

Newsletter has become my close relative for the last many years. As a multi-user the publication with its many columns of analysis, reviews and introductions of books make the readers to look at it as a reference material.

Bagalkot **Hanamant Tasagaonkar**

I would like to share my success story with all readers. About three years back I was confused between continuing my job or to take care of home front. In a book fair, a polite representative introduced the *NBT Newsletter*. I subscribed for the *Newsletter* and forgot about it. Then I read an article about translation and another on creative writing. I was writing for newspapers since long but was not able to choose this as my career. Gradually I started approaching publishers and started getting translation jobs. I worked from home and this was an ideal solution for me. I also got offers from publishers to publish my books. Only after three years of this happening, now I am a proud recipient of national level Ambika Prasad Divya Rajat Alankaran for my first book of Hindi short stories titled *Den Uski, Hamare Liye*. This journey is going on. Thanks a lot to *NBT Newsletter* for changing my thoughts and bringing a success start.

By e-mail **Antara Karvade**

I thank you for providing me an opportunity to be present at a very successful book fair organised by the NBT at Aurangabad on December 2 to 11, 2005. I think it was the first such fair held in Aurangabad. It was attended by a large number of book lovers. I was told by several Urdu and Marathi writers that the attendance was beyond their expectations. A large number of children made the proceedings quite exciting and beautiful on 8th December. I have never signed so many autograph-books for the children! The questions put to me were intelligent.

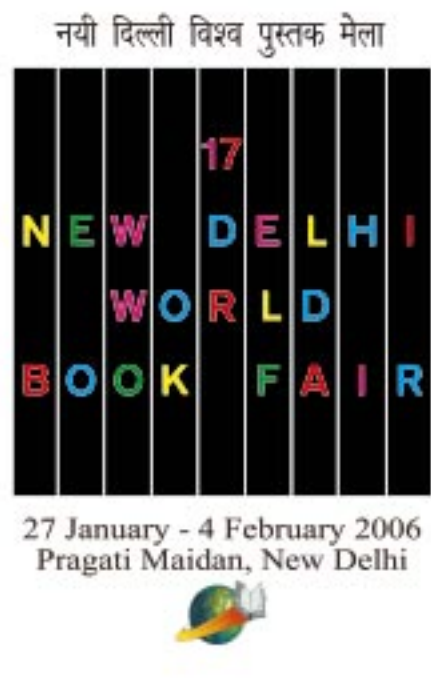
I think that the NBT, by taking up programmes like Aadan Pradan and holding such fairs in different parts of the country, is contributing to the objective of nation-building in an extremely meaningful way, serving the objective of national integration. I think that no other government body, including the Sahitya Akademi, is performing this task so single-mindedly.

Hyderabad **Jeelani Bano**

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FORTHCOMING BOOK FAIRS

Itanagar Book Fair
1st Week of March 2006

On India Government Service

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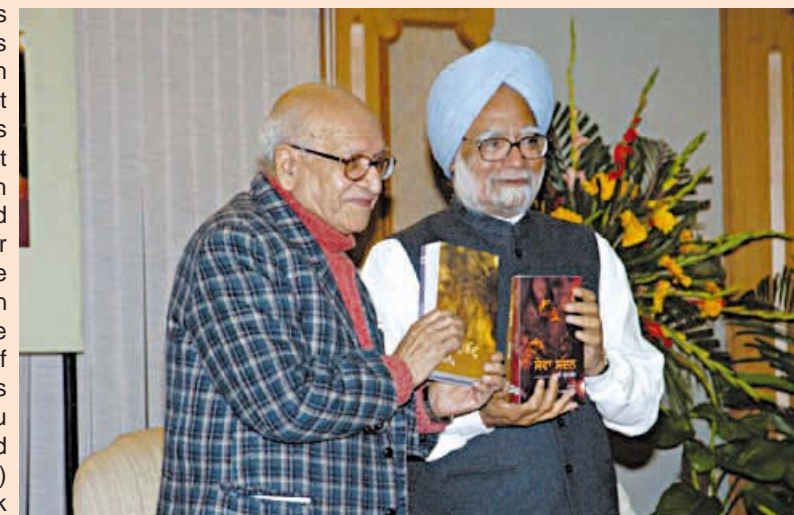
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PREMCHAND WAS A GREAT FEMINIST OF MODERN INDIA: PM

"Any literature that captures the beauty and finer aspects of life in the midst of gloom and despondency is a great literature. Premchand's writings belong to that category of literature which have deeply influenced progressive forces all over the world", said Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, while releasing the special editions of two of Premchand's novels *Sevasadan* (in Hindi, Urdu and Punjabi) and *Rangbhumi* (Hindi and Urdu) published by National Book Trust, India at a function organised at PM's residence on 10 January 2006.



Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh releases the books; to his right is Prof. Bipan Chandra, Chairman, NBT

Lauding National Book Trust, India for bringing out the special editions of these epoch making novels, Dr Singh underlined the contribution of Premchand as "one of the great feminists of modern India" as the great Hindi and Urdu writer "argued for restoring the rights of women." He complemented the National Book Trust, India led by its Chairman, Prof Bipan

Chandra for playing a major role in "national integration by bringing out translations of major Indian literary works and making them available for the general masses".

Speaking on the occasion, Prof Namwar Singh, eminent Hindi critic, brought out the integral aspects of Premchand as a revolutionary writer by quoting from Premchand's letters and articles. He

underlined the championing of the cause of Swaraj by Premchand, which is still quite relevant in our times.

Prof Mohammad Hassan, an eminent Urdu critic, brought out the way power permeates the life of the general masses something that was the greatest concern of Premchand. Prof Hassan underlined the issues of untouchability, social discrimination, gender justice that Premchand painted through his novels and short stories which still exist in our times in one way or the other.

Earlier Prof Bipan Chandra, Chairman, NBT, India welcomed the Prime Minister and the other distinguished guests. While underlining the historical importance of Premchand, Prof Chandra informed that NBT would be translating these novels in all major Indian languages. Ms. Nuzhat Hassan, Director, NBT also spoke on the occasion.

—Kumar Vikram

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Ms. Nuzhat Hassan, Director, NBT, speaking on the occasion

MAKING A CASE FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT

"Panchayati Raj and decentralization of the participatory process of development is the key to the attainment of full employment in the country," said Shri Mani Shankar Aiyer while releasing the Trust's latest publication *Development with Dignity: A Case for Full Employment* written by the eminent economist Prof. Amit Bhaduri.

Shri Aiyer said that merely because an economy becomes a part of the global economy, it may not lead it to respond positively to the requirements of the society. Terming the publication of the book as timely, Shri Aiyer emphasized that as long as the process of governance remains guided by the 'classes', it may not be able to address the needs, of the 'masses' and that is what the Panchayati Raj seeks to set right.

Earlier, eminent economist Prof. Prabhat Pattnaik while lauding the theoretical propositions as put forth by Prof. Bhaduri in the book, stated that the current economic debate of the market vs. the state is enough



Shri Mani Shankar Aiyer releasing the book

to guarantee the development of the people at large with dignity. Stating that Prof. Bhaduri also argues for a cohesive approach, he believes that coming from a distinguished economist, this line of argument will command due attention and acceptance.

Speaking on the occasion former Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University Prof. Deepak Nayyar pointed towards the dichotomy between 'global' and 'local', between 'India' and 'Bharat', as it exists in contemporary scenario. He further added that the most significant contribution of this important publication is that it shows the way to connect the two differing

aspects of India. In that sense, he emphasized, the book is a "reality check for the current socio-economic situation which is conveyed in a jargon free manner".

Prof. Jean Drez, who provided his own perspective on the book as well as to the employment guarantee scheme as propounded by the government, stated that he did not agree fully with the visionary goal, as put forth by Prof. Bhaduri in the book.

Prof. Bhaduri, who was also present during the discussion shared his ideas discussed in the book. The book brought out under the Popular Social Science series of NBT demolishes many conventional economic propositions and demonstrates forcefully why a full employment society with dignity for all citizens is feasible in the near future.

Earlier, Prof. Bipan Chandra, Chairman, NBT, welcomed the guests and introduced the Popular Social Science series of the Trust.
—Kumar Vikram



Prof. Deepak Nayyar speaking on the occasion



A view of the gathering

FORTHCOMING TITLES FROM NBT

Courts, Legislatures and Media Freedom

Edited by K N Harikumar

Going beyond the confines of the traditional perspectives in the law, the book takes the debate on the relationships between the judiciary, the legislatures and the public in the context of press and media freedom, to a wider socio-political perspectives. contributors to the volume include Fali S Nariman, Samar Ditya Pal, N R Madhava Menon Rajeev Dhawan, Uday Raj Rai and B R P Bhaskar.

Historical Beginnings into the Making of the Aryan

Edited by Romila Thapar

The book attempts to set out the parameters of the concept of 'the Aryan' and the form it took in the last couple of centuries. The essays in the volume representing four different

aspects - Historiography of the Concept of Aryan; Cultures and societies of the Indus tradition; History of Linguistic Arguments and Agro-pastoralism and the Migrations of the Indo-Iranians - by Romila Thapar, Jonathan Mark Kenoyer Madhav Deshpande and Shereen Ratnagar familiarizes the general reader with the broad spectrum of current scholarly discussions on the issue.

