield of any state and becomes a weapon in times of war. At present there is no knowing of the achievements of IB and RAW but their failures are publicized. A committee of members of parliament of all political parties could be appointed to oversee their work. Such practice has been implemented in Western democratic countries. One of the difficulties in India is the tendency of political parties willing to compromise national security to gain points against the opposition.

The Panchsheel Agreement has been described with the comment that “While serving the peace of the world, we sacrificed an unarmed neighbour [Tibet] and our vital interests.” Sardar Patel’s warning about the intentions of China was ignored. We should note that in negotiations with the other neighbouring countries, China has not conceded any territory from its claim line. They have taken the same position in negotiations with India. “The Chinese will always claim what is theirs and what is yours is also theirs. They are masters of making very important statements by not making any statements.” Mr Shyam Saran, former Foreign Secretary, has suggested that the Indo-China border, though not marked on map or on ground has not suffered any violence during the last several years and we should not worry about it. There have been a few cases of intrusion and pull-back. Lord Desai has commented that these acts by China are just to drive home the point that they can intrude and withdraw as they like. Military and economic strength along with correct political alliances are the only solution.

India is facing terror acts in J&K by jihadi groups enrolled by Pakistan and by Maoists in the heartland. Knowing well that Pakistan cannot win against India militarily, it has resorted to a strategy of terror acts. It is wrong to presume that a democratic government in Pakistan would give up the policy of terror acts. There is need to strengthen the Intelligence network and frame appropriate laws to help the police in taking preventive

records after a certain period. The public and the students of history are deprived of an important source of information. A few memoirs that appear in the market are often a justification for the actions taken by the individuals. Mr. Karnik’s book is not an autobiography or a biased report. It is objective and provides reasons for the actions taken on the various important issues. Part One of the book contains author’s perceptions of the various security issues.

The opening chapter deals with the sudden Chinese attack in NEFA and Ladakh in October 1962. The first victims were the civilian IB personnel manning the observation posts. Mullik, Director IB, has been criticized for having exposed them to this risk. The IB undertook this task since the army had declined to occupy these forward posts. The army could not disobey a direction from the government. They could only advise and it was for the government to accept their advice or replace the army chief. The IB personnel had no protection and this forward policy provoked China. In case these forward posts had not been established, China would have occupied them without any opposition and it would have been difficult to dislodge them. The question remains whether a major Chinese attack was foreseen. Perhaps, occupation of the Dhola ridge was the immediate provocation. A salutary aftermath of the debacle was the reorganization of the Intelligence structure. Two separate organizations. IB and RAW were set up for internal and external intelligence respectively. The IB became essentially a Central Police organization. Rajiv Gandhi’s attempts to make it more broad-based failed.

and punitive action. The bogey of saffron terrorism has been raised by some politicians only to discredit the opposition.

The massacre of a large number of CRPF personnel in April-May 2010 led to a demand for employing the Army against internal insurgency. The army needs laws like AFSPA and cannot fight own citizens as ruthlessly as they can against a foreign enemy. The need is to improve the training and operational capability of the police. The terrorists in J&K, North East and Maoists cleverly decided to exploit the Human Rights organizations to hit back at the security forces. The call by human rights activists and self-styled intellectuals to justify killing of police personnel is misplaced. It has almost become a religion for the Human Rights organizations to criticize the security forces without checking what kind of people they were defending. Not only the government but all the major political parties are hostile to these organizations. Arun Jaitley rightly pointed out that the over ground face of the underground is the real danger. State is not the ogre as painted by them and is a protector of the citizens.

Intelligence community is blamed whenever the administrative authorities are caught unbalanced. Lack of military preparations and faults of the police are drowned in the talk of intelligence failure. Intelligence about some activities in Kargil was available in February 1999. It should have been investigated by sending patrols or other means. The lesson is that no part of the border should be left unguarded. The terror attack in Mumbai on 26/11 is a good example of how intelligence inputs were ignored. The operational authorities took the excuse that the intelligence was non-actionable. No intelligence should be ignored with such remarks. Instead, there should be an attempt to focus on what more information is required to take action. The book, *Siege*, co-authored by Adrian Levy claims that the US had given twenty six warnings about the Mumbai attack. The IB and RAW are unlikely to comment and the truth will remain unknown. The report by the Enquiry Commission comprising of Mr. Pradhan and Mr. Balachandran has pointed out the failures of the police but the media has generally ignored these parts of the

Report. Mere assurances of corrective action are not adequate and effective steps must be taken to improve intelligence and punish those who support such acts. We must change our image of being a soft state.

