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## Socialist Candidate Lopez Obrador Wins Mexican Presidential Elections

**Neeraj Jain**

In a major victory for the global socialist movement, the leftist candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (widely known as AMLO) won the presidency of Mexico in the elections held on July 1, 2018 with a landslide win. He got more than 53% of the vote, more than double the total for his nearest rival, according to a preliminary count released by Mexico's electoral authority INE.

With participation at 62.9%, Ricardo Anaya from the right-wing National Action Party (PAN) came second with just over 22% of the vote.

AMLO will be the first socialist president of Mexico, and will be the first president who is not from either the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) or PAN in almost a century. After his win, he announced that he would tour the country as president-elect as part of creating a government "of the people, by the people, for the people". He said his government will be a transition period for a new era in Mexico's history. Lopez Obrador will take office on December 1, 2018 and will govern until 2024.

AMLO's party, *Movimiento Regeneración Nacional* or Morena

(English: National Regeneration Movement) fought the 2018 presidential elections in coalition with the left-wing Labor Party (PT) and the conservative Social Encounter Party (PES) under the name of *Juntos haremos historia* (English: Together we will make history). Morena and the Together We Will Make History coalition are also slated to gain an absolute majority in both the Chamber of Deputies and Senate, giving Lopez Obrador ample legislative support when he enters office next December. AMLO's Morena party also swept the local elections. The party took 80.2% of municipal polls, while PAN had a sorry turn out of 11.5% and the PRI 8.2% of local votes.

The landslide win would give AMLO a platform both to address Mexico's internal problems and face external challenges like the threat of a trade war with the United States. Lopez Obrador has said he wants to make Mexico more economically independent of the United States. He also declared that one of his priorities would be to root out corruption, and said he would spare no one, including comrades, friends

and officials, in his commitment to root it out. His Moreno party supports “zero tolerance” of security force corruption, a law against conflict of interest, an “accelerated” transition over to renewable energy, and a return to peace in the streets and homes.

One of the most important changes planned by AMLO is to reform the approach taken on security matters, which includes the removal of military forces from the streets through a training and professionalisation plan for the police. Over the past decade, Mexico, in collaboration with the United States, unleashed the military on the country's drug cartels. This “war” has claimed over 150,000 lives between December 2006 and August 2015, making Mexico one of the world's most deadly conflict zones.

Indicating that he was serious about his promise to change the government approach on public security, AMLO announced immediately after his victory that he will not use the services of the presidential security. "I will not use the services of the presidential general staff, I will not be surrounded by bodyguards, those who fight for justice have nothing to fear . . . The people will protect me," he said in a speech.

Obrador also announced that he and his staff are working on proposals to improve living conditions for the Mexican people that include scholarships for young people, pensions for the elderly and the revision of previously awarded oil contracts.

### **Socialist Leaders Congratulate AMLO**

Immediately after the results

were released, Lopez Obrador was congratulated by socialist leaders from across the globe, including US Senator Bernie Sanders and the leader of the British Labour Party Jeremy Corbyn.

Corbyn repeated Lopez Obrador's recurring words “yes we can” and assured that change is possible both in Mexico and in United Kingdom, where the left is still the opposition. “We can bring a voice to the poor and marginalised, we can bring change, we can win. Today is a new beginning. As we build for the future we must also remember and secure justice for those who died during those elections,” he continued, in reference to the many candidates, politicians and citizens who were killed during the campaign period.

On his Facebook site, Bernie Sanders also congratulated Mexico's president-elect: “Congratulations to Andres Manuel López Obrador, the newly elected president of

Mexico. Now is the time to stand up to Trump's divisiveness and xenophobia and create a continent which brings countries together to focus on economic, social, racial and environmental justice.”

Several other Latin American socialist leaders, including the President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro and the Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel, also congratulated AMLO for his stunning victory in the polls. Calling Lopez Obrador a brother as he hailed his "overwhelming victory" Bolivian President Evo Morales said: “We are sure that your government will write a new page in the history of Latin American dignity and sovereignty.” The Argentinian football legend Diego Armando Maradona also hailed AMLO's victory, saying that Lopez Obrador's victory means the Latin American people are “alive.”

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## **What Option is There Before India and Pakistan But for Friendship and Peace?**

**Sandeep Pandey**

The India Pakistan Friendship and Peace march from Ahmedabad to Nada Bet during 19 to 29 June, 2018 concluded successfully, even though Ahmedabad Police detained the marchers for about 3 hours as soon as the march began from Gandhi Ashram, and the Border Security Force didn't give permission to the march to reach the border and stopped it at Nadeshwari Mata Mandir, a distance of 25 km from the border. Hence the total distance of this march on foot was curtailed to about 250 km. From

Gandhi Ashram in Ahmedabad, the march proceeded along Adalaj, Kalol, Chatral, Nandasan, Mandali, Mehsana, Bokarwada, Sihi, Balisana, Patan, Dunawada, Roda, Totana, Thara, Devdarbar, Diyodar, Kuwala, Bhabhar, Dudhwa and Suigam to Nadeshwari Mata Mandir at Nada Bet.

The march was taken out to demand that the Governments of India and Pakistan reach an agreement to stop killing each other's soldiers on the border. Recently on 21 June 2018, on the occasion of

international yoga day, Indian and Chinese soldiers practiced yoga together at Daulat Beg Oldie in eastern Ladakh. Why can't a similar atmosphere of bonhomie be created on the India–Pakistan border? The two countries need to grant easy permission for visas to each other's citizens to allow them to travel across the border. If possible, they should waive the visa requirement for old people, children, journalists, academics, social activists, religious leaders and labourers. One route on Gujarat border with Sind should be opened to facilitate travel and trade between two countries either at Khavda or Nada Bet. The bus service between Suigam and Nagarparkar which was there till 1972 should be restored. Opening of Khavda route will be a great help for those fisherfolk whose family members get caught by the coastal guards of the other country and then have to spend years in jail without any information reaching back home. Sometimes family members may not even know that their kin have landed in jail on the other side of border. Recently, it was reported that a Gujarat fisherman Deva Ram Baraiya died in a Karachi jail and his family has yet to receive any official communication from any of the two governments or his body, even though three months have elapsed since his death (his body has being preserved by a Pakistani NGO at its morgue). Two other fishermen, also from Gujarat, Dana Arjun Chauhan and Rama Mansi Gohil, suffering from various ailments, were released at the Wagah border. One can imagine the travails of their arduous journey back home, covering thousands of kilometers on both sides of border. The two countries must make public the

list of each other's prisoners and ensure their early release, preferably through a shorter route. For people who may find it difficult to get a passport made or obtain a visa, if the daily evening military ceremony at Wagah–Attari border is replaced by a Peace Park and people from across the border are allowed to meet freely for a couple of hours every day merely by depositing one of their identity cards and under a suitable security apparatus, the event would serve a great purpose. Such peace parks could be created at all openings along the border. Finally, it is important that China, India and Pakistan should give up their nuclear weapons to make Asia a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone and safe for all people of the region and the world.