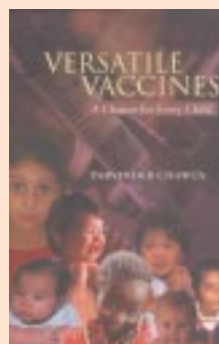
Partition of India

by Anita Inder Singh

The partition of British India in 1947 was one of the most cataclysmic events in world history and the debate on it is endless. This book, written in a lucid language for the general reader, takes us through the complex political parleys and stormy debates that took place during the heady days before the partition, amongst the parties concerned.

NBT PUBLICATIONS OF THE MONTH

Versatile Vaccines: A Chance for Every Child, Parvinder chawla, NBT, ISBN 81-237-4611-3, Rs. 95.00



The miraculous power of vaccines to fight a multitude of menacing microbes is undoubtedly one of the greatest success stories of medicine. Several conventional as well as modern vaccines, based on revolutionary techniques of genetic engineering, today act as potent tools to keep many disease-causing bugs at bay. Not just that. A host of novel preventive and therapeutic vaccines are in the offing, thanks to the wondrous advances in vaccine research. This profusely illustrated book sketches, in a very simple language, the present scenario of vaccine development and emphasises the role of versatile vaccines in offering the most precious gift to a child—a chance to live a healthy life ahead.

Chapters in this book include:

- The Stepping Stone
- Bugs at Bay
- Modern Vaccines
- AIDS Enigma
- Tackling Hepatitis
- Expanding Horizons
- Delivering Vaccines

Baba Kharak Singh and India's Struggle for Freedom, Mohinder Singh, NBT, ISBN 81-237-4598-2, Rs. 40.00



This monograph on Baba Kharak Singh endeavours to depict the life and times of this great son of India, who was mainly responsible for moulding the course of events in the politics of modern Panjab and inculcating nationalist and secular values in the regional politics. In 1922, Baba Kharak Singh was elected as the President of the Provincial Congress Committee in Panjab. It was his vision and leadership which was greatly responsible for bringing about close cooperation between the Sikh struggle for Gurdwara reform and the larger movement for country's liberation. Babaji was popularly described as the "Uncrowned king of the Sikhs". Pandit Nehru described Babaji as the bravest among the captains of the struggle for India's freedom. When the Akali civil resisters succeeded in forcing the powerful British administrators in Panjab to handover the keys of the treasury of the Golden Temple to Baba Kharak Singh, Mahatma Gandhi sent him the following telegram: FIRST DECISIVE BATTLE FOR INDIA'S FREEDOM WON. CONGRATULATIONS.

Prarambh, Gangadhar Gadgil, Translated by Arvind Dixit, NBT, ISBN 81-237-4572-9, Rs. 240.00



Prarambh tells the story of the fascinating transformation that Mumbai went through under the impact of new forces during the eventful decades between 1818 and 1869. This dynamic half century saw the setting up of new schools, literary and scientific societies, medical colleges and the building of road, rail and telegraphic networks. It was also a period when the tightening yoke of colonial rule were frustrating the aspirations of a newly emerging society. At the vanguard of this change stood the charismatic figure of Jagannath Shankarshet who ignited and nurtured the hopes of the masses and paved the way for a resurgent India. Institutions such as the Elphinstone College, Grant Medical College and the Asiatic Society stand as lasting testimony to the vision of this great pioneer. Weaving strands of history deftly into the narrative, *Prarambh* recreates this vibrant era and recounts the role that Indian enterprise, philanthropy and participation played in the building of a modern India. This English rendering brings to you a classic of modern Marathi literature.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Aadhitha Kaaviyam, I l a m k a m b a n , Thanmanak Kural, Kaveri Nagar, Ramanathapuram, Coimbatore—45, Rs. 20 A collection of poetry praising Shri Adithanar, who changed the course of the newspaper industry in the state of Tamil Nadu.



Hillol (poems in Bangla)
Galpa Mala (short stories in Bangla)
Devi Tirtha Vaisno Devi (Travelogue in Bangla)
All the above three books were authored by Nemai Chandra Das and published by



AD Book Publishing, Krishna Nagar, West Bengal.

World's Great Personalities: Inspiring Lives to Motivate and Shape Your Success, P.S. Bright, Brigh Careers, 1525 Nai Sarak, Delhi – 110006, ISBN 81-7199-046, Rs. 150

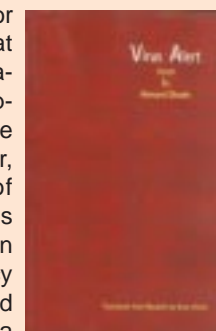


The book provides an insight to the lives of the eminent people—scientists, politicians, writers, philosophers, who have left and indelible impression on the minds of the people.