Part Two of the book comprises excerpts from articles published in the *Freedom First* on security, external dangers, corruption, governance and public affairs. The trial of Headley and sentence of thirty five years imprisonment by the US court angered India who thought it to be their right to try the person responsible for the Mumbai attack. The Indian courts would have taken a much longer time and perhaps pronounced a lighter punishment. It was good that he was tried in the USA. Afzal Guru was hanged in February 2013 after a delay of a few years. There has been criticism by organizations and some political leaders who want to ban death sentence. They forget that death sentence by the courts is awarded only in deserving cases. The country has paid a high price for the release of three dreaded terrorists in exchange of passengers on flight hijacked to Kandhar. A similar let down took place to get the daughter of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed released. The author has recommended that a resolution be passed in the parliament that the government would not give in to the demand of terrorists. The police arrested the terrorists responsible for the Delhi bombing. The HRD minister sanctioned legal aid to them in national interest and others demanded a judicial enquiry into the police raid on Batla House. Such acts can only demoralize the security services.

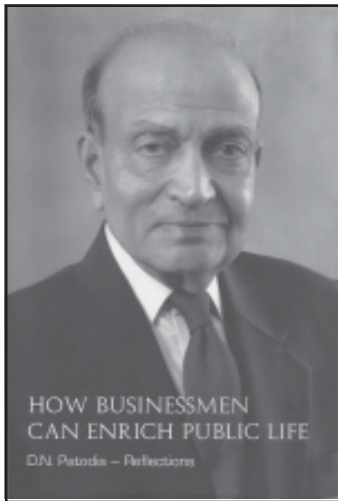
The Arab Spring has caused instability in the Middle East and Africa. There is a danger of jihadi rhetoric raging there to spread to India also. Zawahiri has announced plans for a unit for jihad in India. The USA has suffered a few terror attacks like the Boston bombers and the shoe bomber. Few cases of corruption, espionage, denigration of institutions and poor governance have been given.

The book is a must not only for members of the Intelligence community and students of history but also for the general public who are the main victims of terror acts and fault lines in governance.

QUESTIONS NEEDING ANSWERS

- 1) How could celebrities re-examine products already licensed by the Government? They endorsed "Maggie" as it was approved. Should they be penalized?
- 2) Is Yoga compulsory?
- 3) Why is Pakistan reigniting the K issue? Any thoughts?

Ashok Karnik



HOW BUSINESSMEN CAN ENRICH PUBLIC LIFE – D. N. PATODIA – REFLECTIONS by S. V. Raju, published by Project for Economic Education, Mumbai
● 2014 ● pages 225.

Reviewed by Mr. Peter Greenhalgh, independent Research Professional, Oxford, UK.

Mr. D. N. Patodia (DNP) has witnessed and participated in over eight decades of remarkable change in India's economic and political developments, and for four decades was often at the centre of some of these

developments. He was unwilling to write a biography preferring to "let my work speak for me". Fortunately for us, we have the next best thing, in that his friend and close associate for many years, Mr. S. V. Raju, has brought together and provided commentary on a collection of DNP's speeches. These illustrate both DNP's wide range of activities as well as his in-depth knowledge of many issues. In addition, DNP provides some personal reminiscences that help to set the scene for the remainder of the work. However, it would have been interesting to learn more about DNP and his family's business interests – and the specific issues faced in their operation.

Although many speeches were written some decades ago, the topics and issues covered are highly relevant today, and young readers (as well as many older readers) will benefit from the wide-ranging analysis and suggested solutions presented in the book. The book is very well written and provides interesting and sometimes fascinating overviews and insights into specific topics and issues against a background of India's dramatic political and economic changes since the 1960s.

