

These are a few of my Favourite Things

Edited by Viren Lobo

An Especioza Trust Production

(This is dedicated to my Aunt Marie Lobo whose 77th Birthday we commemorate on 8th September 2021)



Marie at the experts meeting on aging and the aged at Uganda 27th Nov- 1st Dec2000¹

¹ Little did she know it then but she was to make this her life's mission towards the last five years of her life

Foreword

“This is probably the first time that I am on the other side of the table and it is so relaxing to be able to share on equal terms and be at the receiving end. It seems to be gift at this stage to discover god’s will for me at this juncture as well as to understand and accept myself. This is a challenge and I hope I can meet it squarely. Please keep me in your prayers for inner healing and openness to god’s will.”

Marie on hearing the news that she had terminal cancer

Obituary announcement - Ms. Marie J. Lobo Dears, In case you haven’t seen the below message. All of us know Marie during our Mogadishu days. Later we also served in Amman and HQ. Marie was a very kind and genuine person. She may remain in eternal peace. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees announces with profound regret the death of Ms. Marie J. Lobo Former Staff Member on 25 July 2019, at the age of 74 in Goa, India. Ms. Marie J. Lobo joined UNHCR in May 1981 as a Counseling Officer in New Delhi, India and served there in different capacities till 1989. In June 1989, she was appointment as Senior Project Officer (Social Services) in Somalia. She also worked as Senior Social Services Officer at Geneva, Switzerland for the period of 5 years. Later on she served as Senior Regional Policy Officer/ Community Services Officer at various locations including Kigali and Nairobi. Her last position was as Senior Regional Community Services Officer in Lus

A message from the UNHCR forwarded by Esmeralda Mendonca

**I won't forget you in my life*
for all your kindness, your love,
your prayers
and
your support.
Because
you are such a lovely
and
caring person,
I am sincerely grateful to you.*

This is the last message I wrote to Marie. She was so kind, so loving, so caring not only for me but also for my family. I feel she might be reincarnation of Virgin Mary.

Pratibha Gopujkar from TISS

Marie is the Best Student of the TISS of all Times to come

Mandakini Khandekar from TISS



Marie's photo at Paraplegic Foundation

We won't forget you
for all your kindness, your love,
your prayers
and
your support.
Because
you were always a lovely
and
caring person,
We are sincerely grateful to you.

Pratibha Gopujkar's message to be put below the photo at Paraplegic Foundation

Background

This poem written by me recently reminded me of my days with Marie in Delhi in 1985 when she was working with the refugees from Afghanistan. For the first time got to see Marie professionally. The way she motivated her staff, carried people with her and the dilemma and questions of the Afghans.

The Taliban in Kabul

Recognised by Russia, China and Pakistan
Peace it will bring says one
Investment down the drain wails it's neighbour
Was betting on Biden a mistake
Or did the CIA change the cake
No resistance was indeed a surprise
Inside job can we surmise
Fundamentalism rears its head
No compromise off with its head
Ravan new heads does grow
The tribal has a new bow
Modern weapons with archaic thinking
How compatible is this linking
Restrictions on women with it, it brings
Even as the tribal whoops and sings
Not having seen an aeroplane before
What followed makes your eyes sore
People anxious to flee the scene
Not caring for protocol and the spleen
Where will civilisation go
Do we this fundamentalist line now tow
A silver lining in every cloud we hope
Still frantically figuring out the scope.

Dedication

Atrij Ryan Centre for Holistic Living²

Goal: To develop the methodology for provision of holistic living linked to the local ecology

Hypothesis: Historically, holistic living is embedded in the principle of a healthy life which in turn is related to healthy food and in tune with nature and the surroundings. Healthy life is supplemented by what is known as ‘mother’s remedies’ and local primary health care practises of vaidus carried over from generation to generation. The organised form of this knowledge is embedded in Ayurveda. Lok Swasthya Parampara Samvardhan Samiti acknowledged this traditional health and knowledge stream. Modern day science is only now being able to have a glimmer of appreciation of the value of this stream of knowledge as the foundation for sound health care incorporating what technology has to offer as well.

Objectives:

1. To make healthy life an achievable goal for all.
2. To base this in traditional knowledge and wisdom, only supplemented by modern science where required.
3. To help in the facilitation of the restoration of eco-systems on which such traditional practises were based.
4. To link this to the larger goal of healthy living.

Methodology:

- a. Revival/restoration of traditional food and lifestyle habits to the extent possible and where not supplemented by modern science for sustainable ecosystem development
- b. Revival of the traditional health practises to the extent possible, supplemented by principles learnt from Ayurveda and modern science only where required.
- c. To use modern science principles to screen knowledge while acknowledging that the framework itself may need to be modified to incorporate elements that have been ignored / sidelined.
- d. To put this in practise at all levels of daily life as a prerequisite for healthy living in tune with nature.

Proposed activities:

- a. Creation of a Learning and Capacity building centre at Visnagar housed at Habitat.
- b. Creation of an outreach centre at Bhekadia to start with and similar centres in other locations as well.

² Atrij is the nephew of my colleague Dr Leena Gupta, CEO Habitat Ecological Trust. Ryan is my nephew. Both have different versions of Congenital Muscular Dystrophy, a rare disease with no cure. Only holistic health care can provide some relief. PS: Atrij Gupta passed away on 13th September after choking on his food, he had had cough and cold for four days and the cough had collected in his chest making it difficult for him to breathe.

- c. Developing of primary health care centres in every village by evaluating existing practises for primary health care. This includes the functioning of the existing PHC centres.
- d. Linking this to larger life processes in the region (tuning economic activity with the natural resources).

Gujarat

COVID care and relief centres in Kavant Taluka of Chhota Udepur

Due to hospital facilities being far, the youth were asked to investigate the basic facilities available at the village level. On the basis of this information 12-15 villages were identified for the creation of COVID care and relief centres. The local population was asked to donate cots which were marked with their names so that when the pandemic was over, the cots could be returned to the owners. These centres perform the role of community isolation centres and community care centres. Ayurvedic decoction in the morning and food is given twice a day. Treatment is as per the COVID guidelines, payment for the food and other expenses is given by the Collector. A system to ensure that the children and elders get fruit once in two days was also put in place; the help of the youth was taken to ensure delivery takes place. As a result of these measures, in 2020 no one got COVID. In 2021 due to free movement of labour from cities and elections where people from urban areas freely moved in the villages there were a number of reports of COVID. The federation took responsibility for dealing with the overall management of the issue.

The centre for differently abled children at AAJ (Special children):

This centre was set up by AAJ with the idea of taking care of mentally disabled girls. A total of seven girls are at this centre receiving special care from trained nurses of local tribal background. In addition these children are exposed to normal children at the Ashram so as to develop a healthy atmosphere for their growth and development. As a result of the care and attention, these girls are now able to look after their basic needs and help around in basic housework like cleaning.

When developing this centre, a preliminary study of the district indicated that there were around 3,000 such mentally disabled children in the district. It was found that given the societal underpinnings, boys generally got adequate care and attention from the families but the girl children were vulnerable and also sometimes victim of sexual assault as well. The need for special care cannot be overemphasised. In this connection AAJ decided to set up this centre with support of benefactors. In the three years it has been functional, a marked

improvement has been noticed in the children including their sense of self and the way they are able to take care of their personal effects. Exposure to normal children has the twin purpose of building up awareness among the children as also to create a healthy atmosphere for the health and well being of these mentally handicapped children.

In one case, in the district it was found that a fifteen year old mentally handicapped girl gave birth to a child. Since the mother is not able to take care of the child, special care is required. A special type of formula milk powder is required to give the necessary nutrition which is slowly increasing as the child grows older. HABITAT help spread the word around and benefactors have been forthcoming to provide a steady supply of this formula milk powder. In a situation where the grandparents could not take care of their own daughter, it is doubtful that in the current conditions prevailing they will be able to provide the necessary security to their granddaughter now. While the ramifications of this issue are being discussed with AAJ to work a more permanent solution in terms of adoption of the child is being explored. Discussions are also underway with AAJ to develop the appropriate linkages with women and child welfare department and be update on legal issues like juvenile justice under the JJ Act and POCSO Act (Prevention of Child from Sexual Offences). Institutional arrangements to handle these issues at the district level are also being explored.

Rajasthan

The Covid-19 lockdown period has on one hand caused misery to the people, especially restricting their livelihood opportunities, and on the other hand it has helped people in knowing their other constitutional and statutory rights (along with already known forest rights) when they had to access and demand for the relief measures declared by the union and state governments. Therefore, while keeping the basic thrust on capacity building of traditional forest dwellers and forest dependent communities for submitting and asserting their CFR rights and individual forest rights, the activities of providing handholding support to the local community for accessing relief measures started by the government amidst COVID-19 lockdown, were also carried out.

Institute for Ecology and Livelihood Action (IELA) and Badad Majdoor Kisan Sangathan (BMKS), a regional federation of tribal villages in Chittorgarh district) also took certain initiatives regarding public awareness on different rights including right for labour under MGNREGA, rights to access to minor forest produce, welfare schemes under scheduled tribal area etc.

Access to Government support schemes: Prior to conducting public meetings, IELA and BMKS jointly with the help of village volunteers conducted survey of the families in 19 villages of 5 village panchayat areas in Rawatbhata tehsil and listed out families that still do not have access to different household and livelihood schemes. The team identified more than

200 families that are eligible but do not have access to government schemes to avail benefits. Based on the survey results the families were categorized under four categories – (1) Below Poverty Line (BPL) families (families who are living below the poverty line specified by the state government); (2) Above Poverty Line (APL) families who live above nationally designated poverty threshold; (3) Deen Dayal Upadhyay Antyodaya scheme (a convergence and accountability framework aiming to bring optimum use and management of resources allocated by 27 Ministries/ Department of the Government of India under various programmes for the development of rural areas); and (4) Annapurna scheme (aims at providing food security to meet the requirement of those senior citizen who though eligible have remained uncovered under the National Old Age Pension Scheme). The survey data was communicated to the local MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly), Sub-District Magistrate (SDM) and the Sarpanch of respective panchayat with the request of enlisting the needy families under different schemes. After continuous pursuance of the matter by BMKS and IELA rural volunteers, the administration and panchayats were forced to take necessary measures swiftly.

Handholding support in registration for food security scheme: IELA and BMKS team also identified families that were facing food crisis amidst Covid-19 lockdown and helped them know about The National Food Security Act, 2013 (also 'Right to Food Act'), an Act of the Parliament which aims to provide subsidized food grains to approximately two thirds of India's 1.2 billion people. More than 100 families were facilitated to file online registration under food security scheme and now they are availing its benefits. A letter to the local MLA was also communicated in the month of October to arrange government's help for registering families of Kushalgarh panchayat that belong to Above Poverty Line (APL) but facing food crisis due to Covid-19 lockdown and loss of livelihood.

Advocacy and technical support to MGNREGA job card holders (including FRA beneficiaries): To provide livelihood support to rural families under Covid-19 relief measures, the central as well as state governments started different work in various departments under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), but the benefit of government's relief measures was not reaching to the people. IELA and BMKS team conducted a sample survey in the month of July in one panchayat (Kushalgarh) to know that how many days' work a MGNREGA job card holder gets against the 100 days work assured under the Act. Overall 114 MGNREGA job card holders were surveyed and it was found that none of them had got more than 50 days work in the last financial year!! The MGNREGA Rojgar Sahayak Sachiv (Employment Assistance Secretary - EAS) whose job is to receive the job applications from the job card holders was unreasonably reluctant to receive the job applications and the panchayat officials as well as elected representatives were also ineffective to help the poor people and take action against the MGNREGA secretary.

