

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

# janata

**Vol. 67 No. 23**  
**July 1, 2012**

## **The focus shifts**

**S. Viswam**

**Hindutava versus regionalism**  
Kuldip Nayar

**An Opportunity Lost**  
Mastram Kapoor

**Ideology in Indian Politics**  
D. K. Giri

**European crisis and India**  
K. S. Chalam

**Why Socialism?**  
**Thoughts from South Africa**

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

The candidature of Pranab Mukherjee for the presidency as the UPA nominee has unexpectedly resulted in a shift in the national political focus. Circumstances have so conspired as to make Pranab's election as president a foregone conclusion. One would have expected this development to induce a change in the focus from the presidential to the vice-presidential election. Not so surprisingly, the focus has instead shifted to the 2014 Lok Sabha poll and the identity of the prime ministerial candidates of the various major political groupings. Thus, today greater public and political interest is centred on the Lok Sabha polls two years ahead of the event. How did this happen? The BJP, which was the first party to take an interest in the presidential election, had rejected the name of Pranab Mukherjee because he was the Congress candidate. It also dismissed the name of vice-president Hamid Ansari on the specious ground that he lacked stature. The same BJP, found itself unable to locate a candidate within its own ranks, and after failing to persuade former President Abdul Kalam has had to fall back on P.A. Sangma. It hastened to adopt Sangma's candidature not with an eye on the presidential poll but on the Lok Sabha poll in 2014.

The objective was to push the BJP, the largest partner in the NDA, to the good books of Tamil Nadu AIADMK Chief Minister Jayalalithaa and the Odisha Biju Janata Dal Chief Minister Navin Patnaik with a view to firming up their participation in the NDA as its constituents for the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. Thus, even though Sangma has no chance of defeating Mukherjee, the BJP is propping him up as an "Opposition consensus candidate" for the presidency. There is nothing the BJP will not do for snatching a political advantage from any developing situation!

However, apart from the BJP's role in choosing a candidate to oppose Mukherjee, another factor that has contributed to the shift in the national political focus is the unexpected opposition to the RSS-BJP strategy to project Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi as the NDA's prime ministerial candidate for the 2014 poll. Narendra Modi himself has been behaving as if he has already been named the NDA candidate. He not only blackmailed the BJP into ousting Sajay Joshi from the party but he chose to attend the Mumbai BJP session only after Joshi had been eased out. Sanjay Joshi has since quit all the party posts he held.

***Between the lines***

## Hindutava versus regionalism

**Kuldip Nayar**

But opposition to Narendra Modi's prime ministerial ambitions came from Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar who insisted that the NDA prime ministerial candidate should be named immediately, that he should be a secular-minded person with a liberal face and without any "rough edges" and that Narendra Modi was obviously not such a candidate. Much to the surprise of the BJP itself, RSS supremo Mohan Bhagwat rushed to add his little bit to the Modi-Nitish stand-off by endorsing Modi's candidature. Since Nitish has served notice that the JD(U) would break away from the NDA in case Modi is named as the prime ministerial candidate, the RSS-BJP combine is perhaps ready to risk a break-up in the NDA alliance. It also means that the RSS reposes so much confidence in Modi's political clout that it does not mind the complete rejection of the NDA by the minorities at the pan-Indian level. An off-shoot of all these developments is that Nitish Kumar has emerged as a likely candidate for 2014 as the choice of the "secular" components (non-BJP, non-saffron elements) of the NDA.

While the NDA has already involved itself in the run-up to the 2014 polls, there is uncertainty over the choice of the UPA's prime ministerial candidate. The Congress, as usual, thinks that the talk of a prime ministerial candidate is premature. Sonia Gandhi has said that there is still plenty of time, even for speculation! Will she name Rahul Gandhi? Is Rahul Gandhi ready to assume the responsibility of the high office? Is he prime ministerial material? Can he deliver the nation for the Congress when he failed to deliver even the Congress

***(Continued on Page 3)***

The Bhartiya Janata Party seems to have tryst with doom. In the wake of scams and scandals in the Congress-run government, the BJP was gaining ground. Its performance in Parliament was comparatively better and its younger leadership assertive and more meaningful. But once again old RSS men who have been riding the party have brought it back to square one.

First Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi joined issued with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on the concept of secularism and then RSS played the Hindutava card. Both have scotched even the remotest chance of BJP returning to power. A person who has his hands tainted with the blood of Muslims cannot be projected as India's next Prime Minister. Nor can the false clothes of culture hide the real face of adherents to Hindu Rashtra concept.

The BJP has, by and large, remained quiet. One of its leaders has spoken out of turn and questioned the very concept of secularism. But he was hushed up quickly. It seems that the party did delude itself with the idea that the Hindu voters were beginning to own the RSS philosophy. The BJP should have learnt the lesson in 2009 when it was all set to win but lost to the Congress.

Political parties, including the Congress, do not understand the new electorate, mostly young. It is liberal in outlook and hates to mix religion with politics. This was

the ethos which the nation adopted during the independence struggle and after freedom as a pole star under the leadership of Mahatama Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.

True, regional chauvinism, which is co-terminus with caste and community in certain states, is rearing its ugly head. This is because the Centre looks confused and equivocal when it comes to enunciate policies which demand secular credentials.

Having little feedback from the field, New Delhi continues to monopolise power and fails to appreciate that the decentralization would infuse life among the people in a state. Regional aspirations have got a new edge in the past years and the locals are fired with confidence that they can sort out their problems themselves and find a consensus quicker than the remote New Delhi does.

This is the reason why Trinamul Congress won in West Bengal and Samajwadi Party in UP. The voters found the parties closer to them and more sympathetic to their problems. Even if these regional parties do not give them a better administration the people are not likely to go back to all India parties which they have found failing them again and again. They may try another party within the region because they are getting convinced that all India parties are not an answer to their problems of appalling living conditions.

The idea of India may be pushed further into the background. There may be insurgents and separatists in certain areas to assert the identity of their caste or community, believing that in the affairs of all India politics they may get lost. Much would depend on how New Delhi handles the situation. The Sarkaria Commission on Centre-State relations has become outdated. Had its recommendations been implemented when the report came out more than two decades ago, the demand by the states to have more powers might not have arisen. The Centre has to curtail the subjects it has, either voluntarily or through a Constitutional amendment. Apart from Defence, Foreign Affairs, Currency and overall financial planning, New Delhi should not have more subjects. Once it decentralizes its power it should ensure that the decentralization goes all the way, from the state capital to the district and then to the Panchayat so that people themselves participate in governance.

The two main parties - Congress and BJP - and the Left would have problems. The Left does not seem to bother because it is dictatorial in its working. The CPM ousted a member from the party even though he had resigned after supporting Pranab Mukherjee, the Congress Party's presidential candidate. Yet both the Congress and the BJP need to handle their members carefully. Even when a state Chief Minister speaks out of turn, he has to be brought around as has been the case with Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan, although he is a creature of Congress President Sonia Gandhi.

The BJP faces a bigger problem because it rules in twice the number of States as the Congress does.

Leave Modi apart - he is a bull in the China shop - the Chief Ministers in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka are too tall to tame. They are leaders of their own communities and command wide influence.

Both parties would have great difficulty for 2014 election, first in choosing the top person and then tackling him or her. Take for example the BJP, it is already wooing Vasundheraraje Scindhia, former Chief Minister, who thumbed the party and stayed in the wilderness because she was sure that the Central BJP would one day come to her and accept her authoritarian leadership.

Problems of the Congress on this count are negligible. Sonia Gandhi has all the authority. That Rahul Gandhi, her son, should be nominated as number two has already been done. There is no dissidence and she alone, more so after the departure of Pranab Mukherjee, has the confidence of allies in the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) she chairs.

The BJP would need more and more assistance of RSS to sort out difficulties with the state leaders. Realizing this, RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat has announced that Modi has all the qualifications to become India's new Prime Minister. However, this has naturally infuriated the BJP's main ally, Janata Dal (United). Its President Sharad Pawar has said that if Modi is the Prime Minister candidate, the JD (U) would quit the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

What is wrong with having a Hindutava prime minister? Questions Bhagwat. This question itself shows how RSS lives in a world of its own and does not face the reality of

secular India. For the BJP, already a divided house, the confusion is more confounded. It realises that the country can never be ruled through a communal agenda. Even the former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee realized this and always put his liberal foot forward. He refused to oust his Principal Secretary Brijesh Mishra despite the pressure of RSS. But then the BJP's problem is that it does not have a tall person like Vajpayee to withstand the pressure of RSS.

*(Continued from Page 2)*

strongholds in Uttar Pradesh? These are all questions that are being raised in political circles.

National politics is in a state of flux right now. However, some hopes for a revival in the economy have been raised by the take-over of the finance ministry by the prime minister. Whatever Mukherjee succeeded or failed in doing is no more relevant. But Manmohan Singh faces both a challenge and an opportunity to end the decline in the economy and usher in measures to lift it up. He has only a limited time to achieve this.

## Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on  
Mumbai Bank  
in favour of  
**JANATA TRUST**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai 400 007

# An Opportunity Lost

**Mastram Kapoor**

The presidential election, 2012 provided a golden opportunity for unity of progressive forces as against the forces of status quo and crony capitalism in the guise of neo-developmentalism that means by plundering the earth enrich the few and push the masses to gradual extinction. The opportunity was however lost not by circumstances but by utter poverty of imagination and will on the part of the progressives consisting of communists and socialists as well as complete loss of direction among NDA constituents.

After the unpredicted success of the Samajwadi Party in UP Assembly elections, a hope was generated that the present UPA regime of loot and corruption can be challenged at least symbolically, in the presidential elections, as a rehearsal to the Lok Sabha elections in 2014. A rough calculation of votes showed that out of about 11 lakh votes, the UPA, with all its constituents, including Trinmull Congress, have 4,60,000, the NDA with its allies, 3,04,000 and the rest, about 2,62,000 votes. If the socialists of the Samajwadi Party had taken an initiative and put up a candidate of non-partisan, clean image with a good knowledge of the Constitution and he is backed by the Left Front, there could have been a fair possibility of NDA groups joining the campaign, in view of the fact that NDA is the main opposition, entitled to replace the UPA regime, in case the UPA candidate is defeated resulting in depletion of Congress or ultimate fall of the UPA government.

In order to find a way to come out of the present suffocating atmosphere, a proposal was given to Mulayam Singh suggesting the name of Justice B. Sudarshan Reddy, who last year, before his retirement from the Supreme Court of India, had delivered famous judgments on black money and Salva Judum and also decided in favour of reservations to OBCs in educational institutions. Earlier Justice Santosh Hegde's name was suggested as an alternative by Ravi Varma Kumar, senior advocate and former chairman of Karnataka Backward Commission.

On getting a casual nod from Mulayam Singh, consultation process was started with different parties expected to join the campaign. Our first stop was Ajay Bhavan where extensive discussion took place with CPI leaders AB Bardhan and Atul Kumar 'Anjan'. CPI leaders fully appreciated the idea behind the effort. They agreed that the President should not be selected by consensus but should be elected by contest. They also agreed that consensus smacks of feudalism and court culture and open contest and free vote are basic requirements of democracy. Elections of the President by real contest and free vote held in 1967 and 1969, had stirred the imaginations of the people making them part of the political process which is the real need of democracy. Since the electoral college of President's election comprises of MPs and MLAs and not political parties, no whip can be issued in the President's election

and all votes should result from call of conscience as was exhorted by Indira Gandhi in V.V. Giri's election in 1969.

It was decided that CPI leaders would discuss this matter further in Left Front meetings and try to arrive at a combined opinion about supporting a common candidate from opposition. Unfortunately, Left Front parties could not agree to the idea of combined opposition candidate and CPM leaders looked entirely given to idea of consensus. In three meetings held the CPM leaders showed inclination to follow the Congress lead instead of taking their own initiative. In the last meeting CPM and forward Bloc openly declared their support for ruling party's 'Bengali' candidate while CPI and RSP showed their pure metal by deciding to abstain from voting.

Surprisingly, the weakness of following the Congress lead was seen in almost all major opposition groups. Even the main opposition party which claimed to be ruling party in waiting, waited for the Congress to name its candidate and nearly decided to vote for him and only unwillingly extended support to P.A. Sangma with an eye to expand NDA circle by roping in Navin Patnayak and Jayalalithaa. Samajwadi Party supremo, Mulayam Singh, showed some guts when he joined with Mamata Banerjee to propose their own candidates in defiance of Congress's proposal. But when Congress supremo reacted angrily against their suggestion of including

Dr. Manmohan Singh's name, Mulayam Singh's guts crumbled and he immediately withdrew his earlier stand and extended his support to Congress candidate, leaving Mamata in lurch. This acrobatic of Mulayam Singh destroyed whatever goodwill Samajwadi Party had earned from its recent success in UP Assembly polls. It will be very difficult for SP to regain it.

The other pillar of the socialist movement, JD(U) behaved even worse. The leaders of JD(U) made up their mind from the start to vote for the ruling party candidate. A suggestion to the President of JD(U), to support a common opposition candidate, brought a violent reaction and its spokesman proudly declared its support to ruling party. The chief minister Nitish Kumar, the real centre of power of JD(U) however, saved some of its lost honour by diverting the media attention to the debate of NDA's P.M candidate, though he remained hanging to the coat-tail of Manmohan Singh. The remaining three factions of the socialist movement, i.e. Lok Jan Shakti Party, JD(S) and RJD, didn't even shy like a new bride before extending their support to the ruling party.

The most pathetic character in the drama was the BJP leadership which claims to be a better substitute to the Congress. Throughout, it was in 'to be or not to be' dilemma. Although there were many good candidates who could be put up as candidates for presidentship (Justice B. Sudarshan Reddy and Justice Santosh Hegde's names were suggested to them and they already had Ram Jethmalani and Subramaniam Swamy) the leaders of BJP could not make up their mind. Even the idea that the main opposition should not leave the

ruling party's candidate uncontested, dawned on them when they were forced by the circumstances to support a weak candidate like P.A. Sangma. All Chanakyas and Sardar Patels in the party failed to see that in no country, ruling party's presidential candidate is given a walk-over by the opposition.

The net result of this whole political drama is that whatever possibilities of unifying the opposition forces and presenting a challenge to the present failed regime that were emerging, were lost

and hopes of a left-democratic front are dashed. The blame should go to all opposition parties and groups, mainly to BJP, SP, JD(U) and CPM who have betrayed the faith of their voters. In view of the all round disappointment that will follow this presidential election, there is urgent need to start fresh efforts to build a left-democratic alternatives for which the lead must be taken by parties like CPI, RSP, Mamata's Trinmull and SP's new leadership and reincarnated JD(U) even if it meant to start from ABC.

...However, the time has certainly come to expand the electoral college for this election and to make it more representative of the totality of the country's democratic system. In other words, elected members of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) should also have the right to vote in the presidential election. After the 73rd and 74th amendments to the Constitution, which empowered PRIs and ULBs respectively, there can be absolutely no political or constitutional justification for denying members of these bodies the right to participate in the election to choose the country's President.

This major political reform will have several beneficial effects on our democracy. Firstly, it will broadbase the presidential election, by adding nearly three million more electors to the

existing electoral college of 4,896 MPs and MLAs. There being no whip in this election, this will reduce the scope of politics of manipulation, inducements and blackmail that the Congress party routinely resorts to. Look how, by misusing the CBI stick, it's got both the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party in UP to back its candidate. Secondly, this will encourage members of PRIs and ULBs to outgrow their localism and develop a national perspective. Thirdly, the President too will feel Constitutionally obliged to speak up for the legitimate needs and rights of these long-neglected grassroots institutions of democracy. Fourthly, this will compel political parties to start taking them more seriously. Lastly, giving PRIs and ULBs a right to vote in the presidential election will also force the centre and state governments to take them seriously.

- Sudheendra Kulkarni, *The Sunday Express*

# Ideology in Indian Politics

D. K. Giri

When we refer to a political party in India, what is the image we instantly conjure up? To sample some: BJP - a Hindu party, Indian National Congress - a catch-all party, Samajwadi Party - a party of Yadavas, Bahujan Samaj Party - a party of Dalits, DMK-AIADMK - parties of Dravidians in Tamil Nadu who once wanted to split from India, Telugu Desam Party - a party of Telugus, and so on, and then the communists and their allies, all bundled into so-called 'left'. But, interestingly, none of the parties are viewed from the point of ideologies; such as Conservative, Liberal, Progressive, Socialist, Centrist, Rightist, Leftist (only the communists), Capitalists, and Bourgeoisie and so on. Why do the parties not identify themselves with any of these ideologies? Because, they do not need to. It is another matter they are characterized by a default ideology defined by what people see them as. What matters to the parties is how to win elections and gain power; the talk of ideology does not help them in that process. One may personally and individually believe in certain principles or an ideology, but s/he may have to sacrifice those at the altar of so-called practical politics. One has to dare and defeat opponents in elections, not be dubbed a doctrinaire. In the international context, one is reminded of Daniel Bell's prognosis in the "End of Ideology". Bell argued that old-time ideological frameworks had lost their power and that, thus, we had arrived at the "end of ideology." May be not, as there are new ideological disputes in many countries. However, in the Indian context, politics has not even

begun to be driven by any ideology.

The political mindset mentioned above is shaped by poor understanding of ideology, and the wrong premise that, being ideological is not practical. In this essay, my attempt is to demystify the concept of ideology, and to suggest that, in the longer run, it is the ideological approach that helps the party to win and to make politics popular and healthy. Furthermore, while ideology may help to guide policy and decision-making, it leaves plenty of room for pragmatic judgment. Again, in a more general sense of the word, every political party needs its ideology, and the more clearly it is thought out the more effective is the party likely to be in government. In any case, how can there be policy without ideology? Is not that like claiming that one speaks "without an accent"?

## The Meaning of Ideology

In popular terms, ideology is a set of principles about which there is considerable agreement amongst the members of a party - belief about the nature of the present society, about the kind of society they want to create, the relation of an individual to the society, about the values people must adopt and so on. Since these beliefs are pitched at a fairly abstract level, they may not appear to have direct practical application, but are used as reasoning for practical policy and action outcomes. Another way to look at ideology is to look at the way Thomas Samuel Kuhn, the American historian and the philosopher of science developed paradigms in science and introduced us to the much-used word in politics

the "paradigm shift". Kuhnian paradigm in science operates as a framework for understanding the universe. According to Kuhn, the scientists do not take all evidences before them, but only those pieces of it which fit their operating paradigm. Those pieces that do not are ignored, until a new paradigm which explains them is developed. Ideology thus gives us a frame to think about the public issues, by excluding certain experiences and perceptions, and accepting others. In other words, in politics, it is the ideology which gives public meaning to people's experiences and perceptions - but only selectively - those perceptions and experiences which do not fit in are neglected. If they are to be accepted as part of people's political understanding, a new ideology is required which draws on, highlights and makes sense of them.

Ideology is not a set of abstract principles, not the same as values and attitudes. Ideology may not be a philosophy, but has political character, and a guide to direct political action. Such action related interpretation also implies that it is not the content of the ideologies alone that separates one from the other; it is the function of the ideology in the political system that creates the differentiation. Ideologies do change in response to emerging political and economic situations in a given country, but the principles underpinning the ideology remain perennial.

On the question of the ideology becoming abstract or theoretical, let us remember what Kurt Zadek Lewin, the German-American

psychologist had said, “Nothing is more practical than a good theory”. It is not being suggested that one needs to be rigid or text-bookish about an ideology without being sensitive to or conscious of a situation or priorities. To clarify this dilemma, let us take two principles of social democracy - liberty and equality - which can in certain practical political circumstances conflict. In fact, this is a classic case - the conflict between the ideals of liberty and equality, to both of which social democrats attach great importance. R. H. Tawney, who is regarded as the ideological ancestor by many social democrats, argued that neither ideal could be attained without the other. Nonetheless, oftentimes, circumstances crop up in which there is loss of some liberty to gain equality and vice versa. And, more generally, there is certainly plenty of scope for conflict between several equally valued “ideological principles”. Therefore, ideology is a guide to action, set of principles, not a “detailed programme of action”.

### **Is Ideology Unimportant?**

It can be argued that the absence of ideology in political discourse in India is partly the consequence of anti-intellectualism in Indian public life in comparison with most other advanced democracies in the world. Researches in political beliefs and ideology show consistently that the public does not often think about politics in ideological terms. This has been amply brought by John Robinson in an article, “The Ups and Downs and the Ins and Outs of ideology” in *Public Opinion* way back in 1984. That is why the politicians do not attach importance to any ideology. Another argument is that, in a country like India where there is massive and chronic poverty, unemployment, backwardness and even in some cases starvation, it

is out of place to talk of ideology, it is a luxury, what is important is to address the immediate issue no matter what ideology one adheres to. This is a myth which is perpetuated in order for politicians to advance their self-interest and continuation in power. The third genuine reason for the people to ignore ideology is that the ideological parties tend to be self-righteous, rigid and sectarian, repelling people rather than attracting people into their fold. For instance, a Communist will see most others as reactionary, BJP views others as pseudo-secular and anti-national, and even Socialists see many others as non-progressive and so on. While, there is some room for such perceptions, it is unwise politically to close the doors on many who may want to embrace one’s thinking gradually. The fourth, most members of a party have only rudimentary knowledge of the party’s ideology articulated by its leaders; in fact, they may hold perhaps unwittingly, a variety of private views that may be at odds with the ideology of the party. This happens because the ideology is not discussed or disseminated to the rank and file of the party through study circles, training and internal communication. So the party members cannot motivate themselves and inspire others in ideological terms. On the contrary, if one does not subscribe to any ideology, it can attract all kinds of people to support it and win elections. This is what the Congress party does, it keeps its ideology vague, so that it can talk about poor, and tie up with the rich and so on, although there is nothing wrong to talk to the rich and poor at the same time and from the same platform for a common cause. But Congress tends to do it in a surreptitious manner, as a matter of opportunism, not openness. The veteran social

democrat, late Madhu Dandavate used to say in his own inimitable way, “the Congress party supports the public sector publicly, and the private sector privately”. The public sector is meant to serve the interests of the poor and the deprived.

### **What is the best Ideology**

There is only one ideology that is worth talking about and exploring - that is socialism that enshrines the universal principles of liberty, equality and solidarity. Socialism has become socialisms with its basic principles being universal. Marxism was once the dominant variety of socialism, but Marxism set its face against socialist pluralism and sought to secure for itself a “position of organizational and theoretical monopoly”. Many have successfully argued and events have demonstrated that this “project was illegitimate, its basis flawed, its consequences damaging and its disintegration is therefore to be regarded as both necessary and welcome”. By extension, this would mean that part of socialist project now involves a process of unlearning.

Finally, it is a world in which “one person in three lives under a regime that describes itself as a socialist, a fact which bears testimony to the success of socialism as a modern ideology, perhaps even the modern ideology. But it is also a world where socialism has become pluralist with many a variety. That is a fact that needs to be accepted. In fact, democratic socialism or social democracy by their name could accommodate all those varieties. Therefore, it is high time that ideology becomes the basis of politics and social democracy the core of that ideology.

# European crisis and India

K. S. Chalam

The third world scholars and thinkers like Edward Said and Samir Amin have raised the issue of Euro-centrism in history, culture and political economy. Economists on the other hand have developed theories of export led growth or import substitution strategies of development for developing countries. The euphoria of Washington consensus that has guided globalization seems to have slowed down due to the failure of market supported theories in most of the countries where there is gloom now. It is in this context that we need to look at the European economic crisis which may cause political turmoil in the region and its broad implications for India. Dr Manmohan Singh in his recent visit to G20 at Rio has strategically used the situation in appealing to the West to invest in infrastructure projects as they were searching for investment destinations in the background of economic crisis. The economic predicament emanated with subprime crisis in the USA and is spreading to rest of the world.

One may ponder over the fact that USA is not an isolated newfound land any longer. It is an extension of Europe. We will find that all the European nations are represented in the USA, but the population data does not speak about them and only lists Asians, Hispanics, African Americans and undocumented immigrants. The OECD and European Union are economic blocks of the Anglo-Saxon or occidental nations that had colonies in the present third world including

India. The desire to continue the past hegemony and the lifestyles based on plunder appears to be haunting them, perhaps unconsciously, as is evident through the policies and strategies recommended by them to the third world. The nations that have seriously taken their advice are now in jitters. It is due to the fact that their economies have been deeply engaged with the Euro-American economies and the contagion is suspected to be imminent.

The European crisis has been discussed whenever there was an economic slowdown in recent months and particularly with reference to Greece, Spain, Portugal, etc. The economic crisis in Greece once seriously talked about as a failed nation in the media has suddenly disappeared once the right wing New Democracy took the reins of power there in recent elections. The political economy of Greece is a very interesting case study to understand some of the contemporary issues. The political atlas of Greece was dominated by two political parties, PASOK, socialist party and N D, new democracy, the former a left oriented party and the latter a right wing group. There are several formations like the Eurocommunists and others playing second fiddle in the coalitions. It appears that the Indian political drama is enacted in Greece or vice versa. The successive governments, some of them called themselves as socialist, have expanded public sector and helped to improve the fortunes of their interest groups. The system has acquired the character, according

to some scholars, of 'bureaucratic clientalism', serving the interests of the political parties in power. This has facilitated the country to raise loans to tide over its economic needs. As a result, the fiscal deficit of the country has reached 15 percent of GDP and forced it to approach IMF, for a loan. The IMF has granted loan on very stringent conditionality that peeved the political establishment. It seems that that was beginning of the crisis in Greece. Interestingly, two of the Greek innovations, democracy and tragedy are being performed live.

The GDP of the country according to World Bank data in 2010 was \$302 billion. It has a total public debt of \$481 billion, almost one and half of its GDP. It is a serious problem. The crux of the European crisis is that they have borrowed mostly from European Banks at an exorbitant rate of 18 per cent interest. It is reported that out of \$2.84 trillion of the European Central Bank capital, \$ 637 billion are given as loans to Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain. The problem of Spain is not public debt but private debt where fiscal deficit has reached a peak at 8.9 percent of GDP in 2011. The private debt of Spain is alleged to be having links with real estate bubble that may go around 90 per cent of its GDP. The implications of the Greece profligacy according to some scholars is that, it has heaped distrust on political parties that led to the change of governments in quick succession. Rampant

*(Continued on Page 15)*



# Why Socialism?

## Thoughts from South Africa

*Most Indian Socialists will benefit from a reading of the thoughtful article "Why Socialism", published in an organ of the South African Communist Party. This is especially because Indian Socialists sometimes seem to be losing touch with their Marxist heritage represented in particular by Acharya Narendra Deva, the doyen of the Indian socialist movement. Generally, the South African Communist movement has exhibited approaches refreshingly different from those of Communist movement in pre-independence India. Many South African communist leaders, like Dr Yusuf Dadoo, were close to Gandhiji and acted in consultation with him in the nineteen forties. Gandhiji's grand daughter, Ela Gandhi and many other leading figures of Indian origin in South Africa have been part of the South African Communist Party (SACP) apart from being active in the African National Congress. The South African Communist party struggled jointly with the African National Congress in the difficult apartheid years and has a long record of struggle against the regimes of the time.*

*The problems that we face in twenty first century India and South Africa are similar in essential character though specific characteristics might be different. I expect that Janata readers will find the article\* below to be of interest to them especially because it contains some practical non-jargon-ridden thinking.*

—Anil Nauriya

Never before in history has the need for a different, a humane world based on the socialist value of putting social needs before private profits been more desperately required. For thousands of years people have worked collectively to build homes and communities, to gather food, herd animals, to harvest crops, to manufacture, to paint, to dance and to sing.

Today, as never before, the collective achievements of human civilisation are threatened with potential extinction.

Of course, the past thousands of years of human history have themselves not been idyllic. The history of human societies has been one of collective endeavour, but also of many variants of brutal patriarchal, colonial, racial, class and other oppressions. If the history of all hitherto existing societies has been one of progressive if uneven scientific and technical advance,

it has also been a history of class struggle. It is a struggle that, in short, everywhere pits the direct producers against those who seek to maximize their own narrow class accumulation interests, regardless of the needs of society at large.

Today, a single world economy is dominated by a tiny minority of exceedingly powerful transnational corporations, buttressed by imperialist state power. After several centuries of breath-taking expansion and world-wide accumulation, the global capitalist system, as we know it, is now approaching a series of systemic, perhaps conclusive, limitations. These limitations include physical, biological, human, social and economic dimensions.

### **Destruction of Our Environment**

Profit driven production is spewing its waste into our atmosphere. Global temperatures are rising, threatening large parts of the world, including most of

Africa, with unprecedented floods, droughts, famines and epidemics. Avaricious logging is destroying millions of acres of virgin forest - the green lungs that replenish the air we breathe. Most commercial fish stocks have been reduced by over 75 percent, with the capitalist-driven industrialization of fishing fleets. This dangerous collapse of fish stocks is further compounded by chemical pollution of the sea, mostly from commercial agricultural fertilizer run-offs, and by real estate developers clogging up estuary spawning grounds with golf estates and tourist resorts. How do we halt these depredations?

For a century, a non-renewable natural resource - oil - has fuelled headlong capitalist expansion. Some time in our present decade, oil production will have peaked and demand will outstrip supply. The major oil corporations and their political backers are already scrambling to grab control of

---

\* Slightly abridged first chapter of the political report of the South African Communist Party.

remaining reserves with greater ruthlessness than ever. Oil is being pumped out of ever more expensive and challenging deep-sea reserves with all of the attendant risks of accidents and devastating oil spills. wars and chronic social instability have flared across the globe, from Central Asia, the Middle East, to the bulge of Africa and Sudan, everywhere there is the whiff of oil. Regional gendarme states in strategic localities, like Zionist Israel, are supported by imperialist circles.

With oil prices spiking, many of the arteries of modern capitalist society are threatened. The futures of middle class car based mobility, sprawling cities with freeways, containerised, long-distance international trade, together with international tourism, and large-scale agro-industry with its oil-based pesticide and fertilizer dependency all have an uncertain future.

Collectively, as human civilisation imprisoned within the present global capitalist accumulation path, we are now on a road to potential extinction. The present capitalist accumulation path is recklessly unsustainable. But the powerful global capitalist forces that dominate this reality are incapable of recognising the crisis, still less are they able to take the decisive measures that are required to provide sustainable resolutions.

The struggle for a different world, for sustainable societies based not on profit but on social need, is about natural resources, it is about biodiversity, the plants and animals with which we share our planet. But it is also a struggle for human civilisation itself against the barbarism of profit maximisation.

### **Destruction of Rural Livelihoods**

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of farming and food production. At the beginning of our 21st century, the World Trade Organisation, dominated by imperialist forces, declared war on nearly half of humanity - that is, on the remaining three billion Third World peasant farmers and their families. The dominant forces in the WTO plan to eliminate small-scale, largely survivalist farming through fast-tracking global agricultural liberalisation in the coming decades.

The processes under-way in our own country-side with the liberalisation of agriculture and the agro-industrial sector, import-parity pricing, monopolisation of the food production chain and of seed stock, mass farm-worker retrenchments, forced removals off farms, the closure of many productive farms or their conversion into game farms, all side-by-side with a seriously challenged and slow-moving land reform programme - these local realities reflect the impact of a neo-liberal approach to land, food-security and the "transformation" of agriculture and the agro-industrial sector.

The global agenda to transform all farming into capitalist production integrated into a single global accumulation path is advanced in the name of greater productivity and modernisation. We are told that this is how Europe modernised in the 18th and 19th centuries. We are told that a capitalist agrarian revolution will greatly improve productivity and bring down food prices for all.