Following an introduction by Mr. Raju and some reflections by DNP the book is divided into 5 diverse sections. The first deals with Inter-State/Federal relations, which in a variety of guises have had a dramatic influence on India's political and economic development. The regions covered include Rajasthan (from which DNP's family originated and which he represented very effectively in the Lok Sabha in the mid-late 1960s), West Bengal, North East India and Kashmir. Two further sections, providing analysis of India's relationships with Tibet (and thus China) and Russia and are very enlightening. DNP illustrates how the close alignment with the Soviet Communist economic and political system was not in India's

best interests, in particular the adverse effects on India's foreign trade and development created by the rupee-rouble trade.

The fourth, and longest section, and to me the most interesting, provides an in-depth analysis of various aspects of the Indian economy covering the Planning Commission; the nationalisation of the banks in 1969 and the inefficiencies that this created; the role of the FICCI (the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry); the many missed opportunities for growth, many of which resulted from the pursuit of socialist/statist policies by the dominant Congress governments; and an analysis of the prospects and challenges of various reforms. The list of issues to be acted upon are still as relevant today as they were in the 1960s-90s as Prime Minister Modi endeavours to re-activate the reform process to achieve continued economic growth in India.

The book provides analysis and effective and practical solutions to a wide range of activities impacting the economy and the private sector. The growing impact of government regulation after independence on business operations and the associated rise of the socialist state are important themes. DNP's analysis details the over-control, the over-protection, the over-regulation and over-taxation of India's economy creating a high cost economy that led to the falling behind of growth rates during the first 40 years of independence. DNP is particularly critical of the failure of the Planning Commission's Five-Year Plans, including the neglect of agriculture, the adoption of wrong priorities and the faulty planning mechanism. While not totally opposed to state-owned institutions he recognised that the regulatory environment in which these operated, including minimum interference by civil servants and politicians, was vital to their success.

DNP had liberal economic and political views, which from the 1960s until the mid 1980s were a long way from the mainstream. Time and events have proved many of his views correct. Recently Prime Minister Modi's Government has launched its "Make in India" campaign and many of the policies pursued, such as the strong appeal to foreign investors to invest in Indian manufacturing and services, as well as the need to

significantly reduce bureaucracy and regulation in setting up and operating Indian businesses were foreseen in DNP speeches some decades ago. This book provides several lessons to the current Indian government's "Make in India" policy. While at the time, DNP and his Swatantra Party and FICCI colleagues were "voices in the wilderness" many of their views and recommendations have been vindicated over time. India has never been short of small companies and in some sectors Indian companies are world leaders. However, one of India's problems is the "Missing Middle companies" and the inability of small firms to grow. Although DNP never actually refers to this – his analysis provides some explanation of the "Missing Middle".

The chapter on the FICCI, of which DNP was an influential member and President in 1985, is equally interesting. Over its 90-year history, FICCI has played a major role in representing business and industry interests regarding domestic and international issues. DNP participated closely in the national and political deliberation/economic debates regarding key aspects of industry development, trade, banking, communications and finance. From independence to the mid 1980s FICCI operated in an environment where private enterprise was severely constrained and state enterprises dominated and controlled many major activities such as manufacturing, transport, mining and banking. DNP's election to the Presidency of FICCI in 1985 coincided with the government's realisation that the Indian economy was stagnating, particularly in comparison with its rapidly expanding Asian neighbours. Several major reforms measures at the FICCI that DNP helped to initiate enabled improved coordination with the Government and assisted in the formulation and shaping of economic policies and international treaties. FICCI and DNP assisted in establishing close economic cooperation between India and several other countries – and DNP led high-level delegations to these countries.

The fifth section of the book contains summaries of three seminal presentations made by DNP which are still relevant and again illustrate DNP's ability to identify major domestic and global issues affecting India as well as a willingness to provide possible solutions. The topics include the continuing housing crisis in India, the enormous opportunities presented by the Oceans and the continuing and unstoppable movement towards global integration.

Finally there are three appendices, which contain abridged version of speeches made by DNP in 1985-86 during his FICCI Presidency. One deals with the crucial roles of trader and producer and the severe constraints and over-regulation faced; the second discusses the "Third

Industrial Revolution" covering advances in information and communications, genetic technology, energy, outer space and the oceans, and their implications for India. The third discusses the opportunities and challenges facing business.