IELA and BMKS team started handholding support to MGNREGA job card holders that were living in villages as well those who had migrated to other places due to unavailability of work and had to return back due to loss of livelihood amidst Covid-19 pandemic and were

facing crisis of livelihood, in filling their job application forms and in approaching the higher administrative authorities so as to compel them to make necessary arrangements for receiving the job applications and release muster rolls of sanctioned work to provide work to the job card holders. As a part of peoples' mobilization for asserting their rights for getting work under MGNREGA act, BMKS along with local peoples groups sent two letters to the Prime minister of India in which they demanded extension of MGNREGA work assurance from 100 to 200 days, extra daily tool allowance, increase in daily wage etc. The advocacy for MGNREGA job card holders (including FRA beneficiaries) continued in the successive months and in this regard continuous pursuance with the SDM was done through reminder letters. As a result, from July 2020 to February 2021 in a span of eight months, total 870 job applications were filed by job card holders with the help of IELA and BMKS team. Muster rolls of works under MGNREGA are being released and people are getting livelihood support under MGNREGA through our team's assistance. The assisted beneficiaries belong to 07 villages (Ganeshpura, Manpura, Badla Ka Khera, Nali, Kanti Ramnagar, Arena Kalan and Kheda Viran) in Kushalgarh and Mandesra panchayat of Rawatbhata.

Part I

My Poems for Marie

(Dedicated to Marie's friends who she had many and Mandakini Khandekar from her TISS days and Maitri Park in particular who inspired me to prepare this bouquet)



Marie with Aunty Hazel's neices at 84 Porvorim³

³ The significance of this photo is that Marie kept up a pre-arranged meeting at 84 Porvorim even after being diagnosed with cancer that very day.

Marie Marie quite contrary

Marie has come to my house to rest.
This Lobo's nest will give her what she likes best
Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens Brown paper packages tied up with strings
These were a few of her favourite things
So ... When the storm hits, when the fall shattered her shoulders
When malaria almost made her die
From the Lobo's nest the cuckoo flew and brought Marie home to renew
While of Utopia she dreamed Socorro was where she laid the cream
The grotto on top of the hill
A place where time stands still
In silence to pray
For what will make the day
A brighter one
As candle we have lit
For its light to spread
And darkness to take shelter
Under it as a bed
Sleep the tissues do renew
It sheds its blessing on not just the chosen few.

Carlton, the cat and the consulting couch

Am waiting for the photo from Carlton
But in the meantime Carlton lying on the couch I see
And cat perched on top Eyes on Marie
The psychiatrist for free
Was Carlton consulting Marie or was it the other way around
From his eyes and the cat it was the other way I will be bound
Long consultation that got over at three In the morning
I say Yawn....if I may
Carlton on one his patients he found
And start early was the lesson he found
0- 13 says he
As busy as the bumble bee
But time Jeanne he did find
And Erica and Amara too
Over a cup a coffee All this I gleaned
As Carlton memories of Marie did stream
Photos of 84 Porvorim from the start to now
A trip to Goa every time in India did he step
And talking of those steps there is a shoe in the picture too
For Marie who his shoes she eyed
And Carlton ready to oblige when because of shoe she nearly died
Broke her collar bone did she
But even on the road as she lay
The spring in her voice was there
Help me up it cried
Long with the physiotherapist Marie struggled
Yet kept her weakness to herself as Porvorim she daily travelled
What a fighter was she
My favourite aunt says me.

From 933 to 84 Porvorim

From 933 to 84 Porvorim the homing pigeon flew
Winging its way through different parts of the world
Mumbai with TISS
And then Delhi with the UNHCR Mogadishu and Geneva
Time Flew by and before we knew
At Brisbane the pigeon halted
Time for a change as Jeanne and Carlton were consulted
So at Candolim the pigeon finally rested
Villamar it's wits got tested.
An ad in the papers caught her eye
Up the pigeon jumped
Why, why, why?
Letters/ emails flew all around
Before long a consensus was found.
84 Porvorim to be taken back
Family was to be made intact.

On the day my Aunt Marie's ashes were interned

It took 20 years for my Dad to learn to make a cup of tea
But cleaning and washing he did with glee
With a song on his lips and twirling his hair
Work was a pleasure
For all who were there
My mother with a broom stood by
Whack on the knuckles If anyone got high
Sigh
Those were the days my friend
We thought they'd never end
As we turn over the pages
With photos supplied by Mark
Night came by and went
We forgot it was ever dark
A bright spark came and went
Like the shooting star over the horizon
Lit up many candles
Before it's short life got spent
These candles will light many more
As the world from Villamar is set aglow
As the cortege to St Inez Will slowly wind
And to ashes to Pune it's new home to find
The light that Marie has lit
In each heart a place it will mind

Marie meets Mama on her Birthday

Into your hands I commend my spirit O Lord
Into your hands I commend my life
Mama's birthday is today
But some premonition made me write the poem early
There was urgency
And Mama guided my hand
To write those lines
So that the daughter she loved dearly could go in peace
Mama you in heaven
Take care of Marie now
She needs your loving tender hand in her new abode
I talked to Elsa yesterday
When we heard Marie may not last the night
Something made her sure that she would survive till Mama's birthday.
Mama's guiding hand through Marie's early years
And later it was Marie who gave her life meaning after Papa (who was her life passed away)
Marie the psychologist knew what was best for Mama
And sure, with her Mama blossomed
The Sound of Music fills my soul
And Mary Poppins over the chimney too
Though my heart breaks
The words "Raindrops on roses And whiskers on kittens
Bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens
Brown paper packages tied up with strings
These are a few of my favorite things'
Come wafting slowly to me
So.. 'When the dog bites
When the bee stings
When I'm feeling sad
I simply remember my favorite things
And then I don't feel so bad'.
So it is the smiling singing Marie
The bold audacious Marie
The loving, giving Marie
The Marie sensitive to the needs of my mother
The Marie who taught us how to make work playful
The Marie whose high spirits were infectious
And so when I hear news of her death
I remember all these wonderful things about her
And then I don't feel so bad
Rest in peace Marie
Your laughter lives forever
But a tear for you I shed
One that will be a raindrop on a rose
And then I won't feel so bad

My Poems for Marie's Parents Mathew and Amy Lobo



Mathew and Amy Lobo

933 Synagogue Street

As the gate of 933 opened
A whiff of baking going on, we could smell
I rushed to the Kitchen
Where on the Wood stove ginger bread was being baked
Mama with her characteristic smile said baking these for you my dears.
Hungry mouth broke the biscuits in glee
Something from Kolkatta we looked forward to
Mama bring me my milk
Yelled Papa from the table
Beating his egg with a patience that caught my eye
Yes dear came the reply
And milk soon after
We settled down to playing with the cats
One kitten for each of us five
The house has come alive
The chicks were running around in the portico behind
Hours we could spend watching them peck
An appointment with my Uncle Tom
Will be back in a sec.

A poem for Mama (Amy Lobo)

Mama make me parathas yelled Francis to his 85 year old mother.
The parathas came of course without reference to her age
At the dinner table Mama rolled the food in her mouth savouring the taste
This has ginger said she while trying to find out what else was there
The little child Jesus talked of
Yet obedient like Mary
Much later I saw another story.
Written by my father but as told by Marie
Be around it said
A powerful message from my grandmother
Preserved and taken forward by Marie
True to the teachings of Mother Mary
So Mama the child and Mama who baked ginger biscuits for us
Both in my memory
As time all things toss
Love being the message, not fuss
And for Marie who Mama's spirit still has kept
The flame will burn forever
Our promise to you
This smile here means I miss you
Have no fear the lord is near
Will hold in his hand All you hold dear

Mathew Lobo the Patriarch of 933

Mathew Lobo's house with Saint's was adorned
One for each of the children he had named after them
As his egg in the glass he churned
Till the froth became thick
We milled around watching the old man and his morning routine
A knock on the door
Begging for alms
The annas and the paise poured out
From the stock kept for this occasion
Amy is the water ready
Cried the old man
As it was time for him to take his bath
His room a poky corner adjoining the hall
Boarded in to keep out the breeze
Quite distinct from the sunlight pouring into the dining room
And the courtyard outside
Prior to their golden anniversary Mathew Lobo had a fall
His eye was black and blue
That did not deter him from the family picture
Imprinted in our minds forever
There are many more stories of Mathew Lobo the Patriarch
Those are not for me to tell
A Pillar of City Church in Pune
And a lot more as well

My Poems on Marie's siblings who passed away

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An Ode to my Godmother Therese Enid Braganza

Born on September 28th
I met her rather late
The first meeting rather sedate
A quiet day at 37 St Patrick's next to our 38
Carroms with Sunno
And a shoot with Dinesh
Got to learn life anew
For this this I give the Branganza's (Uncle Victor) their due
With Chickens too
We had lovely stew
Team work from the Branganzas
With Therese in command the Lobo's too
Many an hour with my aunt
Coffee, bread and homemade jam
From the guavas on their tree
Guava jelly, pudding and cheese could also be had for free
My Aunt Therese had a open door
A Hello to all that popped by
Te ta Te for those that dropped in
A breath of sunshine that made the day fine
Around her home a universe revolved
And all in her orbit she involved
Library for children and other treasures too
Contributed by all but packed with love with effort that was not small
Many a talk I had
Small and big
From the Shooting of Romero
To the sound of the Bolero
(Then it was not there but the dog used to bark with glee at the sound of the car returning)
My imagination she fired
As first to Cyril and then to Irma I got wired
A chance to fulfill my hearts desire
A ring side seat by Jesus' brier
And then suddenly I learnt
Therese was my favourite aunt's Godmother too
What more could I ask for
We were not at the zoo
So to Godmother 2 I pray
For delivery this day
My Dad in heaven 'Standing up to her'
To take her blessings, of that I am sure!!

A Prayer for Intercession to my Aunt Rita

Sister Rita of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
I ask you to intercede to facilitate Unity
Among the family
And in the world as well too
Very Little I knew you
As for a life devoted to prayer
Gave up all you dared
I remember the time in Marie's house in Delhi we shared
As sabbatical from the convent you took
Recover from your illness though not by the book
The beautiful letters written by you
An artist's hand in the handwritten text
Much love and tenderness in them
And a longing for what came next
In the end you suffered much
But for long to God your spirit did not give
Marie was there with encouragement
As you struggled against discouragement
At your convent good times we spent
As Goa we roamed
Till our backs were bent
A very unique experience it was
Larger family unity the cause
So to you for strength I pray
Keep the thread of Unity
If I may

For Francis my Father

Marie was the apple of his eye
A sister bright, bold and beautiful
Francis however carried his own stamp
A piece of paper in his pocket
To be delivered
When the occasion demanded
MC and Toast master
Were only some of them
The one that stands out
Was his debate speech; in Engineering college
Two men stood behind prison walls
One saw mud
The other saw stars
The tape got stuck
The rewind button pressed
But.....
Yet Francis was never one to say die
And so
Never a dull moment when he was around
Emergencies in the house
Or witty repartee with my mum's brother Merwyn
The series on Wealth from Waste
Silivisation
And other spoofs on Society
The Lobo stamp was there
His last endeavour was a marathon
To survive cancer till my sister's silver anniversary
Quite a feat that was
A month of agony from the time I left him in November
See you in Goa was my response to his query on when I would be back
Those eyes stared at me till I left
And keep staring still

For Rocque the youngest of the brothers

A collection of yoga poses the showcase adorned
All in pack of cards nicely packed
Studied many of them and applied
When a slipped disk my back affected
For thirteen years it kept me pretty fit
And even after an operation quickly recovered
The one time I really engaged
Was on his plan for doing business in Ayurveda
Ayurvedic beedis was one of them
The venture did not get far
Why I do not know
I was not the star
During this sojourn with India
About a spiritual connection with Goa he talked
An interesting connect
But could not follow it up
Another memory is the Munich Olympics my father missed
As the Israeli team was massacred
Munich Rocque's home for long
Stayed with me after that
His home in Portugal
Built with his own hands
In seven days I think
Prefabricated of course
Yet speaking of someone who talked by his actions
So though in the main Rocque was more of an enigma
The memories stand out sharply in contrast
A number of other stories too
For those please put your bucket in the well
The cooling drink your mind will soothe
As over his prowess in yoga we brood

Part II

On Others from the Family who passed away after Marie

(Dedicated to Aisha de Sequeira whose tragic death united the family from different quarters of the globe)



Aisha deSequeira

Fitz de Souza (1929-2020)

An important figure in the campaign for independence for Kenya, a member of the Kenyan parliament in the 1960s and Deputy Speaker for several years, passes away in London at the age of 90.

