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The Energy of India

by Pierre David

HYDERABAD IS IN CENTRAL INDIA AND HAS A POPULATION OF A little more than 4 million. It's like lots of Indian cities: crowded, overflowing with cars and motorcycles and tuk-tuks (the motorized, tricycle-like taxis that are ubiquitous in South Asia), hot, pungent and riddled with sharp contrasts. There is great wealth here, and great misery. Gleaming, steel-glass hotels and office parks are rising across the city, but there are still sprawling slums, and ancient, structurally unsound apartment buildings, and bridges and sidewalks that are falling apart, and sewers that are overflowing. More than anywhere in America, Hyderabad offers an array of smells — good, bad and other — that are uniquely, distinctly of this place.

But there's something else here that all Americans should care about very much, something that used to be central to the whole idea of the American metropolis and now, somehow, seems to have dissipated: The energy — the churning — of a great city. Hyderabad is churning. Things are happening. This city, like many Indian cities, used to be an impoverished swamp circumscribed by rings of poverty circumscribed by rings of more poverty. But then, in the early nineties, just as eastern Europe and the Soviet Union were emerging from decades of socialist

totalitarianism, India decided to put an end to its own experiment with command economics. Two decades later, the results are stunning: India is growing, and fast. The growth is uneven and sometimes crude and unplanned and disruptive, but it is obvious and widespread, and it is lifting hundreds of millions of human beings out of the slums and villages into the twenty-first century. That process, that lifting, is noisy and confusing, and it has huge social implications. Old buildings are being razed; new buildings are emerging out of the rubble. Politics and commercial life are being reimagined; the whole idea of what it means to be born, grow up, go to school, get a job and work and have a family has evolved into something never before fathomed. Expectations are not what they used to be. India is not what it used to be.

The most important aspect of this new India, with all its dynamism and energy, is freedom. Not freedom in some abstract or philosophical sense, the way it is so often (and recklessly) bandied about by our politicians. Freedom in the sense that millions of Indians have the power (and obligation) to make decisions that were once made by other people — about what to buy and sell, where to live, where to go to school, what occupation to

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The Anti-Communist Manifestos: Four Books That Shaped the Cold War

by John Fleming

IT'S BEEN TWENTY YEARS SINCE THE SOVIET UNION COLLAPSED, SO it may seem a bit strange to read about early Cold War history and the American struggle to contain the communist behemoth. But there are critical lessons in John Fleming's wonderfully researched and very engaging *The Anti-Communist Manifestos: Four Books That Shaped the Cold War* — on the U.S. confrontation with the U.S.S.R., and with our ongoing campaign against terrorism.

The Anti-Communist Manifestos — for those who haven't read Karl Marx, the name is a play on the 1848 Communist Manifesto — examines four books that strongly shaped Western, and especially American, thought in the early decades of the Cold War. Those books are Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, Jan Valtin's *Out of the Night*, Victor Kravchenko's *I Chose Freedom* and Whittaker Chambers' *Witness*.

Each book has its own strengths and weaknesses. But all of them are bound together by their honesty and their unsparing attitude toward Soviet communism. Today, this might not sound like a big deal. We're accustomed to thinking of the Soviet Union as "the evil empire." But in the early 1940s, when the United States was allied with the Soviet Union against Nazi Germany, criticizing the Stalin regime was considered, in official quarters, threatening to the war effort. More generally, there was a certain wait-and-see attitude among many Americans vis-à-vis the Soviet Union, a hope, or prayer, that the socialist experiment might yield some fruit.

It took Koestler and Co., to alert Americans to the fact that the Soviet Union was — at its very heart — an enemy not only of democratic capitalism but the whole of civilization. Until then, most Americans had but a dim understanding of day to day life inside the Soviet Union, and they knew very little about the Gulag, the purges, collectivization, the Ukrainian famine and the slave labor that had powered the U.S.S.R.'s much-vaunted five-year plans. Nor did they appreciate the international reach of the Soviets' intelligence and propaganda operations. Nor did they really understand that the communists inhabited a zero-sum world in which the very idea of coexistence with the United States was *verboten*. The war against Hitler was viewed, in the Kremlin and among the party leadership, as a precursor to a much bigger confrontation with the Allied powers.