Virus Alert, Hemant Divate, 1701/1702, 6A-Whispering Palms, Lokhandwala Township, Kandivli (East), Mumbai – 400101, Rs. 100
Virus Alert is a complete English translation

of Hemant Divate's first collection of Marathi poems *Chautishiparyantchya Kavita*, widely acclaimed by now for breaking new ground in Marathi poetry.

Translator Dilip Chitre says: "Hemant Divate is one of the twenty or so Marathi poets that define a 1990s generation. He does not represent a generation. He belongs to it. However, this generation of Marathi poems has been thrown up by an 800 years old literacy culture that is alive and looking forward. It is a generation that is making poems out of here and now, just as it has been done all along by poets. I have a feeling that just as the original poems reached me, my translations will find their reader."



The Trust is bringing out a publication titled *Indira Gandhi* written by eminent writer and journalist Inder Malhotra. Herein we reproduce excerpts from the chapter 'Downward Slide'.

— Editor

The Greenest Prime Minister

In her carefully crafted and much applauded speech she gave expression to her strong feelings about nature and environment being a problem of "singular global importance". She did not ignore the developing countries' sentiment that the affluent nations by "playing up" the issue of environment and growing population were trying to "vitalize growth among the poorer countries". But she pointed out that conservation was of paramount importance to all countries, rich or poor. "This gathering," she told the delegates, "represents man's earnest endeavour to understand his own condition and to protect his own tenancy of the planet". She concluded her speech with a quotation from Atharva Veda, a hymn to Earth, "What of thee I dig out, let that quickly grow over/ let me not hurt your vitals or your heart".

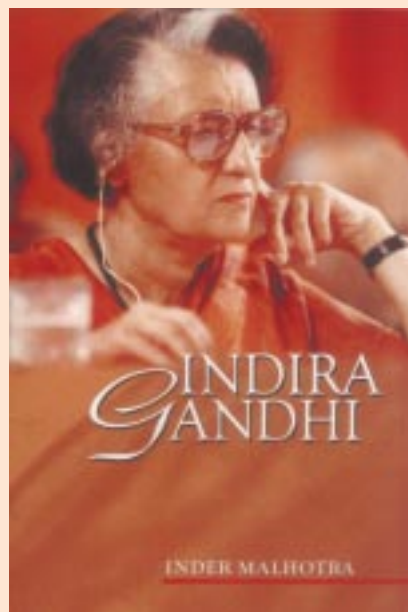
It was not for nothing that as recently as 30 August 2005, *The Hindu*, in a thoughtful editorial on environment, regretted that "green Prime Ministers" were a species "virtually extinct", and added: "It is time Indira Gandhi's virtues as India's first green Prime Minister—whatever her shortcomings as a leader—were highlighted as national policy resource". "A true lover of nature who praised in Parliament activists for confronting tree-felling contractors, she famously reined in trigger-happy princes with a ban on hunting, set up Project Tiger, invigorated the Indian Board of Wildlife, and prohibited trading in furs. She sanctified endangered habitats as sanctuaries and national parks".

After recounting her other brilliant achievements in preserving the environment, the paper described her as the "greenest" Prime Minister. It also lamented that from 1991 Prime Ministers "as a rule have shown little policy or personal interest in conservation of nature. Some have been decidedly anti-green". The paper could have added that Indira, a tireless letter-writer, was in constant correspondence with Salim Ali, the celebrated ornithologist. Before going to Stockholm, she had read Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* from cover to cover. When this leaked out, all copies of Toffler's book in bookshops across the country were sold out.

At a banquet in her honour at the UN conference in the Swedish capital, she had used her after-dinner remarks courteously

to puncture the eminent economist, Gunnar Myrdal's famous verdict that India was a "soft state". In view of how India had handled the grave problem of Bangladesh, it could certainly not be called a soft state, she said, looking directly at Myrdal who was one of the guests, sharing a table with her Scientific Adviser, Ashok Parthasarathy. Myrdal took the opportunity to tell Parthasarathy that despite the Prime Minister's remarks, he stuck to his views. When Parthasarathy reported this to her later, Indira's only comment was: "How do we changed the mindsets of those in the West who are supposed to be friends of ours?"

The savage drought that had tormented 180 million people entered its second year in 1973 and would persist, albeit on a smaller scale, in 1974 and even 1975.