Additionally, he helped provide a legal defence for those accused of Mau Mau activities including the Kapenguria Six, and he was one of the people involved in the Lancaster House conferences held to draw up a constitutional framework for Kenyan independence.

He moved to Kenya from Goa in 1942 and lived all his life here, until he recently moved to the United Kingdom to stay with his family there to care for him as his health needed looking after.

Kenya had just got independent and seats of power were being determined by the new government of [Mzee Jomo Kenyatta](#) and Makhan Singh, who had endured 11 years in detention at the hands of the British Colonists in the cause for independence was also there at the Parliament when he was approached by his long-time lawyer friend Fitz de Souza.

Fitz was was the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly or Lower House He mentioned to Makhan Singh on his intention to request Mzee on his behalf to give him a job in government. Makhan Singh, the avowed unadulterated idealist that he had been all his life forbid him to do so, stating that never in his life had he ever asked for anything, and neither will he do anything of the sort then. As expected, he didn't ask, and he didn't get any post. Though disappointed, Makhan Singh remained committed to his ideals and spent the rest of his years in the shadows until he passed away in 1973.

He always stood by Makhan Singh in getting him released from detention, though he somewhat differed with his staunch and uncompromising ideals. But Makhan, being himself, continued to remain committed to serving Kenya as a servant of the people even when he was nowhere close to being a part of the leadership of the country that he had helped free from the clutches of colonialism - and that's the kind of person Fitz de Souza respected and knew all too well as a close friend and comrade-in-uhuru.

A powerful woman in business rooted in Goa

Aisha de Sequeira was the granddaughter of Dr Jack de Sequeira, a politician and president of the United Goans Party, and daughter of Erasmo de Sequeira, a former Member of Parliament.

Aisha grew up in Goa, was schooled at Our Lady of the Rosary High School, and then went to Goa Engineering College (GEC). In an earlier interview with *Business Standard*, she had [said](#): “My childhood defined who I am, and one thing I learnt was it takes generations to build a reputation but that it can be lost in the blink of an eye. If not careful.”

After engineering college, she went to Yale to study economics and public policy, but after auditing many courses, she decided to major in finance.

Aisha de Sequeira’s association with Morgan Stanley [began](#) during her college days in the summer of 1994, when she joined the firm as an intern. By the time she graduated in 1995, she was an associate. A year later, she moved into the mergers and acquisitions (M&A) group.

Talking about the job of a banker in an earlier interview, she [said](#): “You have to grow the business, expand the pie and connect with the clients for the long term because it is never about a one-off deal.”

Aisha met her husband Roy de Souza, founder of advertising firm Zedo and BreakBio, in 2005 and got engaged in 2007, which was also the year she moved back to India. In the next few years, she became a mother to three children, and in 2013, was appointed co-country head of Morgan Stanley in India.

Asked how she managed her work and personal life, she had [said](#): “It’s doable but not easy, you need a supportive spouse and the whole lean-in thing works, if you just hang in there.”

Under her leadership, de Sequeira’s team [bagged](#) \$20 billion of capital for clients in India, and also provided advisory services for over \$70 billion in M&A deals. She [featured regularly](#) on the *Fortune India* list of 50 most powerful women in business [from 2012 to 2015](#).

But she was also someone who wanted to make an impact in the community. In an [interview](#) with *Business Today* in 2015, de Sequeira explained that as she grew older, giving back became more critical to her, either through education or mentoring.

“I have always been troubled by the issue of the accident of birth that can so dramatically change your life,” she had said.

Fight with cancer

In 2017, after returning from a friend’s house in Mumbai with her husband, she experienced a sharp pain in her stomach, which was found to be due to colon cancer.

Around the time she was diagnosed, Roy de Souza had said: “The survival statistics were not good.” But he thought there had to be a way to treat her, so he took it upon himself to find the cure. He started BreakBio with his friend Devabhaktuni Srikrishna, which aims to find a treatment for cancer with curative intent through personalised vaccines.

Despite the disease, de Sequeira was relentless with her work and did not stop. She also said a lot of people used to ask her: “You’re a good person Aisha, why you?” To which, she replied that for 40 years when fantastic things happened to her she never asked why, so “why be hypocritical now”?

Dr John Gehlot passes away

Dr. John Henry Gelhot, passed away unexpectedly at the age of 75 on March 23, 2021 at Presbyterian Hospital, Albuquerque, New Mexico. A Roman Catholic of the Most Holy Name of Jesus Parish, St. Louis, MO, he was an altar boy, Boy Scout, Sea Scout and Member of CREDO of the Catholic Laity, St. Louis.

He was a graduate of De Andreis High School, St. Louis, MO. After serving in the Air National Guard, the U.S. Airforce (enlisted), and U.S. Marine Corps. (Capt.) earning three honorable discharges, he went on to graduate from Cleveland Chiropractic College, Kansas City, MO.

Dr. Gelhot is survived by his wife of 35 years, Brenda Mary (Pinto) Gelhot, his four siblings; Carol Ann (Late Charles “Phil”) Hooper, Mary Margaret “Margie” (Late Dave) Downs, Kathleen Veronica Guerra and Dr. Helen Theresa (Paul K. Gewalt) Gelhot. He is also survived by his in-laws; Douglas (Alda) Pinto and daughter Dr. Angie Pinto (Deven Billimoria), Ronald (Anna Bodnar) Pinto, and Dr. Daphne deMello (nee Pinto) (Late Dr. Vincent R.deMello), and son Eric deMello.

Dr. Gelhot is preceded in death by his parents, Helen T. Gelhot (nee Specker) and Emmett J. Gelhot and niece, Nina Hooper.

He was uncle to: Chuck Hooper (Godson), Camille Spain (nee Hooper), Scott Hooper, Denise Resinger (nee Hooper), (Late Nina Hooper), Carolyn Hooper, William Burns, Jason (Kelly) Guerra (Godson), Jennifer (Kris) Weber (nee Guerra), Justin (Kelly) Guerra, Jaimie Guerra, Julie (Andrew) Rathert (nee Guerra), John (Jill) Guerra, Jessica (Bryant) O’Laughlin (nee Guerra), and Maryjoyce Gewalt. He was an admired big brother, little brother, Godfather, great uncle, cousin, nephew, mentor, doctor, friend and beloved by many.

Dr. Gelhot helped a multitude of patients over his lifetime as a Chiropractic physician. He was certified in Kinesiology and Acupuncture. He had a special dedication to his brothers-in-arms and after over 20 years in private practice in Phoenix/Scottsdale, AZ, he was the first Chiropractic physician to practice within the VA Medical System where he provided outstanding care and relief to veterans and retired in 2012 from the VA Hospital in Albuquerque, NM.

A hard worker, diligent, lifelong learner, and relentless political truth seeker, John researched voraciously and persevered in daily Bible reading and study. He enjoyed hiking, biking, skiing, canoeing, running and competed in marathons. He took great pride in his healthy living habits, daily physical activity, and liked to dance, talk passionately, and laugh heartily which brought joy to all around. Dr. Gelhot will be missed by all who loved him deeply.

For Yvette

My Dad's cousin Yvette died of COVID 19 in tragic circumstances
No bed, Fiola got the last bed available
No medicine, after much running around an alternative could be administered after two days
Fiola her daughter was distraught
Could not do as much for her mother as she liked
Though with all human effort she tried
Yvette lived a happy life
Though one with lot of turmoil within
The bird that dared to spread her wings
Leaving her father's dream child
For two elder sisters to handle
Yet in a time of distress she too lit the candle
Hostile take over prevented
Mater Dei reinvented
Was it just a life of the ordinary
Or a life to be evaluated through contrary
Like Peter at her sister's Edna's funeral she stood
One of those in the garden of Gethsemane
Watching silently from afar
Heart strings pulled
Family ties stronger and thicker in adversity.

Part III

A Tribute to Fr. Stan Swami and Gail Omvedt

(Dedicated to all those who gave their lives for the upliftment of the downtrodden)



Stan Swamy Passes Away After Contracting COVID-19 in Jail, Lawyer Demands Judicial Inquiry

The 84-year-old tribal rights activist had been seriously ill since May, but was moved to a private hospital only after the high court intervened.



A file photo of human rights activist Stan Swamy. Photo: PTI



05/JUL/2021

Mumbai: Jesuit priest and tribal rights activists Stan Swamy passed away on Monday afternoon, two days after he was placed on ventilator support in Mumbai's Holy Family Hospital. Swamy had [tested positive for COVID-19](#) and was shifted out of the Talaja central prison to a private hospital over a month ago.

Dr Ian D'Souza of Holy Family Hospital told the Bombay high court on Monday that Swamy passed away at 1:24 pm. The court had arranged for an urgent hearing in light of Swamy's deteriorating health.

After Swamy's death, his lawyer Mihir Desai demanded a judicial inquiry into the matter. Desai, who has been representing Swamy since his arrest, told the court that he does not have any complaint against Holy Family Hospital or the high court, but held the National Investigation Agency and the Talaja central prison responsible for Swamy's death. Swamy was denied medical care for over ten days before he was finally moved to Holy Family Hospital on May 30. During those 10, days, Swamy had complained of fever and weakness.

Soon after the court hearing, Desai told *The Wire* that he does not want Father Swamy's death to go to waste. "Father Stan Swamy's didn't die for nothing. We really want to fight this till the end. This case is no more about just Father Swamy's death. We want to expose the state prison and the investigating agency (NIA) whose criminal action has led to this," Desai said.

Taloja central prison, which lacks proper medical facilities, failed to provide adequate medical treatment to Swamy and his health had deteriorated by the time he was moved out to a hospital. Since then, Desai said, Swamy has been in and out of the intensive care unit (ICU). The hospital told the high court today that Swamy died following a cardiac arrest he suffered on July 4. Swamy was put on a ventilator support and was unconscious ever since.

Dr Stanislaus D'Souza SJ, Jesuit Provincial of India, issued a statement after Swamy's death, saying he joined all Jesuit priests in the country in extending their condolences to Swamy's family. "I express my deepest condolences to the family members, friends, lawyers, well-wishers and all those who stood by Stan and prayed for him during this moment of trial and suffering," he said.

Although the Elgar Parishad case is being investigated by the NIA, the prisons fall under the Maharashtra state government's authority as prisons are a state subject. Swamy, one of the oldest prisoners across India's jails, needed proper medical care, more so at the time when COVID-19 had infected several prisoners across the state. The state, however, had failed to get him vaccinated until Desai brought it up before the high court. And when he had already begun complaining of ill health, the jail authorities got the first dose of the vaccine administered to him.