So what's the problem? The problem is that in Europe the capitalist agrarian revolution took over one and a half centuries,

not a matter of decades in the way in which the capitalist agro-conglomerates are now proceeding in the Third World. What is more, many of the millions of European peasant farmers who were made surplus by the capitalist revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries were absorbed in labour-intensive factories of an earlier period of capitalism. Millions more "surplus" impoverished Europeans, thrown off the land in previous centuries, migrated as economic refugees to the Americas, to Australasia, some came to South Africa.

But now, under the strictures of global competitiveness, the factories of the Third World, are themselves considerably more capital intensive. They are unable to employ the existing mass of unemployed, let alone absorb billions more newly uprooted peasant farmers. What about the prospects of mass migration from the South to the North? Everywhere, the walls are going up, fences are being reinforced, the border between a wealthy United States and its poorer Mexican neighbour is militarized. The Mediterranean serves as a defensive moat before a European castle. For the billions of poor of the South, the imperialist North is a gated community. The wealthy enclaves of the imperialist world are branded like benches in the apartheid-era - "Whites Only".

Capitalist modernisation has no sustainable answers to the new agrarian question. In fact, a capitalist agrarian revolution on a world-scale has genocidal implications.

### **Urban Slums**

Related to all of this, some time in the past decade, for the first time in human history, the urban population of the earth outnumbered the rural. As market pressures, droughts,

famines and social instability have pressed down on rural areas, the world has urbanised much faster than was being predicted in the bravest calculations just a few decades ago. The present urban population (over 3,5 billion) is larger than the total population of the world in 1960. This huge wave of accelerated urbanisation has been unlike any preceding it, not just in scale, but in its very character. It is urbanisation largely without industrialisation.

Fully one-third of this now urbanised half of humanity is eking out an existence in the great sprawling slums of the towns, cities and megacities of the South. They have different names in different places - the bustees of Kolkata, the kampungs of Jakarta, the shammahas of Khartoum, the bidonvilles of Abidjan, the baladis of Cairo, the favelas of Brazil, the villas miseria of Buenos Aires, the umjondolos of eThekweni. They have different names, but everywhere it is the same basic reality - millions upon millions of rural people and villagers uprooted from their land by a global capitalist accumulation process, cramming into cities, there to join their earlier urbanised brothers and sisters, many of them retrenched workers, or evicted households, or unemployed teachers and health-care workers "down-sized" and structurally adjusted into poverty.

These are the uprooted victims of an era that has invented the Internet and unraveled the secrets of DNA, but which has taken away from more than a billion people their ability to earn a basic livelihood, offering little in return. In a previous century, Marx referred to these de-classed strata of the urban poor as a "lumpen-proletariat". Many of the features of these strata noted by Marx remain

valid. Their relative marginalisation from mainstream production, their fragmentation and their precarious situation make them available to all manner of mobilisations, sometimes by reactionary, demagogic, fundamentalist or xenophobic forces. But the sheer size and enduring presence of these strata today mean it is no longer possible to think of these one billion people as simply flotsam and jetsam tossed up by a temporary transition to capitalism.

Besides, the boundaries between the urban and rural poor and the active proletariat are blurred. The working class and the poor are connected by a thousand household and community ties. The wage of a single proletarian in the South or of a migrant worker from the South in the North typically supports numerous extended family members some still back in rural areas. Conversely, the daily needs of much of the proletariat are increasingly supplied by a web of semi-formal activities. As waged employment becomes precarious throughout the South, with casualisation and retrenchments, and in conditions where formal social security is minimal, working class households adopt numerous survivalist strategies, engaging in a myriad of petty entrepreneurial and cooperative activities - spaza shops, minibuses, backyard repairs, cooperative savings clubs, home-based gardening, or clinging on to a small family plot in a rural area. These are not just South African realities, they are to be found in differing ways throughout much of the world.

If socialism is to be an answer to the barbarism of capitalist profit maximisation, then it will have to be a socialism that embraces the aspirations, survival skills and community know-how of the

hundreds of millions of urban and rural poor of our era. It cannot just be a socialism of modernization, of catch-up, of a South mimicking the West, of uncritically emulating capitalism, of simply being capitalism without capitalists. Capitalist forces of production have themselves become unsustainable. If we are to save the world, then we have to roll back capitalist relations of production, whose profit maximising logic drives us incessantly deeper into crises and contradictions. "Modernisation" for its own sake, "growth" de-linked from development all have to be replaced by another logic in which we put social needs before profits, in which household and community sustainability and local economic development form important parts of an overall social and economic programme.

### **Crisis of Over-Accumulation**

The world capitalist system is now visibly in the midst of its worst economic crisis since the late 1920s and the Great Depression. That previous major crisis ran right through the 1930s and into World War 2. It was only after the colossal destruction of World War 2 that, from 1945 through until the early 1970s, global capitalism under the hegemony of the United States experienced a period of relatively sustained growth and stability.

From around 1973, the year of spiking oil prices, global capitalism began to enter into another period of prolonged stagnation and deepening crisis. At first the epicentres of crisis were pushed to the margins of global capitalism. This was most evidently the case with the so-called "Third World debt crisis" which began from the late-1970s. The immediate cause of this "Third World debt" was unwise lending by the major

private financial institutions in the developed “First World”. In particular, European banks were awash with petro-dollars from the post-1973 oil bonanza. Billions of dollars were loaned to developing countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia - often for hugely expensive vanity projects that had no positive impact on sustainable development.

By the late-1970s it was increasingly clear that many of these loans were unpayable by the impoverished recipient countries. It was in this context that two key Bretton Woods institutions, the IMF and World Bank, were dusted off and given a fresh mandate. The IMF and World Bank were originally established towards the end of World War 2, with the strategic objective of funding the reconstruction and development of the devastated capitalist economies of Europe. In the late-1970s their new mandate was to rescue the dominant capitalist financial sector by squeezing dry Third World societies through sadistic, enforced Structural Adjustment Programmes.

Over the past four decades there have been several serious regional capitalist crises - among them Mexico 1982, Japan 1990, and East Asia 1997/8. They are all part of an ongoing global reality in which the dominant trend in the major centres of developed capitalism is prolonged and deepening stagnation. This long-term trend towards stagnation has been relieved temporarily by speculatively-driven bubbles, only to be followed by their inevitable bursting. From 2007, with the sub-prime housing and banking sector crisis in the US, the character of the crisis was to dramatically intensify. It was no longer displaced to the margins, its epicentre was now in the core zones of capitalist accumulation

and historic dominance - the US and then rapidly Japan and particularly Europe. Moreover, it struck at the heart of the dominant monopoly capitalist sector - the financial sector. Its knock-on impact across the world has, therefore, been profound. Given the intensified global interconnectivity (compared to the 1930s), the speed and reach of the knock-on impact has also been greatly enhanced. While some economies have continued to grow (notably China) but at a much lower rate, large parts of the world entered into recession, or prolonged stagnation. Tens if not hundreds of millions of jobs have been lost, homes repossessed, and businesses liquidated and value destroyed.

Will there be some short- to medium-term global capitalist recovery? To answer that question it is important to understand the systemic underpinnings of the crisis.

Marx was the first to provide a scientific analysis of the boom-bust cycle in capitalism, which he showed to be endemic to this mode of production. Crises in capitalism can occur as a consequence of factors external to the accumulation process - wars, natural disasters, social upheavals. However, under capitalism (and in contrast to earlier forms of production) wars, natural disasters or social upheavals are more likely to be the consequences of internal crises within capitalism rather than the fundamental causes of its crises.

The cyclical pattern of booms and busts is linked to the fact that capitalism - unlike socialism or earlier forms of production - is essentially production for private profit through exchange, and not for social use. In other forms of production (not least socialism)

over-production of goods would, in principle, usually be a cause for celebration, but under capitalism “over-production” (that is, more than the market “demands”, that is can pay for, that is, more than can profitably be sold) triggers a breakdown in the system - a crisis of over-accumulation. This, in turn, requires a massive wave of destruction of productive capacity (in the form of retrenchments, factory closures, liquidations, and stock exchange collapses), in order to “clear the ground” for the next round of capital accumulation through growth. It must be stressed that under capitalism “over-production” is not the over-production of products that the mass of the world’s population often desperately needs. It is “over-production” relative to “market demand”, i.e relative to what can profitably be sold. Capitalism, for all its dynamism and robustness, is a profoundly irrational system.

This cyclical, boom-bust tendency, systemic to the capitalist system has further been compounded by the growing and inter-related trends of Financialisation, Monopolisation and Globalisation. Over the past three decades these three inter-related trends have accelerated on a vast scale. The global economy is dominated by a few hundred transnational monopoly corporations that reap huge profits through ever shifting investments in low wage economies, the domination of the global supply chain networks, and hegemony over key financial institutions. As we have already seen, this monopoly-finance sector domination of the global economy helped, at least for a time, to displace its own internal crises into the global peripheries. Unsustainable financial engineering (that has now resulted in the multiple banking

and sovereign debts crises) served for a time to delay, to disguise, but then ultimately to compound the inevitable global recessionary shock.

As recently as early 2007 prominent international mainstream economists were boasting that capitalism had overcome its boom-bust tendencies and was now launched on an endless trajectory of upward growth.

To understand the current global capitalist crisis it is also necessary to understand the central role of the US economy in it. For around 100 years (1870 to 1970) the US witnessed an unprecedented trend of rising productivity and rising real wages for the working class. This economic reality lies at the basis of the “American dream”, and of the “consumerism” and relative passivity of the US working class - a car and a suburban home being the epitome of the American “way of life”.

From the early 1970s, the US’s uncontested economic domination of the global capitalist system, and particularly its productive dynamism was beginning to be challenged by Japan, the early Asian Tigers (Taiwan, South Korea) and some key European economies - leap-frogging in terms of technological and industrial plant investments, rendering US industrial plant (fixed investments) increasingly unprofitable. This has led to increasing globalisation, as US capital has moved to other locations of higher profitability because of greater technological productivity, and also and increasingly because of cheaper labour. In the 1960s, 6 percent of US corporate profits came from abroad, in the last decade this figure had risen to 21 percent.

This increasing globalisation has also seen the runaway development of “financialisation”, the shift of capital into speculative activity of literally trillions of dollars traded daily across the globe, more and more disconnected from any direct relationship to productive investment. At the same time, the US has used its political, military and especially financial muscle (the dollar being the global currency) to prop up domestic mass consumerism, kept afloat through increasing credit, despite declining real wages since the early 1970s.

Export-oriented Asian (especially Chinese) manufacturers and Third World oil producers became the core production sites while US consumption propped up global market demand. The US has been running huge current account deficits (an indication of the difference between import costs and export profits) as a result. By 2006 the US current account deficit was at \$800bn (or 6 percent of GDP). On the other hand China, or rather massive wage repression in China (referred to as “savings”), has played a crucial role in financing this US deficit, and therefore US consumption. China has now accumulated the world’s largest foreign exchange reserves (over \$2 trillion, some \$1trillion of which is in US treasury bonds). In theory, China could therefore pull the plug on the US economy, but a move to sell these assets would further damage China’s own post-1979 low-wage, export-oriented growth strategy. This has resulted in a situation which some economists have described as a “mutually assured economic destruction” capacity between the US and China.

With the onset of the crisis in the US, China has sought to lessen its export dependency on the US,

to stimulate domestic demand, and also to challenge the global currency role of the dollar. Currently, some two-thirds of international trade is settled by the US dollar, but the value of the dollar is not controlled multi-laterally, but by the US Federal Reserve, which can simply print dollars to serve narrow domestic requirements - as has been done in recent years with so-called “quantitative easing”.

US domestic consumption was further propped up by a variety of “creative” financial instruments. Among these were “sub-prime loans” - housing loans to those who basically could not afford them, in which the initial interest rate was sub-prime, but with the interest rate escalating over the duration of the mortgage on the assumption that as the borrower progressed career-wise so there would be an increased capacity to pay instalments. (Note that this is not very different from many BEE deals - in which black “investors” acquire shares on loan, on the assumption that the shares will always go up and they will be able to repay the loan). These sub-prime loans were then “diced and sliced” (i.e. mixed up with other more viable loans) and sold on by the direct mortgage institutions to banks and other financial institutions.

The collapse of the sub-prime market was to be the catalyst of the 2007/8 crisis, the Great Recession. It was to see one of the top four investment banks in the US, the 100-year old Lehman Brothers collapsing, and other banks and the mortgage lenders (Fanny Mae and Freddy Mac) having to be rescued, often through temporary “nationalisations” (i.e. at public expense). The dicing and slicing of sub-prime and other toxic loans meant that major financial institutions in the US and Europe, in particular,

had no idea of what they were sitting on. This led to a reluctance of banks to lend to each other, and liquidity in the real economy dried up, which then impacted upon the productive economy and on consumer demand. This, in turn, impacted heavily on major global manufacturers, like China where there have been millions of retrenchments.

Faced with its systemic economic crisis, globalised monopoly-finance has no coherent strategy for surpassing the crisis. It is torn between two contradictory capitalist imperatives - saving the banks on the one hand, and stimulating capitalist growth on the other. It seeks to rescue its hegemonic financial institutions through various publicly financed rescue packages and soft-landings for banks by imposing, for instance, tough austerity measures on national governments - even suspending elected governments (recently in Italy and Greece) and replacing them with unelected, budget-cutting "technocratic" cabinets drawn from the finance sector. On the other hand, these austerity measures and other rescue packages for the banks stifle demand and undermine the prospects for capitalist growth. Moreover, the austerity measures are meeting with stiff rejection from the electorates of the developed capitalist societies, resulting in many cases in the shake-up of a previously cosy electoral alternance between centre-left and centre-right political parties. However, the simple rejection of the austerity packages without advancing a post-capitalist alternative - in short, a socialist alternative - will not enable the current global economy to surpass its current turbulent and threatening dead-end.

### Systemic Crisis

Many of these features of the current global economic crisis

were analysed at the SACP's 12th National Congress in July 2007. At the time, certainly inside South Africa, we were virtually alone in pointing out the interconnected and systemic features of this crisis. We were also virtually alone in arguing that:

There would not be any significant short-term recovery.

Other key features of our 2007 prognosis, whose validity has been amply underlined in the last five years, included:

Notwithstanding its multi-dimensional crisis, it would be naïve to assume that capitalism will simply collapse, or that the crisis will spontaneously give birth to a better world;

The relative decline of US economic supremacy (which has been slipping since the mid-1970s) has now been greatly accelerated but the US will remain the hegemonic capitalist power for some time. However, the world is becoming significantly more multi-polar.

While multi-polarity offers possibilities, potentially more breathing space and alternatives, for the global South, it is the people of the South who will bear the burden of the crisis. For instance, as the core capitalist economies focus on their own crises and their own stimulus packages, already paltry development aid is diminishing; trade protective barriers are going up; FDI is pulling out of much of the South; premiums on international loans have increased; and portfolio investments are even more disinclined to bet on the South.

It is possible that dynamic developing economies like Brazil,

India and China may be partially de-linked (de-coupled) from the recession, but none will escape its impact. China, with its US oriented, export-led growth strategy will face very serious challenges

The world capitalist system is faced with and simultaneously it is provoking a series of interlinked crises that threaten natural, biological and social sustainability. Will these crises prove terminal for capitalism? Or for human civilisation? Will a socialist world begin to emerge from these crises? Nothing is guaranteed. The crises can be surpassed, but only with concerted social mobilisation of the great majority of humanity.

The only hope for a sustainable world lies in a radical transition to socialism in which an increasing part of human activity including production comes under social control, in which we finally create the objective conditions for placing social needs before private profits.

...

*(to be concluded)*

---

Footnote

1. "The word over-production in itself leads to error. So long as the most urgent needs of a large part of society are not satisfied, or only the most urgent needs are satisfied, there can of course be absolutely no talk of an over-production of products – in the sense that the amount of products is excessive in relation to the need for them. On the contrary, it must be said that on the basis of capitalist production, there is constant under-production in this sense. The limits to production are set by the profit of the capitalist and in no way by the needs of the producers. But over-production of products and over-production of commodities are two entirely different things." **Karl Marx**, Theories of Surplus Value.

**(Continued from Page 8)**

corruption seems to be both cause and consequence of misdemeanor of public servants. The Vatopedi land scam during the period of New Democracy in power is a case of how public properties were converted as private estates. The socialist party is also not impervious / to from this. As in India, the Parliamentary committee appointed to enquire into the allegations has failed to reach any conclusion except naming five ministers who were involved in the land scam.

The unemployment rate has ranged between 16 to 19 per cent during the last few years. There are reports of riots by the unemployed groups and the emergence of a new movement called 'I don't pay tax'. The rate of growth of the economy has dropped to less than 0.5 per cent and to negative rates in recent years. Then why the Europeans and the Americans and therefore the world are worried about the events in Greece and other European countries noted above. As I pointed out earlier, the USA is not an autonomous sovereign country, it is an extension of the Europe and has been sustained by few families led MNCs that control the economic fortunes of the world. More than 50 percent of the world's GDP is from USA and E U. Interestingly, out of 500 billionaires of the World (Forbes) 425 originate in USA and the exclusive share of Greece is 12 including the world's richest person John Paul De Joria. The billionaires have accumulated the wealth through Banking, Oil and Gas, Pharmacy and Real Estate. One may notice that banking, real estate and related fields like cement and concrete mixture are the sectors in which Greece was deeply involved both within and outside the country.

It is conjectural to say that the money must have gone into the pockets of super rich that had political connections. Who knows, it may be a political game.

There is lot of discussion in India about the fall out of European crisis. It appears that India has very little connection apparently through trade. It is found that our trade balance with Europe is negative except for the year 2011. In fact, China along with Hong Kong has higher proportion of trade with India much higher than USA. Our trade with Middle East is very significant in terms of exports, imports and in proportion to our total value of trade. It is alleged that the real estate bubble is an artificial opportunity created for the Europeans to exploit the situation with their hedge funds to amass huge profits through financial and banking maneuvering. The Financial Crisis Inquiry commission USA 2011, has said that "the crisis was avoidable and was caused by widespread failures in financial regulations... to stem the tide of toxic mortgages, dramatic breakdowns in corporate governance...in accountability and ethics at all levels". Why should India bother about it?

It is strange to find a country that boasts of a high foreign exchange reserves and an overall positive balance of around \$ 55719 million in the year 2011-12 and a positive trade balance with European Union is behaving wobbly to look at the European crisis. What could be the reason? It is a known fact that 60 percent of the global currency reserves are in US dollars. It is said that the persistent current account surpluses of China and other Asian economies would serve to finance the US current deficit at favorable terms. This must have made some

of the financial institutions in the US to act recklessly and have taken too much risk at others' peril. Some analysts allege that the exchange rate and the dollar reserves are positioned in proportion to the strength of the military power of US. India is an open economy now and amenable to all kinds of investments including the toxic derivatives through the share and money markets route. It is perilous in view of the fact that the market capitalization in India as per SEBI data by the end of December 2011 was Rs 1.05 crore crores. It means that the value of the capitalization is one and half times that of our GDP. We do not know how the channels are operating in manipulating the markets despite of our sincere watch dog RBI. Those who are in the policy making with intimate connections with the markets and international agencies would alone know about the future of the Indian economy and may be politics in the months to come.

**Acharya Javadekar  
A Satyagrahi Socialist**



G. P. Pradhan

**Price: Rs. 20/-**

**Janata Trust**

*D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir  
Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.*



## **GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.**

**(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)**

**REGISTERED OFFICE**

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,  
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

**TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232**

**Website: [gannondunkerley.com](http://gannondunkerley.com)**

**E-mail: [gdho1@mtnl.net.in](mailto:gdho1@mtnl.net.in)**

**GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.**

**GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.**

**OFFICES AT:**

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD  
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**



# janata

Vol. 67 No. 24  
July 8, 2012

**New beginning for  
Manmohan Singh**  
Kuldip Nayar

**Jagdish Ajmera is no more**

**Ascendance of Neo-  
Liberalism on Raisina Hill**  
Prem Singh

**Socialism for All**  
D. K. Giri

**Why Socialism?  
Thoughts from South Africa**

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

## What has happened to us?

S. Viswam

*“Hamein kya ho gaya, pata nahin”*. (What has happened to us, I don't know). Reacting to what he aptly termed as the “growing politics of intolerance”, the well-known scientist, academic and chairman of the National Curriculum Framework (2005) review committee, Prof. Yashpal, has bemoaned that we Indians seem to have lost our sense of humour. We also agonise along with him, and so, we are sure, will millions of our people who have observed that we Indians are also growing more and more intolerant of any opinion other than the conventional. Indeed, as a nation we seem to be forgetting to laugh at ourselves occasionally, though it was not all that long ago that we possessed this capacity in an abundant measure. Are we becoming too sensitive or too insensitive?

Some sections of our population appear to be waiting for opportunities to act as moral policemen. Such self-appointed guardians of our culture and traditions and practices tend to lay down the law for all others and do not cavil even at indulging in violence to assert their point of view.

That such elements have managed to thrive in a secular and cosmopolitan country like ours is a unflattering comment on the failure of our powers-that-be to control them if only to ensure that our civil society is protected from all those who take the law into their own hands, always in defiance of the cherished provisions of our Constitution.

The latest source of irritation and annoyance for our self-appointed moral policemen are political cartoons. This time, those subjecting political cartoons to deep and critical scrutiny are our esteemed educationists and academicians who are laying down the law as to determining what is “politically correct and educationally appropriate” for inclusion in our high school text books.

We do not need to go into the background of the controversy surrounding the contents of the text books, specifically political cartoons. The subject is still fresh in our memories. Following the sudden eruption of a controversy over the cartoons figuring in social and

political science text books for classes X and XI, the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Prof. S. K. Thorat. The committee was mandated to suggest guidelines for evolving the contents of text books, with specific reference to political cartoons. The Thorat Committee has recommended a number of changes in the selection of texts and cartoons which Prof. Yashpal has described as “insensitive” and reflective of the growing politics of intolerance. Many other educationists, social scientists and academicians have been equally critical of the panel’s handling of the issue. Clearly, in its zeal to reform the society in a particular mode the panel has thrown the baby out along with the bath water.

As a comment in a national daily points out correctly, the changes and the new guidelines recommended not on pedagogic grounds but with the interests of politicians and bureaucrats in mind. The so-called “offending cartoons” which set off the controversy in the first place have been ordered withdrawn. Fair enough. However, the committee’s conclusions and recommendations seem based entirely on political and not pedagogic grounds. As the dissenting member of the panel, Prof. M.S.S. Pandian has pointed out, the rationale for the committee’s recommendations is coloured by political overtones and undertones. Prof. Pandian pithily comments that “what is politically incorrect need not be educationally inappropriate”. In other words, what is politically correct could also be pedagogically inappropriate.

(Continued on Page 3)

### *Between the lines*

## **New beginning for Manmohan Singh**

**Kuldip Nayar**

I am probably among the very few who still have faith in the capability of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to take India out of the economic morass in which it is stuck. I do not like his World Bank-guided model. Yet he has given the country a growth rate of 8 to 9 per cent in a decade and more than doubled the Hindu growth rate of 3.5 per cent, our cumulative performance since independence in August 1947.

True, the Prime Minister has come a long way from his report on South-South Cooperation, a definitive work which reflected a left-of-centre approach, something akin to the socialist pattern of society that Jawaharlal Nehru had enunciated. But Manmohan Singh defends his reforms as pragmatic, suited to India’s genius. The end result has been a huge distance between the rich and the poor. He now talks of “inclusive growth” but he has been stuck there for a long time, although he has sold the idea to his admiring followers in the West. To President Barack Obama, he is still a “guru.”

Whether Manmohan Singh would succeed giving a new direction to India’s economy is yet to be seen. However, there are difficulties in his way. He is the god that has failed. His credibility to set things right has got eroded. Investors from abroad and from within the country are demanding a pound of flesh. Inflation is high and fiscal deficit looks

unbridgeable. People are too used to subsidies and they would not take a cut lightly.

On the other hand, one major impediment has lessened. Congress president Sonia Gandhi who was not allowing certain reforms has withdrawn her objection to them. Her backseat driving has cost Manmohan Singh dear. He has lost the image of purity he once enjoyed. There is the general belief that he connived at the various scams. That he knew about the mobiles (2G spectrum) corruption running into hundreds of crores and did not interfere to stop it is taken for granted. The resignation by Agricultural Minister Sharad Pawar from the chairmanship of the Group of Ministers looking into the 2G scandal is a healthy development. No report emanating from him would have been considered fair and untainted.

Such resignations, probably suggested, and the exit of Pranab Mukherjee who could not have done worse than he did as Finance Minister, give more leeway to Manmohan Singh. The only thing expected from him is to lead the process of recovery, made more difficult because of monsoon’s failure in some parts of the country. Also Sonia Gandhi is still overlooking his shoulders.

Since he would be grappling with many problems, he would expect support and understanding from his own party, the allies in the

coalition the Congress leads and even the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) in the opposition. The latter has offered help on certain reforms but its contention is that the Congress party is itself divided over some of the steps contemplated. This was the BJP's position even in the budget session of parliament but the Congress was then not prepared to bite the bullet.

The real problem that Manmohan Singh faces is the government's ally, Trinamool Congress headed by mercurial Mamata Banerjee. She, in fact, humiliated the Prime Minister by naming him as a candidate for the office of the President of India. After meeting Sonia Gandhi, she and the other ally of the government, Mulayam Singh of Samajwadi Party from UP, proposed his name kicking Manmohan Singh upstairs. Sonia Gandhi should have retorted immediately to the suggestion and issued a statement saying there was no question of changing Manmohan Singh as the Prime Minister. She allowed the confusion to prevail for 24 hours, humiliating Manmohan Singh further.

I do not know why the Prime Minister is saying every now and then that he is willing to vacate his place for Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi's son. Manmohan Singh should know by this time, having been in the Congress for 25 years, that whenever Sonia Gandhi decides, she would not even ask him why she is putting her son in his place. At present, Rahul's image is down because of the battering of the Congress in Bihar and UP, the two states where he campaigned during the assembly elections. He would need some time to refurbish his appeal.

Besides giving direction to the matters of economy, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh should show that he is really in command of the country. He should have publicly asked for a report on the killing of 'Naxalites' who the human rights activists allege were innocent villagers. In fact, he should have ordered a judicial inquiry straightaway to verify the facts because the police has the reputation of being gun crazy. The wobbling home minister P. Chidambaram is not known for quick decision.

Coming to the issue of prisoners in India and Pakistan, the Prime Minister should have taken the matter in his own hands when Pakistan released Surjeet Singh and not Sarabjit Singh, as was announced earlier. Many television channels from Pakistan informed me about Sarabjit's release and got my reaction. Apparently, the hardliners made Islamabad change its decision. The Prime Minister should have taken up the matter at his level because the relationship between the two countries is getting affected by the "mistaken identity", if it was so.

One thing that comes out clearly from the recent confusion is that prisoners on both sides are considered mere pawns on a chessboard and are kept in jail beyond the tenure of the sentence to play the opportunistic game. Surjeet Singh who has been released spent nearly 10 years more because that is the practice. None bothers on both sides about human sufferings. None is accountable and nobody is taken to task for detaining prisoners illegally.

In India, there are examples where its own prisoners are in jail

even if they have served their sentence. For example, I would like to know the fate of Sikh prisoners languishing in jail since 1984. Had the government shown agility, the prisoners would have been released by this time.

Economic reforms may be important, but more important is the people's feeling that the government is just and cares for them. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh can begin from this note.

---

*(Continued from Page 2)*

The entire point of the exercise of reviewing the contents of the text books, one would have thought, was to choose the texts with an eye on stimulating the curiosity and thought processes of the students so that they can learn more of the subject through their own initiatives and enterprise. In other words the idea is to encourage learners to seek and obtain more knowledge and information on their own and learn to think on their own. By insisting on making the contents conform rigidly to politically correct perceptions and perceived community sensibilities is to defeat the very purpose of the review.

The committee's views on the place and role of cartoons is bizarre, to say the least. Cartoons are precisely that. They are meant to make us laugh even while inducing us, gently, to indulge in a little introspection. As Prof. Yashpal says, cartoons point to our weaknesses and inconsistencies and that too in a nice way. The more we condemn a particular category of cartoons the more insensitive we become, and in any case why get incensed over something that is meant only to make us laugh even while making us look at the mirror?

## **Jagdish Ajmera**

### **November 9, 1917–July 1, 2012**

Jagdish Ajmera, Chief Adviser to the Western Railways Employees' Union and the Editor of Railway Sentinel, passed away on 1st July 2012 at Jagjivan Ram Hospital, Mumbai Central, at the age of 95 years. Com. Ajmera was a veteran freedom fighter and a staunch socialist. His contribution in socialist movement and trade union movement is immense. During the freedom struggle, he came into contact with Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and leading socialist workers like Yusuf Meherally, Purshottam Tricumdas, Saad Ali, H.Z. Gila, Gaurishankar Bhatt, Varaskar, N.T. Shroff, M.L. Shah and others. He was a close partner of late Madhu Dandavate, a veteran socialist leader and ex-Railway Minister. They lived together for a long period in a chawl room at Worli.

Com. Ajmera was born on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1917 in a Jain Bania family in Lakhnaka, a tiny village in Saurashtra region of the then Bhavnagar State. After completion of his Matriculation from Sir Jaswant Singh High School, he joined Shamaldas College, Bhavnagar in 1940. In that year he shifted to Bombay and came in contact with the Congress Socialists and became active in the socialist trade unions of the workers of General Motors, Ford Motors, BEST, Richardson and Crudas, Godrej, etc. He was associated with the Gurnasta Maha Mandal and union of private motor drivers. He also took interest in students wing of the socialists.

At the age of 23 years, he took active part in the freedom struggle and carried out underground activities during the Quit India Movement. He was part of historic Quit India procession at August Kranti Maiden on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1942 and was detained under Defence of India Act. He was variously tortured in CID Lock-up and then was kept in Woril Detention Camp. During the detention, when he was taken to Sir J.J. Hospital for treatment, he dramatically escaped from the police custody. He was re-arrested in June 1943 and tried in Mazagaon Court. He was kept for nine months in Arthur Road Jail and subsequently shifted to Yerawada prison.

Com. Ajmera joined Railway trade union movement and became a Branch Secretary of Dadar Branch of the then BB&CI Railway Employees' Union in 1946. He was elected as Vice President of the BB&CI Railway Employees' Union in 1949 and thereafter as its Secretary, which Union is now known as Western Railway Employees' Union (WREU) after the post-independence merger of BB&CI Railway into Western Railway. He served as Secretary of WNREU for 28 years and thereafter as the Working President during 1977-1980. He was President of WREU from 1980 to 2000 and Vice President of All India Railwaymen's Federation (AIRF) up to 2001. Since 1951, Com. Jagdish Ajmera has been publishing "Railway Sentinel", mouth piece of WREU, and was its editor till his death.

Com. Ajmera devoted his whole life for the benefit of working class in general and railwaymen, in particular. He married Indira Mane who supported him in trade union movement. He guided railway employees in 1946, 1960 and 1974 nationwide Strikes of Central Government Employees and Railway Employees and secured various benefits for railway employees such as Absorption of Casual Labours, Restricted Hours of Work, Overtime, Weekly Off, Provident Fund, Gratuity, Pension, Productivity Linked Bonus, Compassionate Ground Appointments, RELHS, Cadre Restructuring, Group insurance Privilege Pass while in service and Post-Retirement, Enhancement of Maternity Leave, etc. etc.