About 500 signatures were collected during the march on the above mentioned issues on a petition addressed to the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan.

The peace march received a major boost when PM Narendra Modi's wife Jashodaben decided to join the march on 23 June for about half an hour in the morning to express her solidarity. She whole heartedly supported the idea of peace and friendship with Pakistan and thought that the killing of soldiers was avoidable. Jashodaben's endorsement also had a soothing effect on the people subscribing to jingoistic variety of nationalism who were raising questions about the goals of the march. Jashodaben and her brother Ashok Modi also signed the statement of the march.

During the march, people raised the demand at Balisana, where about hundred families have relatives in Karachi, to open a Pakistani Consulate at Ahmedabad so that they could be saved the trouble of

going all the way to Delhi to obtain their visas.

Baldev Nath Bapu, the head priest of a temple in Devdarbar belonging to Lohana (Thakkar) community, hosted the peace march during daytime on 26 June, 2018. He described his experience of visiting Pakistan in October 2017 for about a month. He is building a hospital in Salemkot from the donations he received from his followers in Pakistan. He refuted the allegations that Hindus are forcibly converted to Islam in Pakistan and temples are destroyed there. He publicly stated that not once during his month long stay there did he receive any complaints like these. He said that in Pakistan people are talking about the possibility of Suigam–Nagarparkar route being opened by 2020 or 2022.

Earlier, in Totana, the march paid its respect to Sadaram Bapu, aged over hundred years, who has played an important part in preserving communal harmony in the area. It appears that spiritual gurus have a role in maintaining peace and harmony along the Gujarat–Sind border.

At a closing event of the march in Ahmedabad, peace activists from Pakistan Karamat Ali and Saeeda Diep joined over internet and interacted with the marchers and their supporters. Entrepreneur Piyush Desai of Wagh Bakri tea company was so overwhelmed with the idea of the peace march that he has decided to hold weekly meetings at Gandhi Ashram to promote the philosophy of peace and communal harmony.

A letter has been written to Narendra Modi on behalf of the India–Pakistan Friendship and Peace march to start a bus service between Ahmedabad and Karachi similar to

the one started by former PM Atal Behari Vajpayee between Delhi and Lahore.

India and Pakistan have been overtaken by Bangladesh in social indices like literacy, malnourishment, sanitation, health status of children and women, fertility rate and women empowerment primarily because both of them have invested heavily in defence, including the development

of dangerous nuclear weapons, whereas Bangladesh has judiciously concentrated on improving the general condition of its women and children. The security for common people comes from fulfillment of their basic needs. Nuclear weapons at best protect the vested interests of the ruling elite. How are our nuclear weapons providing security to a child dying of hunger or a farmer

committing suicide? If we don't take care of the basic needs of people, of what use are the pompous weapons for common people?

India and Pakistan must bury their differences and resolve all their outstanding disputes amicably through dialogue and give peace a chance.

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## Compulsions of 2019: Retreat in Kashmir

**Anil Sinha**

New Delhi has made one more retreat in Kashmir. The Mehbooba Mufti government was forced out and governor's rule imposed. There should not be any doubt that the BJP decided to withdraw from its alliance with PDP because it knew that there is no solution to the Kashmir issue right now. The government also knew that if there is any solution, it is not for it to implement it. The BJP wants itself to be seen as a strong party which can go to any extent to deal with terrorists or any one opposed to the Indian state. The 2019 polls are only few months away and the party felt it urgent to reinforce the image.

This is not the first time that a ministry in Kashmir has been forced to end its tenure without completing it. It has been done several times since 1953, when Sheikh Abdullah, then prime minister of Kashmir, was dismissed and arrested. He had no clue of New Delhi's plan about him. He was holidaying in Gulmarg when he was served the order of the Sadr-i-Riyasat, the constitutional head of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. He was accused of conspiring to declare Kashmir independent. In

fact, two of his ministers conspired with New Delhi and staged the coup. The Sadr-i-Riyasat, the Yuvraj of the erstwhile Maharaja Hari Singh, was manipulated to order the dismissal.

Since then, it has been repeated many times. One thing has remained common each time, that every time people associated with security play an important role. In 1953, the then Chief of Intelligence B.N. Mullik had played a key role. This time, National Security Advisor Aji Doval was there to guide the government. Shortly before the decision, Doval met BJP president Amit Shah at his residence.

However, one factor has changed significantly. The opposition to New Delhi is now not limited to political parties. It is now dominated by diverse elements, from communal fanatics to liberal progressives. The field fighters are generally led by terrorist organisations based in Pakistan. This was not the case till the early nineties. Now, the security forces are equipped with Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).

The BJP cited deterioration in the security situation and the

“discriminatory attitude” towards Jammu and Ladakh regions, areas with non-Muslim majority, as the reasons for withdrawing support to the government. While it avoided detailing its other differences with the PDP in public, it nevertheless leaked them. The differences, obviously, are not new. In fact, the two parties had fought the last assembly election on these same issues and had fiercely opposed each other. After the elections, even though they entered into an alliance with each other, both the alliance partners never relinquished their stance.

The issues are related to reconciliation in Kashmir. The PDP has always been demanding talks with all stake holders, including Hurriyat Conference and Pakistan. It wanted softer actions against stone pelting youths and relaxation in the powers of the armed forces. The BJP has been opposed to all these demands. The BJP wooed PDP to join the government on the assurance that it will work for peace and reconciliation in the valley, and lent its support to the “healing-touch” policy of the PDP. However,

after formation of the coalition government, the BJP did not adhere to its promises. Now, it is blaming the PDP for discriminating with Jammu and Ladakh in the distribution of Rs 80,000 crore development allocation from the Centre.