Swamy had been cured of COVID-19 a few weeks ago but his lawyer said that the infection had left a lasting impact on his vitals. Desai insisted that the delay in the treatment led to Swamy's death. As per the procedure laid down under Section 176 (1A) of the Code of Criminal Procedure, a judicial magistrate's inquiry has to be carried out in case of a custodial death. Additional solicitor general Anil Singh told the court that the state is not "foreclosing the mandated inquiries".

The division bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and N.J. Jamdar expressed their condolences to both Desai and Dr D'Souza and also appreciated them for their efforts to ensure Swamy got adequate medical treatment at the hospital. Swamy, who had terrible experience at the state-run JJ Hospital, was against being moved to a hospital. But after Desai had convinced him in May, he had relented. The court, taking note of it, appreciated Desai and observed, "We appreciate your efforts that you could prevail over him to go to a hospital. And he got the best possible medical treatment. But unfortunately, he could not survive."

Court petitions for all care

Swamy, who was arrested in October last year, was sent to judicial custody immediately and since has been in Taloja prison. Here, he had to move courts each time he fell sick or

needed access to healthcare. Suffering from advanced Parkinson's disease, Swamy needed a sipper to drink water. Even that sipper was made available to him only after an application to the court.

Soon after the Holy Family Hospital informed the court about Swamy's death, Desai asked that a post mortem to be conducted on Swamy's body and all guidelines laid down by the National Human Rights Commission in the case of a custodial death be followed. The court agreed.

Swamy, a priest, who lived with his friends and colleagues in Ranchi, Jharkhand, did not have any blood relatives. Desai told the court that Swamy's body should be handed over to his long-time friend, Father Frazer. The state public prosecutor told the court that the state had no objection to handing over the body to Father Frazer.

Swamy was [arrested on October 8 last year](#) for his alleged involvement in the Elgar Parishad case, which has been described as a witchhunt against critics of the government. Swamy was the 16th person to be arrested in the case and also the oldest. At the time of his arrest, he was frail and ailing, and had an advanced stage of Parkinson's disease. Swamy, who had [difficulty in even sipping water](#) from a glass, was dependent on co-prisoners to go about his daily life in jail. In the months that followed, Swamy had trouble going about with his day-to-day activities at Taloja jail, before he fell terribly sick in May. Only after the Bombay high court intervened, was he finally moved to Holy Family Hospital in Bandra.

Swamy, who has been booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, has been denied bail several times even though many prisoners across prisons in Maharashtra have [been infected by COVID-19](#).

In May, during one of the Bombay high court hearings, when Swamy was produced before the bench through a video conferencing link, he had told the court that the only request he had from the judiciary was that of interim bail. "The only thing that I would request the judiciary is to consider for interim bail. That is the only request," Swamy had said.

In his interaction with the court, Swamy had said that he had noticed a steady regression in his health since he was arrested in October last year. Swamy had wanted to return to Ranchi where he had founded Bagaicha, a Jesuit social research and training centre at Namkum. At the court hearing too, he insisted that the court allows him to return to Ranchi. "Whatever happens to me, I would like to be with my own," he had said in the court on May 21.

In the past year, several petitions and [complaints](#) have been filed against the Taloja jail officials, especially its superintendent Kaustubh Kurlekar. The state government, however, didn't act on these complaints until last week, when Kurlekar was shunted out of Taloja jail.

Swamy, one of the oldest prisoners in the jail, had been complaining of weakness and fever for a long time before he was moved to the hospital in the last week of May. The jail, overcrowded and ill-equipped to handle medical emergencies, ignored Swamy's plea for proper healthcare for weeks, leading to serious deterioration of his health condition.

After Swamy fell sick in May, his lawyer, Mihir Desai, moved another application before the high court, this time challenging the constitutionality of UAPA. Desai has challenged the constitutionality of section 43D (5) of UAPA, which imposes strict conditions for grant of bail. The bail application claims that the UAPA section violates Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Indian constitution. The case is scheduled for hearing again on July 6.

In his plea filed through advocate Desai, Swamy said the above section created an insurmountable hurdle for the accused to get bail and, thus, was violative of the accused person's fundamental right to life and liberty as guaranteed by the constitution.

In a statement, the Jarkhand Janadhikar Mahasabha said that the NIA, which is investigating the Elgar Parishad case and the Union government are "solely responsible for the sufferings of this elderly person and [his] current state of affairs".

Desai, who is representing several accused persons in the Elgar Parishad case, had been defending Swamy ever since he was arrested. Desai, who has known Swamy for over three decades, said his relationship with Swamy was more than what was shared between a lawyer and a client. "I have had the opportunity to visit Jharkhand a few times and each time I was there, I would stay at Bagaicha," Desai said at a condolence meet organised by the Indian Social Institute.

Desai pointed at the systematic harassment that Swamy was subjected to for two years before his arrest in October last year. "The police had raided his house in 2018 and when we asked them (police), they said they are only checking on him as a suspect; they claimed they won't arrest Fr. Stan... Two raids were carried out and nothing was found."

Irrespective of the fact that the local Pune police (which had earlier handled the investigations in the Elgar Parishad case until January 2020) and then the NIA did not find any evidence to implicate Swamy, he was still arrested. "Ideally, a person is taken in custody for further investigation and gathering substantial evidence. But Swamy was directly sent to judicial custody. Targeting Swamy was not a mistake, it was a deliberate, malicious arrest," Desai added.

Swamy was shifted to a private hospital, Holy Family, after a long legal battle. The prison, with over 3,500 persons incarcerated, was managed by three Ayurvedic doctors. These doctors, although not qualified, have been accused of administering allopathic medicines to the prisoners. In the case of Swamy too, allopathic medicines were given to him, his lawyers have alleged.

Even when Swamy was struggling in jail, both the NIA and the state prison officials had opposed his shifting to a private hospital. Swamy's lawyer had moved an urgent interim bail and the NIA court had rejected his bail petition on grounds including his health and the current COVID-19 situation.

Note: This article has been updated with a revised time of Father Stan Swamy's passing, Mihir Desai's quote and details of what the activist had told the Bombay high court.

<https://thewire.in/rights/stan-swamy-death-covid-19-judicial-inquiry>

My poem for Fr Stan Swamy

Long live Stan Swamy
A beacon light for Adivasis to follow
To bring in the world of tomorrow
The picture of Jesus crucified on the \$
The politics of neo colonialism
Brought about by finance Capital
Control of natural resources the key
Criminalisation of the people
And if that not enough then State enemy
So whose State is this ?
The State of the people
Or the State of the Capitalist
Stan has shown that religion need not be subservient to State politics
The Beatitudes taught by Jesus
Blessed are the meek and humble
To the power of nature
To living in harmony with nature
As Adivasis do
So Stan Swamy may you live forever
In the minds and hearts of the adivasis you worked for
As a candle that lights up the darkness
Showing us the way ahead.

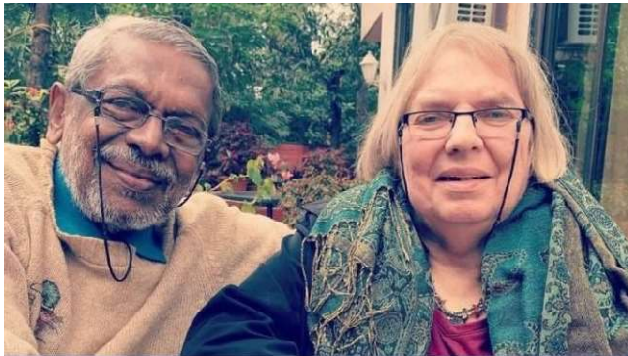
The book by Stan Swamy: *I am not a silent spectator*

https://www.sjesjesuits.global/media/2021/08/I_am_not_a_silent_spectator_Stan_Swamy.pdf

Gail Omvedt took caste to global audience that was fed only a Brahminical point of view

Gail Omvedt represents a generation of scholarship and activism that combined diverse ideologies to fight out caste-based oppression. She was a trusted friend of Bahujans.

SURAJ YENGDE 25 August, 2021 6:35 pm IST



When your morning messages and updates have only one person in their sharing, then it can be safely assumed that person was central to many people's lives and interests. It is rare to find such acceptance across the board. Gail Omvedt, an American-born Indian scholar, prolific writer, public intellectual, researcher, activist, and founder of socio-political movements, is one of those.

Gail Omvedt passed away on 25 August 2021 at 10 am at her village in Kasegaon, Sangli, Maharashtra at the ripe age of 80. Omvedt was born on 2 August 1941 in Minneapolis. She attended Carleton College and went to University of California, Berkeley for her doctorate. She was one of the first among American scholars who truly spent time with the oppressed people trying to unearth their archives for an international audience that was otherwise only fed a Brahminical, elitist point of view.

Omvedt first came to India in 1963 and then came back again to research on her PhD dissertation in 1970. Her dissertation "Cultural Revolt in a Colonial Society: The Non-Brahman Movement in Western India, 1873-1930" was submitted in 1973, which was eventually published as a book with emphatic appreciation from social justice movements in India.

The era of 1960s and '70s saw the emergence of peace movements in the West. The new culture of finding soul and freeing it from the trap of consumerism and imperialism was trying to find solutions elsewhere, to find a true meaning of life. The East became a hub of a new generation of activists fighting against war, nuclear arms, ethnic and colour violence, with the touch of Communist struggle. The university and college campuses in America did not budge down and dared to face the might of the empire, its police and capital.

This approach of delving into other cultures and learning from them brought the famous hippy culture. When the Western world was trying to learn various traditions from India and grasping the mostly Brahminical approach of the Indic past, there were honourable exceptions who chose to study the real, ideal, and people's India as opposed to the privileged castes' India.

Also read: [Understanding the new Dalit identity: Radical, angry, urgent and international](#)

Making India her home

Gail, as she was fondly called by her friends and colleagues in India and abroad, took up a teaching position in San Diego after submitting her PhD dissertation, but the distance between her home and her loving country, India, was becoming impractical. She finally chose to settle in India in 1978 and eventually married a Shudra caste activist, Marxist, Phuleite Dr Bharat Patankar. Omvedt relinquished her American citizenship to become Indian in 1983.

Gail was a household name of the Dalit and worker rights activists of the '70s, '80s, and '90s. I grew up listening to her and another American scholar Eleanor Zelliot's names. One could notice a white woman speaking fluent Marathi and addressing rallies, seminars, conferences, while also vociferously publishing seminal texts and offering public commentaries in newspapers, magazines, while at the same time theorising movements for the academic world. A polyglot thinker, Gail offered the required assurance to the anti-caste, workers', environment, and women's rights movements.

Like most activists, my father knew her and marvelled at her work. They had mutual interest in BAMCEF (the All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation), workers' movements, and the power of literature and cultural movements. They would bump into each other at BAMCEF conventions.

Also read: [Dalit history threatens the powerful. That is why they want to erase, destroy and jail it](#)

Vast body of research, anti-caste writings

The list of books authored by Gail is vast. She poignantly wrote about the social movements against caste, workers' and peasant movements, and religion. She also authored books on the most important thinkers of the anti-caste world — Phule and Ambedkar — alongside a list of anthologies that combine archival research, ethnographic observations, journalistic reportage, biographical notes, and intellectual history.