Com. Ajmera was a founder member and lifetime Trustee of Maniben Kara Foundation. Com. Ajmera was honoured with Tamrapatra for his services during India's freedom struggle. He was Adviser of Guru Swami Forum and Guru Swami Alamelu Labour Research Centre. He struggled for free, independent and democratic trade union movement and socialist pattern during his life time. His death is a great loss not only to WREU but also to the whole trade union movement in the country.

-WREU

# Ascendance of Neo-Liberalism on Raisina Hill

**Prem Singh**

Like the last presidential election, the current election too has been a talk of the town and country. It is good that discussions are on with respect to the election of the highest constitutional head of the nation. The debates during Constitution-making regarding Presidentship can also be looked into for better understanding of the Constitution and the Presidentship as well. There can be many other points for this discussion such as elections of previous Presidents, their special deeds, decisions and critical analysis of their deviations. I want to recall that Dr. Rammanohar Lohia had criticised the twice elected President Dr. Rajendra Prasad for washing the feet of the Varanasi's priests. There were occasions when the first President and the first Prime Minister were engaged in arguments over the question of the role and powers of the President. People casually talk about adopting the presidential system in our country like that of United States of America, thinking that it will put an end to all our political problems. But whatever be the focus of the debate, we can have a serious contemplation on this subject in academic and political domains while the process of electing our next President is on. Those who are contesting the Presidential elections should be made to face public debate on the contentious issues faced by the country and the world at large. Constitutional provisions should be discussed with them in order to know their views, understanding and the weight that they give to the Constitutional provisions and basic values enshrined in it. The presidential candidates should be asked what

motivated them to contest the elections and after succeeding what special contribution they would make apart from performing ceremonial role. They may be asked about their studies on various subjects and their opinion about the dimensions of life other than politics.

The high point of the discussion should be the expectations that people have from the President and the degree to which the would-be President understands these expectations. There is no need to say that being the custodian of the Indian Constitution, the personality, post and the role of the President should be seen as existing within the purview of the Constitution – the guiding document of our destiny as a nation. This would, certainly, enhance and strengthen our Constitutional civic sense that is lacking these days due to various reasons.

However, the ongoing debate only reflects that the election of the constitutional head of the nation has not much importance for us. The media and the political parties both seem to be giving the message that the more important thing is which political party, coalition or leader becomes successful in making its candidate the President and in turn gets to hold the key to the 'power' at the President's Office. They are keeping an eye on the next general election to be held in 2014 while scheming their moves in the presidential election. This is the most unfortunate aspect of this election. This time, it has become a game of gamble for them. One throws a googly and another throws dice.

Distrust, double-speak, even mischievousness is the order of the day. It was an absurd drama, most dismal, when a senior leader suggested Prime Minister Manmohan Singh for the post. The whole chapter simply reflects that the Indian politics has become directionless. Ironically such a crisis could have opened a way to find a right direction provided there was a pure motive behind the search.

The President of the country is supposed to be the custodian of the Constitution, however, all the current debates by the experts, leaders or by the candidates themselves portrays the President as the custodian of neo-liberalism. There was no discussion from any corner that the next President has to take care of the Constitution that has been altered in more than one ways in the favor of neo-liberalism since the last 25 years. We need a President who can heal the damages done to the Constitution and who is committed to the socialist goal of the Constitution. The Congress and the BJP will not be able to give such presidential candidates as they have already adopted neo-liberalism as their goal.

The regional parties too are following a path similar to these two national parties though there are some regional parties who describe themselves as 'Socialist'. Janta Dal (United) is one such party whose spokesperson has come out in support of Pranab Mukherjee saying that neo-liberal economic policies are irrevocable. He has said that even if BJP spokesperson Ravi Shankar Prasad becomes the Finance

Minister, he too will follow the path of Shri Mukherjee. The role of Samajwadi Party's supremo Mulayam Singh Yadav is equally regrettable in this election. It seems that he has not read a single line written by the great philosopher and socialist leader Dr. Lohia whose name he uses against Mayawati's idol Baba Saheb Ambedkar in UP politics. Biju Janata Dal and AIADMK are the initial proposers of PA Sangma's name for President's post. Sangma has challenged Mukherjee to an open debate not because the former Finance Minister had implemented neo-liberal economic policies and thus worked against the spirit of the Constitution but because he wants to expose the failure of Mukherjee in implementing these policies speedily. It proves PA Sangma considers himself a better expert and bigger supporter of neo-liberal policies than Pranab Mukherjee.

Sangma had eyed the post of the President much before Mukherjee. Sangma, in support of his candidature, has said that so far no one from any tribal community has become the President. To push his candidature, Sangma formed 'Tribal Forum of India' with some like-minded friends, and declared himself the forum's presidential candidate by saying he represents crores of tribal people living across the country. Whether it was during the era of colonialism, during the era of mixed economy after the independence or in the last 25 years of neo-liberalism - tribal communities have suffered most due to the capitalist model of the development. Sangma belongs to the North-Eastern part of the country. There are geographical and cultural differences between the North-Eastern tribal population and the tribal communities living in other

parts of the country. The ill-effects of capitalism are deeper on those tribal communities residing out of N-E region.

Sangma has been a prominent leader of mainstream politics that promoted capitalist development and ruined the lives of tribals in most part of the country. He has never raised his voice for tribal rights while profit-greedy MNCs plunder them. He was never seen on any forum or peoples' movement which fights for the rights of the tribals. Sangma, a party to the destruction of tribal people, is now aspiring to become the country's next President while claiming to be their representative. He is appealing to the MPs and MLAs to cast their vote according to their conscience - "antaratma ki awaz". Sangma himself should introspect whether his own conscience is clear?

Left Front is also divided, like the NDA, over the candidature of Pranab Mukherjee. However, the division within the Left Front is more important because it is an ideological front driven by the aims of socialism since four decades. The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has supported Pranab's candidature. However, another fraction of the Left Front, Communist Party of India (CPI) has decided not to take part in the election. The Forward Block is with CPM while RSP is with CPI. Instead of Pratibha Patil, CPM had proposed the name of Pranab Mukherjee during the last presidential election also. The rationale behind CPM's support to Pranab's name is amazing and against the very party line. The CPM's Secretary General Prakash Karat has stated that ideological considerations do not apply to the election of the President. One may ask him how can the election of the President be viewed

as outside of ideology. If one grants that it is outside the Marxist ideology, how it can be considered outside the ideology of the Constitution? If no ideology is involved in the election of the President, one wonders, how he or she be perceived as the custodian of the Constitution?

There is a unique world of Marxist discourse and party network in India. They apply their own thesis, terminology and methodology to analyse situations and justify their line of support and conflict based on them. A debate is already taking place in Communist circles, where CPM's move to support Pranab Mukherjee is being viewed as a wrong decision. A young leader from the party's research wing has resigned from his post on this issue. The CPM claims that it has expelled the leader from the party. It says that Pranab Mukherjee has wide acceptance and the party has no strength to oppose his candidature. The question is whether the wide acceptance of the name of Pranab Mukherjee is also not an acceptance awarded to neo-liberalism? By not opposing it, does it naturally mean that it should be supported? It is clear that CPM's decision is related to West Bengal's politics. In the wake of Mamata Banerjee's opposition to the candidature of Pranab, CPM has given its support to the veteran leader only to woo Bengali sentiments.

But it involves ideological complications also. The CPM, that speaks about Indian socialism these days, cannot imagine real socialism without capitalism. The CPM has only two options - either it should completely forget about capitalism or come out in its full support. Secondly, for Marxists, Indian Constitution and parliamentary democracy that follows

the Constitution is a big hurdle in their way to socialist revolution. Since they have accepted it reluctantly they are not able to take real inspiration from the Constitution. Thirdly, Marxists still rely on their party's organisational strength before they think of political strength. For them the outside world is more like a doctrine; they are, therefore, unable to expand their political power in the larger public sphere.

It would have been better if the Left Front had fielded its own presidential candidate. It might have lacked the strength but until and unless the public witnessed their stand, how could they support them? What is happening now is that those who claim to practice pro-public politics are becoming part of the mainstream politics while saying that they don't have the strength to contest the election. There is an urgent need for a strong, honest political voice to claim public attention. In this era of neo-liberal imperialism, it is the only way, shown by the Constitution, to spread socialist political consciousness. It is not necessary that every leader of a pro-neo-liberal political party should also be a supporter of neo-liberalism. Questions can be raised on neo-liberalism within parties. The Left Front should have fielded a candidate against Pranab Mukherjee and PA Sangma in support of true democratic and socialistic ideals.

Such a candidate could have been a non-political person also. Civil society could have started a sound debate against the attack of neo-liberalism in this way. Even without actual nomination the aim could have been fulfilled. However, the Indian civil society is affected by the same problem as mainstream politics. There are very few people who have

trust in socialism; many are the supporters of faster economic reforms. This is the reason that there was not a concrete effort from the civil society on the name of Justice Rajinder Sachar, which came up in discussion, or anybody else. Thus, this presidential election does not provide any solution to the problem - onslaught of neo-liberal imperialism on our Constitutional sovereignty - rather it has deepened it.

Pranab Mukherjee, who has wider acceptance in the electorate collage across the party lines and is considered to be the most suitable candidate for the post, is not in the fray to uphold the spirit of the Constitution. Till his farewell from the government and the party, he has been committed to the pace of the economic reforms as the only remedy to the slowdown of economy. His faith in the neo-liberal economy has been consistent and beyond doubts of qualms for the last 25 years. He has never bothered about the fact that the new economic policies cater to only one-fourth of the Indian population and necessarily exclude the rest. Therefore, Pranab will tag on with the reforms even in the President house. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Planning Commission deputy chairman Montek Singh Ahluwalia, Knowledge Commission chairman Sam Pitroda, Home Minister P. Chidambaram along with Sonia Gandhi will take his Presidentship as an opportunity to accelerate the speed of the economic reforms. The biggest reform that may be implemented after Pranab's victory would be a green signal to 51 percent FDI in multi-brand retail sector. Those who say that Pranab has been excluded by the market/corporate forces to the 'ceremonial' Presidentship are trying to confuse the discourse.

## Conclusion is but...

In his article "Patient is on oxygen", S. Viswam has rightly concluded that "The UPA enjoys two advantages right now. First, its main political adversary, BJP is even less coherent. It has surfeit of Prime Ministerial aspirants but no real quality leadership. The public perception of the BJP-led NDA is even less flattering than that of the UPA. The second advantage is that the voters who opted for the UPA rather than for the NDA in 2009 are still in the mood to give the Congress and its allies another chance for 2014. But they may change their minds and mood if the UPA does not cure itself of its paralysis without any more delay."

However Dr. Manmohan Singh government is not on oxygen. No doubt, the government has committed serious mistakes while functioning. But there are constraints because of coalition. And in his functioning Dr. Manmohan Singh, our Prime Minister, has exhibited tolerance which must be appreciated.

Let us accept for a moment that the government under Dr. Singh is in-efficient, but no party in the Parliament dared to table a no-confidence motion against the government. Because Dr. Singh has a special image that of being very sincere and honest. There are stalwarts in all the opposition parties but they have not reached to that height. Dr. Manmohan Singh who possesses at all times. Moreover, in spite of overwhelming support to the movement of Anna Hazare against corruption, the Prime Minister stood firm but did not insult any leader of the movement. This is the quality of leadership exhibited through dignified behavior Dr. Singh.

—R. D. Prabhu

# Socialism for All

D. K. Giri

The popular perception of socialism is that it is meant for the poor and the deprived, it tends to level down different sections of people, it is not in favour of growth and affluence. Such perceptions have led socialists to electoral defeats, as they appeal to particular sections of people, not all. My argument in this article is that socialist party should be a catch-all party in order to be a modern party, win elections, and deliver its values. A socialist need not be doctrinaire, and at the same time, should not be too practical to compromise its principles. In the words of R.H. Tawney, "It ought to be possible for a movement, like an individual, to be both sensible and trenchant...until the Labour Party can persuade its fellow countrymen that it represents both - that its idealism is not lunacy, and its realism mere torpor - it will neither win general support, nor deserve it". This applies to a socialist party anywhere.

## Maintaining the Balance

Some comrades of the old guard argue that socialism must fight for the poor, deprived and the weak. Any talk of the richness, growth and powerful amounts to betrayal of socialist values. Furthermore, they would suggest that you cannot fight poverty without identifying with the poor; it is like Malcom X, the African-American radical rejecting a white American girl's support for his movement. The reason for his refusal was that the well-meaning American girl was not a Muslim, so she could not work for the Muslims. So a rich

person should not talk of alleviation of poverty. But if democratic socialism depends solely on mainly on the fuel of poverty, deprivation and pain for its advance, it will be motionless. Democratic Socialism, if it is to succeed, must appear and appeal as a source of efficiency and justice as much as to the affluent and secure as much to the impoverished and insecure. The task of transforming a society needs the support of strong as well as the disadvantaged.

Care and concern for the weak is one of the core values of socialism, but material benefit for all should be the strategy. Democratic Socialism must focus on the interest of the taxpayer as well as beneficiaries of the welfare schemes in health, education and the like. Democratic socialism should cater to all - the enlightened should find it desirable and the needy ones should find it absolutely necessary.

## Sentiments and Self-interest

Democratic Socialism has tended to appeal more to the sentiments than self-interest in individuals, although both must go hand in hand. In the West European countries, the welfare state has been presented as the hallmark of socialism. The building up of welfare state has been seen as the success of socialism, but the need for running it effectively and renewing it periodically has escaped the attention of the socialists. Also, welfare state has been defended for its compassionate approach, not for its competence to promote liberty and justice for all. These two words

have become sentimental dogmas for many socialists, not the instruments for building a just and equal society. Way back in 1936, George Orwell had to advise the socialists, "Justice and Liberty" are the words that have to ring out like a bugle across the world, not to be buried under layers of doctrinaire priggishness, party squabbles, and half-baked progressivism".

## Production vs Distribution

Democratic socialism has been seen as distributionist, not as productionist philosophy. The British Labour Party, for instance has been seen as "tax and spend party", not known for generating wealth. In 1992, British General Elections, when the shadow chancellor John Smith presented Labour Party's shadow budget, he proposed that anyone earning above 25,000 pounds per annum will pay income tax. One of my Bangladeshi-British acquaintances came up to me and said that he would not vote for the Labour Party although he was a traditional labour supporter. His worry was that the Labour Party, if it came to power, would take away all his money, he was then earning around 11,000 pounds a month as a cook in a restaurant. In my attempt to persuade him to stay with the Labour Party, I reasoned with him that when he earns more than 25,000 pounds, he should easily and happily pay taxes for the welfare activities and community services. He saw the point.

Another older British lady told me, she was not voting Labour as it was



a party to “spend, spend and spend”. Thus, the image of the Socialist Party still sticks in the minds of the voters as “spending and distributionist party”. It is time the Democratic Socialists place themselves on the side of growth. Let us take brief look at India’s current economy. It was static at around 3 per cent growth for long time. Since 1990s, it reached up to 8 per cent. Many comrades call it capitalism, and oppose further liberalization. A discussion on India’s economic growth, whether it is “inclusive or capitalist”, is beyond the scope of this essay. But, it will be necessary to note the difference between capital formation and capitalism for any such discussion.

### **Attitude must Change**

Socialists all over seem to have a doctrinaire approach, favoring lower and middle classes while treating the upper class as enemies. Most socialist parties are split into Right and Left within. Therefore, socialists always fight on two fronts - one with their own comrades on the ideology and the other, with their opponents in elections. Some socialists, a bit on the far-left, are more exercised in winning arguments amongst themselves, than in winning elections against the opponents. These so-called hard-core socialists stick to outmoded positions, they are so obsessed with their ideology, that they do not see people for slogans, so self-righteous that they ignore realities, so busy preaching that they do not listen to anyone who does not applaud their so-called simplicity.

In fact, some comrades believe that a small band of ideologically committed people can win power. This is impractical. Fredrick Engels advised, “that revolutions of small conscious minorities at the head of

unconscious masses are at the end, and that the task of socialist parties in political democracies is to work for increase in votes and carry on with parliamentary activity”.

One hears a common refrain that political workers and leaders are in politics for their convictions, not for votes. By extension, socialists could enunciate policies, no matter its impact on votes. Such hard-core socialists would do well to recall what a person like Trotsky himself had pointed out, “it is not enough to create a programme, it is necessary that working classes accept it”. Therefore, socialism should align with people’s thinking and aspirations. Again, the aspirations change, for instance the poor would need some relief and elevation, but as their basic needs are met, and they come out of poverty, they aspire for other things; Socialism would have to evolve to meet those changing aspirations. Nothing remains static for ever.

### **Is Catch-all Unethical!**

Catch-all is used a pejorative term to mean everything to everyone, or to be opportunist as a politician. Here catch-all is used as appealing to every section of society, transcending social and economic class barriers. In such case, socialism would compare better with communists who emphasize on ‘class struggles’ and with the conservatives, and neo-fascists who exploit social divisions, ethnicity, race, etc. Democracies run on a majoritarian principle and the majority can be achieved by going beyond classes and segments.

In economic terms, there needs to be a shift from state capitalism and mixed economy to a composite economy. In a composite economy,

everyone and every section of the society would be part of growth as per their productive capacities. It will build capital of the heavy-investment sector for the future generation, and shall provide consumption necessary to the needy of the current generation and help them withstand repression and exploitation. It would create and promote entrepreneurs in all sectors. The Constitution needs to be more centralized, but implementation more autonomous and decentralized. The state will remain, in Gunnar Myrdal’s characterization, between hard and soft, as a firm state.

Each country should have a planning process - what is called a bottom-up or decentralized planning. In planning, income and wealth egalitarianism needs to be substituted by consumption egalitarianism. So the concept of equality remains a guiding principle. The composite economy permits a fusion of the reconcilable aspects of socialist and capitalism systems and it discards the irreconcilable aspects.

Finally, with a redefinition of objectives and re-specification of the instruments of implementation for delivery, growth and equality would be achieved simultaneously as essential components of democratic socialism. The public and private sectors both with socially meaningful roles have space to operate, but in a composite economy, individuals and organization will also have space to contribute to growth.

In the light of the proposition for “catch-all socialism” the orthodox economists, the traditional socialists, the decent and pragmatic capitalists and the standard political theorists

*(Continued on Page 15)*

## Socialist Party (India)

### National Executive

The national executive committee meeting of the Socialist Party was held at Wardha in Maharashtra on 9 June 2012. Bhai Vaidya, president of the party presided over the meeting. National office bearers and members of the national executive committee from 12 states participated in the meeting. Justice Rajinder Sachar and Dr. G.G. Parikh, Editor, 'Janata' weekly, were present as special invitees. The following decisions were taken in the meeting:

1. Socialist Party will contest Gujarat Legislative Assembly elections due in October-November this year. The Gujarat unit of the party has been authorised to make seat adjustment with non-Congress and non-BJP like-minded parties. 2. Socialist Party will take part in the next general election in 2014. The process of identification of seats has started in the states where the party has its unit/committee. A front, at the national level, will be

formed with Lok Rajniti Manch and other like-minded political parties which are opposed to neo-liberalism. 3. The party will launch a farmers' help campaign from 20 June to the July end. State units of the party will assist farmers in resolving their problems regarding seeds, water, khad, electricity, etc. Under this campaign efforts will be made to help farmers in drought-hit areas. 4. 'August revolution day' will be observed on 9 August. Freedom fighters will be honoured on this occasion. 5. A movement will be launched against foreign direct investment (FDI), particularly in the retail trade, from 15 August to 30 August. All state units will hold a one-day dharna on this issue and submit a memorandum to the Governors. 6. Socialist Party supports the demand of All India Samajwadi Adhyapak Sabha for free education from KG to PG. The party will play a leading role in making 'Shiksha Hak Satyagraha' (to be observed

on 28 November 2012) a grand success. 5000 'Shiksha Hak Satyagrahis' will be recruited for this cause.

Pannalal Surana presented a resolution against FDI which was passed after due deliberations. The agenda of the meeting was presented by Dr. Prem Singh. Bhai Vaidya made an appeal to the office bearers to form units of the party in all remaining states in the next six months. Niranjana Mahto, national secretary general of Socialist Yuvjan Sabha (SYS) presented its report. SYS has decided to speed up the membership drive in colleges and universities and to take part in elections of student unions.

It was decided that the next national executive meeting will be held in Delhi on 16 September 2012 at 11 am. The venue of the meeting will be : Gandhi Peace Foundation, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Marg, New Delhi 110002.

### National Camp

A three-day national camp, attended by around 60 participants, was held in Wardha from 8 to 10 June 2012. In the beginning, participants offered condolence following the demise of Prakash Mohadikar, founder of the Sane Guru Kathamala, and Tarani Yadav, a committed socialist comrade from Jharkhand. Freedom fighter Sawarkar Master sang welcome songs in Marathi and Hindi. The proceedings at the camp started with presentation of the state reports by the representatives.

Renu Gambhir and Prem Singh from Delhi, Onkar Singh and Sandeep Pandey from UP, Sanjay Gaikwad and Hasan Bhai Desai from Maharashtra, Vinayak Naik from Goa, Jayanti Panchal from Gujarat, Tarkeshwar Singh from Jharkhand, Om Singh Satiana and Gurtez Singh Rabji from Punjab, B.P. Roy and Tarun Banerjee from West Bengal, Ranjit Kumar Mandal and Sachidanand Singh from Bihar, S. Rajshekharan Nayar from Kerala, Ramrao Chandrashekhar from Karnataka and Gopal Patange from

Andhra Pradesh presented detailed account of the party activities in their states. Convener of Tamil Nadu Narne Natesan, convener of Himachal Pradesh Devraj Duggal and convener of Jammu and Kashmir Tarsem Pal, who could not attend the meeting/camp, sent their reports to the general secretary.

After the report presentation session, Pannalal Surana, convener of the camp, addressed the participants and described the

*(Continued on Page 15)*

## Why Socialism? Thoughts from South Africa - II

*Most Indian Socialists will benefit from a reading of the thoughtful article “Why Socialism”, published in an organ of the South African Communist Party. This is especially because Indian Socialists sometimes seem to be losing touch with their Marxist heritage represented in particular by Acharya Narendra Deva, the doyen of the Indian socialist movement. Generally, the South African Communist movement has exhibited approaches refreshingly different from those of Communist movement in pre-independence India. Many South African communist leaders, like Dr Yusuf Dadoo, were close to Gandhiji and acted in consultation with him in the nineteen forties. Gandhiji’s grand daughter, Ela Gandhi and many other leading figures of Indian origin in South Africa have been part of the South African Communist Party (SACP) apart from being active in the African National Congress. The South African Communist party struggled jointly with the African National Congress in the difficult apartheid years and has a long record of struggle against the regimes of the time.*

*The problems that we face in twenty first century India and South Africa are similar in essential character though specific characteristics might be different. I expect that Janata readers will find the article\* below to be of interest to them especially because it contains some practical non-jargon-ridden thinking.*

**–Anil Nauriya**

In the course of the 20th century great hopes were stirred around the world, including here in SA, by the 1917 October Revolution in Russia. In the course of World War II, the inspiring role that the communist movement played in the defeat of Nazism, fascism and Japanese militarism greatly added to the prestige of the world communist movement. After 1945, socialism extended to a broad bloc of countries led by communist and worker parties. This socialist bloc inspired and provided invaluable assistance to radical national liberation movements in the South. The strategies and tactics of many progressive movements in the South were premised on the existence of this seemingly powerful counterweight to imperialism within a two bloc world system.

The collapse in the late 1980s and early 1990s of the socialist bloc should not detract from the many important gains and progressive advances achieved. Nor does the

collapse in any way detract from the imperative of an ongoing socialist struggle. The collapse certainly did not mean that capitalism and its imperialist system had suddenly become “better” - on the contrary imperialism became even more arrogant, more unilateral in its actions and more genocidal in the implications of its ongoing accumulation path.

But, at the same time, it is imperative that progressive forces, not least communist parties, conduct an honest and self-critical review of the factors that led to the collapse of what we used to call “actually existing socialism”. Many of these factors were external to the socialist bloc, especially unremitting destabilisation and the crippling Cold War arms race that the imperialist powers imposed on the socialist bloc. But there were also many grievous systemic errors and subjective mistakes - dogmatism, intolerance of plurality, and above all the curtailment of a vibrant worker democracy

with the bureaucratisation of the party and state. Millions of communists were among the victims of Stalin’s purges.

As the SACP we are determined neither to throw away the communist achievements of the 20th century, nor to become denialist about the grave errors and crimes committed in the name of “communism”.

Through much of the 20th century communist parties sought to build international solidarity and coordinate strategies through the Communist International (formed in 1919) and later through somewhat less formal international conferences of Communist and Workers’ Parties, and similar multi-lateral and bi-lateral communist initiatives.

Many important achievements were registered, but there were also negative tendencies - the danger of subordinating the strategic and tactical imperatives of local struggles

to the conjunctural requirements of the “centre”; dogmatism and sectarianism in national parties often provoked by attempts to assert a particular factional perspective as the anointed “Comintern approved” line; or, contrariwise, clumsy interference from the centre in national dynamics. Later, many serious divisions opened up in the world communist movement, the most serious being the Sino-Soviet “split” in the 1960s.

Today, there is a wide diversity of communist, workers’ and left political formations in the world and the SACP works to forge fraternal links with them, to share perspectives, and to co-ordinate struggles around key themes, among them - for climate and environmental justice in the face of a destructive capitalist accumulation process; for world peace against imperialist militarism; in solidarity with the Cuban revolution against the US blockade; in solidarity with the Palestinian people against Zionist aggression in the Middle-East and for an end to Israel’s apartheid occupation; in solidarity with the people of West Sahara and for an end to Moroccan occupation of their territory.

In deepening international communist solidarity it is no longer possible to repeat old assumptions and patterns of behaviour. In some countries there is more than one significant communist party, in others, former communist parties have coalesced into broader formations, in still others, they have all but disappeared.

In southern African, radical national liberation movements formally adopted “Marxism-Leninism” in the 1970s. Without

exception, they have all moved away from this formal position - which is not to say that the influence of Marxism has entirely disappeared, or that the SACP should abandon ongoing efforts at engagement. Conversely, international communist and left formations from around the world are not only interested in meeting with the SACP in South Africa, they are all keen to engage with the ANC. This is something that the SACP greatly welcomes.

In short, in our internationalist work, the SACP neither claims a South African monopoly, nor do we engage externally as if there were necessarily “unique” counterparts elsewhere. We respect the sovereignty of countries and their governments, and we respect the integrity of all fraternal parties and formations.

The SACP has a very rich experience of working with (and within) both a broad national liberation movement and a progressive trade union movement. But in the course of our anti-apartheid struggle we have worked over many decades with a wide range of progressive formations - religious formations, social movements, community based organisations, NGOs, and, of course, one of the world’s most successful global solidarity struggles - the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

This experience is of great value to the challenges of re-building international solidarity in the present. There is a wide array of broadly progressive forces in the world many focused on the critical challenges of our epoch - environmental sustainability, peace, human rights, women’s rights, the Third World debt, the democratisation of

international multilateral institutions, etc. There are also many diverse localised struggles including the cultural and land struggles of oppressed nationalities. Wherever possible, the SACP should support these struggles and learn from them. We should seek, as best as possible, to make conscious and practical linkages between these many different fronts of struggle and the overall objective of rescuing human civilisation and the natural world from the depredations of capitalism.

### **The African Revolution**

The SACP has a particular interest in (and responsibility for) the continent in which we are located, and particularly our region, southern Africa. Africa continues to be the most brutally oppressed region of the world. Having been ravaged by colonialism and slavery in previous centuries, Africa continues to suffer the most oppressive immiseration within the present imperialist accumulation process. Africa, the poorest continent in the world, exports more capital by way of debt repayments and profit repatriation to the North than it receives in aid or investment! Millions of Africans have been rendered landless, and millions are without employment. In many African countries life-expectancy rates are amongst the lowest in the world, while infantile mortality is amongst the highest.

As we have already noted, global economic dynamism has been shifting quite dramatically over the recent period. This dynamism has been notable in China, India and a range of other Third World societies, including many in Africa. Between 2000 and 2010, six of the ten fastest growing economies in the world were in

Africa. For the coming five years, seven of the ten fastest are predicted to be in our continent. Taking Africa as a region, then it is the fastest growing region in the world after China and India.

But what is this African growth? How sustainable is it? Will it be growth that underpins structural transformations within our continent and between our continent and the global economy, laying the basis for sustainable social and economic development and political stability? Or is it growth that is still locked into the same enduring pattern that has lasted for some five centuries, in which Africa has been plundered for its labour power (the dismal centuries of the slave trade) and its natural resources (both mineral and agricultural)? This five-centuries pattern of extraction has fuelled human and social development and economic industrialization, but always somewhere else in the world, leaving Africa under-developed (which is not the same things as undeveloped).

When we speak of the current surge of “growth” in many African countries, it is always important to remember that it is very often off an extremely low base. It is also no secret that much of Africa’s current growth is fuelled by the commodities boom driven, in particular, by spectacular growth in China and India.

There are two main challenges with this reality. In the first place, it is not clear how long spectacular growth in Asia in particular will be sustained, and therefore how long the current levels of demand for Africa’s primary commodities will last. Secondly, and more

importantly, there is a very real danger that the commodity boom “growth” will simply reproduce the same patterns of historical underdevelopment - enclave-style infrastructure investments that are simply pit-to-port, or plantation-to-port, designed to expedite the unprocessed export of primary commodities to distant markets. There are also the related dangers of commodity bonanzas:

- the so-called “Dutch disease”, in which wealth generated by a natural resource bonanza appreciates a country’s currency and undermines the competitiveness of that country’s often infant tradeable (manufacturing) sector; and

- the “Resource Curse” - a related but wider set of more political and social problems, in which resource abundance can trigger corruption, distributional conflicts, growing inequalities, and all manner of rent-seeking behaviour.

Across Africa, and indeed in South Africa itself, we need to leverage commodity boom related investments to achieve our own developmental objectives - including job-creation and skills development; industrialisation anchored around our mineral and agricultural endowments, through upstream and downstream related production; and much greater attention to building infrastructure that services not just a distant global market, but also our local, national, regional and continental markets.

But this will also require collective political will and social mobilization. In this regard there is a considerable diversity within our continent. Over

the recent past, there have been some important democratic and social gains - but in many African societies, with hollowed out economies, and impoverished populations - development is non-existent, and politics is reduced all too often to the comprador parasitism of competing neo-colonial elites, which often provokes political instability and even violence.

The SACP believes that, fundamentally, the present strategic task within our own country - to advance, deepen and defend our national democratic revolution - is also the key strategic task throughout our region and continent. The African revolution of the 21st century has to be a national democratic revolution. This means consolidating democratic national sovereignty and nation building (including the infrastructure that is the objective underpinning for any national consolidation). It means deepening democracy so that the urban and rural working people of our continent have the conditions in which they are able to act as the key motive force of emancipation. And it means a revolutionary struggle to transform the skewed dependent-development patterns that constantly reproduce African underdevelopment.

Which is to say, the African revolution will have to be an anti-imperialist revolution directed against the predatory agenda of the global capitalist corporations buttressed by imperial state power and global multi-lateral institutions dominated by these powers. The anti-imperialist struggle includes the struggle to remove all foreign military bases in our continent, to expose and eliminate the deliberate

destabilisation of democratic states, the manipulation of debt and of “aid”, and the fostering of all manner of corrupt comprador and parasitic neo-colonial elites.