It is now clear that there was no basis for forming a coalition. It looks as if the BJP had formed the coalition government to maintain the status quo in the Kashmir valley, so that the Kashmir issue should not become a hinderance in its governing the rest of the nation. The party knew very well that it could not adopt a soft stand—neither could it abandon its demand of repealing Article 370, nor could it endorse soft measures—because that would go against its long standing stance.

In fact, the BJP has never changed its Kashmir policy, not even in the Vajpayee era. It always said that they were suspending their demand because their coalition partner did not agree. Their partnership with the PDP never deterred them from expressing aggression on the Kashmir issue. It could be seen during actions like the surgical strike. While the coalition government in Kashmir did not do any official propaganda about this, the BJP made a hype of it.

The planned status quo has harmed the prospects of reconciliation immensely. The PDP has lost its credibility and in turn the country has lost a strong democratic force in the valley. Among the mainstream political parties, this was the only party which had considerable following in the alienated areas in Kashmir.

Past experience clearly suggests that the valley has been peaceful in times when we had better relations with Pakistan. It also suggests that

there is no way other than dialogue to move towards a settlement.

A close scrutiny of the historical evidence would reveal that the deterioration in the Kashmir situation has much to do with the failure of India in keeping the country secular. Very few people now recall that the National Conference showed its commitment towards secularism and progressive ideology in the era when the rightwing and communal ideology was at its peak. In the 1930s, when organisations like Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League were spreading virulent form of communalism and secular leaders such as Abdul Gaffar Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had failed to contain its spread, Sheikh Abdullah had successfully fought against it. He even succeeded in changing the name of Kashmir Muslim Conference to National Conference in 1939 and incorporated people from all religions and faith in its leadership. His Naya Kashmir manifesto was far more progressive than any of the contemporary documents. The Naya Kashmir resolution envisaged

a socialistic and secular society. The National Conference was under the ideological influence of Gandhi and Nehru. Impressed by the amity in Kashmir, Gandhi remarked on August 1, 1947 that Kashmir is the beacon of light for secular India.

The communal propaganda in the state by Praja Parishad and Jan Sangh's campaign in other parts of the country affected relations between the union government and Sheikh Abdullah. Nehru succumbed to anti-Sheikh propaganda and agreed to order the arrest of the greatest leader of the state. "The Sheikh's dismissal and arrest on 9 August 1953, apart from causing a revolt in the state, caused a deep wound in the psyche of Kashmiris. It meant that while Kashmir remained steadfast with secular India, the Union didn't!" writes senior Kashmiri leader Professor Saifuddin Soz in his recently released book.

We fail to understand that Kashmir is not a geography, it is an identity. Identities needs negotiation.

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## Emergency, Indira Gandhi and RSS

**L.S. Herdenia**

I do not hold any brief for Indira Gandhi as far her decision to impose emergency is concerned. There is no doubt that the emergency period will be recorded as a black chapter in the democratic history of the country. But certainly, I have every reason to differ with Arun Jaitley when he compares Indira Gandhi with Hitler.

Hitler perhaps was the cruellest ruler in the history of mankind. Besides destroying all the democratic institutions of Germany, he targeted

one particular community (Jews) and wanted their total physical annihilation. While Indira Gandhi also committed many atrocities during the emergency, she did not go to the extremes to which Hitler went. She did not target any particular community during the emergency. In our country, there are leaders who orchestrated the genocide of people belonging to particular community in Gujarat, but certainly, Indira was not one of them.

Hitler not only destroyed democracy but destroyed Germany itself. But Jaitley must appreciate the fact that Indira restored democracy and ordered elections, fully knowing that total annihilation awaits her.

Here I will like to draw attention to another fact that Jaitley ignores, that the then Chief of the RSS congratulated Indira Gandhi when the Supreme Court gave judgment in her favour. M.D. Deoras, in his letter to Mrs. Gandhi written from Yerwada Central Jail dated 10 November 1975, wrote, "Let me congratulate you as five judges of the Supreme Court have declared the validity of your election". In an earlier letter written to Mrs. Gandhi from Yerwada Jail on 22 August 1975, Deoras had stated, "I heard your address to the nation which you delivered on August 15, 1975, from Red Fort on the radio in jail [Yervada jail] with attention. Your address was timely and balanced so I decided to write to you." In this letter Deoras praised the programme which Mrs. Gandhi announced in the course of her speech. Deoras writes, "As you said in your speech delivered on 15th August 1975 inviting the entire country to this work, it was most befitting occasion and the time".

These days, the BJP and the RSS claim that they were the main opponents of the emergency and that it was largely due to their struggle that the emergency was lifted. But the fact is that the RSS assured Mrs. Gandhi that the Sangh keeps itself aloof from the power politics. In the above mentioned letter dated 10 November 1975, Deoras writes, "RSS has been named in the context of Jayaprakash Narayan's movement. The government has also connected RSS with Gujarat movement and Bihar movement without any reason.

The Sangh has no relation to these movements." Deoras repeatedly appealed to the Prime Minister to "set free thousands of RSS workers and remove the restriction on the Sangh. If done so, power of selfless work on the part of lakhs of RSS volunteers will be utilised for national upliftment (government as well as non-government)".

Deoras also sought the help of Vinoba Bhave in lifting the ban on the RSS. In a letter written to him from St. George's Hospital's prison ward no. 14, Bombay, Deoras wrote, "At the feet of respected Acharya Vinobaji, this is my prayer to you that you kindly try to remove the wrong notion of the Prime Minister about the Sangh and as a result of which the RSS volunteers will be set free. The ban on the Sangh will be lifted and such a condition will prevail as to enable the volunteers of the Sangh to participate in the planned programme of action relating to country's progress and prosperity under the leadership of the Prime Minister. Prayer for your blessings."

Shri Jaitley claims that Indira Gandhi was like Hitler. If so, why did the Sangh, of which you were a part in 1975 and are now one of its top leaders, accept Indira Gandhi as their leader. It may be mentioned here that Vinod Dua in his popular programme Jan Gan Man Ki Baat has termed Deoras' letters as pieces of apology.