A few suggestions:

- The book would have benefitted from an index – and given the technology available today this would have been relatively easy to prepare. (Even from the 1970s DNP was very much aware of the impact that technological change could/would have on India!). However, there is an appendix detailing some important political and economic landmarks between 1969 and 2014.
- In some cases, it is not always easy to differentiate between whether the comments are made by DNP or Mr. S. V. Raju.
- The failure on some occasions to explain the meaning of some acronyms used, which may not be familiar to both the younger and foreign reader.

In making DNP contributions and arguments on a wide range of topics available to a wider audience, many of which are directly relevant to India today, Mr. Raju had done a great service to both India and to business.

*

A Reader's Comment

This is an unusual book, truly enriching the reader. Mr. S. V. Raju has done a fantastic job in putting it together. It is readable and interesting. The book has several new dimensions not known to me hitherto about certain critical issues that continue to confront the nation. My respects and admiration for D. N. Patodiaji has multiplied. His role in the Parliament, his arguments, his concerns, his courage and consistency deserve that this book is read by more leaders and people's representatives. He inspires many ways.

Those in Parliament today, old and new, would benefit from reading the book. It exposes several lapses, lacuna and even lies in our policies at critical times of independent India.

Dr. N. Bhaskara Rao, Founder–Chairman of Centre for Media Studies (CMS), New Delhi.

Educating Adults

Life and Death

Firoze Hirjikaka

And then when you're 70, you wake up to the fact that you barely know your wife and your kids; and ask yourself whether the Vice Presidency and the accumulated savings were worth it.

"This is a matter of life and death". How many of us have glibly uttered this statement without appreciating its true import. This fact was hammered home to me with the sudden and premature passing of S. V. Raju. Here was a man in reasonably good health and in full control of his faculties. He developed an infection (hardly a life threatening illness) and had recovered sufficiently to be discharged from the hospital. Then within a blink of an eye, he was gone. There was no decision he could have taken that would have changed this outcome. Death is not only a great leveller; it is the one aspect of our existence that we cannot control. It makes an appearance either when expected, or with a terrifying suddenness – and all we can do is look it in the face and then lower our eyes.

So death is not in our control, but life is. So many of us do not appreciate that the greatest gift our Creator bestowed on us is free will; and we squander it on superstition, a sense of futility, or chasing after symbols of prosperity. The most insidious of these is superstition; and surrendering of our free will to imagined but unproven divine intervention. I am often amazed and aghast at the spectacle of supposedly well-educated and cosmopolitan individuals showering gold or jewellery on idols in famous temples – as if the deity has any use for these baubles. Equally bewildering is this penchant of bargaining with God: grant me this or that boon and I will make a pilgrimage to half a dozen temples, or perform a maha-puja, or hold a mass. If one looks at it objectively, this is merely the modern version of the ancient ritual of offering animal sacrifices; although this was in pagan times when the concept of one God was still forming. Then there is this particularly Indian obsession with *muharrat* or auspicious dates. I'm not talking about uneducated villagers. The worthies who govern us and presumably affect the quality

of our lives are especially prone to this. After 10,000 years of civilization, this is what we have progressed to? Not exactly a ringing endorsement.

The reality is that where you will land up in the after-life depends entirely on how you live your life on this planet. The Hindus call it *karma*, but it goes by many names. Confessing your sins to a priest and then muttering a few Hail Marys will not allow to you to escape God's judgment. Similarly, you cannot cheat or do harm to your fellow man and expect absolution by performing a *puja*. Nor can you constantly bother God with your petty problems. He is not there to mollycoddle you. He has put you on this earth to experience life and hopefully learn from it. He will judge you in the next life. During your time on earth, you are on your own. There is no free lunch either in this world or the next.

Let us now turn to material prosperity. So many of us chase relentlessly after money, promotions, or prestige; we put in 18-hour work days, pay only perfunctory attention to our families and scheme to get ahead of our rivals and competitors. And then when you're 70, you wake up to the fact that you barely know your wife and your kids; and ask yourself whether the Vice Presidency and the accumulated savings were worth it. You regret that you did not spend more time and make a greater effort to appreciate the simple pleasures of life. You also regret the effort and stress exerted in putting down your business rivals; and the bitterness it has generated in you: a bitterness that sometimes involuntarily comes out even against your loved ones.