There is no single, “exportable”, “made-in-South Africa” formula for each and every African country’s ongoing national democratic struggle. Progressive forces elsewhere in Africa have their own rich experience of struggle, including the challenges of post-independence, from which we can learn. The key catalyser for progressive national democratic struggle in different African societies will vary according to local circumstances. It may be the state and ruling party, it may be opposition parties, it may be the trade union movement, or other social movement forces. Respecting each country’s sovereignty and the integrity of different formations, the SACP is committed to forging ties of friendship and solidarity with all progressive formations in our region and continent.

Since the 1994 democratic breakthrough, South Africa has played an important but uneven role in our continent. In particular, our government has been active in major peace and democratisation efforts in a number of African countries and regions. It has also been active in the struggle for African socio-economic reconstruction - although these efforts have often been compromised by being located outside of a deeper understanding of the role of imperialism on the continent.

Our 1994 democratic breakthrough and our government’s regional and continental initiatives have also opened up many new investment possibilities for South African private capital. While South African

investment in the continent can, potentially, play a progressive role, there is a grave danger that South African capital will simply constitute itself as a sub-imperial power, perpetuating the largely predatory role it played pre-1994. All these considerations underline the importance of SACP and progressive linkages to the continent, and the role of popular mobilisation rather than relying solely on inter-state-driven reconstruction efforts

Given the diversity of national realities, advancing the African revolution requires that, as South Africans, we ensure that we work closely as the ANC-led alliance, together with our democratic state, so that our work is cohesive and that we maximise the respective advantages of our different formations in the interests of advancing, deepening and defending the African national democratic revolution.

The key motive force of the struggle for the African revolution, and for a different socialist world remains the working class. No matter how many millions are retrenched, or casualised, or made redundant, millions upon millions of workers are still daily on assembly lines, at the furnaces, down the mines, in the mills and sweat-shops, at the tills and stacking shelves, in the power stations, or punching in data, driving trucks, buses, trains. Others work on farms, in hospital wards, in school class-rooms, or repairing roads.

We must not romanticise the working class. It, too, is often battered down by oppression, exhausted by the crime-infested communities within which it has to live, dazzled by the allure of the commodity market,

or mobilised demagogically by narrow sectarian forces.

Above all, the international working class is fragmented and stratified, perhaps more than ever before. Apart from the traditional industrial working class, there is a burgeoning “service sector” with, at the one end, highly skilled and globally mobile workers largely in the knowledge service sectors. Relatively small in number, this stratum of the international working class is crucial in that it occupies strategic positions in the cutting edge of the modern capitalist forces of production. While they are generally well paid, their aspirations and the global social knowledge networks in which they work increasingly underline the irrationality of the world of global corporate private profit taking and short-termism within which they are constrained.

On the other end of the service sector are millions of under-resourced and poorly paid public sector workers (teachers, health-care workers, municipal workers, security workers) and alongside them a mass of even more poorly paid, often casualised private sector service workers, many of them in small micro-businesses, or own-account workers.

The great revolutionary struggles of the 20th century - whether in Russia, China, Cuba, Vietnam or South Africa - were never “pure” working class struggles. In every case a proletarian cadre, schooled in Marxism-Leninism, played the critical vanguard role. But equally, in every case this cadre was able to forge close organic links with the great mass of peasant and (especially in the South African case) urban and peri-urban poor. The

relative (but never absolute) marginalisation from the global capitalist system of the Third World peasantry and urban poor is both a source of impoverishment AND a potential revolutionary asset.

In all of the major revolutionary struggles of the 20th century, the marginalised countryside of relatively independent peasant farmers and the marginalised communities of the urban poor constituted the core revolutionary bases of struggle. It was here that revolutionary forces operated, recruited, replenished, mobilised and drew strength from the cultural traditions of collectivity and struggle. And it was here, in the course of struggle, that organs of popular power emerged as people threw off the shackles of oppression and made themselves “ungovernable” by the old order.

Today, in the struggle against the barbarism of global imperialism, more than ever, the task is to build the unity of the international working class and the unity of workers with the great mass of the urban and rural poor.

The working class alone has the capacity to lead the battle to transform the world and itself in struggle. Despite everything, it is steeled in a thousand daily struggles for survival and against the unceasing attempts to roll back whatever rights it may have won in bitter struggle.

Above all, life teaches workers, like no other social force, that an injury to one is an injury to all; that solidarity is the only true weapon.

*(Concluded)*

*(Continued from Page 9)*

will be made to re-examine their premises and analytical frameworks.

In Britain, the New Labour under Tony Blair made democratic socialism catch-all for Britons;

*(Continued from Page 10)*

objective of the camp to them. He also apprised participants about the session wise schedule of the camp for all the three days. Bachchu Singh, a farmer leader from Agra, emotionally told the audience that 8 June happened to be the birth day of his great grand father Shaheed Shiv Singh. He was a soldier in the Azad Hind Fauj and sacrificed his life on Burma front in 1944 fighting the British. Participants offered homage to Shaheed Shiv Singh.

Following academic sessions were held in the camp: ‘Health Policy’, speaker: Dr. Abhijit Vaidya, chair: Dr. Nitin Gangade; ‘Education Policy’, speaker: Bhai Viadya, chair: Bhai Sheelbhadra; ‘Realities Faced by Dalits, Backwards and Adivasis’, speaker: Nutan Malavi, chair: Varsha Gupte; ‘Minority Policy’, speaker: Dr. Prem Singh, chair: Pannalal Surana; ‘Question of Gender Equality’, speaker: Yamini Chaudhary, chair: Yashodhra Potanvar; ‘Equality and Development in Agriculture’, speaker: Dr. Srinivas Khandewale, chair: Pannalal Surana; ‘Freedom of Speech’, speaker: Justice Rajinder Sachar, chair: Sandeep Pandey; ‘Alternative Model of Development’, speaker: Pannalal Surana, chair: Jayanti Panchal; topic: ‘Labour Policy’, speaker: Bhupen Chandra Roy, chair: S. Rajshekhran Nayar; ‘Language Policy’, speaker: Dr. Prem Singh, chair: Sachidanand

many socialists pilloried him for diluting socialism. But why and how did he win three historic consecutive elections need to be studied. Should socialism be dogmatic and theoretical or realistic and practical? Let the debate continue.

Singh. Dr. Sunilam, who visited the camp, expressed his views on ‘Challenges of Contemporary Politics’ in an open session.

Tarkeshwar Singh, Varsha Gupte and Dr. Ashwani Kumar conducted the proceedings on 8, 9 and 10 June respectively. Dr. Gajanan Kotewar, president, Sane Guruji Kathamala and Amrit Rai Yeukar visited the camp and assured to extend every possible help in support of the Socialist Party. Sandeep Sapkale of Mahatama Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishvidyalaya and senior journalist Basant Pandey also attended the camp along with some more people from Wardha city. Socialist literature in Hindi, Marathi, Kannada, Malyalam and English was displayed and sold for all three days. The camp concluded with the national anthem.

–Prem Singh

### **Janata Subscription**

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque  
on

Mumbai Bank  
in favour of

**JANATA TRUST**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai 400 007



## **GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.**

New Excelsior Building  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, A.K. Nayak Marg,  
Fort, Mumbai - 400 001

TEL: 91-22-2205 1231      FAX: 91-22-2205 1232

TELEGRAMS: "LOOMS" OR "DYNAMIC"

E-MAIL: [gdho@vsnl.com](mailto:gdho@vsnl.com)

**CIVIL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS  
MANUFACTURERS AND TRADERS**

**GANNONS** are specialists in:

Industrial Structures, Bridges (RCC and Prestressed Concrete), Thermal Power, Fertilizer, Chemical, Paper and Cement Plants, Public Health Engineering works, Piling Foundation & Foundation Engineering. **GANNONS** are also pioneers in Material Handling works, erection of Mechanical Equipments and Piping and supply of Textile Machinery and Light Engineering items.

**BRANCHES AT**

**\* AHMEDABAD \* COIMBATORE \* HYDERABAD \* KOLKATA  
\* MUMBAI \* NEW DELHI**

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*



# janata

**Vol. 67 No. 25**  
July 15, 2012

**Strange Antics  
on Mercy Petitions**  
Rajindar Sachar

**A more caring touch**  
Harsh Mander

**Who sheds tears for Tibet?**

**Some Political Anecdotes**  
Kuldip Nayar

**A Political Function**

**Ram Chandra Sharma**

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

## Blackmail politics

**S. Viswam**

The latest political developments in Karnataka, involving a change of leadership of the state government, represent the manifestation of a combination of blackmail politics and vote bank strategies. We have seen often enough in post-independent India the naked display of the greed for power. But nothing can surpass both the greed and struggle for power as have been witnessed in Karnataka during the last few months. For a party that loses no opportunity to criticize all other parties, the Congress and the UPA coalition in particular, the BJP's performance in Karnataka has been characterized by the blatant resort to low and partisan politics the kind of which neither the Congress nor other parties have ever been guilty of. When it formed a government of its own in the state, the BJP was congratulated for having established a power base in the south of the Vindhyas, an achievement secured through the ballot box. Four years later, and with the next round of assembly elections just nine months away, the BJP can be said to have jettisoned whatever goodwill it had amassed by the wayside. The party dispensation in Karnataka has acquired a new leader, incidentally the third in four years, in an exercise

in which casteist overtones overshadowed the power struggle. A Vokkaliga leader, who was in the good books of the then chief minister and Lingayat leader Yeddyurappa was catapulted to power. He has now been replaced by a Lingayat leader currently in the good books of Yeddyurappa. Since he himself cannot remain king, as corruption cases are pending against him, Yeddyurappa has been playing the kingmaker game. The central leadership of the BJP has been dancing to his tunes for the last four years. Even during the height of the party in power, Yeddyurappa carried out without any interference from the central leadership his own agenda of political patronage at the expense of governance. Once known as a well-administered state, Karnataka has slipped over the years in this sphere. The government under the BJP's control has been possibly the worst in the state's post-independent history, with the party, its members and its ministers never taking eyes off the fat chance. In the initial months, one never could make out who was really ruling the state, Yeddyurappa or the Reddy Brothers of Bellary who were calling all the shots. Governance never enjoyed the

priority it deserved when the administration passed into the BJP's hands after the 2008 assembly elections.

*Between the lines*

## Who sheds tears for Tibet?

**Kuldip Nayar**

Things were bad enough under Yeddyurappa but after his exit in 2011 following charges of corruption and nepotism listed in the Lokayukta report, governance touched the nadir. Some hopes of a change and tightening up were raised when Sadananda Gowda assumed office, mostly based on the theory that a new broom would sweep clean. But the new chief minister was never allowed to have a free hand thanks to the continued dissidence against him and his supporters by the Yeddyurappa loyalists. In spite of this handicap, Sadananda Gowda did try hard to give a clean administration. He had his limitations as was evident soon in the fact that the central leadership of the BJP had to succumb to the former Chief Minister's blackmail politics and show the door to Gowda and bring in Jagdish Shettar, as a concession to the Lingayat lobby. In the traditional Lingayat-Vokkaliga power struggle in Karnataka, the Lingayat lobby has won out for the present, but how much damage the wounded Vokkaliga pride will do to the BJP's fortunes in the coming May 2013 assembly polls remains to be seen. Equally, it is also right now a matter of pure conjecture as to how long the new leader Shettar will be allowed to stay in office. Nine months' interregnum is too short a period for another leadership change, but the track record of Yeddyurappa is such that no bets can be taken on that score. However, the state's electorate may have to ponder deeply on whether or not to entrust the BJP once again with the responsibility of power for another five years considering that its performance has

*(Continued on Page 7)*

One more monk burns himself at Lhasa. People have lost the count. Yet such fiery protests take place throughout Tibet, almost every other day. This is the way the monks are registering their defiance to Chinese communist culture. Yet Beijing is relentless in imposing its way of life on them, seen clinging to their Buddhist heritage fiercely. Self-immolation is considered the highest type of sacrifice in Buddhism, although their religious leader, the Dalai Lama, has advised them strongly against such a practice. He has said in a press interview that he understands their pain and feels guilty in criticizing them. But if he doesn't, he apprehends, there would be innumerable monks taking their lives.

Against this backdrop, the world conscience remains dead. A few who protest in the West are silenced by their governments forcibly. The almighty Yuan has suppressed the expression of truth beneath the mercantile considerations. The emerging China is too powerful and too rich to be boycotted for the intangible value of religious freedom and human rights. The preachy West has told the Dalai Lama explicitly not to visit them because it realizes which side of the bread is buttered.

The government in India is too scared to support the Tibetans' cause. Even when its request to reopen its mission was rudely rejected, New Delhi did not even voice its protest. The Dalai Lama has said many a time that India "can do more" for his people

but it prefers to keep its distance from them because of Beijing's sensitivity. Yet the Tibetans have not given up the fight.

Camp Hale at Colorado in the US was a long way from Tibet. What joined the two was the training of some 2000 Tibetan warriors in the guerilla warfare to fight the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China. The warriors failed to make any headway. Yet they have kept the powerful army on its pins all the time. Unfortunately, Beijing sees the hand of New Delhi behind Tibet's independence struggle. China is more convinced about this after Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna told it the other day that Tibet was like Kashmir, "our core problem."

The Tibetans, however, continue to harbour the grievance against India for having accepted China's suzerainty over Tibet after the British left India in 1947. Their complaint is that New Delhi never consulted them. The Dalai Lama, who took refuge in India in 1954 when he could not see the Communist shoes trampling upon the spiritual and traditional ways of his people, too believes that since New Delhi had no locus standi in Tibet, it had no right to accept China's suzerainty without consulting his people.

Suzerainty does not mean independence. It is government's political control over a dependent state. What New Delhi transferred to China is overlordship, not

sovereignty. Yet it is apparent that for the sake of India's good relations with China, the Dalai Lama who became 77 this week, has to face hard living conditions. Along with his people, he has been sent to stay rooted at Dharamshala, a small hill station in Himachal Pradesh.

And the Tibetans have been warned many a time against having any contact with the outside world without New Delhi's prior permission. Even local people have been told not to interact with them. The Dalai Lama too has restrictions on his movement and even pronouncements. Even otherwise, he speaks rarely. In an interview, he said, "meaningful autonomy is the only realistic solution." He made the same offer some time ago, but Beijing rejected it. This time too he doesn't expect China to change.

The Dalai Lama has noted that even during the 1962 war of India against China, Jawaharlal Nehru did not utter a word about Tibet. Nor did he draw the world's attention to the ethnic cleansing going on in Tibet at that time. On certain occasions, the Dalai Lama has felt "suffocated" and has raised protest over New Delhi's attitude. No successor to Nehru, including Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, has been any different even when Beijing is hauling thousands of Chinese to Tibet to settle them there so as to change the ethnic complexion of Tibet.

A lonely Dalai Lama goes on pointing out that Beijing is sedulously destroying the centuries old culture of Buddhists in Tibet. On the other hand, the world has got attuned to the sufferings of

## Strange Antics on Mercy Petitions vis-a-vis Death Penalty

**Rajindar Sachar**

President Patil just before her retirement has been the subject of strong criticism allegedly for accepting over 35 mercy petitions and commuting death sentence to life imprisonment of those accused and convicted of rape and murder of children – an action which causes justifiably disbelief and alarm. She is even said to have commuted the sentence of a person who died five years ago, (showing a kind of sloth in disposing of such delicate matters).

The President's office being naturally piqued at getting the blame and finding an unexplained and unfair silence from Central Home Minister P. Chidambaram refusing to clarify that it was he who had recommended the pardon has had to come out with a press statement that all commutations are "not playing to the gallery" by the President but rather she has acted on the aid and advice of Home Minister. The President is on firm footing – it has been held by the Supreme Court that pardon under Article 72 of the Constitution being an Executive action by the President is to be exercised on the advice of Central government i.e. Home Minister, Government of India. Hence it is incumbent on Shri Chidambaram to explain to the public as to what were the special considerations which led him to recommend pardon to these 35 accused and held guilty of most heinous crimes. This is an instance where explanation from the Home Ministry is urgently required if faith in even and serious dealing with such sensitive matters is to be accepted

by the public—more so when President Patil is retiring in the next three weeks. Shri Chidambaram owes to President Patil to remove the unfair cloud, the blame for which if any has to be taken by him, and not by her, who only did the executive act of following Home Minister's advise, which she was bound to accept under the Constitution. The reasons by Shri Chidambaram need to be placed in public domain, so that electorate can profitably be amazed how such serious matters of life and death is dealt with in the home Ministry.

It also needs explaining that while Chidambaram has had all the time for consideration and to give such unlikely pardons but, he has not found time to even consider and deal with cases of Afzal Guru (J&K. Government. has pleaded mercy for him). The same with the killers of Rajiv Gandhi (Tamil Nadu Assembly, and even Sonia Gandhi, have recommended pardon for some killers) and the case of Rajoona where Punjab Government. has pleaded for him)

This is all the more urgent because previous Presidents had specifically formulated certain guidelines. Thus President APJ Abdul Kalam who had 25 mercy petitions pending before him only dealt with two, rejecting one and pardoning the other. He took keen interest in laying down specific criteria for consideration of the petitions. He made detailed queries

*(Continued on Page 4)*

from the Home Ministry about the poverty of the accused and whether the accused had proper legal help for his defence and made queries about other petitions and remanded them to the Home Minister for further clarification.

President K.R. Narayanan, also chose a similar role by disposing one only out of 10 petitions pending before him. Of course we had the opposite case of President S. D. Sharma who rejected all 14 mercy petitions filed before him. These illustrations show that even in disposing of mercy petitions, President though objective is yet sub-consciously influenced by major inarticulate premise of their personal views on the question of the death penalty. Thus a certain kind of arbitrariness at granting pardons is bound to happen. Let me clarify – for people like me who advocate the abolition of death penalty, even a messy policy of pardons is to be welcomed, because at least by this process the horror of death penalty is somewhat lessened, because I fully accept stand of Dr. Ambedkar, who said, “I think that the proper thing for this country to do is to abolish the death sentence altogether” and that of Jayaprakash Narayan, Socialist leader who said, “Death sentence is no remedy for such crimes”.

Ironically, after the rarest of rare doctrine of death penalty was propounded in 1980 by the Supreme Court, it confirmed death penalty in 40 per cent of cases in the period 1980-90 whereas it was 37.7 per cent in 1970-80. For the High Courts the figures confirming death sentence rose from 59 per cent in 1970-80 to 65 per cent during 1980-90. The vociferous opposition to abolition of death penalty springs

from the myth that it can lead to increase of murders. Facts show otherwise. Thus, in 1945-50 the State of Travancore, which had no death penalty, had 962 murders whereas during 1950-55, when death sentence was introduced, there were 967 murders.

A survey conducted by the United Nations in 1988 concluded that research has failed to provide any evidence that executions have a greater deterrent effect than life imprisonment.

A survey released in September 2000 by The New York Times found that during the last 20 years the homicide rate in the states with death penalty has been 48 per cent to 101 per cent higher than in the states without death penalty.

The death penalty has been abolished since 1965 in U.K. The membership of European Union is dependent on having no death penalty. This has been done obviously in the confidence that murders do not get automatically reduced by retaining death penalty. Since 1973, 123 prisoners have been released in the USA after evidence emerged of their innocence of the crimes for which they were sentenced to death.

So far 139 countries, from all regions of the world, have abolished the death penalty and 150 have put a moratorium on death penalty. Mahatma Gandhi openly proclaimed “I cannot in all conscience agree to anyone being sent to the gallows, God alone can take life because he alone gives it”. Must this land of Buddha and Gandhi continue to present such a negative face against human rights by retaining death penalty?

*(Continued from Page 3)*

Tibetans and does not even say anything about the daylight murder of the old culture and heritage. The purpose of Beijing is to squeeze out even the last bit of religious practices and rites which the Tibetans still defiantly follow.

Washington may be willing to appeal to the world conscience to help save the Tibetan culture. But how far it is willing to jeopardize the trade and economic ties with China is the question. After all, President Barrack Obama kept the Dalai Lama waiting to placate Beijing. Even when he met him, Obama looked like going over an exercise. Strong Chinese economy gives more comfort to the US citizens than a few drops of tears that the irking conscience of some may shed.

When Beijing lays its claim on Arunachal Pradesh and when the visa for people of Jammu and Kashmir is given on a separate paper, although stapled to the passport, New Delhi gives in more than it imagines. It should introspect whether it was correct in accepting China's suzerainty over Tibet when Beijing is not prepared to take into account the sensitivities of either Tibet or India.

Tibet today is like an occupied territory, without the people there having any say in governance. Lhasa is directly under Beijing's control. Unfortunately, the Dalai Lama is thinking of retiring when he is needed the most. He should, in fact, go around the world and awaken its conscience to garner support against China's brutalities. Beijing must let the Tibetans live the way they want to because that alone gives them their entity.

## Ram Chandra Sharma

Ram Chandra Sharma, a socialist with unfeigned integrity, breathed his last on June 5, 2912, at his native place Laudih in Gazipur district, UP. When this sad news reached Howrah, which was the centre of his activities, his Bengal comrades, particularly of Howrah, felt that they have lost their close kin. Sharmaji, who had stepped into 97<sup>th</sup> year, passed away at a ripe old age. But friends had expectation that he would live to be a centurion. Sharmaji was the senior-most living Socialist of Bengal, nay of India.

Ram Chandra Sharma, who was widely known as Sharmaji all over Bengal, was born in a poor peasant family of Gaziabad. His father died when he was just seventeen days old. He completed his primary education from a school, which was five miles away from his home. Since there was no high school nearby, he came to Asansol in Bengal with one of his uncles, a colliery worker. In spite of pecuniary hardship, his result in Matriculation was excellent. Unfortunately, however, he could not get himself admitted in an Allahabad college and returned to Bengal, this time at Howrah, and survived through private tutitions with an eye to higher education. In 1937, he met Dr. Lohia, who used to live in Calcutta then. Dr. Lohia inspired him by saying not to consider carrier as all important, since "we are a slave nation". Ram Chadra also speeches of Shibnath Banerjee and began to place country before the self. He became a whole-timer of Congress Socialist Party/ Indian National Congress.

Shibnath Banerjee was an outstanding leader at that time. He

was the centre of all activities of the CSP, Congress and trade unions that were conducted from the premises at Jelkelghat (later Nityadham Mukherjee Road). Sharmaji also began to camp at this office. During this phase, he came into contact with Baswan Singh, Ramanand Mishra and a few other leaders from other states. Since Shibnathbabu was a pioneer trade union leader, many trade union leaders who later became famous in AITUC, INTUC, CITU, like H. M. Shad got then early training from him. However, Ram Chandra Sharma and his intimate friend Haripada Majundar remained all through Shibnath Bannerjee's right and left hands.

Then came the August Movement in 1942. Most of the senior and important leaders of the Congress, including those of CSP, FB and RSP were put in gaol. JP was already in jail but came out through daring escape from Hazaribagh jail along with Suraj Narayan Singh, Ramananda Mishra and others and inspired the youth of the country turning the August Movement into a revolution. JP and Lohia could evade arrest for a pretty long period and Achyut Patwardhan and Aruna Asaf Ali remained throughout untraceable to the police. Among those who could evade arrest for a longer period in Bengal were Atul Krishna Bose, the first secretary of Bengal CSP and the likes of Sharmaji. Atulbabu was the planner and the main organizer of operations was Sharmaji. He used to arrange distribution of JP's letters and Azad dastana. Sharmaji met JP, Lohia, Achyut and Aruna a number of times during this period. Meanwhile, through Lohia's help an underground mobile radio broad

casting was also started from Calcutta. It is interesting to note that during the 1943 famine in Bengal, Sharmaji, an underground Auguster, with the help of two underground leaders, Achyut and Aruna organized a huge hunger march to protest against the British-designed famine. Ultimately, Sharmaji was also was arrested. However, he could fulfill his dormant ambition to pass intermediate examination with credit from the jail.

Sharmaji was a well known trade unionist. He also built up trade unions among the unorganized sector workers. Particular mention should be made of Railway Porters' Union. It can be said that his task was made a bit easier, since most of the workers were from Bihar and UP. As a Socialist leader, like his mentor Shibnath Banerjee, he had welcome access to most of the rural houses of workers' families. Apart from politics, he often acted as a guardian to them and sometimes as an arbitrator of their family problems.

Sharmaji's role during the Emergency was also noteworthy. He was a pioneer in organizing a protest movement against the arbitrary declaration of Emergency. Of course, he was not spared by the police.

After his release in 1976, he founded PUCL in West Bengal and organized a meeting in a hall in South Calcutta. V. M. Tarkunde also came to attend the meeting. But at the outset, Jyoti Basu said that the speakers should not say anything against the Emergency for permission was given only for academic discussion on the proposed

amendments to the Constitution. Obviously, Tarkunde and the likes of Sharmaji found themselves square pegs in round hole!

We should mention that Sharmaji took initiative to convert the premises at 4, Nityanand Mekherjee Road, into a national heritage. All the Congress activities from the days of Saratchand Chaterjee, renowned writer and the President, Howrah D. C. C. and then CSDP, SP, Navanirman, Jana Sangharsha Samiti and of course trade union activities were conducted from the premises. Through the ceaseless efforts of Sharmaji's devoted younger colleagues, it has been declared a national heritage.

The Socialists in India had to face many splits and mergers. Most of the leaders and workers, willingly and unwillingly, had to take shelter under one banner or the other. Sharmaji was also not an exception. But the beauty of his character was such that he had no bickering with anyone and he could maintain cordial relationship with every group.

Because of his age and ill-health he had been staying mostly at his native place for the past few years. But he could not avoid his occasional visits to Howrah and mutual friends.

Today, Socialists in India are not considered as viable force, except some essentially power-oriented groups in certain pockets. Attempts have been made to rejuvenate the movement. In this situation what we need most is the likes of Sharmaji who would practice what he professed.

A well attended meeting was held at Howrah on June 20, to condole the death of Ram Chandra Sharma.

The meeting was presided over by Sharmaji's long time Socialist colleague Brijnath Rai and addressed by many of his family members and

admirers. Among the speakers, were Sudhanshu Ganguli, B. C. Pal Roy, Nirmal Ghosal and Sandip Das.

—Sandip Das, Nirmal Ghosal

---

## Kill and probe

If Raman Singh and Vijaya Kumar don't know how to control Maoism without butchering innocent tribals, they have no business to stay.

The shooting down of 19 tribals in Bijapur last month is regrettable. But more shocking are the utterances of the perpetrators of the mayhem. CM Raman Singh said, "Naxals had used tribals as shield and hence the ultras are responsible for civilian deaths 'if any'". Mr CM, the ultras have not taken a solemn oath to protect the life and property of the people; but you have. CRPF chief Vijaya Kumar made himself a joke by this atrocious statement: 'We cannot identify a person before killing him'. What the tribals are supposed to do? You want them to vanish from their homes if they come to know ultras and security forces are going to land in their hamlets! Kumar said it was a genuine encounter because six of his men were injured. Two of his injured men were discharged after bandaging for bruises. Two other sepoy's sprained their legs while jumping. So much for the genuineness of the encounter.

Kumar also ridiculed those who questioned the killings this way: 'Probably these people will be happy if security persons were killed'. Whether the civil activists and pressmen are happy at the casualties suffered by police is a debatable issue. But if Kumar has the guts and inclination to talk to the affected tribal population, he will realise how much

the security forces are hated. While Dr B D Sharma was travelling in the Sukma jungles along with the released Collector, he asked the adivasis what did they achieve by supporting the ultras for the past several years. Pat came the reply: 'We are free from the patvari-thanedar raj'. Mr Kumar, are you listening?

Union Home Minister Chidambaram said extremely sorry "if" women and children were killed. His own party men said six children under 14 were killed. How many more Ifs and Buts, Mr PC? Chhattisgarh is fast becoming a Sri Lanka. The ruthless tyrants of the island nation (from President Mahinda Rajapaksa, Defense Secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa to Commander of the Sri Lankan Army Sarath Fonseka) justified the mass killing of innocent Tamils three years ago stating that Tamils were used as shield by LTTE terrorists. PC, Raman Singh, Vijaya Kumar and Vishwa Ranjan just imitate the Lankan butchers.

An expert group constituted by the Planning Commission of India to study the extremism in Central India makes the following concluding observation: "There will be peace, harmony and social progress only if there is equity, justice and dignity for everyone." The state's deliberate attempt to hand over vast tracts of tribal land to mining companies against the wishes of innocent local people is no substitute for equity, justice and dignity for everyone.

The Apex Court in its judgment exactly one year ago on the dreaded SPO (Salwa Judum) case observed that any steps taken by the State, within the paradigm of treating such volatile circumstances as simple law and order problems, to perpetrate large scale violence against the local populace, would only breed more insurgency, and ever more violent protests. The judges further observed, “We, in this Court, are not unaware of the gravity that extremist activities pose to the citizens and to the State. However, our Constitution also warns us that ends do not justify all means and that an essential and integral part of the ends to which the collective power of the people may be used to achieve has to necessarily keep the means of exercise of State power within check and constitutional bounds”.

But the state governments in the Naxal affected states in connivance with the union government continue to treat the crisis as a simple law & order matter and adopt all unconstitutional means to reach their dubious end of extracting minerals, come what may.

—Sankara Narayanan

*(Continued from Page 2)*

nothing to commend itself for. The Congress did not distinguish itself with a sterling performance either when it was in power, but its record is miles better than that of the BJP. In the long run, it would seem that it is the people who suffer the most whichever party, the Congress or the BJP or the Janata Dal(Secular) is in power, or whether or not the Vokkaligas or the Lingayats are in control. Surely, the gentle people of Karnataka deserve better at the hands of its politicians?

## A more caring touch

**Harsh Mander**

There is a widespread perception of policy paralysis in the corridors of power. The two remaining years of the UPA’s term is still not too short to reverse the current drift, but time is rapidly running out. The damaged economy needs urgent fixing as does restoring the credibility of an executive racked by scandals and the absence of a sense of direction. The people of the country long for clean, decisive governance. But what is less widely recognised is that they also seek a leadership which is caring.

When the UPA was emphatically returned to power in 2009, confounding most predictions, what decisively weighed with the people was not the pace of ‘economic reforms’ or even economic growth, nor the successful negotiation of the nuclear deal. I believe that it was programmes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) which despite implementation flaws, still offered India’s poorest people a dignified alternative to starvation, debt, bondage and distress migration, which most influenced the millions left out of India’s growth story, when they pressed the ballot button.

It is to the essentials of just and caring governance that the UPA must return if it has any claim to a third term of power. To begin with, it must end the disastrous symbolism of a government willing to let food rot in its warehouses, or export it at subsidised rates, but not distribute it to masses who toil but sleep hungry and malnourished. The first and

highest priority of this government must be the early passage of the Food Security Bill.

All or most households should be covered by subsidised food. The law would also guarantee feeding and nutrition programmes for small children, school meals, universal maternity entitlements, destitute feeding and soup kitchens for subsidised cooked meals to migrants and homeless persons. Any further procrastination will render impossible the rolling out of the complex implementation architecture of this ambitious programme of social protection, in the two years left for this government.

Equally important is to address the distress of farmers, who continue to languish in poverty and despair, manifested in unabated farmers’ suicides. The revival of agriculture would require basic income support and insurance especially for the small and middle farmers; a massive expansion of farm credit; a guarantee of purchase of all farmers’ produce at remunerative minimum support prices; and a major expansion of watershed development programmes. It is also imperative to revive the agenda of land reforms for the landless poor and tenants.