Mounting violence was leading to strikes, processions, and clashes with the police in far too many places. In Bombay where I then lived there were 12,000 strikes, sit-in protests and lockouts during 1972-73. In the key state of U.P, the Provincial Armed Constabulary mutinied. The Army, called out to control the situation, could do so only after 13 Army soldiers and 22 rebellious PAC men had been killed and over a hundred injured.

Into the Nuclear Club

There was an unexpected and dramatic twist to the tale of the railway strike. On 18 May, the country temporarily forgot all about the strike and even the JP Movement to enthusiastically to welcome a landmark achievement for which even her inveterate critics praised Indira. The general public was ecstatic. Early that morning at Pokhran in the Rajasthan desert India had conducted

an underground nuclear detonation and thus become the sixth member of the Nuclear Club, the world's most exclusive. At that time and for some years later, the official Indian position was that it was a Peaceful Nuclear Experiment (PNE) but anyone who knew anything about nuclear matters also knew that a nuclear bomb had been tested.

A day before the great event a top-level, super-secret meeting was held in Delhi to decide whether the button should be pressed or the experiment deferred for the time being. Most of those present, led by P.N. Haksar and P.N. Dhar, wanted the venture postponed, if not abandoned, though for different reasons. The chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Homi Sethna, an engineer rather than a physicist, remained silent. Indira Gandhi looked at Raja Ramanna, the builder of India's Bomb, and said: "Dr. Ramanna, please go ahead. It would be good for the country". It was over two years earlier, a few days after Nixon had ordered the Seventh Fleet to chug towards the Bay of Bengal in the last stages of the Bangladesh War, that she had given the signal to the scientists, headed by Ramanna, to start preparing for the PNE.

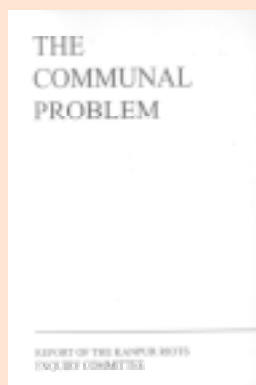
While demonstrating India's ability to produce and test a nuclear weapon, Indira stuck to her policy of not going in for nuclear weapons and concentrate instead on total nuclear disarmament. But she was equally steadfast in insisting that in research and development in the area of nuclear technology India must keep abreast of the rest of the world.

Hardly had the cheers for the Pokhran detonation died down when the country applauded the otherwise beleaguered Indira equally exuberantly. This was because of her comprehensive crackdown, in the month of September, on smugglers, manipulators of foreign exchange and other economic offenders who had become fabulously rich and incredibly influential because of their close connections with not only police and customs officers but also politicians whose elections they often financed. Almost overnight India put paid to this shocking state of affairs by putting 134 Mafia dons in prison and keeping them under detention for two years, thanks to the strengthened Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA).

By this time Indira and her government had begun to feel that the JP Movement would peter out by the year-end. But two startling events in 1975 were to upset this calculation and, indeed, have a profound impact on modern Indian history.

A DOCUMENT TO BE TAKEN NOTE OF

The Communal Problem: Report of the Kanpur Riots Enquiry Committee; National Book Trust, India, 2005, pp. 216; ISBN 81-237-0000-0, Rs. 85 (PB); ISBN 81-237-0000-0, Rs. 250 (HB)



Riots broke out in Kanpur on 24 March 1931 and lasted for several days. Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, President of the UP Provincial Congress Committee and a well-known journalist, was killed while trying to intervene in the conflict and save people in danger. The ghastly incidents sent shockwaves through the nation, especially as they took place almost at the culmination of the first phase of the Civil Disobedience movement. The Congress, at its Karachi session at the end of March 1931, set up a committee of six members to enquire into the riots, identify the causes and suggest remedies. The Committee was chaired by Bhagwan Das, one of the most eminent Indian philosophers and the secretary was Pandit Sundarlal, a distinguished non-official historian of medieval and modern India. Other members were Purushottam Das Tandon, Manzar Ali Sokhta, Abdul Latif Bijnori and Zafarul-Mulk, all committed nationalists. The report was submitted in October 1931, but could not be published immediately as the Congress was facing heavy repression. It was published in 1933 and was immediately banned by the government.