For mainstream publishers in India, texts on Dalits were mostly guided and published by Gail. *Dalits and the Democratic Revolution: Dr. Ambedkar and the Dalit Movement in Colonial India* and *Ambedkar: Towards an Enlightened India* profiled Ambedkar. *Buddhism in India: Challenging Brahmanism and Caste* offered an anti-caste substance to the Buddhist revival and contrasting flavours with Brahminism that opposed the open, liberal, and universal social view of Buddhism. Her contribution to India's feminism and the women's movement is vital. *We Shall Smash This Prison: Indian Women in Struggle* was a landmark in that she assessed the variants of feminist movements.

Gail's most famous text in recent times was *Seeking Begumpura: The Social Vision of Anticaste Intellectuals* that literally subverted the elite paganism of the Indian crybabies over the European Renaissance. Putting aside these conventional tropes, Gail aptly put the modernist revival at the hands of Dalit and Shudra intellectuals — Chokhamela, Janabia, Ravidas, Kabir, Tukaram, who existed prior to or during the famous European modernity. This text shook me from inside. A spark ran throughout the body as I started devouring it.

Also read: [*Why neo-liberal capitalism failed Dalit enterprise*](#)

‘Our Gail’, a trusted friend

Gail's writings were lucid and accessible. She wrote on a topic in a crisp and concise way. Her books are indispensable for students and the public to know more about India and its past. Almost taking the responsibility of filling the gap, Gail produced a scholarship in English. Her vast list of Dalit and Shudra caste collaborators, comrades and network of movements and their leaders is proof that Gail was a trusted friend. Along with her husband, she co-founded Shramik Mukti Dal (Workers Liberation Party) and remained a regular invitee and advisor to various movements across the board.

Whenever the Dalit movement was faced with challenges posed by Brahminical actors or foreign individuals, Gail was prompt to respond to and offer the nuanced perspective of Dalit response. During the famous World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, Gail was holding the fort strong to push back against the misguided apprehensions of the Indian government.

A recipient of several awards, fellowships, and professorships at national and international institutes, Gail Omvedt was the most influential American ambassador to India. She became an ideal for Western scholars on how to write, intellectualise, and reach scholarship into the masses. She could be seen on the streets leading a movement as easily as she would teach in classrooms or advise international bodies.

Omvedt represents a generation of scholarship and activism that combined diverse ideologies to fight out oppression. One could embrace Buddha, Phule, Ambedkar, Shahu, Marx and still not break each other's head. Looking back, it seems like a delicious combination. Today's generation will have to work very hard to develop a similar blend.

Gail is survived by her husband Bharat Patankar, daughter Prachi, son-in-law Teju, and granddaughter. She is immortalised in our memories. The community will not forget the grateful contribution of an unrelated, distant foreigner becoming “our Gail.”

Suraj Yengde, author of Caste Matters and an associate at Harvard University, is currently in Tuscany, Italy. He tweets @surajyengde. Views are personal.

<https://theprint.in/opinion/gail-omvedt-took-caste-to-global-audience-that-was-fed-only-a-brahminical-point-of-view/722072/>

The works and writings of Gail Omvedt

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/181SfKTHfO6Rp7_k2qCUCbGTs-SktXAJ2?fbclid=IwAR2VBYjkqyhWLvejM0GFMu9qgQd4tDoMAH_lxJY-QmFf55n4nllqtHqwxYo

Part IV
Other News and views from across the Globe
(Dedicated to Latika Malkani who embodies the modern spirit)



Latika Malkani - Hazel's Daughter in law

Latika for Orinda

Latika Malkani ran for Orinda City Council in 2020. She believes in accountability, transparency, and community, and strives to thoughtfully expand Orinda's resources, budget, services, and quality of life

An extract from her campaign – facebook post dated 22nd September



These were thoughts I shared Sunday night, as we collectively gathered at a vigil to honor the incredible Justice Ginsburg:

"We mourn her loss because of the heroic giant she was and all that she accomplished. But we also mourn this incredibly ill-timed loss because we understand the Supreme Court's role in preserving rights and democracy, and because we are terrified of what comes next.

But remember: Justice Ginsburg changed culture one step at a time, and in the face of the seemingly impossible and the hostile, she held her voice resolutely, so ours will be amplified. She truly never gave up, using her brilliance and creativity to advance legal principles she knew were morally correct. She entered Harvard Law School as one of only 9 women amidst 500 men, and she was a new mom with a 14 month old daughter. She won equal protection cases that favored women's rights, arguing as a young, female ACLU lawyer, to an all-male Court, that gender preference was unfair because it discriminated against her male clients. She truly and absolutely held strong through more health battles than any of us could imagine enduring, for the sake of our country and democracy. When she saw a barrier, she didn't give up, she looked for a way through, around, and over.

Justice Ginsburg, we stand today on your shoulders. It would not have been possible for so many of us to find and amplify our voices if you and other courageous leaders had not made such great sacrifices to change our society for the better. Justice Ginsburg showed us, through how she lived her life, that everything is possible and that everyone has a voice that is worth hearing. For that, we thank you and we will never forget what you have done for us.

And now, it is time to pay it forward."

Latika did not win but this was her post on facebook shortly before the results were out.

I'm writing to give an update on the Orinda City Council race.

First, my endless, sincere gratitude. It has been a long couple months and an even longer 24 hours for everyone! I want to thank all of you who supported me in this run. This campaign has been a true community endeavour that literally took a village. Thank you for hours of phone banking, canvassing, emailing, hosting Zooms, writing postcards, donating, and for voting and telling your friends and family to vote. Thank you for sharing your wisdom on the many ways we can do even better in Orinda. Thank you for standing up and speaking out for accountability and transparency, for equity and diversity, for kindness and community, and for our climate and our future.

Second, an update on election numbers: tonight's dominating theme wherever you turn! Our local election results are not final, and won't be final for at least a couple days, but a win for me is not likely. As things stand, we have made an incredibly strong showing but I'm presently trailing by about 600 votes, or about 4%, out of a total of about 14,500 total votes cast and counted thus far. See, <https://results.enr.clarityelections.com/.../web.264614/...> (FYI, votes cast does not equal ballots cast, because each voter may vote for up to two votes, so each ballot returned may have up to two votes cast.)

Now, some math! As of Monday, the day before the election, out of the over 15,000 registered voters in Orinda, the County had in its possession ballots from about 69% of us, or just over 10,000 ballots. See <https://www.cocovote.us/.../CCC...>. This means there were up to 20,000 votes cast before election day. If we assume that at least another 10-11% of us turned in our ballots by yesterday, we have a total of about 80% of registered voters or a total of 12,000 ballots (and up to 24,000 votes cast) in by yesterday. These are of course only approximations, but these numbers confirm what the County is telling us, and what some of you have noted--that there remain some uncounted votes, including some earlier returned ballots. (More ballots mailed by yesterday may trickle in and be counted, but those numbers are estimated to be smaller.)

For those who are now asking how many Orinda mail ballots already received are left to be counted, we don't know. Contra Costa County doesn't track how many Orinda ballots it has counted, but it reports that it has counted ballots from about 52% of all registered voters in the County, with an estimated additional 25% in mail ballots anticipated to be counted by this Friday at 5 pm.

Bottom line: With these numbers, my ability to catch up is unlikely but not impossible. In any case, we'll know more Friday at 5 pm. Focus your energy on the nation, and tune in Friday night for an update.

Third, some uplifting thoughts! Regardless of the final outcome of this election, I'm proud of our high numbers thus far. Together we ran a strong, sincere, ethical campaign with a specific platform and messaging that resonated with many of our neighbors. I'm not going anywhere

and neither (I hope) are you. Let's take a short break to renew, then let's work together to push forward on a local agenda that prepares for wildfires, addresses climate change and embraces clean energy, supports inclusivity, demands accountability, and creates a better Orinda.

I'm proud that we have come this far together, and honoured to call you my neighbours and friends.

Keshini on Discrimination – Taking after her mother?

Dear Acalanes Union High School District Governing Board,

My name is Keshini Cardozo, and I am a member of the Miramonte Class of 2020. The events of the past few weeks have sparked dialogue about the prevalence of racism in our country, and the videos published on social media last night are a reminder that a conversation about race needs to happen right in our community. This is an opportunity for us to grow as a community and actually change for the better, so I ask that you please listen to what I have to say.

Whether we like to admit it or not, we live in a racist community. By saying that I do not mean everyone here is a bad person, I mean that Lamorinda residents, myself included, are plagued with implicit biases. I know there is a large focus right now on punishing the girls who said the n-word on film, and they absolutely should be punished, but racial issues on campus expand much further. We have a culture of white solidarity in which people are rarely called out for their microaggressions or even blatantly racist remarks. I am ashamed to say in my first couple years on campus I heard others say the n-word and did not say anything to them out of worry of sounding uptight. I have since educated myself and learned to speak up, but I cannot say the same for many of my peers. Beyond microaggressions, there have been multiple incidents which exposed the problematic views of many of my peers. When I was a freshman, an African American student had the n-word painted on his locker. Discussions occurred afterwards, but nothing changed. Last Halloween, when four young people were killed at a house party, the response was to stop people of color from coming here, not to mourn the lives lost. When my mother spoke at a city council meeting after the incident and asked others to examine their implicit biases, someone asked her if she was even from here. And for every incident caught on film, there are so many more that go unreported. The education I received at Miramonte prepared me well for college admissions at the cost of prioritizing equity, which is supposed to be a part of AUHSD schools' mission statement. I can count every book I have read in school with a minority author on one hand. While I love *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *A Lesson Before Dying*, teaching racism does not end with books that say black people deserve basic human rights. The English curriculum treats racism as a historical era, forgetting that it never ended. In my English 4 WISE class this year, my teacher Mr. Poling exposed us to material that I felt better confronted modern day race in America, and it made my classmates uncomfortable. When reading excerpts of Robin Diangelo's *White Fragility*, many of my white peers had difficulty even acknowledging white privilege or that they have implicit biases. If a book makes white students uncomfortable, that is a sign that the book could be promoting growth and needs to be read. I am happy to hear that Miramonte will be offering a deconstructing race class for next year, but all students need to be exposed to these ideas, not just those who choose to take the class. Maybe if people actually learned about the history of the n-word, students of color wouldn't have to hear it so often on campus. If people weren't so afraid to acknowledge that they are a part of the problem, we might be able to work towards solving it.

Lastly, Lamorinda has such a lack of diversity that many residents perceive people of color as not belonging. I am Indian, and while I cannot speak for the types of oppression that African Americans face, I do know what it feels like to be a minority in this community. I am constantly mixed up with the three other Indian girls in my grade and I often feel like I need to hide parts of my culture in order to fit in. Diversity is so incredibly important, not just to make minority students feel more welcome, but also to mitigate the bubble which allows people to be ignorant about race. I was deeply saddened by your decision to prohibit inter-

district transfers last year. I know that it was a budgeting issue, but why do you prioritize our chrome books and physics labs and water polo team over minority students? You are making it abundantly clear that you view the white, wealthy students from this area as worth more than all others. It is no wonder that students feel emboldened to use racist language when their leaders are telling them to prioritize their own advancement over caring about other people.

While I can only share one experience of going to Miramonte, I hope that you listen to me and ask that you especially hear the experiences of African-American students. As I said in the beginning of this email, this is an opportunity for growth, and you have a choice to make. You can issue a statement about the district standing against racism and punish those few girls to avoid public outrage and pat yourself on the back for being good non-racist people. Or, you can affect actual change in this school, rework the curriculum and change policies, and really educate EVERY student to excel and contribute in a global society. For myself and every other student in this district, I hope you make the right one.

Sincerely,
Keshini Cardozo

Why I shall Always Love Zanzibar by George Pereira

[Memories of Zanzibar List 1 of 4 - by Ives \(George\) Pereira](#)

To me, Zanzibar was the ideal place to have been born and raised in.