Decisive action is needed on corruption to build early consensus with the political opposition and diverse citizen opinion for the early passage of a law to establish a strong, independent and accountable

*(Continued on Page 9)*

## A Political Function

There was an impressive function at Pune to felicitate Pannalal Surana who turned 81. It was impressive, not merely because there were people from all over India or there was fulsome praise showered on him, but also because it generated a political heat. Egged by his conscience, as he said, Shushilkumar Shinde, the central minister for Energy, who made it a point to be there, explained, perhaps, with some guilt, why his party had turned away from the socialism which once he shared with Pannalal. He made two points. One was the old argument that poverty cannot be distributed. This is what Nehru used to retort when taunted by socialists and the other was the total negation of all that the Congress stood for in the early years, in 90's. It is obvious that Pannalal, in reply, made a political speech. Aruna Roy too raised political issues.

It is time some socialists challenge both these formulations. It is true poverty cannot be distributed. But what you produce has an impact on what you distribute. While the state was chosen as the instrument of production, what was produced could have been different. There were Gandhians who had a different view and if they had prevailed, the situation could have been different. Even Brahmanand and Vakil had advocated a different plan for development. While the state under Nehru leadership concentrated on producing capital goods, it left it to the then existing small industrial class to produce consumption goods and that class, for reasons that have been documented often enough, became powerful, and in 1990s, though the process had started with Indira

Gandhi, it is this class which became the exclusive producer with state blessings and, given the faith in profit maximization, the distributing what was produced, became impossible. So the net result was that though we produced and created wealth, there was little to distribute. And in the name of socialism we created a capitalist society. There are some people who believe that if we had used common people to produce, the inequality which is so glaring would not have developed.

Then there was the second point which the minister made out. He referred to the foreign exchange crisis in early 'nineties and the mortgaging of the family silver and justified what was done in response by the Congress party led government. Though there were voices opposed to GLP, no one seriously questioned the complete succumbing of our government to the WB, IMF pressure. We need not have done what we did and could have brazened out the crisis. We could have announced that we will reduce the need for foreign exchange, we could have bought time the way Chandrashekharji did and borrowed against our gold and used it to our benefit. We could have announced that we will freeze the use of petroleum products and appealed to people to reduce the use of their private vehicles. We could have decided to reduce our expenditure on defense if it needed foreign exchange. If we had appealed to the citizens, they would have given gold, reduced their consumption of foreign goods, cut down foreign travel and that could have seen us through the crisis. India always rises to the occasion when

there is a crisis and it would have done in this case too. And we could have continued with our policy of import substitution. So many alternate possible responses were available, but the country which led the colonial world to freedom, proved out to be too soft. It was not realized by our leaders or even economists, that if they had announced that they will not allow petrol consumption to grow at the rate at which it was growing, the international prices of crude would have come down.

We need not have privatized. There was resistance then and there is resistance even now. We could have made the public sector units more efficient and profitable. Yes, we could have reduced some unnecessary state controls.

The tragedy is that we did not do any of this. We did not even think of doing it. Perhaps, this happened because we forgot all too soon what we had said, promised during the freedom struggle and had started chasing a new course of action for our development which was nothing else but copying our imperial masters. Looked at that way, this was second betrayal.

Coming back to Pannalal, he obviously made a forthright speech to explain his ideological position, though, perhaps, he may not have done it if the minister had not egged him to do it. Bhai Vaidya pointed out dramatically that Pannalal was always on the move. It seems he has decided not to be at one place for more than one day, he added. No wonder, in the backdrop, Pannalal was shown moving on. And the minister brought out a rare quality in



him. Once, when there was a literary event in Barsi, and he was the organizer, Shri Shinde was made the chairman of the Reception Committee. He had agreed with some hesitation and a budget was drawn up of a modest figure of Rs. 85,000/-. To his surprise, Pannalal

came back to him after the event to say that Rs. 25,000/-, less were spent. This brought out Pannalal, defining quality, his frugality with public money. In fact, some chide him off and on because he sends hand written post cards from wherever he is to communicate. Did he learn this from

Gandhiji? He alone can answer. And one more point. What is said in jest about socialists, Aruna Roy converted it into a compliment. Socialists, she said, do full time work supported by their wives. Pannalal certainly fitted into it.

—A correspondent

*(Continued from Page 7)*

lokpal, along with a comprehensive basket of anti-corruption measures. These include long-delayed electoral, administrative and judicial reforms and measures for effective grievance redressal at the levels of the village and city settlement.

There is also need for extensive backroom lobbying with the UPA, the Left and the BJP, to mobilise sufficient support for early passage of the Women's Reservation Bill, and a comprehensive law against sexual violence. For Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, the government must establish ironclad systems to ensure sufficient flow of budgetary resources to enable them to bridge the development gaps. A strengthened SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act would better protect them from continued violence. A special programme would be in order to guarantee basic services of clean water, sanitation, child-care centres and roads to all SC and ST settlements.

In addition, tribal people desperately require effective amendments and implementation of the Forest Rights Act and Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, which restores their control over their lands, natural resources and governance systems. They would also benefit from the early passage and implementation of laws which give a much fairer deal to persons

affected and displaced by land-acquisition and mining.

The UPA promised in 2004 a law to prevent communal violence, but it has not been able to muster the political nerve to introduce a strong bill which would make public officials accountable for failures to protect people in communal riots. Other measures for religious minorities should include universal scholarships for all children from religious minorities excluding wealthy groups; a special programme of residential schools, including for girls, in all minority blocks; and guarantee of basic services in all minority settlements.

In India's troubled conflict areas, a healing touch would require a new commitment to human rights, including by ending and punishing encounter killings and torture, and abrogating laws like the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, Public Safety Act, Disturbed Areas Act and other preventive detention laws. This would spur a new mood of reconciliation in these states.

There is need for substantial increases in investment in public health services (and not private health insurance); and a programme for free or affordable generic medicines, building on the successful experiment in Rajasthan. The early passage of an improved Social

Security Bill for Unorganised Workers, a universal old age pension; and unconditional income transfers to families of persons with disabilities, will reach out to other disadvantaged groups. For the millions who migrate to cities, programmes and laws which guarantee land tenure rights and basic services to slum residents and to street vendors, would enable them to escape the violence, State oppression and squalor that characterise the lives of the urban poor.

What ordinary people hope from their governments is not just that they will control prices, promote economic growth and offer clean governance. They expect support in their daily struggles to build a life of dignity, justice and ultimately hope. It is this expectation that governments, once elected, most easily forget.

### **Janata Subscription**

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque  
on

Mumbai Bank  
in favour of

**JANATA TRUST**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai 400 007

## Some Political Anecdotes

*Kuldip Nayar, 89, has seen Gandhi at prayer in Birla Mandir, quizzed Nehru, watched Jinnah closely, worked with Shastri and Govind Ballabh Pant. Journalist, editor, author, he has seen history unfold, watched in action the people whom most of the present generation know only as institutions or physical landmarks, say Kamraj University or the Netaji Subhash Airport. "My story is really the story of modern India. Of the freedom struggle, of Partition, of Nehru's India, of the Bangladesh war, of Emergency and more recently of liberalisation and India as a world power," he says. Here are vignettes from his overarching autobiography, a sort of a fly-on-the-wall account of how our country came to be, from Mountbatten to Manmohan.*

*Excerpts from **Beyond the Lines** by Kuldip Nayar, Roli Books, pages:420; Rs. 595 :*

—*Qurban Ali*

### Mohammed Ali Jinnah

‘What have I done?’

The catholicity of Hinduism and the compassion of Islam: if such sentiments survived, they made no difference. Villages after villages had been annihilated, the Muslim habitations destroying and burning the Hindu-Sikh ones, and Hindus and Sikhs in turn retaliating or taking the initiative in wiping out the Muslims....

Riots, in fact, had erupted in Punjab in March 1947 itself. Rawalpindi and Jhelum were the most affected, where many Hindu and Sikh women jumped into wells to save themselves from rape and kidnapping. Lahore became a battleground between Hindus and Sikhs on the one side joining hands, and Muslims on the other. This was the city where Master Tara Singh, the Sikh leader, had unsheathed a sword in front of the state assembly building and raised the slogan of Khalistan....

The men in khaki—the army, the police, and other services—were meant to bring the riots under control but they too were infected by the communal virus. To expect them to be impartial and punish the guilty from their own community was to

hope for the impossible. They had lost all sense of right and wrong. These custodians of the people knew they would go scot-free in their “own country” after the transfer. I think it was a blunder to give the choice to civil servants, the police, and the armed forces to opt for India if they were non-Muslims and Pakistan if they were Muslims. A mixed administration would have behaved differently and infused the minorities with confidence. Jinnah would not believe the reports that thousands of people were migrating from both sides of the border. Both the Congress and the Muslim League had rejected the proposal for an exchange of population and had insisted on Muslims and non-Muslims staying back in their homes. Jinnah remained sullen for a few days and then accused India of seeking to undermine Pakistan. Even so, he was deeply concerned not only about the migration of people but also recurrent news that several lakhs of people had been butchered on either side of the border.

One day when Jinnah was in Lahore, Iftikhar-ud-din, Pakistan’s rehabilitation minister and Mazhar Ali Khan, editor of Pakistan Times, flew him in a Dakota over divided Punjab. When he saw streams of people pouring into Pakistan or fleeing it, he

struck his hand on the forehead and said despairingly: “What have I done?” Both Iftikhar and Mazhar vowed not to repeat the remark. Mazhar took his wife Tahira into confidence and told her what Jinnah had said, and she communicated Jinnah’s comment to me long after her husband’s death.

### Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

‘Kashmir can go to Pakistan’

My impression is that had Pakistan been patient it would have got Kashmir automatically. India could not have conquered it, nor could a Hindu maharaja have ignored the composition of the population, which was predominantly Muslim. Instead, an impatient Pakistan sent tribesmen along with regular troops to Kashmir within days of independence.

While it’s true that Nehru was keen on Kashmir’s accession to India, Patel was opposed to it. Sheikh Abdullah told me in an interview later (February 21, 1971) that Patel argued with him that as Kashmir was a Muslim-majority area it should go to Pakistan. Even when New Delhi received the maharaja’s request to accede to India, Patel said: “We should not get mixed up

with Kashmir. We already have too much on our plate.”

Nehru’s anxiety (on this issue) was clear from his letter to Patel (September 27, 1947), three days before Kashmir’s accession to India: “Things must be done in a way so as to bring about the accession of Kashmir to the Indian union as rapidly as possible with the cooperation of Sheikh Abdullah.” Nehru wanted Indian forces to fight against the Pakistan tribesmen and others advancing in the Valley. It was Mountbatten who asked Nehru to get the instrument of accession signed first before sending troops.

From the very outset, the maharaja’s preference was for independence. Failing that, he wanted a merger with India. His fear in relation to the second alternative was that with Nehru at the helm of affairs, he would be reduced to a mere figurehead, and Sheikh Abdullah would be the one with real power. When Patel, otherwise close to the maharaja, suggested that he should “make a substantial gesture to win Sheikh Abdullah’s support”, the maharaja knew his fate was sealed.

Mountbatten later told me that Patel had agreed to let Kashmir go to Pakistan if the state so wished. “By sending its irregular troops into the state, Pakistan spoiled the whole thing,” added Mountbatten. He was, however, worried that Nehru’s Kashmiri ancestry would lead him to unwise decisions. (Nehru is reported to have confessed to a British officer: “In the same way as Calais was written on Mary’s heart, Kashmir is written on mine.”)

However, Pakistan could not wait. Kashmir had always been a part of

the concept of Pakistan and the letter ‘K’ in its name stood for Kashmir. As the Pakistan minister for Kashmir affairs said in 1951, and this has been repeated by many ministers to this day, “Kashmir is an article of faith with Pakistan and not merely a piece of land or a source of rivers.”

### Lal Bahadur Shastri

‘Nehru has Indira in mind’

As the days went by, instances (of humiliation) piled up. In fact, Shastri had to wait even to get an appointment with Nehru and at one point thought of resigning from the ministry. Once he told me that he would return to Allahabad. “There is nothing for me here now,” he said. He then added woefully: “If I continue to stay in Delhi, I am bound to come into a clash with Panditji. I would rather retire from politics than join issue with him.”

Many people told him that Nehru’s behaviour was influenced by Indira Gandhi’s “hostility” towards him. Initially Shastri would never encourage such doubts, but later he would go out of the way to find out if that was true. In due course, he became convinced that he was not uppermost in Nehru’s mind as his successor. Indira Gandhi was more open about ignoring him and would herself take important files to Nehru. I ventured to ask Shastri one day: “Who do you think Nehru has in mind as his successor?” “Unke dil mein to unki suputri hai (He has his daughter in his heart),” said Shastri, “but it won’t be easy,” he added. “People think you are such a staunch devotee of Nehru that you yourself will propose Indira Gandhi’s name after his death,” I said. “I am not that much of a sadhu as you imagine me to be. Who would not like to be

India’s prime minister,” was Shastri’s reply.

\*\*\*

Was he poisoned?

That night I had a premonition that Shastri was dying. I dreamt about him dying. I got up abruptly to a knock on my door. A lady in the corridor told me: “Your prime minister is dying.” I hurriedly dressed and drove with an Indian official to Shastri’s dacha which was some distance away. I saw (Soviet premier Alexei) Kosygin standing in the verandah. He raised his hands to indicate that Shastri was no more. Behind the verandah was the dining room where a team of doctors was sitting at an oblong table, cross-examining Dr R.N. Chugh who had accompanied Shastri.

Next to it was Shastri’s room. It was extraordinarily large. On the huge bed, his body looked like a dot on a drawing board. His slippers were neatly placed on the carpeted floor. He had not used them. In a corner of the room, however, on a dressing table, there was an overturned thermos flask. It appeared that Shastri had struggled to open it. There was no buzzer in his room, the point on which the government lied when attacked in Parliament on its failure to save Shastri’s life.

Our official photographer and I spread the national flag, which had been neatly folded up near the dressing table, over the body, and placed some flowers to pay homage to him. I then went to meet Shastri’s assistants. It was a few yards away and one had to walk through an open verandah to reach it. Shastri’s personal secretary, Jagan Nath Sahai, told me that Shastri had

knocked on their door at around midnight and wanted water. Two stenographers and Jagan Nath helped him walk back to his room. This was fatal, Dr Chugh said.

After sending the flash on Shastri's death, I went back to his assistants' room to learn the details about his death. Bits and pieces of information gathered together indicated that Shastri, after attending the farewell reception, reached his dacha around 10 pm. Shastri told (his personal servant) Ram Nath to bring him his food which came from Ambassador (T.N.) Kaul's house, prepared by his cook, Jan Mohammed. He ate very little: a dish of spinach and potatoes and a curry.

Ram Nath gave Shastri milk, which he used to drink before retiring at night. The prime minister once again began pacing up and down and later asked for water, which Ram Nath gave from the thermos flask on the dressing table. (He told me that he had closed the flask.) It was a little before midnight when Shastri told Ram Nath to retire to his room and get some sleep because he had to get up early to leave for Kabul. Ram Nath offered to sleep on the floor in Shastri's room but Shastri told him to go to his own room upstairs. The assistants were packing the luggage at 1.20 am (Tashkent time), Jagan Nath recalled, when they suddenly saw Shastri at the door. With great difficulty Shastri asked: "Where is doctor sahib?" It was in the sitting room that a racking cough convulsed Shastri, and his personal assistants helped him to bed. Jagan Nath gave him water and remarked: "Babuji, now you will be all right." Shastri only touched his chest and then became unconscious. (When Lalita Shastri was told by Jagan Nath in Delhi that he had given him water,

she said: "You are a very lucky person because you gave him his last cup of water.")

\*\*\*

Gen Ayub was genuinely grieved by Shastri's death. He came to Shastri's dacha at 4 am and said, looking towards me: "Here is a man of peace who gave his life for amity between India and Pakistan." Later, Ayub told the Pakistani journalists that Shastri was one person with whom he had hit it off well; "Pakistan and India might have solved their differences had he lived," he said. Aziz Ahmad, Pakistan's foreign secretary, rang up Bhutto to inform him about Shastri's death. Bhutto was half asleep and heard only the word "died", and apparently asked, "Which of the two bastards?"

When I returned from Tashkent, Lalita Shastri asked me why Shastri's body had turned blue. I replied: "I am told that when bodies are embalmed, they turn blue." She then inquired about "certain cuts" on Shastri's body. I did not know about those because I had not seen the body. Even so, her remark that no post-mortem had been conducted either at Tashkent or Delhi startled me. It was indeed unusual. Apparently, she and others in the family suspected foul play. A few days later, I heard that Lalita Shastri was angry with the two personal assistants who had accompanied Shastri because they had refused to sign a statement which alleged that Shastri did not die a natural death.

As days passed, the Shastri family became increasingly convinced that he had been poisoned. In 1970, on October 2 (Shastri's birthday), Lalita Shastri asked for a probe into her husband's death. The family seemed to be

upset that Jan Mohammed, T.N. Kaul's cook at the time, had cooked the food, not Ram Nath, his own personal servant. This was strange as the same Jan Mohammed had prepared food for Shastri when he visited Moscow in 1965.

Following newspaper reports, the old guard Congress party supported the demand for a probe into Shastri's death. I asked Morarji Desai towards the end of October 1970 whether he really believed that Shastri did not die a natural death. Desai said: "That is all politics. I am sure there was no foul play. He died of a heart attack. I have checked with the doctor and his secretary, C.P. Srivastava, who accompanied him to Tashkent."

### A.Q. Khan

'We have the bomb'

Mushahid Hussain, editor of Muslim, a daily from Islamabad, invited me to his wedding (in 1987). He was a close friend who had once met me in Delhi when he was a lecturer, to seek my advice on whether he should take up journalism. I found his writing promising and predicted that he would one day make a good editor if he took to journalism seriously. Mushahid was at the airport to receive me when I landed in Islamabad. He told me that he would give me a 'wedding gift', and then whispered in my ear that A.Q. Khan, the nuclear scientist, had agreed to meet me. I was flabbergasted. True, I had asked him many times to arrange a meeting with A.Q. Khan but had never imagined he could pull it off.

When we reached A.Q. Khan's house, the security guard spoke to Mushahid but did not even look

towards me. That convinced me that the interview was sanctioned by the government. Khan was waiting at the verandah to welcome me. As he was leading me to the drawing room, he said he had been following my writings and was a “great fan” of mine. “They treated me very badly at Bhopal,” said Khan. That’s where he graduated. He was referring to his migration from India to Pakistan a few years after Partition. I told him that I came from Sialkot and had faced more or less the same privations. “The cake is delicious,” I said. “My wife baked it for you,” he replied.

I had heard he was very full of himself, and he matched the description to perfection. I annoyed him when I mentioned in passing that he had been hauled up before a Dutch court in a case for having “stolen” information from one of their nuclear laboratories. He raised his voice to deny the charge, adding that the court had cleared him. The question of whether India had tried to penetrate the secrets of Pakistan’s nuclear plant pleased him. Laughingly, he said that New Delhi had sent spies for the purpose, among them an Indian army major, but they had all been arrested.

My entire interview was directed towards learning whether or not Pakistan had made a nuclear bomb. He skirted all such questions, brushing me aside whenever I tried to be specific. It appeared to me that he had been permitted to give me this interview but at the same time had been told not to say anything specific. I praised him for being an outstanding scientist and the only one in the subcontinent who had two PhDs, one in metallurgy and the other in physics. I asked him whether he had any foreigner assisting him.

He proudly said that his team comprised only Pakistanis.

I thought I would provoke him. Egoist as he was, he might fall for the bait. And he did. I concocted a story and told him that when I was coming to Pakistan, I ran into Dr Homi Sethna, the father of India’s nuclear bomb, who asked me why I was wasting my time because Pakistan had neither the men nor the material to make such a weapon. Khan was furious and began pounding his hand on the table: “Tell them we have it, we have it.” Mushahid was taken aback and looked distraught. I followed up Khan’s disclosure with the remark that it was easy to make such a claim but it needed to be corroborated. No test had so far been conducted to confirm that Pakistan possessed a nuclear bomb. He said that they had already tested the bomb in their laboratory. “Haven’t you heard of a prototype plane flying with the help of a simulator? We do not have to explode a nuclear bomb to ascertain its potency. Sensitive and advanced instruments in a laboratory can show the scale of the explosion. We are satisfied with the results.”

“Why haven’t you announced that you have a nuclear bomb,” I asked him point blank. “Is it necessary? America has threatened to cut off all its aid,” he replied. Khan said their bomb was larger than the one we had exploded in Rajasthan on May 18, 1974. “The US is aware that Pakistan has a nuclear bomb,” said Khan, “and what the CIA has been saying about our possessing a nuclear bomb is correct as are the speculations in the foreign media.”

Khan made no pretence that Pakistan’s nuclear programme was for peaceful purposes. “The word

‘peaceful’ associated with the nuclear programme is humbug. There is no ‘peaceful bomb’. Once you knew how to make reactors, how to produce the plutonium, all of which Pakistan has mastered, it became easy to produce a nuclear bomb.”

### **Jawaharlal Nehru- Edwina Mountbatten**

‘Theirs was spiritual love’

My interest in finding out about Lady Mountbatten’s influence on Nehru did not slacken with time. I picked up the thread when I was India’s high commissioner in London in 1990. I learnt that Air India flights would carry Nehru’s daily letter, which the high commission dutifully delivered to Lady Mountbatten and daily collected her reply and forwarded it to Nehru. Nehru took officials to task whenever her letter was delayed.

During my stint in the UK, I met her grandson, Lord Romsey, who headed the Nehru Trust, which Mountbatten had constituted in London to arrange an annual lecture in Nehru’s memory. As high commissioner, I was an ex-officio member of the trust. Lord Romsey and I met many times in that connection. After meeting him a few times, I thought I had developed a sufficient equation to talk to him about his grandmother. He did not seem to mind.

I once broached the subject of Nehru’s letters with him. I said: “Nehru wrote beautifully.” His reply was that his grandmother too wrote beautifully. I told him I would love to see at least one of her letters. I had seen Nehru’s writings but not hers. He said that Rajiv Gandhi and he had

exchanged copies of his grandmother's and Nehru's letters. There were two sets, one with him and the other with the Gandhi family. I realised then that it would be difficult to obtain access to them.

Nonetheless, I bluntly asked him one day whether his grandmother and Nehru had been in love. First he laughed and then wondered how he could describe their relationship. He paused for a while and said: "Theirs was 'spiritual love'." Then he changed the subject. I let the matter rest there. Lord Romsey subsequently said: "They fell in love; a kind of chivalrous love which was understood in the olden days. Nowadays when you talk of love, you think of sex. Theirs was more a soul-to-soul kind of relation. Nehru was an honourable man and he would never have seduced a friend's wife."

Back in Delhi, I tried to get access to the letters. I went to the Nehru Memorial Library and asked for the correspondence between Jawaharlal Nehru and Lady Mountbatten. The librarian looked surprised. "You have to get permission from Mrs Sonia Gandhi," he said and closed the topic. I wrote a letter to Sonia Gandhi stating that I was working on a book on the Mountbattens and would like to see Nehru's papers. She did not reply but Natwar Singh, then the state minister for external affairs, said that I could go to the library and consult the letters. I could hardly believe it. When the librarian placed before me a bundle of papers in a secluded room, I thought my efforts had borne fruit. I spent many hours sifting through the pile, but they proved to be Nehru's letters and notes to Krishna Menon, who got him to change

many policies on foreign affairs. My mission, however, was different.

I approached the librarian who said that my permission was for the 'C' grade papers. For this I would have to obtain Sonia Gandhi's specific instructions. I wrote to her again. Once again Natwar Singh was the channel of communication. He told me the papers could not be made available to me.

There was no explanation. All he said was that they were her property and she alone could decide. I think Nehru's letters are the nation's property and should be made available to the public because they throw light on matters meaningful to our history. But this does not seem to be the general policy. The Government of India has not yet made public the papers relating to the transfer of power by the British to India while the UK has.

### **Lolita, Swan Lake and Meena Kumari**

#### **Too Risque for Comfort**

Lal Bahadur Shastri, who, like Nehru, belonged to Allahabad, was conscious that he was way down in the social ladder in comparison to the Nehru family. After all, Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru's father, was an iconic figure and a dashing social figure while Shastri was a struggling lower middle-class individual. I recall Indira Gandhi's remark about "middle-class living" when she visited Shastri's residence to consider whether she could move there after his death.

Shastri was impressed with English-speaking intellectuals who he thought came from highly educated families. Once he wrote a

note on the Punjab situation and asked me to read it. I thought he wanted me to see whether his analysis tallied with mine as I came from Punjab, but to my surprise he wanted to know whether the note was well written. As I began reading it, Shastri said that even L.P. Singh, his favourite joint secretary, had praised his writing style.

Shastri's note to Nehru on Punjab did not create any stir, but his letter on Vladimir Nabokov's racy novel *Lolita* did. One Congress leader had written to Shastri that *Lolita*, which had reached bookshops in India, was so lewd that it should be banned. Shastri accordingly wrote to Nehru (L.P. Singh provided the draft) that the book should be banned. Prompt came Nehru's reply the following morning (he replied to all correspondence within 24 hours) arguing at length why he thought *Lolita* should not be banned and why D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* should continue to be. *Lolita* wasn't banned.

Shastri was not a moralist but he was a traditionalist. When he watched *Swan Lake* performed by the Bolshoi Ballet group in Leningrad, he was uncomfortable. At intermission, I asked if he was enjoying the show. He said he had felt embarrassed throughout because the legs of the dancers were naked, and *amma*, the word with which he addressed his wife (Lalita Shastri), was sitting by his side. He was equally embarrassed at the reception hosted by Kamal Amrohi in Bombay at the sets of his film, *Pakeezah*. Meena Kumari, then at the peak of her career, garlanded him and read out a small speech in his praise. Before responding, he took me aside and asked who the lady was. I was flabbergasted and told

him that she was Meena Kumari, the leading film star in the country. He began his speech in Hindi—"Meena Kumari ji mujhe maaf karein"—for admitting that he had heard her name for the first time in his life.

## Lord Mountbatten

Why August 15, 1947?

The process of division (of the country) was clumsy and hurried, particularly when Mountbatten advanced the date from June 3, 1948 to August 15, 1947. Why did he do this?... (His press secretary) Campbell-Johnson told me that Mountbatten selected August 15 because it was the day when the Japanese surrendered to the Allies, ending the Second World War. Some British Foreign Office hands disagreed with this reasoning. Their argument was that Mountbatten was lobbying for a more senior position in the Royal Navy and did not want his appointment in India to block his aspiration. When I checked with Mountbatten himself, he said he had to change the date because he could not hold the country together. "Things were slipping from my hands," he said repeatedly. "The Sikhs were up in arms in the Punjab, the great Calcutta killing had taken place, and communal tension was prevailing all over. On top of it, there had been the announcement that the British were leaving. Therefore, I myself decided to quit sooner..." "This was not to the liking of Lord Attlee," Mountbatten added, "but he had given me full powers."

## Lalit Narayan Mishra

Death Foretold

She (Indira Gandhi) realised her credibility was low; she said at a

meeting to condole the death of L.N. Mishra (the rail minister killed in a bomb attack in Samastipur), "Even if I were to be killed, they would say that I myself had got it done." Mishra was a dear friend. He rang me up at midnight before going to Samastipur that he had handed his resignation to her personally. He sadly remarked that he'd be killed at Samastipur and put down the phone. It proved to be true. He was murdered at Samastipur the following day. The murder mystery has not been resolved to this day.

## Sanjay Gandhi

Emergency Forever

Sanjay had heard about the book I was writing. Strangely, he asked me not to include any part of our conversation. I have, however, no obligation after his death and am therefore disclosing the gist of our conversation for the first time. The first question I asked Sanjay was how he thought that they would get away with it: the Emergency, the authoritarian rule, and the rest? He said there was no challenge to them and that they could have carried on with the Emergency for at least 20 to 25 years or more until they felt confident that they had changed people's ways of thinking. In their scheme of things, he said, there would have been no elections and they would have ruled from Delhi, with the help of provincial satraps like Bansi Lal from Haryana and like-minded bureaucrats in other states. It would have been a different kind of governance, with power centralised in Delhi. In the scheme of Sanjay's rule, there was no Congress leader of eminence and experience. Anyone who wanted to be part of the form of governance he was contemplating had to believe

in a state completely devoid of fundamental rights, freedom of speech and expression. The judiciary would have to function accordingly. "Then why did you hold elections?" I asked Sanjay. He didn't, he said. He was opposed to it to the very end. It was his mother's doing. "You should ask her," he said. By then Indira Gandhi reappeared at the porch, probably wondering what we were discussing, but then rapidly retraced her steps.

## Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale

Making of a Terrorist

It was Sanjay Gandhi, known for his extra-constitutional methods, who suggested that some 'sant' should be put up to challenge the Akali government. Both Sanjay and Zail Singh, particularly the latter, knew how the former Punjab chief minister Pratap Singh Kairon had fought the Akalis. He had built up Sant Fateh Singh against Master Tara Singh, the Akali leader who had become a hard nut to crack.... As Sanjay's friend Kamal Nath, a member of Parliament, recalled: "The first one we interviewed did not look a 'courageous type'. Bhindranwale, strong in tone and tenor, seemed to fit the bill. We would give him money off and on," Kamal Nath reminisced, "but we never thought he would turn into a terrorist."

## Dr Rajendra Prasad

Ms Lazarus from South

The prime minister and the home minister jointly decided on the final list (of Padma awardees). The President, who authorised the gazette notification, rarely amended the list. However, Dr Rajendra

Prasad, the then president, made an exception on one occasion. He added 'Miss Lazarus from the south' in his own hand to the list. We in the ministry worked hard to find out who she was. There was an educationist by that name in Chennai and we informed her about the award of the Padmashri. However, when the list went back to Dr Prasad, he wrote that she was a nurse and returned the list. His adc informed us that she had treated him when he fell ill travelling by road from Vijayawada to Hyderabad. We were eventually able to locate her, and that year two ladies with the name Lazarus received the award.

## Maulana Azad

### The Man We All Loved

I have often told Pakistanis that Indian Muslims paid the price for constituting the new country. Helpless and abandoned, Muslims in India recalled Maulana Azad's warnings that after Partition their importance would be reduced to nothing. They rallied around him but it was too late. Hindus maintained a streak of respect for him, no matter how angry they were with Muslims in general. This was clear when he died on February 22, 1958. A ceaseless queue of non-Muslims flowed into his house through the night to pay respects. I was one of them. Nehru himself selected the site for Azad's burial near Jama Masjid. Azad had left behind piles and piles of books and papers which I tried to access in vain. I finally located the papers over 40 years ago in a trunk in the custody of the family of Ajmal Khan, Azad's private secretary. I wish someone would retrieve them because the papers

belong to a significant period of our national struggle. There was no money in Azad's bank, nor was there any at home. Significantly, another Muslim cabinet minister, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, too died penniless. The fact that these Muslim ministers had no assets spoke a great deal about the integrity of nationalist Muslims.