The Report has some basic thrust areas. One, that communalism is the result of communal thinking, it is a mindset, and once it is there, "riots can be caused almost at will by interested parties wherever and whenever it may suit them". The report often uses the imagery of disease and germs to describe communalism. Two, it believed that the primary cause of this communal thinking is to be found in the distorted or "perverted view of history" developed by British colonial writers and administrators in the 19th and early 20th centuries. So pervasive was this view, said the Report, that "even some of our best Congress workers, both Hindu and Muslim, are possessed with this idea," and "it is our purpose to correct this view which is generally met with in school

histories" (p. xiv). "We consider, therefore, that an attempt to remove historical misconceptions is the first and most indispensable step in the real solution of the Hindu-Muslim problem" (p. xv). Accordingly, the main part of the Report was devoted to the study of the medieval and colonial periods of Indian history, and a brief alternative reading of Indian history is presented in the Report. Three, the authors of the Report dismissed the notion that religious differences were the cause of communalism. "There is nothing in their religions which makes it impossible for Hindus and Muslims to live peacefully as good neighbours and fellow-citizens." Nor were cultural differences seen as the cause. On the contrary, the Report documented in great detail how a common culture had developed in the medieval period at the level of the people. Four, British colonial policies were seen as a major contributory factor. The divide and rule policy is discussed at great length. Beginning with the discrimination against Muslims following the revolt of 1857, the lag in Muslim taking to western education, the Nagari-Urdu controversy, the encouragement to Muslim elites to remain away from the Congress and the setting up of the Muslim league, culminating in the policy of separate electorates begun in 1909, but initiated in the command performance of the League delegation, all are discussed at length.

True to its promise, the Report contains an excellent historical survey, especially of medieval India, which I believe can even today be of great use to those who are campaigning against communalism, in the public domain or in the classroom. The first major point made in this survey is that Islam did not come to India by means of the sword, but through a variety of contacts. Indian contact with Arabia and Arabs and Central Asia pre-dated the birth of Islam. The western and eastern coasts of India had Arab colonies in the pre-Islamic period and therefore Islam came to India via these colonies, once Arabs became Muslims. Thus, Islam preceded Muslim political power in India, and it was not resisted by the Hindu rulers, in whose domains Muslims worked as merchants, soldiers and even generals. They fought on the side of Hindu kings against Muslim invaders. Similarly, the army of Ghazni, even before the time of Mahmud, had Hindu troops and generals. The Report concludes that "Islam was not spread by the sword of the invader but by the indigenous caste tyranny. It satisfied the social yearnings of vast

sections of India's populations which were struggling to be free from that tyranny."

The Report also marshals a large body of evidence to argue, with an uncanny contemporary resonance, against the notion that "Islam is inherently bigoted and intolerant". Pointing out that "intolerance, to some extent, seems inherent in every religious system...but history does not justify us in giving a major share of it to Islam," it argues that, "on the contrary, we find that, for its age, as a political power, Islam behaved as tolerantly as any other religion." Contrasting Islam with other faiths, especially Christianity, it points out that "when Islam emerged from Arabia and went as a conqueror to Christian territories, it was everywhere hailed as a deliverer by the Christian populations," suffering from the "relentless spirit of persecution" of Christianity.

Questioning the belief that Muslim invaders were "too barbarous and bigoted even for their age" (pp. 42-3), it gives examples from across the world—of the invasion of Khurasan by the Ghuzz Turks, of England by the Danish armies, of Syria by Nawsheran the Just, a Zoroastrian king of Persia, of Kalinga by Ashoka, of Spain under the Moors by the Christians—to prove that "the cruelty belonged to the age and not to individuals and religions" (pp. 44).

To counter another favourite communal argument, it explains why religious places are targeted by conquerors. One, "for nowhere else were the booty so plentiful and nowhere was it so easy to take". Further, and even more important, the prestige of power is shown by destroying the gods who were supposed to protect the conqueror's enemies. It gives the example of Emperor Harsha who, acting according to the custom by which the victor compelled the vanquished to surrender the most cherished idol in his principality, made the King of Kashmir part with one of the holiest Buddhist relics. After the death of Harsha, it was the turn of the Hindus to destroy Buddhist temples, and in the course of "about two centuries thousands upon thousands of Buddhist temples and monasteries, with which India teemed in the days of Buddhist glory, had all but vanished" (p. 46). It points out that "no honest attempt has been made to discover how many Hindu temples were built by Muslim rulers, and how many of them received royal grants and subsidies. When such researches are made it will be found that even a king like Aurangzeb gave grants to a larger number of temples than he is credibly alleged to have destroyed"

(p. 54). One of the major reasons why rulers could not indulge in religious persecution or wholesale conversion, it argues, was that Muslim kings had Hindu soldiers in large numbers and Hindu rajas had Muslim soldiers. Refuting the view that the medieval period was a contest between Islam and Hinduism, the Report says that, between the 8th and the 18th centuries, the "same number of battles are fought between Muslim and Muslims and Hindu and Hindu as between Hindu and Muslim kings" (p. 55).