During the emergency, a slogan was very popular: Emergency ke teen dalal, Vidya, Sanjay, Bansilal. At that time, Vidya Charan Shukla was the Information & Broadcasting Minister, Bansilal was the Defence Minister, and Sanjay Gandhi was the younger son and the closest confidant of Indira Gandhi. All these three were the main executioners of

the emergency. Later BJP co-opted both V.C. Shukla and Bansilal. V.C. Shukla contested the Lok Sabha election on a BJP ticket, while the BJP became a part of the Haryana state ministry headed by Bansilal. Sanjay died in an air crash in 1980, but BJP admitted his wife Maneka Gandhi to the party and made her Central Minister, and she continues to be so. To the best of our information, Maneka Gandhi has not condemned the emergency till today. If Indira was like Hitler, then V.C. Shukla, Bansilal and Sanjay Gandhi were her main commanders. Shah Commission, which the Janata Government constituted to enquire into atrocities committed during the emergency, found them guilty of doing several acts to enforce the provisions of the emergency. It was V.C. Shukla who monitored the censorship on the media. What happened afterwards for the BJP to reward Shukla? This was the volte face of the BJP, which is the political wing of the RSS.

In the end, it may be mentioned that the RSS actually has admiration for Hitler. This admiration was reflected in some school textbooks of Gujarat. There was a hue and cry against this act of the Gujarat government, after which these laudable references to Hitler were removed.

## Spectre of Fascism

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# Stronger Laws Needed For Social Security of Unorganised Workers

**Bharat Dogra**

One of the gravest shortcomings of labour welfare in India has been that while as many as 90 percent of the workers are in unorganised sector, most of the welfare laws have not been applicable to them.

Enacting protective umbrella legislation which can apply to all sections of unorganised workers is not easy as a very wide range of works and occupations have to be covered. Some of these leading occupations are—agricultural workers, forest workers, rickshaw pullers, vendors, domestic workers, home based workers, construction workers, rag pickers and wholesale / retail trade workers. Nevertheless, it is important to have a comprehensive law that provides at least some protection for all unorganised workers as the alternative is to have separate laws for too many categories of workers—a task which is even more complicated and time-consuming.

In this context it is important to look back at some important recommendations of the Second Labour Commission as these still remain very relevant.

The Second National Commission on Labour (NCL) was asked, as perhaps its most significant task, to propose an umbrella type legislation for workers in the unorganised sector.

The NCL Report explained why it is important to have new legislation to cover various categories of unorganised workers, and also elaborated on the scope and aims of this legislation:

*Most of the Labour Laws that we have today are relevant only to the organised sector. Furthermore, the laws in the statute book that relate to some sectors of the unorganised sector are too inadequate to give protection or welfare for the vast majority of workers in the unorganised sector. The schemes of Welfare Funds and Welfare Boards are also confined to a few states and specific categories of workers in the unorganised sector. It is in this context that we have to look at the need for new legislation that will have general applicability and will provide essential protection.*

*The way to extend legal protection to the employments and vocations in the unorganised sector is not by legislating separately for each employment or vocation. This will only multiply the number of laws when one of our goals is to simplify and reduce the number of existing laws. It is, therefore, logical and wise to enact an umbrella type of law for the unorganised sector which would guarantee a minimum of protection and welfare to all workers in the unorganised sector, and would leave it open to the government to bring in special laws for different employments or sub-sectors if experience indicates the need for it, provided that the sub-sectoral laws do not take away any of the basic rights or the*

*access to social security that the umbrella legislation provides. Such an arrangement will give full respect to the federal nature of our Constitution as well as the different needs of diverse groups of workers. It will also be open to governments to repeal existing sub-sector laws or merge existing (welfare) Boards with the Boards or Funds that we are suggesting in the Umbrella Legislation.*

*The unorganised sector accounts for over 90% of our work force. Their percentage is likely to increase. They are as entitled to protection and welfare / security as workers in the organised sector, who are often described today as the privileged sector of the work force. The laws that exist today hardly touch the work force in the unorganised sector. It is therefore necessary to enact new legislation to cover workers in this sector. There is a wide variety of employments in this sector. Conditions vary, levels of organisation vary. The nature of the relations with employers vary. There is an expanding sector of those who are self-employed, or are on contract, and work from homes. It is difficult to have separate laws for each employment. This will only result in endless multiplication of laws. "Hence the need for one umbrella legislation" that covers whatever is basic and common, and leaves room for supplementary legislation*

*or rules where specific areas demand special attention. But we cannot overlook the fact that all such legislation is enacted with the twin purposes of extending protection, and welfare / security. Protection includes security of employment, identification of minimum wages or fair wages, making the minimum known to workers, ensuring the full payment of these wages without unauthorised deductions, and a machinery at the threshold of his / her workplace to enforce the law on minimum wages and working conditions. Welfare / security has to include medical services, compensation for injury, insurance, provident fund, pensionary benefit, etc. We have also tried to keep in view the need to ensure that the machinery proposed for enforcement of benefits is not vitiated by distance, centralisation, top heavy structure, inaccessibility, multiplication of administrative set-ups, etc.*

The NLC Report says that in specific terms, the objectives of the legislation will have to be:

- a) To obtain recognition for all workers in the unorganised sector.
- b) To ensure a minimum level of economic security to these workers.
- c) To ensure a minimum level of social security to these workers.
- d) To facilitate the removal of the poverty of these workers.
- e) To ensure future opportunities for children by eliminating child labour.
- f) To encourage formation of membership based organisations of workers including Trade

Unions.

- g) To ensure representation of workers through their organisations in local and national economic decision making.

According to the NLC, the Social Security measures for the unorganised workers should include:

- a. Health care;
- b. Maternity and early child care;
- c. Provident fund benefits;
- d. Family benefits;
- e. Amenities / Benefits including housing, drinking water, sanitation, etc.;
- f. Compensation for injury during employment (including invalidity benefits and survivor's or dependent's benefits);
- g. Retirement and post-retirement benefits (gratuity, pension and family pension);
- h. Some cover in cases of loss of earning or the capacity to earn;
- i. Besides these, there should be schemes, either independent or in association with the government, welfare bodies, NGOs and social organisations, for the upgradation of skills and the education of workers, and for the elimination of child labour, forced labour, and unfair labour relations and practices.

After holding discussions with a large number of concerned persons and considering the recommendations of a study group on this issue, the National Commission on Labour suggested a draft of this legislation in which apex boards for unorganised sector workers will be created in all States by the respective State governments. This apex board in consultation with the State government will create State Welfare Boards for various categories of workers. The State

Board in consultation with district panchayats will also constitute district boards.