## Pranab Mukherjee

### Austerity to Opulence

I recall his phone call to the Statesman when I was resident

editor, requesting me to have tea at his house. He held no government office then. We three, including his wife, sat on the floor and sipped tea....They had very little furniture and no servant....His wife was a struggling dancer seeking to gain recognition. When he requested me to give her publicity, I realised why he had invited me. I met the same Mukherjee some years later during Emergency. His house exuded opulence...the sitting room was cluttered with stylish furniture, plush carpets and sparkling silver. He was then commerce minister.



## PRESENTING THE NATION WITH A REPLICABLE MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



ADIVASI GIRLS HOSTEL AT TARA, PANVEL



WEEKLY EYE CAMPS AT THE YMC HOSPITAL, TARA, PANVEL



RUNS THREE HIGH SCHOOLS

### YUSUF MEHERALLY CENTRE AND YOU

There are ways in which you can join the YMC movement in bringing education, healthcare, women empowerment, employment generation, relief and growth to our rural villages. Visit our Centre, volunteer your help, buy our products, become a Life Member. You could also support the cause by donating to our various initiatives.

### SPONSOR AN ADIVASI GIRL'S HOSTEL STAY

It takes Rs.15,000 per year to meet the expenses for supporting a girl child's stay at the hostel in Tara, Panvel Taluka.



Yusuf Meherally Centre  
D-15, Ganesh Prasad, 1st Floor,  
Naushir Barucha Marg,  
Grant Road (West),  
Mumbai 400 007

### FINANCE A CATARACT SURGERY

10 to 15 eye operations are performed at the weekly eye camp held at the Maharashtra State Government funded hospital building. Sponsor a cataract operation for Rs. 15,000/-.

### CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCHOOL CORPUS

YMC runs 3 high schools - 2 Marathi, 1 Urdu medium. With only 2 of these on government aid, the Centre needs Rs.1 crore as corpus to run the 3rd and maintain, conduct extra-curricular activities in all 3 and finance its building expansion plans. Give generously.

Visit [www.yusufmeherally.org](http://www.yusufmeherally.org),  
Call: (022)-2387 0097,  
Fax: (022)-2388 9738 or  
E-mail : [yusufmeherally@gmail.com](mailto:yusufmeherally@gmail.com)



Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

# janata

**Vol. 67 No. 26**  
**July 22, 2012**

**Dedicated Socialist**  
**Mamata caves in**  
S. Viswam

**A dead civil society**  
Kuldip Nayar

**Pension for the elderly**  
Rajindar Sachar

**Democracy and the Left in Asia**  
D. K. Giri

**The information warriors**  
Harsh Mander

**Performance of Public Sector  
and Disinvestment**  
K. S. Chalam

**Model Political Leader**  
Amarendra Dhaneshwar

**A True and Humane Socialist**  
Singh

**'Paaniwali bai'**  
Meena Menon

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)



**Mrinal Gore**

**June 24, 1928 – July 17, 2012**

## Highlights of Report on MPs and MLAs voting in Presidential Elections 2012

National Election Watch has analyzed the affidavits submitted to the Election Commission of India (ECI) of 772 out of 776 MPs and 4063 out of 4120 MLAs (a total of 4835 out of 4896) in all the states of India which forms the Electoral College.

As per the ECI, a total of 1098882 votes can be cast in the Presidential Elections.

Based on the number of votes these 4835 MPs/MLAs can cast, NEW & ADR has analysed 1089287 votes out the total 109882 votes.

Out of the 4835 MPs/MLAs analyzed, 1448 members or 31 % have declared criminal cases against them in a self sworn affidavit filed with the ECI before their most recent elections.

Out of these 1448 voters who have declared criminal cases, 641 MPs/MLAs have declared serious criminal cases like rape, murder, attempt to murder, kidnapping, robbery, extortion, etc.

There are 6 MPs/MLAs who have declared rape charges in their self sworn affidavits submitted to the ECI at the time of filing their nomination. There are 141 MPs/MLAs who have declared murder charges, 352 have declared attempt to murder charges, 145 have declared theft charges, 90 have declared kidnapping charges and 75 have declared dacoity charges.

These tainted MPs/MLAs are entitled to cast a total of (31%) or

335089 votes out of 1089287

Among state assemblies, based on the number of tainted MLAs, the maximum number of tainted votes are from Uttar Pradesh which has 39312 out of 83824 votes analyzed (189 out of 403 MLAs), followed by Maharashtra with 25550 out of 50225 votes analyzed (146 out of 287 MLAs) and Bihar with 24047 out of 41693 votes analyzed (139 out of 241 MLAs) who have declared criminal cases.

In terms of percentage of tainted votes, among state assemblies, Jharkhand has the highest % of tainted votes with 74% or 10560 out of 14256 votes (60 out 81 MLAs analyzed) followed by Bihar with 58% or 24047 out of 41693 votes (139 out of 241 MLAs analyzed) and Maharashtra with 51% or 25550 out of 50225 votes (146 out of 287 analyzed).

A total of 2322 out of 4835 MPs/MLAs analyzed i.e. 48% are crorepatas as per their self sworn affidavits. Based on the number of votes these crorepatas MPs/MLAs are entitled to cast, a total of 54% or 585918 out of 1089287 votes analyzed are of MPs/MLAs who are crorepatas.

Amongst state assemblies, Uttar Pradesh has the maximum number of crorepati votes with 56368 out of 83824 votes analyzed followed by Maharashtra with 34650 out of 50225 votes analyzed and Andhra Pradesh with 25308 out of 42772 votes analyzed.

In terms of Percentage, among state assemblies, Goa has the highest percentage of crorepatas voters with 92% or (37 out of 40 MLAs analyzed) followed by Punjab with 86% (101 out of 117 MLAs analyzed) and Haryana with 72% (65 out of 90 MLAs analyzed) crorepatas voters.

As per the data from ECI, out of the total 4896 MPs/MLAs who are entitled to vote in the upcoming Presidential Elections, only 418 or 9% are women.

Based on the number of votes the MPs/MLAs are entitled to vote, the total number of women votes is 10% or 113145 out of 1098882 votes.

Among MPs, Lok Sabha has 11% or 41772 votes out of 384444 from 59 women MPs and Rajya Sabha has 10% or 16284 out of 164964 from 23 women MPs.

Among State assemblies, West Bengal has the maximum amount of women votes with 12231 votes out of 44394 (34 out of 294 MLAs), followed by Uttar Pradesh with 6656 votes out of 83824 (32 out of 403 MLAs) and Bihar with 5882 votes out of 42039 (34 out of 243 MLAs).

In terms of percentage, among state assemblies, the highest percentage of Women votes is from Bihar with 14% (34 out of 243 MLAs) followed by Rajasthan with 14% (28 out of 200 MLAs) women votes and West Bengal with 12% (34 out of 294 MLAs).

## Dedicated Socialist

India's Socialist movement, already on shaky legs, suffered a grievous blow on Tuesday with the passing away of one of its veterans, Mrinal Gore, at her daughter's home in Vasai, Thane district, off Mumbai. Mrinal was among the handful of dedicated and inspired activists who had made Socialism their life mission. The ranks of such dedicated Socialists is unfortunately thinning, and for this reason alone her death, at a time when she continued to remain active and engaged in public service, will be widely mourned. She was part of a movement which had attracted to its ranks a number of women who contributed to it handsomely by championing causes that were of immediate and pressing public relevance like clean drinking water, affordable prices, housing and women's empowerment. She was thus a contemporary of women leaders like Aruna Asaf Ali, Ahalyabai Rangnekar and Pramila Dandavate, who had become household names throughout the country in the pre-and post-independence era. Indeed, she was among the more notable among the large group of Socialist politicians who were in the quest for a viable alternative to the

Congress party. Mrinal, who identified herself with the Janata Party/Janata Dal after her spells with the two major Socialist groupings of that period, could have had any official and/or ministerial position of her choice, but she chose to remain an activist in the field leading masses-backed public campaigns to secure the rights of the common people. In Mumbai, which was her home, she will be remembered for her yeomen work in many fields, but particularly as one who successfully campaigned to bring drinking water to Goregaon, the suburb where she lived with her husband Keshav Gore, also a political activist who unfortunately died at a very young age, for which feat she was popularly known as "Paniwali Bai". In her death, it is not the Socialist movement alone that has suffered. It is a loss for the entire country. She leaves a void difficult to fill. "Janata" dips its banner in salute to a woman who toiled for the people and made their cause her own, and whose life and political career are bound to be an inspiration to the younger generation. The nation's sympathies will go to her family in this hour of their grief.

## Mamata caves in

It is largely her own fault that the volte-face by West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee in deciding to vote for the UPA presidential candidate Pranab Mukherjee and the vice-presidential candidate Hamid Ansari is seen as her political humiliation engendered by her last-minute capitulation to UPA pressure. She has adduced, what in her eyes, are "cogent" reasons for her change of heart and mind. She has claimed that all options other than a pro-UPA vote were closed to her because her own nominees for the high offices declined to contest. Also that abstention from voting would have meant the waste of the TMC votes which were substantial, as her party is the largest single constituent of the ruling coalition after the Congress. But these are not as cogent as she makes out. She could have still exercised the option of voting against the UPA choices or abstained. If she chickened out, it was largely because she was unsure of the voting loyalties of her party members, she was politically isolated, and she ran the distinct risk of alienating large sections of West Bengal people who were bound to bask in the glory of a Bhadra Lok representative becoming

India's first citizen. While her decision is welcome for many reasons, the manner in which she announced it and the language in which she couched it was, to say the least, crass and graceless. To say that it was a painful decision, that it was taken with a "sad and heavy heart" and that "alliance compulsions" left her no choice does not reflect well on her political maturity. Indeed, considering that the Congress had informally made it clear to her that either a no-vote or abstention would result in her forced exit from the UPA coalition, she was left with no choice but to yield. She could have demonstrated goodwill on the occasion. Instead, she has tried to retain her image as the stormy petrel of the alliance. Even so, her last minute gesture of support to the UPA will undoubtedly strengthen the Prime Minister's hands, even if that was not her real intention. The UPA's the stronger for her U-turn, but whether the strength acquired at her expense is likely to be durable or transient, will again depend on her and her mercurial temperament. On the positive side, it has ensured the smooth electoral successes of Pranab and Hamid Ansari. On balance, it is a noteworthy gain.

—S. Viswam

## A dead civil society

Kuldip Nayar

In Parwan province, north of Kabul, Afghanistan's capital, a gunman shoots a woman dead to the delight of wild crowd. Taliban had held her guilty of 'adultery' in a Kangaroo court. Hundreds of women dared them and came out on to the streets in support of the murdered woman.

More or less at the same time and at the same distance from India's capital, New Delhi, a Muslim village in UP gives women the Taliban-type diktat not to go to the market without escort, not to use mobile phones and not to have a love marriage. In this case, there is no protest and even politicians prefer to keep quiet. Instead, a Khap, a combination of 35 panchayats, endorses the *furman* (order) while the Supreme Court wants some action against the Khap.

Something more shocking and scandalous happens at Guwahati, where a 17-year-old girl is molested in public. A local television channel telecasts the incident the whole day long. The editor and the reporter of the channel resign when their complicity becomes public. The police is late to act and so is Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi. The National Commission for Women tarries behind at Delhi until the media points a finger at its indifference. The senior superintendent of police is merely transferred after the demand by the academicians.

Not long ago, girls in Pune were asked by the self-appointed custodians of morality not to wear jeans. In Mumbai, a similar force

forbids women from going to the bars. In Assam, a legislative assembly woman is beaten mercilessly because she marries a Muslim. A nine-year-old girl is killed when a member winning the corporation election fires at random to celebrate his victory.

All these incidents may seem unconnected and taking place far from Afghanistan. Still they have the same pattern of irresponsibility and the same ruthlessness that has distinguished Taliban from other terrorists. The former want to register their cruelty beyond comparison.

Indian civil society, the thinking segment of the nation, remains quiet. There is no evidence of its unhappiness, much less any demonstration. People shrug their shoulders and put the entire blame on the government. The elite does not mention such incidents in their drawing rooms lest they should spoil the mood of over-dressed, over-fed class. The media reports some incidents but does not pursue them except Arnab Goswami, who is relentless in exposing such horrors and dwelling on them.

By announcing that it is against the cricket series between India and Pakistan this December, the Shiv Sena has again shown its same old bias. This organization is like any other set of fundamentalists who are out to pollute the atmosphere of amity. Some similar organizations and individuals may adversely react to resuming India-Pakistan

cricketing ties. Retired players on both sides should voice their protest against those who are trying to sabotage the series that may make even the Pakistani authorities sit up and ponder over the court's rejection of the judicial commission's report on 26/11. The tragedy is that the right thinking people choose to keep quiet and leave everything to the government which has its own policies.

The question that the Indians have to ask themselves is: Has civil society become effete because it is afraid of being targeted or is it a victim of the Taliban-type culture where the people has effaced the thin line between right and wrong, moral and immoral? Whatever the answer, the fundamentalists cannot escape the blame. They are brainwashing young men in the name of religion and they are the ones who, in turn, are hijacking the society. Even those who feel that there is victimization of women or the marginalized, keep quiet lest they should become unpopular in the eyes of fundamentalists. They do not dare to join issue with either a maulvi, a pandit or a granthi.

Civil society all over the world represents the nation's conscience. True, it is invariably lost in its own doubts, ifs and buts, but it does assert itself at times. They are the ones who have to call a spade a spade. If they do not—and invariably they don't—they harm the cause and encourage the wrong-doers. Their silence is the loss of society.

I have seen that civil society, over the years, has become insensitive. Even the slightest wrong used to create furor but now it does not care as if cruelty has become part of living. When pushed or cajoled, a segment of society expresses itself but it goes back to its inactivity and slumber when it should be in the field all the time. True, the government should be more vigilant and prompt but it has got into the habit of making laws and leaving at that. That is the reason that one sees the law is more violated than adhered to.

Martin Luther King has said: The day you see the truth being challenged and you do not speak out is the day when you begin to die. This is probably too high an expectation in a society which is too absorbed in making money by hook or by crook. Yet it is the duty of every person to preserve the fundamental values of a democratic society. He or she must display a degree of vigilance and willingness to sacrifice. Without the awareness of what is right and a desire to act according to what is right, there may be no realization of what is wrong.

The role by human rights activists is commendable. Thousands of them are working at the grassroots level throughout the country and facing the wrath of extremists on the one hand and the repressive authorities on the other. The successes of activists may be limited as compared to their failures but the nation should be grateful to them because civil society is complacent and the government-sponsored bodies are on the side of the political party which appoints them. The truth has strayed from the path of righteousness. The activists alone are trying to retrieve the situation but with very little success. Civil society has to put its act together and speak out to be counted.

## Pension for the elderly It's no charity, but human right

Rajindar Sachar

It is a truism, though painful, that the Central government's priorities in fiscal matters are determined by the perceived sensitivities of the foreign and Indian corporate sector and the richer class rather than the urgent and humanitarian considerations for the poor and old citizens of India. How I wish that instead the government was to show urgent attention to the plight of about 10 crore elderly people (8 per cent of the Indian population, with 1/6th of them living without any family support). No doubt, under the Central government's pension scheme, persons above the age of 60 get a pension of Rs. 200 and those above 80 years Rs. 500 per month, but this is applicable to those below the poverty line. The uncertainty is increased by the ever-fluctuating determination by the government of what should be the poverty level; pensions vary in different states — Delhi paying a maximum of Rs. 1000 per month while others like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, etc, only Rs. 200 per month.

Of the total elderly population, only 1.97 crore are beneficiaries of IGNOAPS, which means that only about one in every five persons over 60 years receives old-age pension.

Employment-linked pensions are restricted to the elderly in the organized sector or to those who are among the rich and upper middle class categories. But the groups that are most in need of old age pension are largely in the unorganized sector. Between the year 2000 and 2010,

the organized sector added less than 0.3 per cent workers annually to the workforce while the GDP of the country more than doubled with an annual rate of more than 7.55 per cent. It is clear that much of the contribution to this growth came from the workers in the unorganized sector. But unlike the organized sector, workers in the unorganized sector do arduous manual labour often in the most difficult physical circumstances and without adequate nutrition and rest. Forcing them then to work beyond the age of 55, in order to survive, amounts to a form of punishment. The demand for old age pension is thus not a demand for charity but a demand for recognition of their contribution to the economy, and the need-based constitutional principles which are to be applied. As Chief Justice of India S. H. Kapadia has expounded in Human Rights Year-Book 2011.

“What is the need-based approach? Supposing there is no statute but the right to life is involved, is it open to the defence to say tight resource, financial crunch? The answer is ‘no’ because the right to life is there in Article 21 of the Constitution and the defence cannot toll the bell of tight resource. Take the case of food security. Two out of five people are below poverty line, and if pension is to be paid to them, the government cannot say I have no money. Now this is what I mean by revisiting welfare rights. And that is where if enforceability is there the rule of law will prevail.”

The insensitive and negative approach of various state governments and the Central government to the plight of five crore people in the unorganized sector in the construction industry would show the government's anti-poor face, especially in the way they have dealt with the report of the Justice V. R. Krishna Iyer Committee given decades back.

One of the key recommendation and which on paper has even been accepted by the Government of India (but it has persistently refused to enforce) is about the manner in which the scheme of contribution by the employer along with a contribution by employee is to operate.

Now as construction industry worker is a migrant and has necessarily to be on the move for finding employment, it was accepted by the government that the contribution of the employer and the employee will be deposited in a computerized bank account with a specific identity number for each individual workman. This was so decided because construction labour being migratory, with the result that if a new account was to be opened every time with separate employers, his past accumulation was in danger of becoming irrecoverable. So, the way suggested was that each employer will deposit his contribution in a fixed numbered identity account given to the employee, and which will be honoured by all banks anywhere in the country. But, this not having been done, the result is that at least Rs 5000 crore of the Employees' Provident Fund is lying in banks but has not been disbursed to the workers because the government has not yet allotted them their identity account numbers. The result is that lakhs of workers are

continuing to be near starvation line.

Another callous indifference of the government is shown by the fact that though all government contracts provide for the contractor to make temporary but proper accommodation for the construction labour at the site, it is common knowledge that contractors mixed up with dishonest inspectors do nothing of the kind — forcing female workers to use open toilets and leaving children to the vagaries of weather with no shelters built. A simple solution is for the government itself to provide these facilities and adjust funds at present being given to the contractors. In spite of protests by workers, nothing has moved — probably, the contractor-inspector nexus is all powerful.

The Central government has unapologetically announced many concessions for the corporate sector and the rich with the shameful claim that prosperity so generated will move down and improve the condition of the poor. This is a false claim as given in a warning by Noble

Laureate Joseph Stiglitz — “The theory of trickle-down economics is a lie”.

According to the ILO's 2010-11 World Social Security Report, the ILO's new recommendation on social protection sets nationally defined guarantees aimed at universal access to minimum income security, especially during old age, and that such guarantees are a human right and an ethical imperative of governments. How can the Central government remain silent?

Governments cannot negate the claim for pensions for the old by pleading that development has to take precedence over poverty reduction. This is a specious argument that shows that poverty is a long-term problem and that current deficits represent a short-term emergency, that poverty can wait but deficits cannot. This is muddle-headed thinking. To reduce and eliminate massive absolute poverty lies at the very core of development itself. It is critical to the survival of any democratic and decent society.

---

## A public hearing !

"We condemn the undemocratic and farcical manner in which the authorities in Haryana are conducting the important public hearing on the environmental impacts of the proposed Gorakhpur Nuclear Power Plant (GNPP) on 17th July 2012.

This public hearing is an important step under the MOEF guidelines to provide an opportunity to the project affected people to raise their objections. According to the rules, the local people should be given the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report 1 month prior to the

public hearing. The EIA report should be translated in the local language and must be distributed freely to the village bodies and concerned individuals of the area.

However, the people of 6 panchayats in Fatehabad districts who will be affected by this project have not received the copies of the EIA so far. While the notice for the EIA hearing was sent to the village panchayats (elected local governance bodies) on June 16th, 2012, the EIA report was made

*(Continued on Page 13)*

---



---

## Mrinal Gore

---



---

**Amarendra Dhaneshwar**

Mrinal Gore, the veteran socialist leader, passed away on Tuesday, 17th July at the ripe age of 84. She was ailing for a long time and was out of action due to old age related illness, but her passion for the downtrodden remained undimmed till the last breath. The sea of humanity in mourning next morning at Goregaon which was her Karmabhoomi testified to the trust that people had in her commitment to their cause.

Mrinal Gore was a model political leader in the sense that she rose from the Panchayat level to the Lok Sabha by dint of sheer merit, hard work and sound common sense. She was a quintessential Bombayite who was born and brought up in Khar which is a suburb of the metropolis. Mrinal belonged to the Kayastha family and was drawn to the Rashtra Seva Dal which was active during the Quit India movement of 1942. Leaders of the Quit India movement like Yusuf Meherally, Achyut Patwardhan, S M Joshi as well as young firebrand cadres like Madhu Limaye, Keshav Gore and others inspired Mrinal Gore to join the anti-imperialist struggle. Later on, after the British relaxed the restrictions in 1945, the leaders were released. The Rashtra Seva Dal camp held at Umbergaon in the Thane district in 1945 was addressed by Madhu Limaye and others and that was the turning point for Mrinal. She had enrolled herself in a collage to become a medical practitioner but gave up the prospects of a lucrative career in order to dedicate herself to full time political work. Mrinal fell

in love with Keshav aka Bandu Gore and they set up a home in Goregaon, a suburb of Mumbai, which became a centre for socialist political activity for the next five decades. The Topiwala Bungalow in Goregaon was a place which was frequented by stalwarts of the socialist movement like Jayaprakash Narayan, Rammanohar Lohia, Acharya Narendra Deva and later generation leaders like Rajnarain, Madhu Dandvate, George Fernandes and Surendra Mohan.

Mrinal Gore was elected to the gram panchayat and her legislative career began at the grass root level. At a time when family planning was a word that evoked horror, she actively canvassed for family planning among women. She lost her husband Keshav Gore at a very young age. Her husband's premature demise strengthened her resolve to dedicate herself completely to political work for the underprivileged sections of society. When the Praja Socialist Party split in 1955, Mrinal joined the faction led by Rammanohar Lohia. 'Socialist Party' had initially kept itself aloof from the Samyukta Maharashtra movement and paid the price. Later on that party too joined the bandwagon. Mrinal was elected to the Municipal Corporation in 1961 together with George Fernandes who was elected from the Kalbadevi constituency. Both of them, along with Shobhnath Singh, fought for the use of Marathi in the corporation affairs and created a history of sorts. Mrinal was an active corporator who was always at the beck and

call of her constituents. Her rise to popularity was due to her constant touch with her constituents and their problems. Once Lohia visited Goregaon for a political rally. He was amazed to see women walking long distances for a potful of water and expressed his anguish at the situation. This inspired Mrinal to resort to agitation for a steady supply of water. She organized satyagrahas, gheraos and all kinds of peaceful yet militant agitations to focus the attention of the civic authorities and to compel them to initiate ameliorative steps. This earned her the epithet 'Paaniwali Bai' and her appeal spread among all linguistic and social groups in the suburbs of Bombay.

Mrinal Gore and her team which consisted of senior leaders like P, B. Samant, Kamal Desai, Mukund Ganesh Naik, Vasant Phalnikar nursed the constituency and were thus able to put up a tough fight when the Indira wave swept across the country. In 1972, when the assembly elections were held in the aftermath of the Bangladesh war she was the only opposition candidate to win from the entire city of Bombay. Mrinal entered the assembly and made a deep impact with her superlative performance as a legislator and political leader. Mrinal exposed many scandals like the Vadkhal Naka incident which had raised suspicions about the involvement of a Minister in smuggling and also raised important issues. She combined her legislative work with street agitations over issues like price rise, employment

guarantee scheme, atrocities on dalits and women, and supply and availability of water to all sections of the rural society. She was at the forefront of the anti-price rise movement: gheroing ministers, taking out morchas wielding the rolling pin and became a virtual symbol of the woman power. Her simple style of living and her use of public transport like the suburban railway was not merely an image building exercise. It was a genuine attempt to connect with common people.

Mrinal Gore, thanks to her image and her dedication, was one of the topmost names tickmarked for early detention during the infamous emergency of 1975. She addressed the rally at Hutatma Chowk on 26th June 1975 together with Acharya Kripalani and S K Patil and went into hiding immediately. She managed to remain underground for six months and led the anti-emergency struggle against Indira Gandhi's dictatorship

by inspiring and organizing satyagrahas, meetings and helping to publish bulletins and posters. She was arrested in December 1975 and was singled out for shabby treatment by the authorities. Her underground work evoked image of Aruna Asaf Ali who was the heroine of the Quit India movement.

She won the 1977 Lok Sabha election with a margin of over 2,77,000 votes and was at the height of her popularity. As a member of Parliament she championed the cause of political detenus forcing the Morarji government to withdraw the preventive detention bill and also the freedom of religion bill which was inspired by the Sangh parivar to harass the Christian community.

She sided with the Madhu Limaye, George Fernandes and Rajnarain faction and was labelled a 'traitor' and a splitter which cost her membership of Lok Sabha during the 1980 elections. Undeterred by

defeat, she plunged into political movements and pursued the cement scandal to the logical end which persuaded the Bombay High Court to hold the then Chief Minister A. R. Antulay guilty of corruption. Mrinal Gore also began a movement for low cost housing by providing the government land at a cheap price under the then Urban Land Ceiling Act. Her prolonged fast won the battle for the lower middle class people and the Nagari Nivara project became a reality. Mrinal Gore was elected to the Maharashtra assembly and became the leader of the opposition in the state assembly. Her appeal cut across party lines. She unsuccessfully contested the 1989 Lok Sabha election but continued to remain active and lend her voice to the grievances of the people rendered homeless and jobless by the apparently triumphant forces of liberalization and market driven capitalism. Mrinal Gore's life and immense contribution will inspire many future generations.

## A True and Humane Socialist

### Prem Singh

General Secretary, Socialist Party (India)

The passing away of Mrinal Gore, popularly known as Mrinaltai and 'paniwali bai', is a great loss to the socialist movement, particularly in this era of corporate capitalism. She was motivated by deep human concerns during her long political struggle. Born in 1928 and trained in the Rashtra Seva Dal, Mrinal Gore was elected to the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly twice. She opposed the emergency and had to remain underground for a period of time. Later she was arrested and put in jail. In the 1977 elections she won the Parliament seat of

Mumbai North with a huge margin. She was among one of the founders of the Socialist Party after India's independence. She contested her first assembly election as a candidate of the Socialist Party and won.

Mrinal Gore launched a unique movement, with public participation, for water in Mumbai and became popular as 'paniwali bai'. She was particularly sensitive to the issues/problems faced by and related to women. Mrinal Gore, in her second term in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, raised the issue of female foeticide. As a result, the government

banned sex-selective abortions by making a law in 1986. She was a great advocate of gender equality, women's rights and inter-caste marriage. She herself chose inter-caste marriage with the prominent socialist leader Keshav Gore.

Mrinal Gore played an important role in reviving the Socialist Party on 28 May 2011 in Hyderabad. She offered her full support to the idea, attended all meetings held in Mumbai in this connection, and she has been a source of inspiration for the Socialist Party cadres.



# ‘Paaniwali bai’ had great love for people, passion for causes

**Meena Menon**

In her later years, her feet bandaged thickly in white, Mrunal Gore was a familiar sight in Goregaon west, the leafy Mumbai suburb, where she lived most of her life. But people will remember her more for her feisty battles for water even before she was elected corporator in 1961, and her noisy “rolling pin” anti-price-rise marches, where women protested by beating rolling pins against steel plates. Born in 1928, Gore set aside a career in medicine inspired by the Rashtra Seva Dal, and later left it to form the Socialist Party. She married Keshav Gore in 1948, an inter-caste marriage, and had a daughter. The couple were committed to social justice, and also became part of the Samyukta Maharashtra movement. Keshav passed away in 1958, and after that Mrunaltai continued his social work under the Keshav Gore Smarak Trust.

She was elected to the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly on the Socialist Party ticket in 1972, and later on in 1985 on the Janata Party ticket. She also made it to Parliament with a huge number of votes after the elections were held post-Emergency, where she was forced to go underground before her arrest. Mrunaltai related to the common person and her empathy for women’s issues and problems gave her a huge following. Since the 1950s, she, along with Tara Reddy of the Communist Party of India and Ahilya Rangnekar of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) formed a striking triumvirate who fought on the side of the people, at a time when few women were seen in public

life. In 1983, Mrunaltai founded Swadhar which worked with women who were victims of violence and provided counselling and legal help. As an MLA, she moved a private member’s bill to ban sex-selective abortions, and her speech was one of the best in the Assembly. “After that, most MLAs accepted the fact that female foeticide had to be banned,” recalls R. P. Ravindra, social activist. Mrunaltai played a big role in the State government, moving a ban against sex-selective abortions in 1986.

Much of the issues she engaged with in her youth remained with her till the end. She fought the price rise fiercely, championed women’s issues, and was a firm believer in reservation for women in political life, as also low-cost housing. She was a source of inspiration and guidance to Medha Patkar in the heyday of the anti-Narmada dam movement and Ms. Patkar remembers her role with gratitude. She even visited the fasting Ms. Patkar at Ferkuva on the Gujarat border, in what was a watershed event of the anti-dam movement. Talking to *The Hindu*, Ms. Patkar said that for Mrunaltai, the personal was political. “She was emotionally committed to everything, and she was a gem of a person, she stood with us all the time and she was so moved by the plight of the tribals.”

Ms. Patkar also recalled her skills as a mediator who could achieve what she wanted without compromising on anything.” She had great love for people, passion for

causes, and a level of commitment that few had. The kind of value-based politics she promoted is no more. She was our heroine,” Ms. Patkar added. She had called Mrunaltai last on her birthday on June 24, and her mother is Mrunaltai’s classmate and very close friend.

Despite her ill-health — she survived breast cancer and suffered from diabetes for 25 years — Mrunaltai displayed a keen interest in current affairs, and even sustained a visit from her foe, Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, just before the municipal corporation elections in Mumbai. She attended a gathering of all anti-Narmada dam activists in May in Mumbai, and was active till the end. Mrunaltai was the last of the old warhorses to whom common people could turn to, in a city where so many of the things she fought for remain elusive till today to the ordinary citizen. She will be remembered as the “paaniwali bai” in her trademark white sari with a dark border, and her infinite charm and dignity will forever grace her memory.

—*The Hindu*

**Madhu Dandavate**

**By**

**B. Vivekanandan**

**Price: Rs. 20/-**

**Janata Trust**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W),  
Mumbai 400 007.

# Democracy and the Left in Asia

D. K. Giri

I was invited as a Resource person to the IUSY World Festival that was held at Europacamp, Attersee, near Salzburg, in Austria, on the 25th-31st of July 2011. International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY), with a membership from 148 countries, is kind of a youth wing of Socialist International. The aim of the World Festival is to “gather 2500 young political activists from all over the world to shape new politics”. It offers a high-profile platform for political youth leaders and policy experts to map out their progressive vision for the future. The World Festival has a long tradition and is the highlight for IUSY, its member organizations and all the young people, who come to meet new friends, have fun and discuss politics.

Political focus of the World Festival in Austria was Equality, which “we believe must be core of social democracy in the 21st century – a time where change is needed and possible”. The year 2011 was a historical year for Social Democracy in Austria since it was the 100th anniversary of Bruno Kreisky. SPÖ and SJÖ, the socialist youth organizations of Austria were hosting the World Festival 2011 in commemoration of Bruno Kreisky and the values of international solidarity that led him and his time of social democrats just as they lead us today. The World Festival therefore had the theme “We know where we come from – We know where we are Going.”