For one, it was a small little town; small enough to have been called **a village**, judging by its size.

Its **multi-cultural** population added **spice** to an otherwise boring life. What made it very cozy was not only that the whitewashed buildings appeared to be hugging each other but that the people were unreservedly generous, tolerant of each other and warm. Above all, it was the lack of sophistication of the population that made it so welcoming and an ideal place on earth. Perhaps it was the best place on earth.

There were many distinct communities in Zanzibar,

The Africans, who were by far the majority, lived primarily in an area called “Gambu” where they built their huts and lived peacefully within their own culture which had now become an amalgam of Arab and Swahili culture. This culture was understandably influenced by Islam and so it borrowed appreciably from Arab culture. The Muslim Arabs were the carriers of Islam wherever they went. Occasionally, the Africans held their “Ngomas” (dancing to the haunting sound of African drums.) The majority of Africans were Muslims and like most Muslims in Zanzibar, they were consciously polite and gentle people in spite of the general poverty that was endemic. In fact, the language itself reflected the politeness and gentleness of the people. “Swahili” in its dynamism, also assimilated many words from other languages but particularly from Arabic and Hindi words. The Africans, though in the majority, had few twentieth century skills during the early years of growing up on this island. This was probably due to their lack of formal schooling which had to be paid for. There was no free public education at that time. They usually took up jobs as “domestics” in households, or did menial tasks such as the ones offered to them by the municipality or the Public Works Department. Many were in construction and they were generally relegated jobs that involved heavy lifting. Some of the Africans lived on small pieces of land outside the town boundary and lived a subsistence life growing cassava and sweet potatoes, and raising chickens and goats. Others took up to fishing in the very generous Indian Ocean that hugged and embraced the shores of Zanzibar. Extra fish that were caught were sold at the busy local fish market and one was always assured that the assortment of fish on display would be fresh since they were taken from the pristine Ocean the night before. Refrigeration was unknown then and so the fish had to be sold as quickly as possible in order to maintain their freshness. I recall that one way to tell whether fish were fresh was to open up the gills. If it was a bright red it might be considered safe for eating. As in most developing countries the customer was expected to bargain since the initial asking price was usually very inflated. Bargaining had a cultural component to it. Good bargaining techniques came with years of practice and involved a whole lot of acting and body language that conveyed messages of dissatisfaction, disapproval, walking-away- from-the- deal, or final acceptance expressions. If a customer chose not to bargain he might be considered “foolish” or “retarded”. He might also be considered an ignorant foreigner.

Other Africans worked for wealthy Arab land owners in possession of vast clove and coconut plantations. During the year, the workers were occupied in weeding large tracks of land, and during the picking season, they were up the trees picking cloves or coconuts which were then dried and stored in large burlap sacks for export to places like **Russia, India and other countries. The export of cloves and copra were the chief cash crops of Zanzibar.**

Many Africans also worked the Port area and helped in the task of loading and unloading ships. In those far off days, large goods were transported by “hamali carts”. These were long carts on four wheels, steered by one strong African while the others pushed vigorously at the cart from behind to keep it moving. There were no brakes on these carts so that accidents were liable to take place particularly if the crew operating the carts were irresponsible or in hurry to avoid late deliveries.

Another large group in Zanzibar were **the Arabs**. Arabs were generally **from Yemen**.

The Sultan **of Oman (ARABIA)** was appointed the Sultan of Zanzibar through a treaty with the British.

Consequently, most of the land and houses were owned by Arabs. The Arabs were Muslims. Since Zanzibar society was fashioned around the manorial system as practiced in Europe in the Middle Ages, the Arabs could well be compared to the Lords of the Manor. The serfs were the Africans, and I am sure that there must have been a quiet resentment among the Africans since they were paid a subsistence wage for all the hard work that they performed. It was very rare to see an Arab in the retail business or working as civil servants. The skills and the enthusiasm or the patience for desk jobs were just not there.

The Government of Zanzibar, however, was Arab dominated. Eventually this was to change after the Revolution in the sixties.

As you might expect, **Indians from India** was a sizeable group in Zanzibar. However, this was a very heterogeneous group. Some were Muslims and represented different sects in the Islamic world. Of these groups, the Bohoras, the Ithnasheries and the Ismailis were the largest groups. Most of the Indians were shop keepers and ran a variety of businesses from car sales to selling local and imported produce. For all practical purposes, Zanzibar town looked very much like little India. Most businesses were owned by Indians who generally lived within the confines of the town. This must have been a source of quiet resentment among the indigenes who always viewed the Indians as foreigners and were considered exploitive in their business practices.

The Goans, who **refused to be called Indian** at this time, were **another distinct group**. Having migrated from Goa where there was an entrenched Portuguese Colonial government, the Goans felt that they had an edge over their Indian counterparts in as far as they were Christians like their British masters and most of them were fluent in English made even more

so by the efforts of the **Sisters of the Precious Blood who ran (??) St. Joseph's Convent school.**

Catholics were forced (??) to join this school failing which, their salvation was rumoured to be in jeopardy. Most Goans chose to err on the side of eternal salvation more out of the fear of eternal damnation rather than conviction.

'The Goans **were favoured by the British and given priority in joining the civil service.**

This was in great part due to the **innate honesty of the Goans**; their ability to work hard and their **loyalty to their British bosses**. They were cut out to be excellent civil servants. A book written by a British civil servant entitled, "The Isle of Cloves" devoted an entire chapter to the contributions that Goans were making to their adopted country and revealed that without the Goans the British bosses would probably be in limbo with regard to their responsibilities. The author of "The Isle of Cloves" was promptly transferred out of Zanzibar for being on the side of truth.

****** British Colonialism referred to this kind of transfer as a promotion. British Colonialism was synonymous with the Russian Gulag.**

Wherever the Goans have gone, it would seem that before long, they would get themselves institutionalized. This sounds very innocuous. What I mean is that Goans have always felt the need to band together and form an association. Legend has it that a Goan Association (call it a Club if you must) was a necessary component of Goan life because it gave them an opportunity to meet, expand their friendships, tear down reputations and preserve their "Goanness" whatever that might be. To some it meant the preservation of Konkoni while to others it probably meant the exchange of Goan recipes that were bound to bring disparate groups of Goans together. Finally, it was hoped that through social interaction, children could ultimately find their mates locally rather than having to travel all the way to Goa in search of one. It was never articulated in public, but mixed marriages were not looked upon kindly. These clubs also provided, on a regular basis, social events such as dances, bingos (usually referred to as "housey-housey") and sports such as billiards, and table tennis. The bar was the watering hole for the young teenagers who felt that a beer or two (and sometimes a lot more) never killed anyone and so the bar became the focal point of many young sports participants and enthusiasts who met after a game of hockey or soccer to share their collective experiences. Some these young adults played "flush" (a variant of poker) at very low stakes.

When the Goans got to Zanzibar at the turn of the 18th Century in search of better opportunities, the need for a Goan Club became very urgent. At that time, the various groups ethnic, religious or cultural banded together because they felt that they had much to preserve from the Mother country and there was always safety in numbers. In essence, it became a multicultural society very much like Canada is today. The British (the Colonial Masters) did not seem to mind this just as long as these groups did not pose a danger to their stake in the colony.

Initially, the band that played at the Goan Club was made up of old veterans from the mother country. One played the drums, another played the violin, yet another played the piano and then there was a sax player. In the context of the times when the Waltz, Quick Step, Slow Foxtrot, Tango, Samba and the Viennese Waltz was king, this band churned out all the appropriate sounds and tempo for couples to show off the latest steps. Then came Artie Shaw and his band of renown and conventional sounds were challenged. One fine day a Goan artist from Daressalaam (who played Artie Shaw's famous tunes on his clarinet) introduced the Zanzibaris to those melodious sounds, and music forever began to change.

Dancing steps became more vigorous with the entry of Elvis Presley on the music scene much to the discontent of the older folk who viewed jive and jitterbug as crude and a curse visited upon their children. It was only after President Kennedy led the way, that these dance expressions found some respectability and subsequent acceptability.

But dances were not the only activities that were planned by the Goans. There was an active field hockey team (A and B teams) representing the Goans and also an active cricket team. All these teams participated in a variety of leagues which were open to serious competition by the other Club enthusiasts.

When Christmas rolled along, we would have Santa dress in his usual red garb and come and meet the excited children at the Club in a hand pulled rickshaw. When the children had their fun and received their toys, there was a Christmas dance held late in the evening for adults. The bar was well attended and there were quite a few inebriated individuals who in spite of their unsteadiness late into the night still got home safely because most people walked home. Perhaps only a handful of members owned cars. Many participants at these dances promptly left for home at mid-night since it was almost cultural that fights ensued shortly thereafter due to the drunkenness of some individuals.

In the early sixties Sports visits were encouraged between the Daressalaam Goan Institute and the Zanzibar Goan Institute. These were times when there was much excitement in Zanzibar and Daressalaam. It was also a special occasion for all the young boys and girls to meet and develop relationships which parents hoped would eventually end in matrimony. Zanzibar was known by the rest of East Africa (Kenya, Tanganyika, and Uganda) as the one place where teams could look forward to being given a great welcome and a wonderful time. It was also known for its pretty girls.

Most Goan parents in Zanzibar (and I expect elsewhere) were deeply entrenched in the belief in caste. This surfaced particularly when a marriage prospect was to be considered. Somehow, some parents believed that if you married "down" you were marrying someone with some genetic or intellectual disability. Caste also played a pivotal role when it came to membership in the Goan Club. The victims generally denied membership were the Goan cooks, shoe-makers and tailors. As a result the cooks, tailors and shoe makers formed their own association. This form of discrimination will forever be a black mark on the Goan

community who, by their very silence, were a party to this degrading and unchristian practice.

They say that it takes a village to raise a child. This is very true of growing up in Zanzibar. Parents kept a religious eye on all the children and this must have assured their safety while they grew up. The great thing about growing up in Zanzibar is that you could go to a friend's house at any time of the day without phoning ahead, that is, if you had a phone. You were always welcomed and you were assured that you would be treated with generosity and love by the parents. There was also a great deal of sharing. I recall that our Parsee friends Saros and Goderich Engineer had parents (Parsees) who would order Laurel and Hardy Comics from the UK. Saros and Goderich were considered by their friends to be very fortunate to have wealthy parents who could afford all kinds of toys particularly during the war years. However, Saros and Goderich were very generous and shared whatever they had very willingly. I remember being a regular visitor to their house and enjoyed the "Beano" and "Dandy" comics that appeared at regular intervals. "Captain Marvel" and "Captain Marvel Jr" comics were in short supply but somehow Saros and Goderich always had them.

The Goan Institute surely fulfilled its purpose at least in Zanzibar. To me it became the meeting place of all my friends. We could have healthy fun and grow into mature adults. Above all, the Club provided parents with security that their children were safe, and this took the potential for worry out of parenting.

There were other groups such as the Parsees, Comorians, Chinese and Iranians. All these groups were integrated into Zanzibar society and played an important role in the development of Zanzibar.

The final group were the British Colonials. They were the privileged ones. They had their own exclusive English Club and Golf Club. They generally went about their business without attracting much attention from the public. From time to time, bits of gossip trickled to the community about the misconduct of the Britishers at their Club particularly after they had much to drink. They made excellent rulers but their private lives were generally a shambles. The British did not mix with the "locals" on a social level. Those who made any attempts to do so were ostracised by their own and were often forced to leave the island or were transferred to another less hospitable colony as a penalty.