In this draft, Worker Facilitation Centres (WFCs) are local centres of activities of the Board, co-ordinated by respective District Boards. The District Board in consultation with local panchayats will constitute them, WFCs will work in panchayats and areas of workers' concentration. Workers will be enrolled by the WFC and welfare benefits to them will also be provided by WFCs.

The Central and State Boards will raise funds by way of contribution, cess, assistance, grant from government through budget allocation or donations from employment providers, private sector, workers and other legally permitted sources.

The Board will encourage the growth and formation of organisations of workers. A legal minimum wage will be fixed without any gender discrimination. Non-payment of minimum wage shall be punishable. Women workers will be given due representation at all levels.

The Central and State Government shall order dearness allowance on minimum wage linked to All India Consumer Price Index Number at least once in every six months, and where the dearness allowance is ordered on the above lines the minimum wages shall be revised once in five years and in other cases once in two years.

Workers will be covered by social protection measures as may be prescribed by the Central or State Government. The worker shall be eligible to social security protection, namely, old age, invalidity, group insurance, sickness, medical and employment injury benefits. The woman worker shall be eligible for

maternity benefits and childcare / daycare facility while at work. The local authorities will create and invest their resources to develop better living conditions for the workers by providing amenities like housing, safe drinking water, sanitation, etc. The State Board shall encourage alternate insurance for employment injury to cover employer's liability

under Workmen's Compensation Act.

Work shall be permitted only in safe and healthy environment and working places. The State government may frame appropriate rules in this regard. Workers shall have sufficient rest, leisure, holidays, leave and optimal working hours. Workers shall be given one holiday

in each week.

As the legislation enacted since then has fallen short of these recommendations, it is important to keep alive these recommendations and to emphasise that the right of unorganised sector workers need to be protected much more effectively by better and stronger legislation.

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## India Most Dangerous Country for Women

**Belinda Goldsmith and Meka Beresford**

India is the world's most dangerous country for women due to the high risk of sexual violence and being forced into slave labour, according to a poll of global experts released on June 26, 2018.

War-torn Afghanistan and Syria ranked second and third in the Thomson Reuters Foundation survey of about 550 experts on women's issues, followed by Somalia and Saudi Arabia.

The only Western nation in the top 10 was the United States, which ranked joint third when respondents were asked where women were most at risk of sexual violence, harassment and being coerced into sex.

The poll was a repeat of a survey in 2011 that found experts seeing Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, India and Somalia as the most dangerous countries for women.

Experts said India moving to the top of the poll showed not enough was being done to tackle the danger women faced, more than five years after the rape and murder of a student on a bus in Delhi made violence against women a national priority. Government data shows reported cases of crime against women rose

by 83 percent between 2007 and 2016, when there were four cases of rape reported every hour.

The survey asked respondents which five of the 193 United Nations member states they thought were most dangerous for women and which country was worst in terms of healthcare, economic resources, cultural or traditional practices, sexual violence and harassment, non-sexual violence and human trafficking.

Respondents also ranked India the most dangerous country for women in terms of human trafficking, including sex slavery and domestic servitude, and for customary practices such as forced marriage, stoning and female infanticide.

India's Ministry of Women and Child Development declined to comment on the survey results.

### Trapped by War

Afghanistan fared worst in four of the seven questions, with concerns over healthcare and conflict-related violence. Kimberly Otis, director of advancement at Women for Afghan Women, said women and girls faced severe gender-based violence, abuse,

illiteracy, poverty and other human rights offences.

"The ongoing war and conflict are getting worse in Afghanistan, which puts the lives of women and girls at increasing risk," said US-based Otis, a survey participant.

Afghanistan's Public Health Minister Ferozuddin Feroz said the deteriorating security situation was making life difficult for women, with large parts of the country still in the control of Taliban fighters after nearly 17 years of war.

"Nowadays, suicide bombings and armed conflict is the third (highest) cause of deaths and disability in Afghanistan," he told the Thomson Reuters Foundation in an interview in London.

"Instead of focusing (spending) on maternal health, on nutritional status, we spend it on trauma."

The impact of a seven-year war drove Syria into third place in the survey, amid concerns over access to healthcare and both sexual and non-sexual violence.

"There are so many dangers for girls and women," said Maria Al Abdeh, executive director of Women Now For Development, which supports women's centres in Syria.

“There is sexual violence by government forces. Domestic violence and child marriage are increasing and more women are dying in childbirth. The tragedy is nowhere near an end.”

Somalia, where more than two decades of war has fuelled a culture of violence and weakened institutions meant to uphold the law, was again named as one of the five most dangerous countries for women.

Saudi Arabia ranked fifth, with women’s rights experts saying there had been some progress in recent years, but the recent arrests of female activists ahead of the lifting of a ban on women driving showed much more needed to be done.

“One of the worst laws that prevent women from having equal opportunities is guardianship—because every woman is subjected to a male guardian. She cannot get a passport, cannot travel, sometimes she cannot work,” said Ahlam Akram, founder of BASIRA (British Arabs Supporting Universal Women’s Rights) in the UK.

### #MeToo Puts US on List

Experts said the surprise addition of the United States in the top 10 most dangerous countries for women came down to the #MeToo and Time’s Up campaigns against sexual harassment and violence that have dominated headlines for months.

“People want to think income means you’re protected from misogyny, and sadly that’s not the case,” said Cindy Southworth, executive vice president of the Washington-based National Network to End Domestic Violence.

Rounding out the top 10 most dangerous countries for women were

Pakistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen and Nigeria.

India, Libya and Myanmar were considered the world’s most dangerous nations for women exploited by human traffickers in a global crime worth an estimated \$150 billion a year.

“In many countries the simple fact of being female creates a heightened risk of becoming a victim of slavery,” said Nick Grono, chief executive of the Freedom Fund, the first private donor fund dedicated to

ending slavery.

The poll of 548 people was conducted online, by phone and in person between March 26 and May 4 with an even spread across Europe, Africa, the Americas, South East Asia, South Asia and the Pacific.

Respondents included aid professionals, academics, healthcare staff, non-government organisation workers, policy-makers, development specialists and social commentators.