My task was to deliver a lecture to the Festival on the “Role of the Left in promoting Democracy in Asia. I

had to begin by briefly introducing India in order to set the scene. India is the largest democracy in the world with a population of 1.21 billion people; 50 per cent of whom are in the age group of 1-25 years. India has 30 different languages and 2000 dialects and all the religions of the world. India is multi-ethnic, multi-caste (and sub-castes), a very diverse country by most parameters. It is regarded as a successful democracy by many although critics argue about the nature and substance of Indian democracy, especially when they compare it with other democracies in the world.

I moved on then to the main topic - Democracy and the Left in Asia. There are three words or concepts in the topic, each of which needs to be put in the perspective, in fact, each requires a short explanation before we discuss the whole topic. Democracy is a universal value and aspiration. But it has no standard definition. It is not a complete structure; rather a political-system-at-work. There are several kinds of democracy. But we need to identify the organizing principles and the political philosophy underpinning any democracy in the world. The basic principles of democracy are equality, freedom, and constitutionally guaranteed rights. Equality among citizens means all citizens have equal right and the opportunity to participate in the political process; the citizens have the sovereign right to choose their leaders, systems and procedures, and have the choice to do so. It is another matter that the procedure in a democracy has evolved from

representative to participatory to inclusive democracy. The latest trend emphasizes that the weak and the marginalized have to be enabled to participate and included in the process.

The second concept in the topic is Left. This is problematic. The Left is popularly understood as Communists and their variants – Leninists, Stalinists, Maoists, Trotskyites, Castroists – what is meant here by Left is us, the Social Democrats. I would like to call ourselves Centre-Left, and make a clear and emphatic distinction from Communists, because any association with the Communists lends us an ultra-radical image which is out of tune with our times. I also believe that Swedish, French and Italian Socialist parties have paid a heavy electoral price for associating with Communists. The third concept is Asia. Is it a geographical, cultural or political category? That is debatable. Gunnar Myrdal, a Swedish economist in his famous book “Asian Drama”, describes and defines Asia. For our purpose, we take Asia as a geographical entity. Asia consists of 35, by some calculations 45 countries. It occupies 8.7 per cent of world’s area, and 60 per cent of its population. It is divided into South Asia, South East Asia, East Asia, West Asia or Middle-East and Central Asia.

No region in the world exhibits greater variations in regimes than does Asia. Before we identify the Asiatic characteristics of democracy and the role of Social Democrats, let’s

have a survey of types of democracy in Asia. In fact, we have two stable democracies in Asia – Japan and India. We have a Communist dictatorship in China, although it pursues a free market economy. We have new democracies in Taiwan and South Korea; transitional democracies in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Thailand and Nepal. We have stagnant and isolated polities like North Korea and Burma. We have a democracy destabilized in Afghanistan. We have a self-confident, sustaining pseudo-democracy in Singapore. In Indonesia democracy is gaining ground. Democracy survives in Mongolia but in most other countries, regimes alternate between military and democracy.

Now I make a proposition, a kind of hypothesis that Asia will determine the global fate of democracy in the next 2-3 decades. This is predicated on the premise that the new forms of democracies are based on multiculturalism, pluralism, deference to authority, growing economies, respect for self and community-ness. These values are found plentifully in Asian societies. In order to elaborate: (i) A communitarian approach suggests that the individual is important as a part of a group or society rather than the notion that the individual is the centre piece of democracy and society; (ii) Greater acceptance of authority is a Asiatic political culture although there are adversarial positions; (iii) A dominant party leading in politics, like the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan, United Malayist Nationalist Organisation in Malaysia, the People's Action Party in Singapore, Golkar in Indonesia and Congress in India. Nearly all Asian countries have a strong State. (iv) The economy in Asia is moving

from capital and labour intensive to information and technology intensive. The latter will spread awareness and build networks. (v) In most Asian countries there is an increasing awareness of human rights. (vi) The emergence and broadening of the middle class and the activism of civil society and its organizations can spark political change in conjunction with sympathizing section of leadership. Finally, nations are less and less isolated from the rest of the world. The interaction amongst them through social media has been phenomenal - in putting pressure for democracy. Many observers would expect Asia to lead the global democratic revolution.

What is the role of Social Democracy in this emerging scenario? Social Democrats should devise instruments to convert cultural pluralism into political pluralism and embrace democratic deliberations over ideologies. They have to strengthen the institutional base in Asia, expand the issue base, promote gender equity, environmental awareness, and stem the rise of terrorism, and violence. They must make sure that the new democracies must deliver, expand societal freedom, impose civilian control over the military and dismantle the national security state.

I will end with the big question on the biggest country in Asia that is China going democratic. What are the prospects? China has shown what some political analysts call, "the authoritarian resilience". China has improved its economy at a speed and a scale that no country has done in recent times. The economic growth has been around 10 per cent for the last 20 years, and some 250 million people have been lifted out

of poverty. But, politically, it has been an authoritarian state; some 5 to 12 thousand political dissidents have been executed every year. It has forced the internet providers like Google, Microsoft, etc. to impose self-censorship. Internet police has blocked words like democracy, human rights, Falungong, and June 4 (1989) Tiananmen Square. On the other hand the civil society is rising. In 1986, there were 4500 NGOs, by 2006; there were 300,000 NGOs or more. On any day, there are 120 million rural migrants in the city, ready to be mobilized for protest action. Thus, the country seems ready to burst any time with a bang for political change. There are two undercurrents which should dismantle the present rule. One, revival of religion: few systems or beliefs have the power to unite and motivate peoples in a common cause than religion. Two, there is a national civic network necessary for a mass democratic movement. People have learnt from the failure of Tiananmen Square. The second undercurrent is that economic freedom and prosperity leads to demands for political freedom. The new middle class will demand to be heard and to extend their choice. By 2025, Communists in China would have ruled for 76 years exceeding Soviet Union's 70 years. In a few years, there will be a new regime in China: more authoritarian or democratic? It is a difficult prognosis to make. But going by the trends, it is not too far when Chinese authoritarianism will crumble under popular uprising.

To conclude, John Keane has said in his now-famous book, "The Life and Death of Democracy", that the history of democracy needs to be democratized. The journey of democracy from Athens

*(Continued on Page 13)*

# The information warriors

**Harsh Mander**

The most significant governance reform since Independence is unarguably the Right to Information Act of 2005. Overnight, the statute created potentially a billion Lokpals, because every citizen acquired the right to seek information and documents from government, in order to interrogate the integrity and justice of official actions.

But many doubted if citizens would stir and organise themselves to actually use this right: it required the careful and tedious study of government procedures and rules, combined with patience and persistence. However, people proved the sceptics wrong. Many times more than any official oversight body, ordinary citizens held local officials to account in ways that were unthinkable even a decade earlier. In villages and small towns across the country, the law has sparked a million tiny non-violent mutinies.

Wherever battle lines are drawn between those who benefit from corruption and those who suffer from it, it has challenged power. Honest officials are more fearless. Some are learning to function more carefully within the boundaries of rules and prescribed procedures, or at least to leave fewer obvious footprints of malfeasance. Some are paralysed into inaction. But there is evidence also that the beneficiaries of corrupt administration are also fighting back. It is increasingly commonplace to hear of attacks, sometimes fatal, on little known RTI activists from distant corners of India's hinterland.

In the middle class imagination, what is described as "civil society activism" tends to be dominated by the larger-than-life persona of a few well-known, highly celebrated fighters. Many, therefore, do not recognise the extraordinary heroism of several battles for clean and fair governance, fought by tall "little" warriors, with scant protection and even less public glory.

One of this multitude of faceless combatants is Ramesh Agarwal, intrepid middle-aged activist committed to struggles for justice for persons dispossessed and displaced by private mining and power companies in the forested tribal district Raigarh in Chhatisgarh. On July 7, 2012, I was stunned and grieved to learn that two men armed with a loaded pistol had driven to the cyber cafe that Ramesh ran for a living, and shot him after an altercation in the thigh. At the time of writing, I heard to my great relief that surgeons in Raipur had worked on his wounds, and declared him out of danger.

I have known Ramesh for over two decades, from the time I served in Raigarh in 1990 as the District Collector. I was privileged to lead a campaign for Total Literacy of the district, an exhilarating mass movement which successfully canvassed more than 30,000 youth volunteers to teach 300,000 non-literate adults in the district. The idealism of throngs of young women and men was infectious and heady. For some, those intense months of collective service and

camaraderie altered the direction of their lives forever. Among these was Ramesh, who joined hands with several comrades to constitute an organisation called Lokshakti, dedicated to carrying forward the radical idea of "conscientisation" of impoverished and oppressed people. Building on the foundations of new-found literacy, they tried to build awareness of rights for collective, democratic resistance to injustice.

In 2005, Ramesh and his old literacy activist partner Rajesh Tripathy, launched a separate platform called Jan Chetna Manch. A number of large industrial houses had acquired and occupied enormous tracts of forest, tribal and farm land to establish a dense battery of coal mines, thermal power plants and ancillary industries. Rajesh and Ramesh were worried by what they believed to be the unjust, illegal and often brutal forceful expropriation of the resources of lands and forests, the pauperisation of their people, and the destruction forever of the natural habitat which had nurtured them for generations.

They discovered an invaluable democratic weapon for effective non-violent challenge to their immeasurably more powerful adversaries, of RTI applications, and they deployed these tirelessly, fearlessly and imaginatively. Through their applications, they exposed that large tracts of forest and farm lands had been mined without being legally being diverted and transferred; mandatory consultations with gram panchayats were bypassed,

manipulated or falsely recorded; lands and standing trees were grossly under-valued to drastically reduce compensation claims; legal land acquisition processes were routinely subverted to benefit private companies; and land was illegally acquired from tribal landowners even though this is prohibited under the law. Their first victory in village Rabu for a captive dam was to force raising of compensation from Rs. 10,000 rupees per hectare to up to Rs. 10 lakh.

Not surprisingly, their exertions were not welcomed both by the private companies and complicit government officials. Initially they were offered bribes to end their confrontations, by lucrative transport contracts, or employment in “corporate social responsibility” enterprises. Some of their colleagues succumbed, but not them. When these inducements failed, they were often openly threatened. Ramesh’s cyber cafe was ransacked. He was attacked and injured. Rajesh’s motor cycle was almost run over on many occasions by transport trucks. Their police complaints were rarely registered, even less acted upon. But a complaint from a private company employee claiming that they threatened to take his life led to the arrest of both Ramesh and Rajesh, and they spent three months in jail in 2011, before they were finally awarded bail from the Supreme Court.

I met them in Raigarh a few months ago, deeply worried about the continuing threat to their lives by their stubborn and unwavering struggle. They responded without bravado but with quiet resolve: “We take precautions now: we do not announce in advance our travel plans, we use different vehicles each

time, and so on. But these are poor people’s issues, and we cannot let them down. We have to continue to struggle. What has to happen will happen”.

There is no law to protect information warriors like them, and

little public outrage or solidarity when they are assaulted. As I heard them, I wondered how much India deserves them. And thousands of information warriors like them: unsung, unprotected, unassuming. And heroic.

*-Aman Birdari*

*(Continued from Page 6)*

available by the Haryana State Pollution Control Board’s regional office to the District Collector (DC) of Fatehabad only on 6th July. To some social activists and concerned individuals, soft-copies of a 14-page executive summary (Download) of the report was provided, that too only in English.

The villagers are supposed to learn English, educate themselves in the technical details of the EIA, decipher the concealing and misleading tactics invariably adopted in such reports and raise their objections - without copies of the document under discussion ! Meanwhile, the media has reported about preparations for heavy police

and paramilitary presence on the day of public hearing.

We condemn this brazen violation of MoEF rules and basic norms of democracy and transparency. Independent experts and popular movements have questioned the safety, viability and relevance of nuclear energy at many places across India and the world.

We demand that the public hearing in Haryana must be postponed with immediate effect, and should be conducted in free, fair and fearless atmosphere after providing the entire report to the people 1 month in advance."

*- Vandana Shiva, Medha Patkar, Praful Bidwai, Achin Vanaik, Capt J Rama Rao, V T Padmanabhan, EAS Sarma, Surendra Gaddekar, Sanghamitra Gaddekar, Sandeep Pandey, Soumya ADutta, Kumar Sundaram, Madhuresh Kumar, Panini Anand*

*(Continued from Page 11)*

to Westminster to Capitol Hill is incomplete. He rejects the notion that “democracy is a purely ‘Western’ achievement or a ‘God-given’ gift to chosen peoples. Such hubris (a favoured word) encourages Western democrats to believe theirs should be a universalising mission, with conversion done at the point of the sword or under the shadow of drone bombers. There are other traditions, mainly in Asia, which have done and would contribute to enriching democracy.

## **Janata Subscription**

Annual Rs. : 260/-  
Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on  
Mumbai Bank  
in favour of  
**JANATA TRUST**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai 400 007

# Performance of Public Sector and Disinvestment

K. S. Chalam

Public sector enterprises or economic activity of government is considered as an investment in the security of people of a nation. In all modern economies including the pure capitalist systems, public sector exists at least to maintain public utilities and in many a country to provide necessary economic and technological guidance to the private sector by the state. However, the neo-classical theories in 1980s described the public sector enterprises (PSE) as a drain on the economy as most of them were considered, in pure economic terms, as loss making units. They were also considered by some economists as the sources that promote rent seekers. One of the important arguments advanced by such scholars and their supporters for the withdrawal of the state or what was called at that time as the 'non-communist withering away of state' was to avoid economic drain owing to public sector enterprises. They have also developed indicators including efficiency, productivity and profitability to prove that the PSE are useless and better to abandon them as soon as possible. Now the situation seems to have changed after gaining experience with the Western models for two decades. We can now discuss about the need for the existence of the public sector on the basis of the parameters developed by experts to show that the public enterprises are the life blood of the developing countries like India.

The history of public enterprises in India dates back to Chanakya's description about the regulatory

authorities to control public works. It is said that even artisan guilds were entrusted with supervisory functions by the state and the British mercantilist inroads in to India were facilitated by the crown. Therefore, state or government enterprises have always been there as a part of state activity. There was serious discussion on the role of public sector in independent India by freedom fighters including those who were business men as part of Bombay Plan. Radical thinkers and others under the leadership of Tarkunde had prepared the People's Plan that emphasized on the role of government to bring industrialization. The role of thinkers like Jawaharlal Nehru, Rammanohar Lohia and others in the socialist group of the Congress were also providing ideological arguments in favor of public sector while B. R. Ambedkar had submitted a memorandum demanding dominant position to the public sector to achieve state socialism. Thus, there was sufficient ground for the development and expansion of public sector till 1991 when neo-colonial policies were implemented in which this sector was given a tepid treatment.

The economic history of India would show how public enterprises were established by the British during famines to aid and help the victims. The industrial policy of the independent government particularly Jawaharlal Nehrus' 1948 policy was a land mark for igniting the spirit of industrialization and modernization in a newly independent country. The Congress party had gone a step

further in passing a resolution in their Awadi congress to initiate socialism through the implementation of industrial policy of 1956 with commanding heights prearranged for public sector. There were only 5 PSEs in 1951 and the number had reached 244 by 1990. But, the reforms introduced by PV NarasimhaRaos' government have weakened the PSEs and private investment was allowed with sky as the limit to achieve a turnaround in the economy. The left parties and some Congressmen had expressed apprehensions the way the economy was made private oriented. But, the philosophy of neoliberalism seemed to have guided the privatization of existing public sector units and disinvestment of minority stakes in some public sector units including the Navaratnas began in 1992.

There seems to be a rethinking on the need for public enterprises in India. The Prime Minister in his address to the conference of chief executives of public enterprises in March 2007 said that "the revitalization of our public sector is an integral part of our strategy of promoting "inclusive growth". We regard the public sector truly as an important source of R&D in our industrial sector". Thus, the indicators that were used to make the PSEs as scapegoats have turned upside down to prove that almost all the PSE units are not only making profits, but substantially contributing to the revenue of the government through taxes and surpluses. For instance, out of 231 PSEs in 2001 around 100 units were making

marginal losses but, the overall profit of all PSEs was estimated to be Rs. 38233 crores and realized profits after paying all taxes, payments, etc came to Rs 17903 crores. The situation has substantially changed by 2010-2011 when only 220 units were there and employed a capital investment of Rs. 949499 crores and obtained an overall profit of Rs. 22763 crores. The contribution to the exchequer through taxes was Rs. 45303 crores and realized profit of Rs. 51002 crores. The loss making units have come down to around 60 in sectors that are crucial for the society and economy.

The evaluation of public enterprises by the financial ratios created by Business managers does not take in account how the prices of the PSE are determined. The prices of most of the units including the Oil companies till recently were guided by the administered prices. The administered prices are calculated taking into consideration several issues including the welfare of the people. For instance, the price of a life saving drug manufactured in a PSE as compared to a private company is not based solely only on the unit costs. It is necessary to look at the economics of PSEs where high depreciation cost that includes not only plant and machinery but also social overhead capital as per norms are invested that makes the margins lower compared to private units. R. Nagraj has found in one of his studies that over the last 40 years, public sector prices never exceeded the overall price level and in 2003-4, the relative price stood just 83 percent of what it was in 1960-61. It means the public sector prices are growing slower than the overall price levels of the economy as a whole. If the implicit subsidies are taken into consideration in the


calculation of inflation, the role of the public goods and services to the society will be evident as substantial. Further, some of the PSEs are the ones that were making losses in the private sector and got into the government sector to provide social protection to the workers, as a model employer. For instance, the nationalization of National Textiles comes under this category.

The international economic experience has provided several lessons to our policy makers. Generally, the regulatory bodies like RBI are given the credit for the stability of the Indian economy during the economic crisis of 2008. But, the role played by the PSEs that have substantially contributed to the GDP, trade and industrial peace is not taken into consideration for such an estimate. It is true that the autonomy given to the PSEs and the fact that the international exposure and strategic advantage of being technologically advanced in the manufacturing sector have been of advantage to our PSEs. Yet, the government has introduced a policy called Disinvestment of Public Sector units in 1992 and is institutionalized with a separate Department of Disinvestment now. If we look at the controversies that are embroiled some of the important privatization bids like BALCO, VSNL, Centaur hotel and 17 other hotels of Tourism Corporation, etc, the intentions behind the disinvestment policy would be clear. In spite of the disagreement on the method, the successive governments have gone ahead with disinvestment in all the PSEs particularly in the Maharatnas like ONGC. It is found that out of the total disinvestment of Rs. 82199 crores as on 2011-12, the total amount during the first 15

years was Rs. 47832 crores making the remaining amount in just six years notwithstanding the protest from Left parties and others.

Interestingly, the privatization was facilitated by the Apex court in a land mark judgment in BALCO case in December 2001. It is said, "thus apart from the fact that the policy of disinvestment cannot be questioned as such, the facts herein show that fair, just and equitable procedure has been followed in carrying out their disinvestment". The public memory is very short and some critics know how this judgment and the subsequent developments in privatization enabled the owner of BALCO into developing as a giant in a short period to help articulate policies of the government that have created tensions in central India, Odisha and elsewhere.

**Acharya Javadekar**  
**A Satyagrahi Socialist**



G. P. Pradhan

**Price: Rs. 20/-**  
**Janata Trust**  
*D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir  
Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.*



## **GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.**

**(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)**

**REGISTERED OFFICE**

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,  
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

**TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232**

**Website: [gannondunkerley.com](http://gannondunkerley.com)**

**E-mail: [gdho1@mtnl.net.in](mailto:gdho1@mtnl.net.in)**

**GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.**

**GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.**

**OFFICES AT:**

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD  
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**



Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

# janata

Vol. 67 No. 27  
July 29, 2012

**Regional leaders in demand**

Kuldip Nayar

**The Role of Bureaucracy**

Sandeep Pandey

**Gujarat: Myth and reality**

Bhalchandra Mungekar

**Stop this madness**

Pannalal Surana

**Class Struggle of  
the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

Amaresh Misra

**Celebrating Harmony**

Ram Puniyani

**Mrinaltai**

Vibhuti Patel

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

## The games Pawar plays

S.Viswam

The Congress-NCP(Nationalist Congress Party) combine at both central and state levels is currently being visited with an inter-alliance crisis whose direction is crystallizing slowly. At the time of writing, which is mid-week, there is an element of uncertainty over the outcome as the pressure-play is yet to exhaust itself. The cat may jump either way. The crisis may end in the parting of ways between the two alliance partners, with the NCP pulling out of the central and Maharashtra governments but extending external support to both, or a total break-up. The latter seems unlikely as the NCP leadership has said it has no intention of destabilizing the UPA. The former is a distinct possibility if, and this is a big if, the current efforts by the Congress to appease the NCP do not bear fruit. In either case, the crisis will well illustrate the kind of subtle and not-so-subtle political games Sharad Pawar plays to make himself and his party relevant on the large chess-board of Maharashtra and pan-Indian politics.

The drama that Sharad Pawar and his colleague Praful Patel have been staging in the national capital in the

last two weeks is targeted more at the audience in Maharashtra than in New Delhi. However, in order to attract focused attention to his political strategy, Pawar has been hinting at some demands as if his and his party's grievances have sprung overnight. It is difficult to believe that Pawar and his party did not entertain these grievances for the last eight years of its association with the UPA. It is this thought that inspires the belief that a deeper game is being played. The first demand, namely that the NCP supremo should be elevated as No.2 in the Union Cabinet in succession to Pranab Mukherjee, was dismissed by the party itself as one unworthy of such a senior national leader as Pawar. Other demands were projected as more weighty. They included the creation of a coordinating committee to facilitate greater consultation and understanding among the coalition partners, a more inclusive political system which allows for consultations on a wider variety of issues like appointment of governors, nominations to the Rajya Sabha and even the vice-chairmen of the upper house. Presently, it was claimed on behalf of the NCP that the coalition

partners were being treated, instead of as equals, as the Congress Party's servants.

*Between the lines*

## Regional leaders in demand

**Kuldip Nayar**

Alongside, it was also made known that there was greater need for redressing the NCP grievances in Maharashtra where the two parties are partners for the last 13 years. The coalition, it was claimed, had suddenly become shaky because the new chief minister Prithviraj Chavan was trying to marginalise the alliance partner. Chavan was flouting long-held traditions, it was contended, by ignoring the NCP cabinet colleagues while taking important decisions, and by taking the NCP support for granted. The Congress and the new chief minister had failed to protect the NCP ministers from wild allegations, by both Congress party and Opposition MLAs, of amassing assets disproportionate to their income and by cornering funds from the infamous multi-crore irrigation scam.

Simultaneously, there were sudden signs of a large group of Congress MLAs raising a banner of revolt against the chief minister in the form of a complaint to the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress President Manikrao Thakre. The letter referred to the chief minister's alleged tardiness in clearing infrastructure projects, delay in filling administrative posts and in sanctioning development projects. Though not on the surface, there were indications that the NCP-promoted crisis at both the central and state levels was interlinked, and that there was some collusion between elements in the Congress and the NCP, the chief minister being the common target of the two parties. These elements want Prithviraj Chavan to be replaced by a leader more acceptable to the NCP and

*(Continued on Page 3)*

President in India is only a constitutional head. He or she draws authority from the elected parliament and state assemblies. Yet the office became a point of contest because both the Congress and the BJP, the two main political parties, wanted to test the waters before the 2014 general elections. The Congress has proved that its support, including that of allies, is intact. Its candidate Pranab Mukherjee, former Finance Minister, has become India's 13th President. The BJP showed, however, chinks in its armour and balloted only half of the polled votes. P.A. Sangma, a northeast tribal leader, was its candidate. Yet the results of presidential election should not be the basis of assessment for next parliamentary polls because elections to the Lok Saba are 22 months away. True, the Congress has lost a lot of ground since the 2009 elections in which it secured 207 seats and formed the government. The party's image has been tarnished by several corrupt deals which have come to light in the last couple of years. The Congress has also been hit by the adverse fallout of sliding economy and the rising living cost. If the Congress could improve economy and bring down prices, it might be in the reckoning. Public memory is short and therefore the voters can be influenced by the atmosphere obtaining at that time. It might be indeed difficult for the party to repair numerous dents on its machinery. Were the Manmohan Singh government to give a sense of direction and shed indolence which has crept in governance, the Congress

would count. The party's advantage is that its rival, the BJP, has not benefited from the Congress loss. BJP leader L.K. Advani has been frank enough to admit that his party too has not endeared itself with the people. The problem with the BJP has been that it has reacted to the situation created but failed to take the bull by its horns. The party has looked more negative than positive. It has been willing to strike but afraid to wound, probably realizing that it is no position to replace the government. People reeling under the rigorous conditions have wanted relief, not a mere statement after statement to analyse how the nation went wrong without the party offering any concrete proposal for improvement. The argument that the BJP is not in the government to make the difference is only a lame excuse which does not impress the electorate. And all the time the party lives in the shadow of the RSS which speaks too often to emphasise that the power lies with it. By appointing bumbling Niting Gadkari as party chief and then persisting with him for the second term may have satisfied the ego of Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS chief, but it has not gone down well, either with the BJP followers or the party's well wishers. They have, in fact, taken to heart the humiliation heaped over Advani who has built the BJP from the scratch. Since both the Congress and the BJP look like the parties of yesterday, engrossed in their petty quarrels and pettier politics, they may not improve upon their present strength in the Lok Sabha. The BJP may, however, do slightly better. But

even this may not happen if there is any truth in the news that Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi, who is always on his ego trip, is the BJP candidate for the post of prime minister in 2014 elections. It is not because of the Muslims' opposition to him, but because India cannot hold its head high in the comity of nations if its prime minister is a person whose hands are soaked with blood. Modi did not have even an iota of sensitivity to say sorry or apologize for his complicity in the killing of Muslims. With Modi as the prime ministerial candidate, no political party will touch the BJP. With this being the case, the party may well be all by itself in the next parliament which looks like a hung house. Even the present complexion of the BJP-led front, the National Democratic Alliance, may collapse. Let the BJP be not under any illusion. Modi's candidature is like blowing the bugle of Hindutva which a secular India cannot accept. When it comes to the Congress, its leading allies are with it because of the government's handouts. It is not a secret that both Mualayam Singh's UP and Nitish Kumar's Bihar have come around after huge financial packages that the Manmohan Singh government has promised. Worst is the use of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to threaten some chief ministers who were not toeing the line on the presidential election. One specific example is that of Nagaland's chief minister. Sangma, although after losing, has made certain allegations. The government or the media cannot dismiss them as an expression of frustration after defeat. There should be a judicial inquiry to probe the charges. Sangma has said on record in public that "economic packages have been given in a big way. Why was Bihar given Rs 57,000 crore and Uttar Pradesh Rs 27,000 crore?

There were threats. Be it Mayawati, Mulayam Singh Yadav and chief ministers of Nagaland and Sikkim—"there are cases against you, so vote for us'." Even the age-old ally of the Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), led by central minister Sharad Pawar, has been found asking a price. He does not want inquiry into the NCP-held portfolios of Irrigation in Maharashtra. In the past decade, the state has spent Rs 42,500 crore on several projects but has failed to increase the area under irrigation by more than even five per cent. Moreover, an amount of Rs 75,000 crore is required to complete pending projects, which have been languishing for periods ranging from five years to three decades. The Congress has unabashedly done everything to

---

*(Continued from Page 2)*

more amenable to accommodating NCP's long-term political concerns that are tied up with Pawar's own ambitions.

More than this, several theories abound in regard to the larger and deeper game that Sharad Pawar is playing. There has always been a tendency to read deeper meanings into Pawar's actions on the basis of his track record as "a shrewd and wily politician". Now, it is claimed by political pundits in New Delhi that he is actually gearing up for a major role in securing benefits for the NCP - and himself - in the run-up to the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, that he is promoting a mechanism for facilitating the emergence of a third front of non-Congress non-BJP parties, and that his immediate goal is to create a new precedent in coalition politics by securing for himself one of the top four jobs in the government, home, finance, external affairs and defence, portfolios which are traditionally held by the coalition's dominant partner.

placate Pawar. It is no surprise to see that the Manmohan Singh government is cajoling other allies to keep the coalition going. The Congress does not realize that it is further losing its stock and enabling the BJP to be more acceptable, although the latter too offered packages and used CBI to keep its flock together when it was in power. Acts of omission and commission by both the Congress and the BJP have made the regional parties larger than their size. They too are increasingly conscious of their importance. The 2014 elections may be fought regionally. Both the Congress and the BJP will have to look for regional leaders in their ranks. Regrettably, the country is short of leaders. This is its tragedy.

---

More importantly, his focus is on enhancing NCP's clout as a regional party capable of calling the shots in the post-2014 scenario. Another bizarre theory being floated is that Pawar wants a change of portfolio at the centre to escape charges of non-performance ahead of the projected monsoon failure and an impending drought!

Whatever Pawar's game plan, he has laid good foundations for its success by staying away from two cabinet meetings and making public his grievance that he is not being treated with the respect and consideration his stature demands. This means that he will be appeased only by some gesture more meaningful than the PM's statement that he is a valued colleague and a tower of strength for the UPA. The tower is leaning to a side somewhat currently. How, when and in what manner it will upright itself is the subject of extraordinary interest currently.

# The Role of Bureaucracy

**Sandeep Pandey**

Today the most important executive at the national level in our system of governance is the Prime Minister (PM), at the state level it is Chief Minister (CM) but when it comes to the district level it is the District Magistrate (DM). The clear implication of this is that we have not allowed decentralisation of democracy to take place. It is not the people's representatives but the bureaucracy which is in charge of things at the lower echelons of power. Some will claim that it is not merely at the lower levels but the bureaucracy is in control even at the topmost level even though it may not give that impression.

The democracy in our country is hostage to the bureaucracy. While sometimes the politicians are able to serve their vested interests by using the bureaucracy often the bureaucracy manipulates the politicians to get things done their way. Most often they work hand in gloves because it suits the interest of both. Even though most actions have to be executed by the bureaucrats, it is very rare that a bureaucrat gets punished for an illegitimate action. The politician may end up paying the price for it as they have to face the people in elections at regular intervals.

The bureaucrats are experts who can find ways of getting things done where there doesn't seem to be a way out and find obstacles for not getting certain things done depending on either the fancies of their masters or their own idiosyncrasies. Politicians look up to them to find ways for getting specific impossible

things done or for stalling seemingly innocuous things which should get done in normal course. As they happen to be the smartest of the educated lot having cleared the toughest competitive examinations they can put their brain to such use. In fact the hallmark of a successful bureaucrat is that s(he) should be able to do things so smartly that they don't get caught.

A lot of them start as young idealists who want to serve their society and country but as they grow through the system they become compliant. The very few who are able to maintain their idealism, get marginalised.

Compared to their political masters they enjoy better benefits from the system and are less accountable to the people. Indices of comparison could be the salaries, the perquisites, residences, staff that they get at public expense. Since they work behind the scenes, especially the senior most ones, they are also spared the public wrath when and if things go wrong.

The bureaucrats are not as accessible as politicians. The senior bureaucrats have offices in secretariat where an ordinary citizen cannot enter because a 'pass' is required for this. Now this 'pass' is made only when the office of bureaucrat informs the office at the entrance gate, which means unless the bureaucrat wants to meet the citizen the citizen cannot meet her. These are supposed to be public servants drawing salaries from the taxes collected from ordinary people.