The Report also devotes considerable attention to documenting the evolution of a common culture at the popular and elite levels in the medieval India. It cites a number of interesting examples, such as how Muslim and Hindu rulers wore similar head-dress and clothes, how astrologers were patronized by the Muslim courts, how Muslims retained caste exclusiveness, how Mughal emperors sat for Jharokha Darshan every morning, Diwali, Shivratri, Id, and Shabi-i-barat, and how they drank only Gangajal, whether at court, camp, or at home, and that there was a whole

department to ensure a regular supply, how Akbar banned cow-slaughter and Jahangir and Shahjahan followed suit, and how Akbar tried to give the ideas of the Bhakti movement a formal shape by founding a new religion, *Din-i-Ilahi*.

The Report concludes its historical survey with the formulation that "all the main (communal) controversies did not and could not have existed during the Muslim period. They are all products of the British period and of British policy" (p. 93).

The Report also contains a very useful chapter on 'Remedies', which shows us that at least some of the answers to the communal problem have been known to us for quite a while, but the problem has been with their application. At a time when we are debating a new legislation to help counter the danger posed by communal violence, it may profit us to revisit the wisdom of the national movement. Among the remedies suggested is that the government should announce that the officers incharge of a district, the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police, where communal violence takes place,

shall be forthwith suspended and then allowed to submit explanation. They know the mischief-makers and they have only to take preventive action (p. 157). Another suggestion is that all denominational institutions should be nationalized, and that in future no school or college bearing the name Hindu, Muslim, or Christian, be set up. The emphasis should be on promoting the evolution of a common culture, and on ideological struggle. The Congress should refuse to negotiate with communal groups as this means accepting them as true representatives of their communities. It should treat communalism as a major problem, and set up a Permanent Board, which should be outside the direct political struggle, to address it.

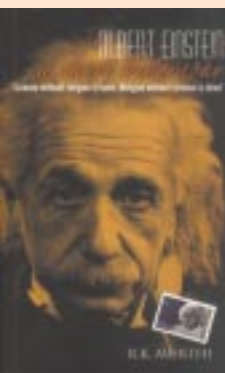
The National Book Trust, by making this Report available to the citizens of this country at an affordable price at this crucial juncture when the ghosts of Gujarat are still to be buried, has rendered a signal service.

—Mridula Mukherjee

Courtesy: The Book Review,
Jan-Feb. 2006

SCIENCE WITHOUT RELIGION IS LAME; RELIGION WITHOUT SCIENCE IS BLIND

Albert Einstein: A Short Biography,
R K Murthi, Rupa & Co., New Delhi,
ISBN 81-291-0711-2, Rs. 95



Albert Einstein is one of the greatest scientists of all times. He questioned widely accepted scientific truths and fine-tuned the scientific theories of great scientists, like Newton. His quest for truth made him take the difficult paths.

"The whole of science is nothing more than a refinement of everyday thinking". Albert Einstein's *Theory of Relativity* led to the explosive developments in diverse fields of knowledge. His famous equation $E = mc^2$ explained the concept of the immense energy that every object holds, in an easy to understand manner.

The author sketches Einstein's simplicity and humility in an interesting manner. He writes: In 1932, the Queen of Belgium invited him to pay her a visit. Never suspecting that a reception committee of state dignitaries

would await him at the station in their limousine, he alighted from the train with a suitcase in one hand and a violin in the other and started on foot for the palace. In vain the dignitaries looked for him at the station. Finally they returned to the Queen with the announcement that Einstein had apparently changed his mind about coming. And then they espied the dusty figure of a little gray-haired man tramping up the road. 'Why didn't you use the car I sent for you, Herr Doktor?' asked the Queen. Her guest looked at her with a naïve smile. 'It was a very pleasant walk, Your Majesty!'

This simple biography traces the trajectory of his life. The book starts with his childhood, when his genius was not readily perceived. Then the turbulent times at the institutions of higher learning where his spirit of independence and his Jewish origin seemed to thwart his career growth. But Einstein's never-say-die spirit took him to dizzying heights. The author then illustrates Einstein's role as the repository of scientific wisdom and the champion of peace and humanism. His private and personal life has also been dealt with great sensitivity and understanding throughout the book.

The humanitarian aspect of Einstein's personality is skillfully portrayed by Shri Murthi as he describes Einstein's reverence

for Mahatma Gandhi. In a tribute to the great leader Einstein had said, "A leader of his people, unsupported by any outward authority; a politician whose success rests not upon craft nor the mastery of technical devices, but simply on the convincing power of his personality; a victorious fighter who has always scorned the use of force; a man of wisdom and humility, armed with resolve and inflexible consistency, who has devoted all his strength to the uplifting of his people and the betterment of their lot; a man who has confronted the brutality of Europe with the dignity of the simple human being, and thus at all times risen superior. Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth."