## Chavismo: Part VII

*The concluding part of a seven part series of articles by Marco Teruggi on the ongoing socialist revolutionary project in Venezuela that the Venezuelans fondly call Chavismo, in memory of Hugo Chavez, the brilliant and charismatic leader of the Venezuelan revolution who died in 2013. Chavez himself called it Bolivarian Revolution, to commemorate Simon Bolivar.*

### The Barracks and the Revolution

#### Marco Teruggi

It is a forested area near the border with Colombia. The members of the militia gradually arrive, in motorcycles, buses, trucks. They are coming from the shanties in the outskirts of the nearby town. They have come for a day-long training camp of the National Bolivarian Militia of Venezuela, which is a part of Venezuela’s National Bolivarian Armed Forces (FANB). They are proudly wearing their beige uniforms, with insignia denoting their different ranks. They include people of all ages, both young and old, many are women, they are people from various walks of life, but what is common to them all is, they are all Chavistas. They practice formation drills and shooting, learn how to quickly respond to emergencies, etc. At the

end of the day, they will change into their civilian clothes once again and go back to their daily activities.

The militia is a key element of the Chavista project. Just as a revolution cannot be built from above, through the state apparatus, it cannot be defended in the classical way, with doctrines learnt from North America in the School of the Americas. This becomes all the more important in a situation where the enemy is attacking you through methods that do not correspond to traditional forms of warfare—it does not have uniformed armies, declared generals and regular armaments. It is not even easily identifiable. Most importantly, it is all the time seeking to create the illusion that it does not exist.

## Popular Participation

The premise for building the militia is the same as that for every aspect of the socialist construction project in Venezuela: there is no possibility of revolutionary transformation of society, the society cannot advance towards socialism, without incorporating new forms of organisation which encourage maximum possible participation of the people. Chavez described the militias as “a first sign of developing a popular armed force to safeguard our integrity and our sovereignty” and “expressions of the new communal state; an integral part of the new structures of communal power that we are building”. And so, in 2008, the government passed a law forming the National Bolivarian Militia. The doctrine on which the militia was formed was that it was necessary to have “the people in arms” both for supporting the FANB against imperialist aggression and for defence of the nation against internal enemies. The National Militia of Venezuela is an autonomous and auxiliary force of the Armed Forces' service branches, with its own chain of command and service arms, and reports directly to the President via the Operational Strategic Command of the FANB. Responding to the call made by Chavez, tens of thousands of young men and women from all over the country, including the barrios in cities and the rural areas which constitute the social base of Chavismo, have joined the militia, described by Chavez as a strategic arm for the defence of the revolution.

There is a deeper concept underlying the formation of the militia, and that is the doctrine of “civic–military” alliance as the cornerstone for safeguarding and

advancing the revolution. “The union of the people with the soldiers, and the soldiers with the people, is one of the fundamental pillars of the Bolivarian revolution,” said Chavez, who was himself an officer in the FANB. The genesis and development of the revolution cannot be understood without understanding the development of this unity. The first important incident was the massive popular uprising called Caracazo that took place on 27 February 1989 in response to the IMF-imposed structural adjustment reforms that had led to a dramatic fall in living standards. As angry protestors from the shantytowns of Caracas poured out into the streets, the government called in the army to quell the protests. The army peppered the protestors with machine guns—more than 3000 people were killed. The government's willingness to use indiscriminate violence against its own citizens not only shocked the people but also the lower-level soldiers who were from poor backgrounds themselves—they were deeply dismayed at being ordered to kill “their own people”. This created the conditions for the military uprising of 4 February 1992 by a section of the military whose aim was restoration of democracy and inaugurating a new political era in Venezuela based on Bolivarian and nationalist principles of justice, equity and national sovereignty. The coup failed, but its leaders, including Chavez, gained enormous support among the population. It was this growing unity between the military and the people that led to the failure of the 11–13 April 2002 coup d'etat—not only was there massive mobilisation on the streets, but large sections of the military

also revolted again the military leaders who participated in the coup, notably the Maracay Battalion and the presidential honor guard.

## The Military in Economic Life

The military in the ongoing Bolivarian revolution in Venezuela has been involved in playing several roles simultaneously. One of its important roles is obviously defending the country's borders against external threats. But apart from that, military officials, both serving and retired, have been appointed to important posts in government offices and public administration, and military personnel have been extensively involved in executing public policies, often in collaboration with grassroots movements. Some of the important economic responsibilities that have been carried out by the military include Great Mission Sovereign Supply (La GMAS), AgroFanb, Military Corporation for Mining, Petroleum and Gas, and the Military Transport Company (Emiltra).

La GMAS, for example, was created in 2016. It is headed by Venezuela's Defence Minister, and has the responsibility of boosting production and guaranteeing the smooth distribution of food and medicine supplies. It has also been given control of the country's ports to root out corruption and mismanagement at the point of entry for imported food.

## Expanding Role for the Army

Why is the army being given an extended role in economic affairs? One reason is that following the defeat of the Chavistas in the elections to the National Assembly in 2015, the right wing opposition

in Venezuela launched a wave of economic sabotage attempts to cripple the economy. Simultaneously, the imperialist forces led by the USA launched a renewed attempt to destabilise the Venezuelan government. Faced with attacks from both external and internal flanks, in order to restore government control over the economy, the Maduro government decided to hand over crucial economic departments to the army, which is spread out all over the country, is a well-disciplined force, can implement decisions quickly due to a centralised command structure, and most importantly, its soldiers have close connections with the people of the country as they have been involved in innumerable community projects all over the country.

Despite this, the economic crisis continues, and the picture in Venezuela remains complex and the revolution is facing its greatest challenge since the 2002 coup attempt. The international blockade imposed by the United States continues. The plots of the opposition to destabilise and weaken the revolution continue; these affect the army too. The resolution of this crisis is not going to depend on changing the leadership of the revolution, but by strengthening the participation of the people in the struggle to rejuvenate the economy, including both the production and the distribution systems.

### **Civic-Military Myth**

It is undoubted that there can be no Chavismo without the unity of the people and the armed forces, without the civic-military alliance. This bond is being stretched to its limits both by the numerous tasks that the army is being called out to do, one of

which is defending the border with Colombia from where innumerable attempts are continually being made by the USA to infiltrate and weaken the country. It is because of the loyalty of the army to Chavismo that the revolution has been able to survive the attacks by the right wing and advance so far.