Our teenage years in Zanzibar were also quite interesting. In spite of all the teenage urges that occupy ones universe of desires at that age, we were still able to exercise a great deal of restraint particularly with the opposite sex. It would be pointless to compare our teenage years with how we see teenagers in North America conduct themselves and the freedoms that they are allowed. Ours was one which was based on sometimes imposed respect for the girls we knew. Sexual contact was taboo. Girls getting pregnant outside marriage were considered "wayward" and they were ostracised by the Goan community. Somehow, even the family of the pregnant girl got ostracised with the shame of it all. As a result, girls were very careful about their virginity, and boys were too scared to be saddled with an unwanted pregnancy

particularly because it meant a shotgun marriage if pregnancy did occur. Furthermore, most young boys and girls were looking forward to furthering their education, a theme that was drummed in by the parents since kindergarten. An unwanted pregnancy would bring a swift end to their ambitions. Fear of venereal diseases also had a very moderating influence on sexual conduct. A.I.D.S. was not known then, but there were other sexually transmitted diseases that were considered as life threatening as H.I.V. (A.I.D.S.)

Growing up in Zanzibar was constantly monitored by parents and friends alike. Neighbours were not reluctant to correct you if they found you doing the wrong thing. Neighbours were respected and so were friends of the family. There was always an awareness that if we did not listen to our elders, we would have to reckon with our parents and this meant serious corporal punishment befitting the offence. There was a deep seated belief in the adage "Spare the rod and spoil the child." Children were to be seen and not heard particularly in the presence of their parents and elders. I really do not believe that it was a good life skill. But I am sure that this made the lives of our parents a lot more bearable than it is for parents today.

St. Joseph's Convent School in Zanzibar has got to be the pulse of our lives as we grew up. We were given the discipline that would stand us in good stead, not only in school, but also in later life. My experiences in this School are what movies are made of and on reflection often leave a smile on my face.

Many parents who were forced to leave Zanzibar because of the convulsions of the political system would give their right arm to have brought up their children in Zanzibar. Their children would have had a full childhood free from the stresses of life as it is known in the West today. In the West children are forced to become latch-key kids because economics in the West demands two wages to make ends meet. Children are often denied their childhood that they rightfully deserve and this will forever influence their attitudes and relationship in the future.

Many Zanzibaris tell me that the Zanzibar of the twenty-first century has changed dramatically. The old values have been laid to rest in preference for the values of the West. While this was inevitable, I know I shall always cherish the Zanzibar that I once knew and still love unreservedly.

Toby Applegate and his work

I was introduced to Prof Toby Applegate's work by my Aunt Hazel Cardozo. These two papers struck me as they matched the areas I was investigating related to local self governance and right to self determination. They have a flavour which needs to be factored into the global debate.

https://www.academia.edu/26657872/SLOVENIA_POST_SOCIALIST_AND_NEOLIBERAL_LANDSCAPES_IN_RESPONSE_TO_THE_EUROPEAN_REFUGEE_CRISIS?email_work_card=view-paper

An extract from the paper: As a nation-state, Slovenia represents an increasingly rare case wherein 80 percent of the country identifies as ethnically homogeneous. Even in the face of this fact, Slovenia's ethno-national identity has been called into question since its independence. The European refugee crisis has brought this questioning into sharp focus as the admittance, care and transfer of refugees has caused burdens not only economically and logistically, but also in terms of what it means to be Slovenian and European at the same time. In a place with little history of provision of care for large-scale refugee populations, the cultural and political frameworks of Slovene society do not possess the crisis response capacity that its Northern European neighbors might. In fact, Slovenia's record on human rights is not as stellar as is often presented to the world at large. This paper argues that Slovenia's place in Mitteleuropa serves as a hindrance to it as a place of social care and reaffirms certain historical conditions that render it a transitory space between The Other and the 'real' Europe. It relies upon field observations of how Slovenia organized its response to the crisis in the autumn of 2015 and criticizes those responses as reaffirming both the post-socialist transition and the neoliberal intent of its national infrastructure and political economy.

https://www.academia.edu/18701165/Finding_Carl_Sauer_s_Sosua_The_Dominican_Republic_s_vanishing_Jewish_landscape_and_a_possible_future_for_material_culture_and_critical_geography?email_work_card=title

This paper explores the vanishing Jewish landscape of the Dominican Republic. Sosua, a former dairy cooperative town, was colonized by German and Austria Jews fleeing Europe during the months before the beginning of World War II. At the invitation of the Dominican Republic's dictator, Trujillo, Jews were settled in Sosua where they founded a once-thriving agricultural community. What has happened to the material culture that these forced migrants created and what does it say about the relationships of globalization, human rights abuse, and landscape erasure? This question is posed and a possible research agenda pertaining to it is proposed.

Ecology and livelihoods some issues

The first discussion I had related to my work and its relation to Goa, was an even right near Marie's home in Candolim, the River Princess which had grounded there on 6th June 2000.

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Mangalore/the-saga-of-mv-river-princess/article29838357.ece>

Issues related to Socialist experiments:

The impacts of sedentarisation and industrialisation on Kazakhstan in the 1930s

<https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/kazakh-famine-beginnings-sedentarization.html>

The impact of diversion of water on the Aral Sea

<https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/world-of-change/AralSea>

Engels on nature:

That nature responds to the ignominy inflicted on it is well known. In *Dialectics of Nature*, Engels writes: *Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel out the first. The people who, in Mesopotamia, Greece, Asia Minor, and elsewhere, destroyed the forests to obtain cultivable land, never dreamed that by removing along with the forests the collecting centres and reservoirs of moisture they were laying the basis for the present forlorn state of those countries. When the Italians of the Alps used up the pine forests on the southern slopes, so carefully cherished on the northern slopes, they had no inkling that by doing so they were cutting at the roots of the dairy industry in their region; they had still less inkling that they were thereby depriving their mountain springs of water for the greater part of the year, and making it possible for them to pour still more furious torrents on the plains during the rainy seasons..... What cared the Spanish planters in Cuba, who burned down forests on the slopes of the mountains and obtained from the ashes sufficient fertilizer for one generation of very highly profitable coffee trees--what cared they that the heavy tropical rainfall afterwards washed away the unprotected upper stratum of the soil, leaving behind only bare rock! Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature—but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly.*

Stalin - Economic Problems of the USSR; the Great plan for transformation of Nature

Some comrades deny the objective character of laws of science, and of laws of political economy particularly, under socialism. They deny that the laws of political economy reflect law-governed processes which operate independently of the will of man. They believe that in view of the specific role assigned to the Soviet state by history, the Soviet state and its leaders can abolish existing laws of political economy and can "form," "create," new laws.

These comrades are profoundly mistaken. It is evident that they confuse laws of science, which reflect objective processes in nature or society, processes which take place independently of the will of man, with the laws which are issued by governments, which are made by the will of man, and which have only juridical validity. But they must not be confused.

Marxism regards laws of science — whether they be laws of natural science or laws of political economy — as the reflection of objective processes which take place independently of the will of man. Man may discover these laws, get to know them, study them, reckon with them in his activities and utilize them in the interests of society, but he cannot change or abolish them. Still less can he form or create new laws of science.

This relates to Stalin's plan to preserve the grasslands while transforming nature

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Plan_for_the_Transformation_of_Nature

Capitalist concerns about nature:

The Brundtland Commission report, our common future

<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/5987our-common-future.pdf>

IELA perspective:

IELA was created to deal with issues that could not be taken forward due to structural reasons, it however starts with a history and is responding to conditions that it faces in the course of its development. To know more visit:

<https://ielaind.org/>

Part V

My Alma Mater, Class mates and Colleagues

(Dedicated to Verghese Kurien whose Birth Centenary is being commemorated this year. His contribution, rural India deserves the best and to V B Eswaran who made SPWD a force to reckon with)

The Milkman of Amul

This milkman is a milk man with a difference
Not producing the milk
But ensuring it reaches every doorstep
The real producers reap the profit
Unlike when they sold to Polson
Or other some such dairyman
The dairy owners of Kaira
This milkman supported
The PM once his exploits observed
Incognito
The birth to NDDB it did give
And distance from Delhi too
In terms of Nationality
This milkman had a different hue
Instead of the slogan Dilli Chalo
The call of Subhash Chandra Bose
His call was
To the village we will go
The rural manager is but a servant
Of the crores of dairy producers
Later oil and other commodities
Service with finesse was his motto
Not suffering parrots too
Yet somehow this tune has slowly changed
The Corporate piper calls the tune
We can produce milk on Mars is the cry
As nature's laws we continue to defy
Universe is our limit for destruction
Milk producers and farmers can go to hell
For the NDDB we know is that a death knell
Certainly an Irman without spine
Is not what we can call fine
I do not know
From where I picked up that line
The milkman and his engineer
Knew it meaning all right
As his disciples
We will not go down without a fight
So to the milkman of Amul my salute
We continue to struggle
For what is right
Right is might
Not money or power
One day this saying we will prove
Will put my money on the hoof
Soon this cry will hit the roof

An ode to the Mountain goat

An ode to the mountain goat
Who has been mascot of SPWD since 1985
My he knew how to make us jive.

This goat even at 75 could climb
The highest peak
For yonder to see
The vast expanse
Of humanity

And its multifaceted links with nature.
For of nature it is a part of
Yet because it has a mind
Which often forgets the laws
That govern human kind

So every this way and that
We see the destruction that is wrought
By mindless consideration
For profit on one hand and survival on the other

This mountain goat
Who once foresaw
The energy policy of this vast country
Was tireless in his quest
For the right kind of development to show its best

Accordingly like Gandhi before him
He travelled its length and breadth
Its vast wealth
To unfathom

Each situation is unique
Said he
The local context is important
To understand

To turn waste into gold
Or biomass
As we see

For that he collaborated with Datye
on WIRP
And with many others as well
Does it now ring a bell ?

He painstakingly put all this knowledge together
At SPWD's Silver jubilee

So that all could have it
For posterity.

The mountain goat decided that it was now enough
There are others
To fill the trough

Yet for me he will remain
The symbol of all that is nimble
Never once did he tremble
At the pile of paper on his table
By morning it was gone

So to the mountain goat I salute
As he dances to Lord Krishna's flute
As the Natraj also gives his bow
To this proud son we endow

Our hearts and minds
To fulfill his quest
That one day
He may find rest.

An ode to the Grizly bear

An ode to the Grizly Bear
Whose hackles rise
When anyone his siblings try to snare.

Like Ustad Tiger he is unaware
Of human intervention, his lot to restare (restore).
His growls keep all but the bold at bay
His family to defend he keeps enemies away.

But alas his habitat is imperiled
By wise men.
Wiser than nature.
And a keeper who believes in science
But forgetting the source
Of all human discourse

The Grizly bear loves fish.
Licking his chops at the savoury meal
The burbling brooks amidst the mountains touching heaven
Are home
For this feast of leaven

A wise man once asked
What if the Grizly bear does not exist?
Do you know the answer?
Write in.

My take
It is imperative to save the grizly bear
As with it the family tree crumbles (food chain).
Is your answer any different ?
I'd like to know.

Cheers to the Grizly bear
He will live many many years
With your support of course !!