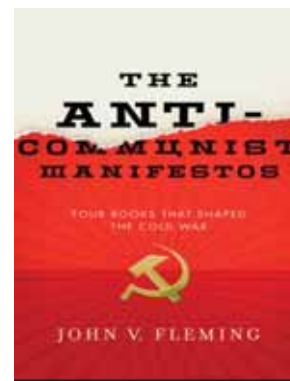
What's particularly noteworthy about *The Anti-Communist Manifestos* is that it underscores the importance of books — ideas — in the struggle for freedom during the Cold War. In general, books seem to matter less in the post-Cold War era than they used to. There are so many other distractions — computers, hand-held devices, video games, Facebook. What's more, every other study seems to point in the same, sorry direction, suggesting that Americans have shorter attention spans than ever. We seem less interested in, less taken with, ideas. It's hard to imagine a few books mattering that much in, say, the United States' quest to rid the world of Al Qaeda.

Or not. The moral of *The Anti-Communist Manifestos* is that powerful ideas are very often those that are communicated clearly and succinctly

to large numbers of people. These ideas are made more powerful not by their complexity but, on the contrary, their eloquence — their simplicity. The arguments contained in *Darkness at Noon* et al., are not very hard to make sense of. They boil down to: America is a vastly better, happier, more just, more equitable society than the Soviet Union, and we should never forget that, and we should be empowered by that in our fight against the totalitarians. Of course, there are nuances, subtleties — each writer has a somewhat different take on America — but that's the essence of it.

When it comes to radical Islam and the fight against terrorism, things are, admittedly, a little more complicated. We are not confronted with a single state or regime. Our enemy is, as is well known by now, far more diffuse.

But, in the end, the struggle is very similar. It is one that pits democracy against a totalitarianism of a different stripe — a would-be caliphate supported by mad men who cannot stomach the idea of coexistence with the United States. All that is needed now are a few good books to state things clearly and powerfully to steel us for the struggle ahead. —PD



GROCERY STRIKE AVERTED

Against the backdrop of California's staggering 12.1% unemployment and the threat of a double-dip recession, everyone took a sigh of relief this month when United Food and Commercial Workers reached a temporary deal with Southern California's big three grocery chains Ralphs, Vons, and Albertsons.

The labor negotiations, which had dragged on for months, helped avert a serious strike in which more than 54,000 grocery workers across Southern California would have walked off the job.

While the union and grocery chains came to a three-year temporary negotiation, both employers and employees appear to be pleased. Rick Icaza, president of UFCW, told *The Los Angeles Times*, "the agreement protects grocery workers' jobs and healthcare, and keeps the employers profitable."

At the heart of the negotiations was a debate over rising healthcare costs. Specifically the UFCW and the grocery chains were trying to reach a deal to ensure the economic viability of a long term healthcare trust fund.

Ultimately, however, workers feared a pending strike, which would have disrupted work for thousands. Many recall the labor stoppage back in 2003-04 that carried on for more than four months, led to a dramatic increase in union dues, cost employers approximately \$2 billion, and paved the way for competition.

— Sabrina L. Schaeffer

The Energy of India

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pursue and so forth. This is not an easy freedom. It is a freedom to chart one's own course, which sounds lovely and perfectly noble until one has to do it.

No doubt, India remains a work in progress. A large majority of Indians are still very poor, and its cities are riddled with garbage and crumbling infrastructure. The hotels that cater to foreigners stock their rooms with bottled water for a reason. Hyderabad is no exception.