The quality of life does not depend exclusively on wealth and material possessions – although the absence



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of wealth can also be degrading. It also does not depend on meditating on a mountaintop, or shutting yourself in a monastery. You will not earn brownie points with the Almighty that way. The Creator is not terribly impressed with you chanting mantras or novenas all day; nor by going on extended pilgrimages. He sent you down here to live life; and will judge you on the manner you do so. He will observe how you interact with your fellow men: whether you are helpful and generous, or devious and vengeful. If you believe there is life after death, this is the most important criterion that will determine your place in it.

Just as important it is to appreciate the true values of living, it is equally important to dispel some of the myths about death and recognise its true meaning. Whether you believe it to be endowed by God or a product of evolution, it is undeniable that the body is a vessel for the life force. In spite of the recent spectacular advances in medicines with artificial body parts and transplants and what have you, once the life force leaves the body, it is the final curtain. The life force, also known as the soul, then goes on its way to destination we humans can only surmise about. What is left behind is an inanimate corpse. The

rituals and ceremonies over the departed, that we attach so much importance to, are primarily for the benefit and comfort of the loved ones left behind. Where the soul goes to will depend entirely on how the individual behaved in life – and nothing. That is why all the controversies about the method of disposal of the dead are meaningless.

There is a cliché saying “live every day as if it is your last”. It sounds a bit corny, but it makes a lot of sense. Life is fleeting and death rarely announces its coming. Therefore, it can only be beneficial to clean your slate as frequently as you can. Above all, harbouring a grudge, seeking vengeance and other negative emotions not only blot your copybook in the afterlife, they eat away at you and degrade the value of this life as well. So try to make amends when you can, spread a little joy and do not evaluate every situation in terms of what’s in it for you. That way, whenever it’s your time to meet your Maker, you will be ready.

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Examination Reforms at the Bachelor’s Level

R. W. Desai

The way out, I suggest, is to create a dual proviso: a ‘B.A. by examination’ and a ‘B.A. examination free’... The question that needs to be addressed is that of the market value of the ‘B.A. examination free’ degree.

It is a sad reality that, in general, the university/college examination system throughout the country has failed on account of rampant cheating. The shocking scenes shown recently on TV of students being brazenly given outside help while writing their answers, despite the presence of invigilators, was an exposure of the farce that these examinations have become. For the conscientious students the scenario is repulsive, filling their minds with cynicism and disgust. The employment of stricter measures has, over the decades, proved futile and, even if at some stage is successful, goes against the spirit of true education and so would be self-defeating. Faced as we are with an ever increasing demand for mass education in numerous academic disciplines, and with a multiplicity of competitive hurdles that need to be negotiated for securing jobs, today’s students are prepared to go to any lengths to reach

the coveted goal of employment. As is well known, these hurdles are formidable. The UPSC tests, TOEFL, CAT, SAT, CLAT, NET, CTET, and IIT entrance and qualifying tests, to name just a few, along with the rigorous interviews and psychological tests which prospective candidates are required to face in order to be selected for admission to institutes of higher education or for employment in government or in the corporate sector, are effective filters for the elimination of unsuitable applicants.

The question we must then ask is whether it is at all desirable, or even necessary, for universities to exercise a police-like restraint against potential cheating. If the true concept of a university is its ability to provide knowledge, wisdom, and culture to those who desire these virtues, then the university is no place for the exercise of a danda-

discipline. Nor should this be the role that teachers – many of whom are distinguished scholars – thus exposing them to insult, hostility, and even violence as in several recent cases. Rather, this role should be filled by the organizations that conduct the competitive tests mentioned above, since the bureaucrats heading these organizations have the resources and authority to enforce strict disciplinary controls by commissioning police and army personnel to ensure fair play.