The style of presentation is lucid and exciting, and provides compulsive reading from beginning to end. The chronology given at the end is helpful for a quick glance through the life of the great scientist.

R.K. Murthi has been active in the field of writing for over four decades. He has authored more than 75 books and has contributed over 4000 articles. Shri Murthi heads the publication wing of Children's Book Trust and is the Secretary-General of 'Indian Society of Authors'.

—Kanchan Wanchoo Sharma

PUBLISHING COURSE AT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A two-week training course in book publishing was organised at Thiruvananthapuram from 19 to 31 December 2005. This was the first such training course held in Kerala. The course was organised in collaboration with the All Kerala Publishers and Booksellers Association at DC SMAT Media School at Thiruvananthapuram.

"Kerala has always adored books; and printing and publishing is a major industry in Kerala. Yet there have been no efforts to bring in professionalism in the field," said Shri Paul Zacharia, eminent Malayalam writer, inaugurating the course. "Standardisation of book production, particularly the involvement of trained editors, designers and proof readers is virtually absent," he added. He appreciated the efforts of NBT, India in initiating such a course which he hoped would become an annual affair. Unless such concerted efforts are made, our publishing industry would not only lack trained talents but will also lag behind world publishing, he added.



Publishing course in progress

The course designed in a workshop format looked at various aspects of publishing including commissioning, editing, designing, production, promotion and marketing among others. It also included all genres of publishing including children's books and textbooks. With 30 students drawn from all over Kerala the publishing course had some of the best professionals in the industry as the faculty. The faculty included Shri P.

Govinda Pillai, Shridhar Balan, Urvashi Butalia, G.S. Jolly, V.K. Karthika, Radhika Menon, Ravi Decece, Joseph Mathai and Kalyan Banerjee among others.

A discussion on contemporary Malayalam publishing was the highlight of the valedictory function. Chairing the discussion Prof G.B. Balamohan Thampi, former Vice Chancellor of Kerala observed that in order to spread the reading habit further as well as to boost the publishing industry there is a great need to revitalise rural library movement in Kerala. Publishing courses organised by NBT would go a long way to provide the industry with good professional talents.

In the interactive session that followed Shri Ravi D.C. and Shri Rubin DCruz observed that despite Malayalam publishing being one of the strongest in India with the largest readership, there is much scope for further growth. Later Prof Thampi distributed certificates to the successful participants.

—Rubin DCruz

CREATING GOOD BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

"Good books for children is the need of the hour," said Shri K. Veerabhadrappe, noted Kannada author, while releasing three of the Trust's latest books in Kannada for children. "It is only with books we can face the challenges created by electronic media and develop a book culture," he added. He regretted that children's literature and children's authors are looked down upon and argued for serious reviews of children's books. Shri Veerabhadrappe further urged for the formation of an academy for children's literature in the state for its all round development. He recalled the contribution of Bijapur District in the field of children's literature

and appreciated NBT for organizing the programme in Bijapur. He also appreciated NBT's efforts in publishing good books and promoting reading habit among common people.

Shri Veerabhadrappe was speaking at a book release function organised at Bijapur (Karnataka) on 24 December 2005 in collaboration with Makkala Sahitya Sangama, an organisation working for the



From left: Shri S.G. Biradara, Shri K. Veerabhadrappe, Shri Kanchyani Sharanappa and Dr. Vijaya Devi at the book release function

promotion of children's literature. *Makkalu Needida Shikshhe* (a play by Sri N. D'Souza), *Surya Banda* (a play by Smt. Vaidehi) and *Matte Bantu Champu* (a story by Sri Anand Patil) were the titles released on the occasion.

Later in a Meet the Children's Author session, well-known children's writers Smt. Vaidehi and Shri Anand Patil interacted with the audience. Smt. Vaidehi spoke on

issues like language, culture, education system and responsibility of media. In his speech Sri Anand Patil congratulated NBT for publishing good books, particularly plays for children. He also suggested for translation of good children's books from different countries into Indian languages, particularly Kannada.

The function was presided over by Shri Kanchyani Sharanappa, a well-known children's author. Shri P.G. Siddapur, Dr. Vijaya Devi and Shri Basu Bevinagidada introduced the books.

Shri S.G. Biradara, President, Makkala Sahitya Sangama, welcomed the gathering and Shri Kadanna Hosatti, a member of the Sangama proposed vote of thanks. Shri Jambunath Kanchyani compered the programmes. Shri H. Nagarajappa, Editor, Kannada, introduced the audience about the activities of the Trust. As part of the programme, display and sale of NBT books was organised by Southern Regional Office of the Trust.

—H. Nagarajappa