On the rare frogs in the well

Sorry Guys I was busy with some frogs in a well
A very rare breed as my colleagues will tell
They are classified as RET by IUCN
First found in Kalpavalli
My colleague suddenly found them at Panerwa as well
They have a strange ability
To croak in unison
Without rhyme or reason
Their croaking interferes
With the work of the industrious ant
I once told you about
And the bees as well
I wondered why?
It is set at a particular frequency
And the trigger is the messages these poor creatures get to do their work.
So I went into the well to set this right
And guess was there a fight?
sorry I mixed my metaphors
This fight was outside the well
Naushy saw it alright
Will keep you updated
For now have set their frequency to another band
Its called the gang of Vassipore
I found the code in Drishyam
You guys must see it too

A Conversation at Headquarters

Group Captain P to Brigadier G
We are building a shelter for cows care to come and see
Brigadier G to Group Captain P
No thanks but would like to have the Ghee
Group Captain P: That will be ₹5,000/- per Kg.
Agent X uses it in Chyavanprash ₹ 4,000/ Kg that will be
Brigadier G: I prefer Chyavanprash then
Group Captain P: You got yourself a deal Chyavanprash it will be.
Agent X: For that we need to see. When I will have time to make that is.
Brigadier G to Agent X: No worries I can wait. This one can be late do we have a date?
Agent X: A date no but a deal yes. How it will pan out anybody's guess.

The Ant and the Fly

The Elephant had been disgraced
Gored his Mahout to death
So the Ant and the Fly at Keonjhar they met
Elephant to take to the vet
Not an ordinary Elephant was he
One that diverted others did he
Agricultural fields being destroyed
Who was Helen of Troy?
Mining in Badbil the cause
As forests were lost of course
Other Elephant routes across Odisha disturbed
Development had made them perturbed
Similar stories brewing in Bengal and Jharkhand too
Other States not far behind in the queue
So Ant and the Fly at Keonjhar conferred
Their solution temporarily they deferred
Larger unity of purpose needed
Oont to the rescue if cause he heeded.
Tribals rallied around him
Death to the Elephant said some
The Oont said how come?
Long with the Elephant have you lived
From where discord in your mid
☹️ ☹️ ☹️
Not the Elephant but CFR
All round development our BDR (mantra)
So tribal rode the Elephant
Ant and the fly side by side
In the forest from their enemies they did hide

Ant Man and the Nobel Laureate

The Ant Man meets Nobel Laureates in Economics
Ant man Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo did meet
Actually other way round was the greet
Poor economics study the occasion
For this liason
The industrious ant had many a story to tell
Including one with a tree that fell
Strong winds and heavy rain there was.
Rotting roots the cause
The roots are fundamental to the economy
And so too for the tree
It was a story of the 'rich' made poor
Deprivation from nature was told to be the cure
Urbanisation and Industrialisation to be sure.
So dependent on EGS and government subsidy they were
Corruption and other things made facilities insecure
So from pillar to post give aways were the lure
Abhijit and Esther reflected
Project they constructed
Ant man their go between
Seva Mandir the project did house
And Vidhya Bhawan it's hall it gave without a grouse.
More on this saga later
Have enough on my platter

Mission the Seed

Q and Bond - Mission the Seed. Code named XX and XY
Bond there has been a breach of code says Q
Where ?
Kutch border, UPOV treaty violated
Our research compromised
Can you have a look Bond ?
Tell Madame X to have the files ready
Will be there at 8 am tomorrow
Fine will tell Moneypenny to do the needful
You and Madame X on your own now
Fine, just give me that smart GPS device you had got ready
Need to get all the coordinates right
Which way the wind blows you mean Bond.
That and a look at the water too
Heard it got contaminated Q
Radioactive stuff placed at the source Bond
Difficult to clean up
Not impossible Q
Mission impossible Bond
No it's Mission - The Seed . Code named XX&XY said Bond smiling
Good luck to you Bond says Q

Suicide or Murder

The broken Hyoid bone
Scene a room in Dera Saccha Sauda (city: unidentified).
Lone Ranger investigating
Bullet holes in the walls
Shot at point blank range why did the now dead man miss?
How did the Hyoid bone break ?
Lone ranger his findings to the top brass reported
Not enough proof was the reply
The Lone Ranger duly deported
Truth contorted
To the bottom of this resolved he
No friendly handshake with the powers that be

Golu and the Anaconda

Golu and the Anaconda

Golu went to the valley of flowers
Warm greetings he got on his birthday
From behind the purda that was
The long long row of flowers I mean
Eyes met with expectation
Would the purda disappear one day ?
For that we need to ask Theresa May
The Anaconda snaked through Assam
The Brahmaputra from Jhelum its next sojourn
How I got there I do not know
Kamrup and Tejpur is my guess
As infested with infiltrators they are in a mess
Into the Bay of Bengal moved the Anaconda
Wrapping itself around India's coast
What do you have to say Golu my dost
Biodiversity is what I love most
So from the hot spots of the Sundarban
To those in the Konkan
Messages travel fast
And fishers have vowed to fight unto the last
Forest dwellers too have joined the refrain
And Pastoralists from Rajasthan, Himachal and Uttrakhand too
Small peasants from everywhere have joined to view
This spectacle with vigour anew
Dussehra round the corner soon
And Ram has already been dreaming of the moon
Chandrayan 2 became mission impossible
The bullet train and coastal bridge in Mumbai
A treat for those who are able

The Earthworm of Amravati

Rajiv Mittal with American friend
To Amravati they went
Gandul to meet
Organic to greet
In the fine overturned mud
They saw Gandul crawling like blood
Among many worms was he
Busier than the Bumble bee
Soil fine to grind
Along with leaf it was left behind
A slow process for sure
Need to take care of the temperature
Water and shade were the elements
That helped to keep it under control
As Gandul over and under he rolled.
As Rajiv the refined mud he handled
Gandul for cover did he scramble
The American friend was pleased
Not sign of any disease
Ready for Rajiv to name his price
Organic to taste is very nice

The Oont from Shekawati

The Oont from Shekawati has travelled long
Currently in Bhopal bonds he has made strong.
This Oont has morphed
Can also achieve that of a dwarf
Long strides through the forests of India
From Thane and Dangs in the West
To Mizoram and Manipur in the North East
Also called the tribal stretch
Catwalk at Bhopal they did
But before Mary Kom they all skid
Everyone to her bid
The Oont lot of water and food did store
As at the festival there was more
Forest foods, tribal medicine and the like
The Oont did declare on the mike.
Kheep however he imported
From Haryana it was exported
The Jat it was who delivered
At Kolkatta the deal was quivered
And Bhopal in time it landed
Before the Oont could be branded
Once took a ride on this Oont in Barmer
Bounding over the sands
With its owner Hamer
Bus to catch
The Oont its speed it did match
What a sight the bus and the Oont
Hurry up said the hoot
As the Oont kneeled
Touch the ground did my heel.
A wave saying goodbye
A sea of red turbans watched the fly
Shekawati is nigh

Women's Rights

When might is right
Women's rights
Comes with a difference
My mind and body are my own
With focus on production
The call of women is reproduction
Why, for whom, for what is the question?
Can the slave of man give birth to anything other than a slave?
Am I my brother's keeper
Mukesh on Anil Ambani
And now we have
Narayan Murthy and Nandan Nilekani
Equality and equal are different
Are the finger fingers the same?
Yet they work in unison
Ask any mason
Equality of women
Is not man's to give
It is necessity demanded by nature
If we respond to its call to save the planet that is
Is it like roses in the sea?
Time will tell
Now have to go
To ring the bell

On the dilemma related to Corona Virus

To sharpen the curve or flatten it?
The question is now merely rhetorical
As flat it is going to be
The shadows lengthen
Though now the sense somewhat brightens
Like the candle does as it reaches the end of road
Yet this does not stop the hoard
All above board
As the economy it corrodes
Immunising the herd
Is something that goes unheard
But take place it will
Phase 1, Phase 2, Phase 3
As of lockdown we have our fill
People tired of being still
immunity has a price
And it's not just a plate of rice
Though the rice bowl with dal
For many would be quite nice
No time to test with mice
So global lab it shall be
Just check out Djibouti
Doing pretty well it seems
Sunshine and fresh air by the reams
Despite the US and Italy bursting at the seams.
Cuba has sent out its team
There are some who at this news beam
Yet it is the cat who takes the cream
Siamese
No Chinese
Can you learn to say please
No wanting the Corona more on that chapter when will we shut the door.

Climate Change and the farmer's struggle in India

Greta Greta
Yes Papa
Supporting farmers
Yes Papa
Subverting Indian law
No Papa
Sovereignty of India
What is that Papa
Elected government has the right to rule
No Papa
Right to serve Papa
Okay Greta
What's your take
Sociocracy and right to recall
If anti people
Government falls
Is this for India only Greta
No Papa
Policy for the world to follow Papa
Autonomy and Sovereignty does not mean my right to question suppressed
It is to take on Board
And do what you think best
How so Greta
Not just farmers but people as a whole affected
Whole of Delhi barricaded
Many have nothing to do with the farmers strike
Yet punished due to government arrogance
We know best says they
Even children and the earth have a voice
Signed by Indian Government too
Is the voice of India
Only the voice of a few

Response from Priya PM NICP

(This is in lieu of a response considering the stands taken by NICP)

Greta Greta

What is it dear Priya

We do not need you for our cause Greta

Why so Priya

Sovereignty Greta

We get the government we deserve Greta

So it's up to us to open our mouths

Besides Greta

Yes Priya

Farmers of Punjab burning rice straw Greta

Pollution reaching Delhi Greta

The cancer train from Bhatinda to Bikaner is about Corporate influence on agriculture too

So the maaise is even deeper

We have to find our own answers Greta

Agreed Priya

Think locally act globally is the call

For us it act locally impact Globally Greta

The farm bill not to our taste

But problems with the agitation too

Want to prop up an unviable system

Anti Nature

And in the long run anti people too

So Greta

Yes Priya

Let us work our solutions out

Agreed Priya

This solidarity to the core

Thank you Greta

Unity and struggle our motto

Unity Struggle Unity is progress.

About the editor:



Viren Lobo who was influenced by liberation theology during his college days did an MBA from Institute of Rural Management Anand. He has been working the development sector since he passed out from there in 1985. Employer, employee and other contradictions observed by him during his thirty year stint at Society for Promotion of Wastelands Development (SPWD) forced him to examine the relevance of Marxism as a way of looking at reality in relation to change he sought to bring. During the course of his work covering more than twenty States, he noticed a link between the livelihoods and ecology which he pursued strongly as Executive Director SPWD. The limitations of existing organisations to deal with the complex questions society posed motivated him to set up Institute of Ecology and Livelihood Action as the transition needed to address issues he was looking into at that time. The contradictions arising out of the a series of Bills that were passed during the last five years encouraged him to use the enforced sedentary life imposed on him to use his creativity to write plays. These were the first of a series which have helped serve the purpose of putting on paper the complex dilemma and diverse social opinions he came across.

About Especioza Trust:



Especioza Trust is named after my great, great grandmother who widowed at an early age brought up her only son Aogustinho (seated in centre). Shortly after a family reunion in December 2013, we got news that the family home at 84 Porvorim had been illegally sold to a builder. My aunt Marie stepped in and after getting the required mandate from the family not only got the family home back but the previous ancestral home of 85 Porvorim as well. Since then it became her project in memory of her widowed great grandmother till her death on her mother Amy Lobo's 117th birthday (25th July 2019). Since the informal trust set up by her could not achieve fruition I decided to keep the struggle and memories alive by carrying on her mission to bring unity within the family and dedicate the work of the Trust to all widows and single women of the world. My Aunt/Cousin Hazel Cardozo the daughter of Liban Pinto one of the two brothers born on my birthday (6th September) has helped me to give this project shape. The other brother Lucian in whose name the house was, also happened to be born on my birthday as well. The spiritual connection and the necessity for me to step in also come from a lot of other quarters which need not be documented here.

Viren Lobo