Of course, there are chinks in the armour of the army too. In March this year, a conspiracy inside the FANB was nicked in the bud. Six lieutenant colonels, a first lieutenant and two sergeants belonging to a right wing movement called the 'Movement of Transition towards the Dignity of the People' were arrested. All the soldiers belonged

to the Ayala Battalion, which in one of the important battalions in the country and is located in Caracas. How much were they offered by the empire to carry out a coup?

It is important to study, deepen the understanding, and implement with renewed vigour the military doctrine laid out by Chavez on how to build an armed forces at the service of the revolution, which staunchly refuses to work for the interests of the ruling classes and the empire. It is a crucial theme for a continent where the army has historically always been associated with corrupt right wing dictatorships and the empire.

## **Bhindranwale Still Lives**

### **Kuldip Nayar**

Indian history is replete with tragedies which, when retold, suggest that the happenings could have been avoided. Operation Bluestar is one of them. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a militant, holed himself up at the Akal Thakt, the highest Sikh seat, and created a state within state. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi used the army to silence his guns and sent tanks into the Harmandir Saheb. Whatever one may say, Bhindranwale continues to enjoy respect in the hearts of Sikhs.

I had a taste of it the other day when, unwittingly, I referred to him as a terrorist. Sikh historian Khushwant Singh could get away with the remark that Bhindranwale was a terrorist. But I could not. Although I explained that it was an off-the-cuff remark, not meant to cast any reflection on Bhindranwale, there was a furore in the Sikh

community. I was criticised for having offended the Sikhs.

Indeed, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi wanted to finish the Akalis and found an opportunity while challenging Bhindranwale. In fact, there was more to it than just what meets the eye. According to one story which was later confirmed by her personal secretary R.K. Dhawan, the plan was to garner voters for the 1984 Lok Sabha elections which were due a few months later.

Indira Gandhi's son Rajiv Gandhi, nephew Arun Nehru and Rajiv's adviser Arun Singh were behind the decision which forced Mrs. Gandhi to order the army to storm the Golden Temple in Amristar to flush out the militant leader and his cohorts. Dhawan was quoted as saying that the trio—Rajiv, Arun Nehru and Arun Singh—believed that a successful army

operation could enable them to win the elections hands down.

Operation Bluestar was not just Mrs Gandhi's last battle. It was the first, and perhaps the most disastrous, of Rajiv's blunders. A report in the Caravan magazine said that "Indira Gandhi, who had evidently approved Bluestar with the greatest reluctance, regretted the operation immediately, according to Dhawan, who was with her when she first saw images of the damage to the shrine." President Giani Zail Singh wanted to visit the shrine to make amends but was dissuaded. He took a civilian plane on his own and visited the Golden Temple to offer his apology.

The deepest cut was that he was asked to defend the operation on AIR. Subsequently, he told me that he wanted to say no but realised that it would create a crisis in the country, the President taking one line and the government the other. He did go on air and defended the operation. He literally wept while addressing the nation.

Mrs Gandhi, too, was horrified to see the footage of the Golden Temple which was brought by Arun Singh. Arun Nehru told me that his phupi (aunt Indira Gandhi) was not willing to carry out the operation until the last minute. But then the army chief and also the trio, which guided Operation Bluestar, eventually changed her mind. This was mainly because Rajiv Gandhi had started dealing directly with Punjab affairs which until some time ago was handled by his brother, Sanjay Gandhi.

It is another matter that Mrs Gandhi had to pay with her life for the attack on the Golden Temple when her security guards gunned her down. Rajiv Gandhi swept to power

with the biggest mandate (421 seats in a house of 544 members) in Indian history following his mother's assassination.

I was a part of the team which comprised General Jagjit Singh Aurora, Air Marshal Arjun Singh and Inder Gujral, who subsequently became the Prime Minister, to span the distance between the Akalis and the government on the one hand and Sikhs and Hindus on the other. All the people whom we spoke to made a case where it was clear that the government had overreacted. Our finding also was that the Army operation was not necessary and that Bhindranwale could have been dealt with differently. We said so in our report to the Punjabi Group which had deputed us to probe the anti-Sikh riots that followed Mrs Gandhi's assassination.

The anti-Sikh riots in Delhi and neighbouring areas could have been suppressed immediately. But then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi intentionally did not ask either the police or the Army to intervene. He reportedly remarked that the riots were spontaneous. He even reacted by saying that when a big tree falls, the earth is bound to shake.

Now 34 years after the Army stormed the Golden Temple, the declassified British documents show that the UK military had advised India on retaking the temporal seat of Sikhs, kicking off political storms in both London and New Delhi. The British Government has ordered an inquiry into the revelations and the BJP has demanded an explanation.

The revelation is contained in a series of letters declassified recently by the National Archives of the UK after the 30-year secrecy rule. In an official communication, dated February 23, 1984 and titled 'Sikh

Community', an official with the Foreign Secretary told the private secretary to the Home Secretary that "the Foreign Secretary wishes him to be made aware of some background which could increase the possibility of repercussions among the Sikh communities in this country".

The letter went on to say that if the British advice were to emerge in public, it could increase tension in the Indian community in Britain. However, there is no evidence in any of the declassified communications if the British plan was finally used for the June 1984 operation.

When I was posted as High Commissioner in 1990, I found that there was a prejudice against the Sikhs entering the building and one of my first actions was to throw open the doors to all. The search of only the Sikhs when entering the High Commission was discontinued.

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# Nonviolence or Nonexistence? The Legacy of Martin Luther King Jr.

Robert J. Burrowes

Fifty years ago, on 4 April 1968, the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. was assassinated.

The night before he died, King gave another of his many evocative speeches; this one at the packed Mason Temple in Memphis. The speech included these words:

*Men for years now have been talking about war and peace. Now no longer can they just talk about it. It is no longer a choice between violence and non-violence in this world, it is non-violence or non-existence. That is where we are today.*

In clearly identifying this stark choice and having been inspired by Mohandas K. Gandhi's wide-ranging social concerns, King's concerns were also broad:

The Triple Evils of poverty, racism and militarism are forms of violence that exist in a vicious cycle. They are interrelated, all-inclusive, and stand as barriers to our living in the Beloved Community. When we work to remedy one evil, we affect all evils.

So what has changed in the past 50 years? The world has traveled a great deal further down the path of violence. So far, in fact, that nonexistence is now the most likely outcome for humanity.

