

Basavaraj Naikar: *A Dreamer of Freedom*, Authors Press, New Delhi, 2010, ISBN978-81-7273-521-0 Book Review: P.V. Laxmi Prasad

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Dedicated to his father's memory, the historical play by Basavaraj Naikar "A Dreamer of Freedom" is published by author's press, New Delhi under ISBN and priced at Rs. 150/-. The foreword is written by Dr. Chandra Sekhar Kambar, a native of Bangalore, India. The playwright's preface speaks all that the play is depicted in the incidences. It is composed in 8 acts of 222 pages. A glossary of native words is appended in the last page. All nativity is rooted in the Kannada Soil with a fine blend of language, tradition, culture and locale. There are 27 dramatis personae apart from the unlimited number of soldiers and sardars. "A Dreamer of Freedom" depicts the interesting life and struggle of Bhaskararao Bhave of Naragund kingdom of peshwa dynasty for freedom. It shows the conflict between Bhaskararao Bhave and the East India Company authorities during 1857 war of independence. It is an interesting play rooted in the burning passion for self-rule and self-respect from the British rulers. It is a play of struggle for dignity and the struggle for dignity is wonderfully depicted in the protagonist's bold attempt to break open those three gates. But Bhaskararao Bhave, the protagonist, exhibits his self respect by breaking those gates. It symbolizes the acts of bravery, revolt and rebellion against the colonial rulers. The negative policies of the East India Company reached a climax during the days of Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General of India then. The Disarmament Bill, the Doctrine of Lapse and the general imperialistic attitude of the British in India aggravated the problems for the Indian Princes who lost their property, power, self-respect and military strength for various reasons. Bhaskararao Bhave fought against the Doctrine of Lapse which strictly prohibits the adoptions from among the relatives. When the British authorities refused permission to him, he rebelled against them and finally declared war on oppressions and injustices. Manson, the British authority, was killed in the fight when he was trying to occupy the kingdom. "Divide and Rule" a British policy, was cleverly employed against Bhaskararao Bhave just when he was preparing for the war. The British influence some of his officers to their own side and his own men like Banya Bapu and Krishnaji Pant were used as their spies to secretly pass on information. They indulged in the acts of betrayal and deceit. They deceived their own king who fed them for years. They are treacherous and their acts of treachery have been focused in superb narrative dialogues. There were heated dialogues between Manson and Bhaskararao Bhave on the issue of adopting a son. When Manson did not allow him, Bhaskararao Bhave becomes blatant and mobilizes all his kings to retaliate the British. The treacherous acts of Banya Bapu and Krishnaji Pant against the king of Naragund have been lime lighted by a colorful narration. The patriotism of Bhaskararao Bhave captures the minds of his people in his fiery speeches. All arrangements for procurement of arms and ammunitions and subsequent plans to attack