Accordingly, it seems to me that we need to go back to the earlier concept of true education and strive to provide the best values for those students who are passionate in their quest for knowledge. Since the bachelor's degree is the minimum qualification for eligibility to appear for any competitive test, it is unfortunate but unavoidable that universities have hitherto made degrees in the humanities and commerce available for both serious and not-so-serious students, both groups having to take the same examination, thus muddying the waters. The way out, I suggest, is to create a dual proviso: a 'B.A. by examination' and a 'B.A. examination free'. To clarify: the 'B.A. by examination' will follow the usual pattern of our present system, but the 'B.A. examination free' will cater to students who are interested in obtaining a degree without going through the rigour of sitting for an examination.

The degree 'B.A. examination free', will have only one requirement which will be strictly enforced: the students who opt for this degree will have to show an 80% attendance in all lecture classes. To many of us this may seem an absurd concession, but let us pause for a moment and consider the consequences. The temptation to cheat will disappear, and if any student who has opted for the 'B.A. by examination', is caught cheating, s/he will immediately be transferred to the 'B.A. examination free' category. The question that needs to be addressed is that of the market value of the 'B.A. examination free' degree. As far as I know, there is no precedent for the award of such a degree, thus making its introduction an innovative, even revolutionary, step. My answer to the above question will be, therefore, speculative.

If the students in the 'B.A. examination free' category maintain an 80% attendance in classes, without going to sleep, they will certainly be better equipped intellectually to face life than they were three years ago when they passed out from school. Further, should they decide to sit for the competitive tests, they could take advantage of the coaching institutes available in any part of the country, an option open to the students of both

categories, thus providing them with a common playing field. However, I think it is logical to surmise that not too many students from the 'B.A. examination free' category will have the inclination or the stamina to take these tests, preferring to choose the prospect of quick employment in lower paying, less demanding, jobs; or the choice of joining the family business; or of contracting a lucrative marriage.

It is ironic that in contrast to the holding of university/college examinations during which unfair means are widely prevalent, in the umpiring of all competitive sports events the strictest and uncompromising standards of judgment are enforced leading to the disqualification of violators, often for life. But society, evidently, has failed to realize that misdemeanour during examinations is a far more serious and insidious defalcation, affecting more adversely our young students by destroying their moral fibre, than any breach of rules that occurs in the field of sports. Since in the academic sphere our universities have over the past 60 years failed to stem the rot which has become endemic, infecting the country's youth during its most formative and impressionable years from 18 to 21, it is high time we acknowledge our helplessness and look for an alternative solution to the problem.

If our public institutions in which these young men and women will seek employment in later years are to be protected from the likelihood of ensuing contamination in their functioning, it is imperative that a remedy be found without delay. We ought to bear in mind that during the colonial period of our history the B.A. degree was considered a sufficient qualification for employment in almost any administrative or corporate opening. Today the degree by itself has no significance except for its limited status value in social circles, or for its being the gateway for candidates to sit for entrance tests leading to specialization in any one particular area of knowledge, without which employment in a high income bracket is impossible.

To conclude, the bifurcation of the study programme into two channels towards the acquiring of the B.A. degree that this paper has recommended will be fair to all aspirants, debarring none from realizing their dream of success while, at the same time, removing the temptation to cheat and, simultaneously, eliminating the possibility of sub-standard candidates securing employment in positions of responsibility in both public and private sectors. Critical responses to this proposal are welcome, for it is abundantly clear that the present

policy of conducting examinations to which all students, serious and non-serious, are subjected has not worked, thus necessitating discussion among educationists,

followed by the implementation of a viable solution.

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A Doctor In The Air: Ancient Aviator Anecdote

Cecil Parker

In the air force, medical officers, though on the posted strength of squadrons (sqn), function directly under the Senior Medical Officer (SMO) of the air base where their sqn is located. As doctors, they report professionally to the SMO and as officers, to the CO of their units. This dual reporting can be a trifle confusing to new doctors recruited directly from civilian medical colleges. Unlike their counterparts from the Armed Forces Medical College (AFMC), their introduction to the armed forces is a brief orientation course at the Army Medical Corp (AMC) Centre before donning a uniform. In view of their relatively long training period, all medical officers are somewhat older at entry and are also granted a higher rank.