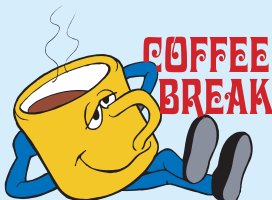
But there is a sense of possibility in this country. That's not because Indians are somehow cordoned off from the dangers and instabilities that plague the rest of the planet. Terrorism is a fact of life, and there's been a downturn in foreign investment. Just as China threatens U.S. interests in the Pacific, it threatens India's national security and is allied with some of its biggest foes, starting with Pakistan. The sense of possibility derives from the knowledge that the future has yet to be written, that tens of millions of people will make billions of decisions over the next five, ten, fifty years, and that these decisions will shape the new India.

In America, meanwhile, one senses a growing and very troubling weariness with freedom. One suspects that many Americans would be happier letting other people — in Washington, presumably — make important decisions for them. This has not happened overnight; it has been building for decades, maybe longer. Nor is this, at root, a partisan matter. It has to do with something much deeper, with our sense of ourselves and our desire to take charge of our futures. We are weaker now, more timid, more prone to follow the rules and stay well within their bounds. Security is more important to us than freedom, and this is why our innovation lags. Innovation entails risk, which entails failure. We seem less able to stomach failure these days.

It need not be this way. The secret of Hyderabad is not a secret. It is something that America practically created: It's freedom, which is what gives this place its movement, its churning quality. This question of our freedom will not be decided in the next election. It will be decided over generations. But we should be talking now. We should start this conversation immediately. —PD

Transference is:

- A. a psychoanalytic patient's distorted view of the analyst.
- B. a certificate that enables a psychiatric patient to change buses.
- C. a money laundering technique used by criminals.
- D. a process in which a protein molecule changes shape spontaneously.



ANSWER : A
Transference is a central concept about which volumes have been written. Forget the bus transfer. Free lunches are waiting. Proteins do change shape but such a process is not referred to as transference.

IN CA DATE NIGHT MEANS WORKERS' COMP

California's legislature recently passed a new childcare bill that could make date night even that more infrequent.

AB 889 is a generous piece of protective legislation aimed at guarding domestic employees like housekeepers, nannies, and caregivers over the age of 18 by requiring, for instance, minimum wage, breaks every two hours, workers' compensation coverage, and overtime.

But the law doesn't simply relate to full time employees. Parents are required to have the same coverage for the weekend babysitter, meaning they would need a backup sitter for the babysitter if dinner and movie runs more than 2 hours. As Sen. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA-4) wrote in *The Union* recently, the Domestic Workers' Bill of Rights will lead to babysitters getting less work and making less money.

The bill has college students who babysit especially concerned. Chico State student Erin Donahoe told *The Orion*, a student-run paper at Chico, that she's concerned parents will favor "daycare" over babysitters in order to ensure that they can't be sued.

Still some parents might just lean toward younger, high school babysitters, who fall below the age requirement. Looks like those freshman girls might receive a lot of calls this year.

— Sabrina L. Schaeffer

BAD SERVICE, NO CONTRACT

It looks like one L.A. school board member is trying to make a point to health insurance companies: outstanding customer service needs to be the rule, not the exception.

Following a payment dispute with MetLife's dental insurance over a mouth guard, Richard Vladovic led a revolt at a recent school board meeting. His story was apparently so convincing that he managed to get three other board members to join him in voting against continuing L.A. Unified's multimillion-dollar contract with the insurance giant, potentially disrupting dental coverage for thousands of school employees.

Vladovic, who claims he was wrongly billed and received terrible customer service, told *The Los Angeles Times*, "When I see an injustice I have to bring it up." And he appears to be telling the truth.

This is not the first time Vladovic has been outspoken on matters such as this -- although in the past he has tended to reserve his anger for bigger issues like teacher layoffs.

Still Vladovic is no wallflower. He recently led a lengthy tirade at a school board meeting, calling for an apology from the producers of the recent Cameron Diaz movie "Bad Teacher," in which the actress portrays a teacher who "berates her students, does drugs and throws balls at children."

And it appears Vladovic and the school board are accustomed to getting what they want. Vladovic's district, located near San Pedro, successfully negotiated better customer service from a contracted workers' compensation company after numerous district employees issued complaints.

For Vladovic, civility trumps all. — Sabrina L. Schaeffer

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