Despite the vastly more perilous state of our planet, many people and organisations around the world are following in the footsteps of Gandhi, King and other nonviolent luminaries like Silo, and are engaged in what is effectively a last ditch stand to end the violence and put

humanity on a path to peace, justice and sustainability.

Let me tell you about some of these people and organisations and invite you to join them.

In Bolivia, Nora Cabero works with the Movimient Humanista. The Movement has many programs including the Convergence of Cultures which aims to facilitate and stimulate true dialogue—oriented towards the search for common points present in the hearts of different peoples and individuals—to promote the relationship between different cultures and to resist discrimination and violence. Another program, World Without Wars and Violence emerged in 1994 and was presented for the first time internationally in 1995 at the Open Meeting of Humanism held in Chile at the University of Santiago. It is active in about 40 countries. It carries out activities in the social base and also promotes international campaigns such as Education for Nonviolence and the World March for Peace and Nonviolence.

Eddy Kalisa Nyarwaya Jr. is Executive Secretary of the Rwanda Institute for Conflict Transformation and Peace Building and is also President of the Alternatives to Violence Program. For the past 18 years, he has been active in the fields of 'peace, reconciliation, nonviolence, healing of societies, building harmonious communities' in many countries including Burundi, Chad, eastern Congo, Darfur (western Sudan), Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan and northern Uganda. Late last year he

was in New Zealand to deliver a paper on the Great Lakes conflict. In Rwanda, the Institute for Conflict Transformation particularly works on nonviolence education in schools, universities and refugee camps. Another initiative is the conduct of workshops on nonviolence and peace through sports for head teachers in the country but it also has programs to fight early marriages and pregnancies, as well as offering trauma counseling to refugees.

In Russia, Ella Polyakova is a key figure at the Soldiers' Mothers of Saint-Petersburg. Ella and her colleagues work to defend the rights of servicemen and conscripts in the Russian military. Ella explains why:

*When we were creating our organisation, we understood that people knew little about their rights, enshrined in Russia's Constitution, that the concept of "human dignity" had almost disappeared, that no one had been working with the problems of common people, let alone those of conscripts. We clearly understood what a soldier in the Russian army was, a mere cog in the state machine, yet with an assault rifle. We felt how important hope, self-confidence and trust were for every person. At the beginning of our journey, we saw that people around us, as a rule, did not even know what it meant to feel free. It was obvious for us that the path towards freedom and the attainment of dignity was going through enlightenment. Therefore, our organisation's mission is to*

*enlighten people around us. Social work is all about showing, explaining, proving things to people, it is about convincing them. Having equipped ourselves with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Russia's Constitution, we started to demolish this dispossession belt between citizens and their rights. It was necessary to make sure that people clearly understood that, having a good knowledge of rights, laws, and situations at hand, they would be able to take responsibility and protect themselves from abuse.*

Bruce Gagnon, coordinator of the Global Network Against Weapons & Nuclear Power in Space, was recently part of a committed effort to convince the Maine state legislature not to give warship-builder General Dynamics, which has already received more than \$200 million in state and local tax breaks for the Bath Iron Works (BIW), any more 'corporate welfare'. Bruce recently completed a fast, which lasted for more than a month, as one of the actions that Maine peace activists took to try to prevent this welfare payment to a company that has spent \$14.4 billion buying back its own stocks between 2013–2017 and whose CEO was paid \$21 million in 2016.

Despite their efforts, the Maine House of Representatives voted 117–31 in favor of the \$45 million General Dynamics corporate welfare bill and the Senate supported it 25–9. The decision was announced on the same day that General Dynamics sacked 31 workers from the BIW. As Bruce noted: "It was an honor to work alongside [those] who stood up for the 43,000 children living in poverty across Maine, for the tens of thousands without health care, for our starving public education

system, and for the crumbling physical infrastructure as Maine joins Mississippi in the 'race to the bottom'." You can read more about this ongoing campaign to convert the Bath Iron Works into a location for the production of socially useful and ecologically sustainable non-killing technologies on their website.

Gaëlle Smedts and her partner Luz are the key figures at Poetry Against Armsbased in Germany. "The inspiration for this campaign is the life, work and legacy of the Latin American poet, philosopher and mystic Mario Rodriguez Cobos, also known as Silo. His total commitment to active nonviolence, his denunciation of all forms of violence, his doctrine for overcoming pain and suffering and his magnificent poetry are a great affirmation of the meaning of life and transcendence." Poetry Against Arms publishes poetry/songs of people around the world who take action to resist militarism.

Since the 1970s, the world's leading rainforest activist, John Seed, has devoted his life to saving the world's rainforests. Founder and Director of the Rainforest Information Centre in Australia, one of his latest projects is to save the tropical Andes of Ecuador, which is "at the top of the world list of biodiversity hotspots in terms of vertebrate species, endemic vertebrates, and endemic plants". From the cloud forests in the Andes to the indigenous territories in the headwaters of the Amazon, the Ecuadorean government has covertly granted mining concessions to over 1.7 million hectares (4.25 million acres) of forest reserves and indigenous territories to multinational mining companies in closed-door deals without public knowledge or consent. These concessions will decimate headwater ecosystems

and biodiversity hotspots of global significance. If you would like to read more about this campaign and what you can do to help, you can do so in John's article 'Ecuador Endangered'.

Apart from the individuals mentioned above, signatories and endorsing organisations are engaged in an incredibly diverse range of activities to end violence in one context or another. These include individuals and organisations working in many countries to end violence against women (including discriminatory practices against widows), to rehabilitate child soldiers and end sexual violence in the Congo, activists engaged in nonviolent defense or liberation struggles—see Nonviolent Defense/Liberation Strategy—in several countries and occupied territories, as well as campaigns on a vast range of environmental, climate and indigenous rights issues, campaigns to promote religious and racial harmony as well as campaigns for nuclear disarmament and to end war.

Given the perilous state of the global environment and climate, still others are focusing their efforts on reducing their consumption and increasing their self-reliance in accordance with the fifteen-year strategy outlined in 'The Flame Tree Project to Save Life on Earth'.

If you would like to be part of the worldwide movement to end violence that has drawn so many people and several organisations mentioned above together, along with many others in 103 countries around the world, you are welcome to sign the online pledge of 'The People's Charter to Create a Nonviolent World'.

Reverend King posed the fundamental choice of our time: nonviolence or nonexistence. What is your choice?



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