In 1970 a new medical officer on posting from Civvy Street reported to the sqn I was in command of. I welcomed him, explained his role, and hoped he would find time to interact with the sqn personnel to guide and help them whether they required medical help or not. He seemed receptive but was still a bit uncomfortable in his new Flt Lt's uniform. He told me he was married but would be staying in the mess as his wife was to deliver a son soon. (I attributed his confident prediction of gender to his profession).

I received reports of our Doctor's unhappiness with the 'unhygienic' conditions of our sqn tea club and flight crew room. I had a rather high spirited bunch of young officers at that time and our new medical officer seemed to resent being referred to as 'Doc' by them. Being a teetotaler he cautioned them against visiting the bar and threatened to have them 'grounded' if he felt they were imbibing unwisely. These veiled warnings resulted in some mischief when the Doc's scooter was 'misplaced' and he received a telegram informing him of the birth of a son. Doc came around happily distributing sweets but three days later was in a disappointed mode when he received actual news of the birth of a daughter. I had to make special efforts to help him adjust to sqn life!

One afternoon I was required to carry out a routine air test on our Hunter trainer aircraft (AC). There is a little known old IAF regulation that authorises medical officers to be given an air experience sortie on AC at their base. I spoke to my Flt Cdr and asked him to ascertain from our Doc if he was free and would like to fly. When I reached the AC I saw him fully kitted out in borrowed flying kit, briefed and ready for the very first flight of his life. He coped well, seemed to enjoy the experience and post-flight appeared a bit less judgmental and friendlier all round (I was informed the next morning that our Doc conducted his sick parade wearing flying overalls)!

During the 1971 Indo-Pak war Doc, though with his leg in plaster owing to a scooter accident, stayed continuously with our pilots and technicians on the tarmac and blast pens in Pathankot helping in any way he could – a very valuable asset to the sqn indeed. A few months later when my own posting orders were received, he came to request my help in getting him a pair of flying overalls which strictly speaking he was not entitled to! I had an extra pair on which I had the sqn crest and a Hunter shoulder patch attached and gifted them to him.

Over the years Doc kept in touch and I learned that he had become a specialist and reached air rank. Years after we had both left the IAF we met in the NCR where Doc was now a consultant in a corporate hospital. With great pride he told me that he had fathered three daughters, two of whom were in the medical profession. He enquired about each of the officers in our sqn by name. His prosperity was quite evident in his girth hence I fully understood his one regret; he could no longer fit into his flying overalls!

Cecil Parker is a retired air vice marshal of the IAF and a freelance writer who can be contacted at cvparker22@gmail.com

S. V. Raju : A Staunch Supporter of the Tibetan Cause

Mr. S. V. Raju set up Friends of Tibet, Bombay in the 1960s. He was very passionate about Tibet's freedom struggle and in the last 40 years has been instrumental in organizing many events in Mumbai highlighting the Tibetan cause.

Mr. Sethu Das, Founder, Friends of Tibet fondly remembers how he approached Mr. Raju to consult him about the cause and how Mr. Raju guided him initially.

Mr. Rohit Singh, campaigner of Friends of Tibet remembers Mr. Raju as a regular face at the events and campaigns for Tibetan freedom. The last such gathering was on World Human Rights Day, 10th December 2014 at Mumbai. Despite his ill-health, he attended the function and spoke at length about his long association with the movement. Addressing the young group of Tibetans, he said that he may not live to see a free Tibet, but the struggle must go on and freedom ultimately wins.

Tibetan poet and activist, Mr. Tenzin Tsundue writes that he has lost a good friend and a long-time friend and supporter of Tibet. He and his Tibetan mates will light one hundred butter-lamps for his soul's journey into the next life!

As a mark of their respect and on behalf of Tibetans, Tenzin dedicates the Declaration made at the International Rangzen Conference, New Delhi, May 2015, and its report, to his friend and inspiration, S. V. Rajuji.

We reproduce below the four-point commitment of the Rangzen Conference:

- The Tibetan freedom struggle
- The critical situation inside Tibet
- To promote unity among Tibetans
- Garnering international support



S. V. Raju at Marine Drive, Mumbai, March 10, Tibetan Uprising Day 2003

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