Even the ministers have offices inside these secretariats but people can at least meet them at their residences. Meeting a bureaucrat at his residence is unthinkable. Hence the bureaucrats have created an elite class of themselves which is contrary to the idea of democracy.

The bureaucrats have made the system of governance so complicated that there are only three ways in which a person get her work done in the present system. She can pay a bribe, pull strings or put collective pressure of some organised group. Lately, the right to information law has opened a window where an ordinary citizen can intervene and get things done without resorting to any of the abovementioned three methods, but then, only less than one percent of our people are using the RTI Act. Even here the bureaucrats seem to possess some invisible power which they use to override the Act. In a number of cases information sought by applicants is not shared but the Information Commission doesn't punish the bureaucrats according to the law. The bureaucrats are often able to justify their undemocratic decisions and actions in the name of exigency or expediency and quite easily get away with it. They seem to enjoy certain immunity. It is interesting that when a bureaucrat indulges in corruption, or is guilty of irregularity or unnecessarily delays a decision it is not viewed as obstruction to performing duty but when a citizen protests against any of these he becomes liable for attracting the section on obstructing a government servant from performing her duty.

A bureaucrat working against the interest of state or public is never booked under sedition law, it is only ordinary citizens protesting against the public loot by bureaucrat-politician-corporate-mafia nexus that are labeled as naxalites and charged with waging war against the state.

In spite of an independent government for six and a half decades and supposedly being a great economic, military power and biggest democracy on earth we fare abysmally low on human development indices. It is the bureaucracy which has to take the blame largely for this because they are the executive. In any other setting they would have been penalised for non-performance or bad performance. But they have given themselves salary raise and other benefits comparable to private sector. They are taking the country for a ride.

The Constitution has envisaged a role for bureaucracy only at the central and state government levels. At the panchayat level the article 243 envisages an autonomy where the Gram Sabha is entitled to take decisions regarding development planning and social justice programmes. However, the district and higher level bureaucrats give scant regard to the people's representatives at the panchayat level and do not give them the respect they deserve. Hence they are the biggest obstacle to the implementation of democracy at the grassroots that ensures participation of each and every citizen in the decision making process. This kind of participative democracy is not possible either at the state legislature or the central parliament level.

If we are to be a democracy we have to get rid of the colonial hangover and overhaul the bureaucracy.

## Gujarat: Myth and reality

**Bhalchandra Mungekar**

A war of words has erupted between the chief ministers of Bihar and Gujarat. Bihar's chief minister Nitish Kumar has slammed Narendra Modi for taking potshots at the state's slow socio-economic growth. The altercation began with Modi saying that caste politics has ruined states like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Hitting back, Nitish has said that Modi should look at the conditions in his own state before criticising others. For the last several years, Modi has been successful in projecting his "vibrant Gujarat" as a role model of economic growth and himself as "Vikas Purush". Though one must give due credit to Modi for his effective skills in making projections, one must also critically analyse this "growth story of Gujarat" based on facts and figures. Regretfully, as one examines the facts since Modi came to power in Gujarat in 2001, the story appears to be hollow and, at times, contrary to what is being projected.

First, about the rate of economic growth. During 1995-2000 and 2001-10, Gujarat increased its annual rate of growth from 8.01 percent to 8.68 percent. But so is the case with other major states such as Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. In fact, Gujarat was ranked second after Rajasthan (8.34 percent) in the first period and third after Uttarakhand (11.81 percent) and Haryana (8.95 percent) in the second period. What is remarkable, Bihar and Orissa, the two most backward and poverty-stricken states, have also shown growth pick up from 4.70 percent and 4.42

percent in the first period to 8.02 percent and 8.13 percent in the second period. Even smaller states like Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh have registered growth of 11.01 percent and 8.96 percent, respectively. During 2001-04, the rate of industrial growth for Gujarat was 3.95 percent, and during 2005-09, it was 12.65 percent. In isolation, this appears to be a phenomenal jump, but not so when compared to some other states. During these sub-periods, industrial growth for Orissa was 6.4 percent and 17.53 percent; for Chhattisgarh 8.10 percent and 13.3 percent; and for Uttarakhand 18.84 percent and 11.63 percent. Thus, the hitherto industrially backward states have far surpassed Gujarat. In FDI, too, Gujarat has not been a leading state. During 2006-10, Gujarat signed MoUs worth Rs 5.35 lakh crore with potential of 6.47 lakh jobs. But Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu with Rs 4.20 lakh crore and Rs 1.63 lakh crore worth MoUs, expect about 8.63 lakh and 13.09 lakh jobs. To top it all, Chhattisgarh and Orissa have signed MoUs worth Rs 3.61 lakh crore and Rs 2.99 lakh crore, more than Gujarat without much fanfare and Modi's much-hyped industrial summits. In the area of credit-deposit ratio, Gujarat is far behind other major states. In 2010, Gujarat's share in total deposits of the scheduled commercial banks was 4.70 percent, as against 5.42 percent, 6.20 percent, 6.34 percent and 26.60 percent for Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra, respectively. The share of Gujarat in total credit disbursed by these commercial banks was 4.22 percent; while the same for Maharashtra,

Karnataka and Tami Nadu was 29.75 percent, 6.71 percent and 9.61 percent respectively. The amount of per capita deposit and per capita credit for Gujarat was Rs 37,174 and Rs 24,268; while for Tamil Nadu, it was Rs 42,580 and Rs 47,964; Karnataka Rs 49,598 and Rs 38,154; and Maharashtra Rs 1,10,183 and Rs 89,575. Even Kerala did better than Gujarat with Rs 43,890 and Rs 27,912.

In terms of per capita income (PCI), in 2011, Gujarat ranked sixth among major states with PCI of Rs 63,996, after Haryana (Rs 92,327), Maharashtra, (Rs 83,471), Punjab (Rs 67,473), Tamil Nadu (Rs 72,993) and Uttara-khand (Rs 68,292). What about inclusive growth in Gujarat? Though Gujarat, with 31.8 percent people below the poverty line did better than Maharashtra and Karnataka, it still lagged behind Kerala, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana, where poverty levels were 19.7 percent, 20.9 percent, 22.9 percent and 24.1 percent, respectively. On three important social indicators, viz life expectancy at birth (LEB), mean years of schooling (MYS) and school life expectancy (SLE), Gujarat is far behind some other states. In Gujarat, the LEB during 2002-06 was 64.1 years and it ranked ninth among major Indian states. In the areas of MYS and SLE, during 2004-05, it ranked seventh and ninth, respectively. Kerala ranked first in all three indicators. Even Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka performed much better than Gujarat. With respect to Human Development Index (HDI), Gujarat's story is devastating. The HDI for Gujarat, in 2008, was 0.527 and it ranked 10 {+t} {+h} among major states. Kerala stood first

(HDI: 0.790), Himachal Pradesh scored 0.652, Punjab 0.605, Maharashtra 0.572 and Haryana 0.552. With respect to three HDI components - income, health and education - Gujarat does not present a shining story. In this respect, states like Kerala took the lead in every sector, while Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal did better than Gujarat. It is found that inequality with respect to income, education and health is higher in Gujarat than some of the major states. Shockingly, in terms of hunger - as revealed by the 'State Hunger Index 2008' - Gujarat ranked 13th among 17 big states and worse than Orissa. In Gujarat, the percentage

of women suffering from anaemia has risen from 46.3 percent in 1999 to 55.5 percent in 2004, and amongst children from 74.5 percent to 80.1 percent. The conditions of dalits and women have deteriorated during the last decade; while those of Muslims and tribals are still worse. Thus, Gujarat's growth story as claimed by Modi is more a myth than reality.

But it is also imperative that other states in the country make concerted efforts to secure higher and also inclusive growth, rather than getting enamoured with the Gujarat growth story. Also, for the people of Gujarat, it's time for introspection and putting right efforts in the direction of making Gujarat a truly "vibrant" state.

---

## Inter-State river issue

A central government Congress minister says that the Prime Minister will not interfere in the affairs of the Mullai Periyar river dispute, since he has no power in this regard. He also says that the Tamil Nadu state government can approach the law courts for getting justice if Kerala government resisted the closing up of the holes, caused in the dam during strength check up by expert committees. That is a regrettable statement.

If a river flows through many states it does not belong to any one state. All the states through which the river flows have their own rights in that river. In the case of the Mullai Periyar river the Kerala government cannot seek sole ownership rights. They declare that they will break the Mullai Periyar dam, can build another dam in that river and they will not accept any declarations of the safety of Mullai Periyar dam by the

courts or experts, they are also interfering and stopping the normal repair works in the dam.

If Tamil Nadu people also wake up and indulge in the same kind of agitations, what will be the result? This part of the country will turn into a riotous land.

So the central government must act quickly. It must take control of all inter-state rivers, create irrigation canals. For this purpose "a land army" should be formed. Engineers, construction workers and youth should be enrolled into that land army. This work should be done on war-footing. State governments must forgo their rights on the rivers, which are flowing through their territory; we should not allow the excess flood waters wastefully flow into the oceans through these rivers.

–**Narana Natesan**, President, Tamil Nadu Socialist Party (India)

# Mrinaltai

Vibhuti Patel

On 17th July 2012, Mrinal Gore passed away. With her demise, an era of women freedom fighters with feminist sensitivities in praxis is over.

Inspired by Quit India Movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, 14-year old young girl, Mrinal became active in the freedom movement. Drawn to political and social causes, she gave up a promising career in medicine in order to organise the poorest and most powerless.

She married her comrade, Keshav Gore and when he died at a young age in 1958, she founded Keshav Gore Smarak Trust which provided democratic platform to progressive forces for debate and discussion, meetings and public gatherings, documentation and institutional base for Samajwadi Mahila Sabha, Bombay Nurses' Association, Anganwadi Workers' Union, Swadhar and innumerable issue-based action fronts involving liberals, socialists and left groups.

In the sixties she worked as corporator and then as legislator. Her agitations were always related to basic issues—water, kerosene, inflation—and they were always fierce. But there was no violence ever, neither in her actions nor in her words. Even friends weren't spared, if she was convinced they were wrong. She was revered and respected by the ministers and chief ministers of her time. She believed

in transparency and social accountability in public life.

## Legendary Political Persona

She brought the issue of safe drinking water in the political agenda of local self government body of Mumbai and earned a title of "Paniwali Bai". A political reformer by instinct, Mrinaltai helped to set up in September 1972 the Anti-Price Rise Committee, which mobilised the largest-ever turnout of women on the streets ever seen since the Independence movement. At the same time, Mrinaltai also worked within the Socialist Party and outside, to get the government to focus on drought in rural Maharashtra.

The year 1975 was an eventful one for Mrinal Gore. It saw Indira Gandhi's government impose an internal Emergency and suspend the constitutional rights of the people. Mrinaltai went underground to guide the protests against the Emergency. She was arrested in December that year and placed initially under solitary confinement. Once the Emergency was withdrawn in 1977, she was elected on a Janata Party ticket to Parliament, winning by the highest margin of votes in the entire state of Maharashtra.

She supported renaming of Marathwada University to Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathada University. When I led a team to 48 riot torn villages in Marathwada in connection with renaming issue and our team prepared report on atrocities committed on Dalits, she

suggested my name to several social organizations and journals so that our report got due publicity.

In 1979, when I was staying at Borivali, we had an acute problem of water and transport, we invited Mrinaltai and we started getting supply of water and later on bus service also. She was always sure of herself and her action. She made rapid appraisal of the ground reality, surveyed pros-n-cons of the scenario, collected documentary evidences and acted after doing lot of homework. Her demand of community based day care centers for working women's children was preceded by survey of working women who reported that it was extremely difficult to carry infants in overcrowded suburban trains.

## Champion of Women's Rights

Since 1977, every year women's rights activists of all hues choose a common theme for commemoration of March 8. Mrinaltai was always there. Now we will miss her the most on International Women's Day. Whether it was in 1980-Anti rape struggles, in 1981-movement against domestic violence, in 1982-solidarity and starting of community kitchens for textile workers who were on strike, in 1983-Ant dowry movement, in 1984-Dharmandhata Virodhi Mahila Kruti Samiti (Women's Front against Communalism), in 1985-Campaign for housing rights (Nagari Nivara Sangharsh Samiti), in 1986-fight

against draconian population policy, in 1987-campaign against Sati, in 1988-introduction of bill for Regulation of Pre-natal Diagnostic Test Act; Mrinaltai took active interest in the discussions and participated in actions along with her colleagues. At times, she invited us to discuss the technical details of new issues such as amniocentesis, legal reforms, and harmful contraceptives so that she could effectively argue the points in the legislative assembly.

The 1980s found her working with the emerging feminist groups and participating actively in protests against rape and dowry, caste atrocities, sex selection and communalism. A natural organiser, Mrinaltai employed a large spectrum of protest actions to get the issue across - from street marches to sit-ins and fasts.

Till late 1980s, she used to commute by local train in women's compartment. If trains were crowded, she would stand quietly in train without making fuss. Once, I saw her boarding the train in which I was sitting with my 5-year daughter in my lap. Out of respect for Mrinaltai, I got up. My daughter, Lara asked me, "Why are you getting up?" I told her, "We must give seat to Mrinaltai." Lara said, "Is she your sister?" I told her, "Mrinaltai is every woman's elder sister." All women in the compartment started smiling.

The first ever bill in the country on sex-selective abortions of female fetuses was moved by Mrinaltai as MLA in a Nagpur session of the Maharashtra Assembly in 1987.

### **Secular Humanism**

While talking about secular

humanism of Mrinaltai, Ramlath, a feminist activist states, "I had met Mrinal Gore few years ago in her house for a photo shoot. Since she always had a few activists by her side, I asked would it be possible not to have anyone in the room while doing the photo shoot. She laughed and took me to a room upstairs and asked me to close the door. I must have spent some 45 minutes with her...She became a lot more relaxed...started talking about less serious stuff...asked me about photography/lighting, wanted to know about the light meter I was using and of course, some personal questions...during our conversation I mentioned about the problems women like me face while finding a house in Bombay because of my Muslim identity, she said she had no idea brokers in Bombay had started asking for passports/pan cards and other documents in order to establish one's religious identity. She immediately called someone and asked whether he could help me find an apartment to rent....one could see pain in her eyes when she talked about the greed and hatred in this city..."

The huge Nagari Niwara Parishad Project in Goregaon East is a living memorial for Gore and her work. She persuaded the state government to offer land it had acquired under the Urban Land Ceiling Act to the really poor and needy. Local politicians who feared that Gore will get a readymade vote bank delayed the project. Yet, when the homes were ready after two decades, they were still the most affordable. They were not big flats, but self-contained spacious units built neatly atop Dindoshi Hills. While the younger generation may not remember this, their parents will remain grateful that they could finally own a home in

Mumbai, thanks only to Mrinal Gore.

### **Reverence of Feminists**

Veteran feminist Ammu Abraham (of Women's Centre-Mumbai) who, like Mrinaltai, gave up a promising career in medicine to plunge full time into organising the poor and the marginalized in the 1970s, has this to say about Mrinaltai, "I remember her with affection. As one of the activists in Mumbai who met her at various meetings at the office near Mantralay, I interacted with her quite a lot, on March 8th leaflets, Maharashtra State Women's Commission and other campaigns. While there was a lot of common ground between us, we did not always agree entirely on some issues, but she was never one to take that personally. One of the most generous spirits associated with the women's movement in Mumbai and Maharashtra has passed away. Hard to say goodbye."

I had known Mrinaltai from my college days in the early 1970s and she inspired us, social activists of Vadodara to start Anti Price Rise Women's Committee in 1974 when I was an undergraduate student. When I relocated to Mumbai in 1977 and was active in the united front of women's organisations, I had to visit Mrinaltai's residence-cum-office regularly for preparation, translation, cyclostyling, posting of circulars, resolutions and leaflets. She always welcomed me with warm smile. While working, if I told her that I wanted to go out for short time; she would immediately retort, "I know, you are hungry." And she would announce, "Make poha, Vibhuti is starved." And I would get poha and sometimes Jebebi also. I was so touched by her hospitality, sensitivity, generosity of heart, open door policy



and decent sense of humour.

Mrinaltai always respected collective wisdom of women's movement. She invited young feminists to discuss contemporary issues and introduced best practices of new groups in her organization. To provide institutional support to women in distress, she started Swadhar in mid-1980s at Keshav Gore Smarak Trust. Here she provided child care centre, library for poor students, counseling centre and meeting place for all progressive forces. She was the first one to launch struggle against sexual harassment of nurses in hospitals and formed trade union of nurses under the leadership of Kamaltai Desai.

Prof. Lakshmi Lingam, Deputy Director, TISS and member of Consultative Committee of Sophia Centre for women's Studies and Development avers, "Mrinaltai is a truly powerful inspiring woman. She came across as a person with determination in thought and tenderness in the heart. She spoke in feminist meetings whether it is the sex determination tests, violence against women, 73rd & 74th amendments, women's policies of the Government or the support for working women, with so much of clarity and sense of humor. She truly represented to many of us a person who had the ability to straddle the old and the new and reach across generations with sense of sisterhood and modesty. I did not have any personal rapport with her, but met her in various meetings and shared a hand shake or a glance of acknowledgement. These are impressions that will stay with us for a life time and also provide a beacon as to how we conduct

ourselves with fellow sister travelers in the movement. Long live Mrinaltai and her like!"

### **Legendary Leader**

In 1988, her sixtieth birth anniversary programme attracted thousands of social activists, trade union workers, women activists with their children. By then, her health had deteriorated due to cancer and all of us who supported her work had made contribution to purchase a car for Mrinaltai.

In 2002, we invited her to inaugurate Workshop on Sexual Harassment at workplace and Round Table on Women Empowerment Policy, 2001. In 2003, Mrinaltai invited me at Swadhar to conduct a session on Gender Audit of Budgets. In 2007, when she came for Mahila Milan programme at TISS, Mrinaltai had become really weak. But she was as spirited as ever. She attended rally of women's organizations in solidarity with the victims of rape and massacre of Dalit girl, Priyanka Bhootmange, and her family members in Kharalanji.

Mrinaltai was a principled politician, honest to the core and great organizer. She stuck out her neck in the midst of adverse circumstances because of courage of conviction. Her name was synonymous with any fight for justice and social accountability in public life. She provided her visionary leadership in the area of political struggles, civic amenities, dalit rights, women's rights, housing issues, Narmada Bachao and innumerable social movements of the marginalized and voiceless sections of society. She was a politician with genuine concern for

masses. Her towering personality became more affable due to her humility and love for humanity.

The chairperson of the Greenpeace International, Lalita Ramdas avers, "Mrinaltai epitomised a generation of feminists who were able to mobilise around an extraordinary range of social and political issues, and thus command attention in mainstream debates. As women and feminists we need to be far more vocal and visible in the public and political domains and dialogues than we are today."

Mrinaltai always encouraged women to be self-dependent. For her, the concerns of Dalits, women, workers, farmers, and tribals were indivisible and demanded a holistic approach. Her politics, consequently, was always inclusive rather than divisive. This was why she could win the affections of diverse sections of people and come to be universally called "Mrinaltai", or elder sister. As veteran feminist and recipient of coveted award "Daughter of Maharashtra" at the hands of Mrinaltai, Manisha Gupte states, "She lives on, especially through her tireless commitment to the people residing in the slums of Mumbai city, and her empathy with women struggling to survive through sky-rocketing prices of household commodities."

I received Citation and Memento from Mrinaltai in a huge function of social activists on 2nd April, 2010. For me, it is most valuable award in my life.

Mrinaltai will remain a constant source of inspiration and role model for many generations of social activists.

## Condemn Oxford School (Bangalore) Management for Humiliating Disadvantaged Children admitted under 25 percent Quota

The outrageous and barbaric act of cutting of tufts of hair of Class I students of the EWS 25% quota at the Oxford English School on Nandini Layout, Bangalore [*The Hindu*, July 18, 2012] deserves the strongest condemnation by all sane persons who are concerned over the fate and future of the constitutional republic, democracy and sheer human decency in India.

The attempt of the school authorities to present this as an 'innocent' act of a student in the crafts class is a shameless ploy to try to escape any punishment. The EWS students had also been discriminated against by their names not being included in the regular register, by their being given uniforms without belts and ties, and by not giving them any homework. This last the school claims is because the EWS children would not be able to cope as they have had no pre-school nursery training and their families will be unable to guide them. So instead of providing remedial assistance to the students, this private school, which will claim reimbursement from the government, is in fact not providing either the environment or the facilities for their education.

This appalling situation is in the first instance the result of the complete inadequacy of the RTE Act 2009. A 25% quota in fee-charging private schools allows EWS students to be targeted, humiliated and isolated. Perhaps this is why the Law Commission had recommended a 50% quota which would have forced private schools to alter

attitudes, curriculum and teaching methods to pedagogically cope with the challenge of changing the elite character of their institutions. Further, restricting the provision of free education only from 6–14 years makes a mockery of the 'right' for the poor, because children from well-to-do families receive school education at least up to 18 years from pre-primary to Class XII. The farcical RTE 2009 excludes free and compulsory pre-primary and secondary education thereby allowing private institutions to discriminate against children only because they come from poor families. This will continue as long as the State promotes privatization and commercialization of education and refuses to respond to the people's need for a state-funded Common Neighbourhood School System.

Finally, the only penalty that RTE Act 2009 provides for is withdrawal of recognition, when what is required

is a complete ban on such managements and the individuals involved in them from engaging in any educational activity whatsoever.

The State has a constitutional obligation to act against such practices. It repeatedly fails to do so because it aligns itself with the oppressors when class, caste, gender, religious, regional, linguistic and disability discrimination and oppression are blatantly practiced and tolerated despite constitutional rights and provisions.

The All India Forum for Right to Education therefore stands in solidarity with the public outrage expressed in protest actions currently taking place in Bangalore. It appeals to its member units and other democratic organizations, groups and individuals to unite in protest against such uncivilized acts of cruelty. Strong and prompt public denunciation alone will compel the State to act.

**Meher Engineer,**

*Chairperson*

All India Forum for Right To Education

**D. Ramesh Patnaik**

*Organising Secretary*

**Madhu Dandavate**

**By**

**B. Vivekanandan**

**Price: Rs. 20/-**

**Janata Trust**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.

## Stop this madness

**Pannalal Surana**

It is a strange, or rather not so strange, spectacle. The protagonists of globalization are taking the Government of India to task for the downslide of the rate of GDP growth. They are avowed advocates of free trade. Shouldn't they be asking questions about the performance of the private enterprises in India and particularly of those in other countries where capitalism has been ruling supreme for the last two centuries. Are they ignorant about the fact that that it was the greed in general and the irresponsible behavior of some leading private players that were the villain of the Great Depression of 1929-30, or of the 2008 economic crisis?

In India, what have the services rendered by the private corporate in cement, steel, drugs and medicine industries where private capital, both indigenous and international, has been allowed complete freedom? Have the quality of products been improved and prices lowered, for the benefit of the consumer whom the free market supposedly considers to be the god to be worshipped? During the last twenty years or so, prices of these commodities have rocketed sky high. While discussing rise and fall in the rate of inflation, the experts and analysts hold primary sector as the main factor. But it is a fact that most significant factor in inflation has been the manufacturing and construction sectors, apart from the fuel sector. Who is responsible for four or five times rise in the prices of oil – any government body or the private owners of extraction of oil the world over?

The auditor firm called Standard and Poor has declared that the ranking of Indian economy has gone down from “stable” to “negative”.

One should not disregard the warning signals from whichever quarter they emanate. But one cannot be blind to the fact that “accredited auditors” of Enron, or Satyam, or Jagmohan Reddy had confessed that they had given false reports about the financial positions of their clients. It is a very saddening feature of free market economy that the regulators that are supposed to be thoroughly objective and impartial, have been indulging in window dressing and perpetrating falsehoods. The whole culture of capitalism is stinking.

The protagonists of free market are raking demands for opening up sectors like retail trade, insurance, pensions, banking, etc. to 100 percent FDI. “Foreign is the savior” seems to be their mantra.

At the behest of WTO, the Government of India enacted Patents Law to extend most favoured position to the “intellectual rights” of the privileged few. And what benefits our poor purchasers of medicines received? All those tricks of the private sector have been the tools of bleeding white all the purchasers of medicines. The slogans: “Foreign is benevolent”, “Foreign capital is the engine of growth” are all wrong and devastating.

The most misused term is “reforms”. In the past, we were

acclaiming Raja Ram Mohan Roy, or Jyotiba Phule as the great reformers. Their efforts were helpful to the multitudes of men and women who were exploited by the wicked customs. During the early twentieth century, there were political reforms which enlarged the franchise (right to vote bestowed on those with lesser incomes or educational qualifications), devolution of powers to provincial governments, etc., - steps to enable more and more unprivileged sections of the people to enjoy fundamental human rights. And now are these protagonists of free trade using that term to demand more and more concentration of economic and financial power in the hands of miniscule minority. This is a great parody.

We, the people of India, will do well to bury the equations like “foreign capital is the savior”. The aim of all our public decisions should be to enlarge scope for small enterprisers in primary and secondary sectors.

Rate of our saving is around 32-34 percent. Investment of this order can certainly accelerate rate of development – not growth. We do not want job-less growth which is sine-quo-non of liberal private globalisation. We want full, meaningful employment of all adult population. We want to protect our environment to save us and the world from the ill-effects of global warming. We want reliable supply of drinking water to all in rural as well as in urban areas; free, qualitative education for all and medical aid to the needy. All

## Opinion

# Manesar: Class Struggle of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

**Amaresh Misra**

this can be achieved not by opening our economy to the multinationals, but by resorting to imaginative and responsible planning. At various levels, more and more people have to be encouraged to participate in planning and decision-making process. We will have to reduce our consumption of fossil fuel so that our imports can be curtailed and trade deficit lowered. Let us not endeavour to outwit other nations. Let us have our all-sided development of economy, education, public health and hygiene along with elimination of caste hierarchies and gender bias. We should have genuine brotherly relations with inhabitants of all the countries under the sun. Let us march ahead towards a more humane society and the world.

We can achieve that by, not by the adventurist acrobatics by a few, but by harnessing collective wisdom of all the people. Let us strengthen bonds of equality. Let us give up madness of “foreign”.

According to the Economic Survey (2011-1012) of the Government Of India annual per capita income of the nation increased from Rs 31,200 in 2006 to Rs 60,972 in 2011 and during the same period annual per capita income of the Government and public sector employees increased from Rs 2,84,057 to Rs 6,66,276.

Per capita income of employees (skilled workers and managerial staff) in the private sector must have increased in the similar manner in the same period.

However, all these employees together constitute not more than 7 percent of labour force in India.

1991, the year that inaugurated new economic policies and the liberalization drive, marked also the emergence of new ideas regarding the management of productive forces. Large Public Sector sections were dismantled. Enormous human and domestic/foreign capital resources were placed in the hands of private corporate players. In the name of fiscal management, State expenditure was sought to be restricted. But perhaps, most importantly, production relations between labour and capital, workers and management, were altered.

Foreign Direct Investment in the manufacturing sector brought in foreigners in management as well. The new management structures—that included Indians and foreigners—were inculcated with a new work ethic that placed growth above workers welfare; but the crucial change rested in the way the new management culture downplayed the cultural sensitivities of the Indian worker.

In a famous case that took place last year in the Honda factory of Haryana’s industrial belt, foreign trained Indian managers refused to allow workers to celebrate *Vishvakarma Pooja*. In the Hindu pantheon *Vishvakarma* is the lord of tools and workers—his birthday is normally a holiday, no less relevant than *Ram Naumi*, *Buddha Jayanti* or the birthday of Prophet Muhammad.

Workers worship their tools on *Vishvakarma Diwas*. In Honda, a worker was assaulted by the supervisor when, the latter tried applying a *teeka* on the former’s head. Indian workers have their own definition of what constitutes ‘hard work’. It includes whiling away time, bonding with fellow workers, and then putting in extra work at the right time. Also, the sense of impersonal hierarchy is alien to Indian workers. They can respect an *angrez* who mingles with them; but they will boycott Indian managers trying to put up foreign airs and indulging in unfamiliar hierarchical behaviour.

Foreign—especially American, German and Japanese personals—were often found dumbfounded by these cultural practices. Because of historic factors—the traditional resistance of the Hindi-Urdu belt to British imperialism, the rugged-peasant masculinity and sense of honour—dubbed mistakenly ‘pre-modern’ by social analysts—the management Vs worker clash was more severe in post-liberalization North Indian factories.

In the 1990s and 2000s, India saw substantial creation of wealth. The culture of malls and new units in service sector and manufacturing, inducted a new working force emerging from Bihar, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. The management culture in force looked more towards casual, contract labour.

Affiliated either to Communists, Congress, and BJP-Shiv Sena—or practicing Dutta Samant type syndicalism—the old Unions were unable to read the modern times. After failing miserably in creating space for casual/contract labour, they started losing their grip over old working class centres as well.

Interestingly, the Gurgaon-NCR based factories flirted at first with CITU and AITUC, the Trade Unions respectively of the CPM and the CPI. The workers—most of them in their twenties—young, restless and ambitious—however, soon grew tired of old negotiating skills of traditional unions. It is symptomatic that last year, the Manesar Maruti-Suzuki plant saw the emergence of a new union with a new, younger leadership. Sonu Gujjar, the erstwhile chief of the union, typified the novel, 21<sup>st</sup> century worker. By presenting the viewpoints of workers through con-calls and other modern techniques, Sonu Gujjar grabbed national headlines. His colleagues wanted their own voice, independent of the management, to be heard.

Indeed this contemporary worker, especially in North India/Hindi-Urdu heartland, was both more rooted and cosmopolitan. Unlike his counterpart of 1970s and 1980s, who hailed mainly from a landless labour, poor peasant or a pauperized proletariat background, the contemporary worker came from middle to upper-middle peasant backdrop. In Indian terms, he belonged to a *khaata-peeta* milieu—he was much more capable of acting on his own. He was part of the North Indian pattidari village community system that ensured both bonding and individuality. He

had learned how to fight while growing up, without getting inflicted with the scars of the *lumpen proletariat*. Averse to slow paced, constitutional ways, he found the quick action recommended by radical Left activists—or ‘on their own’ *marka* angry young men—far more attractive.

This contemporary worker disliked both the detached persona of the foreign manager as well as the philistine, pseudo-personalized approach of Indian managers. He was as impatient with the *taalu-chaalu andaaz* of the foreigners as with the *baniagiri* of Indian executives.

In March 2012, while the Manesar plant was facing wage negotiations between the new Union and the management, two workers shocked the managers with their statistical knowledge. The workers knew exactly that between 2007 and 2011 while the Maruti Suzuki workers’ yearly earnings increased by 5.5 percent, the consumer price index (for the Faridabad centre, Haryana), went up by over 50 per cent. Since 2001, profits for the Maruti Suzuki company increased by 2200 percent!

So in any case, the Maruti Suzuki management was throwing crumbs at the workers. The workers’ salary was in no way, by any yardstick, commensurate with the rise in Company’s profit. Yet the Manesar plant management was not ready to grant even a miniscule wage increase. Here, while contract labor got Rs. 7000 a month, regular workers survived on a mere Rs. 17000. Manesar workers were demanding wage increase of Rs. 15-18000, which the management

was resisting, even when Honda workers were getting similar pay scales.

In this period of global crisis, the Maruti section (Swift and Dzire cars) was contributing more to Maruti Suzuki’s super profits. There seems to be immense pressure on the management to reduce wages in the name of increasing productivity. But why should Indian workers always suffer during a downward spiral cycle of global capitalism?

The problem is that post-liberalization India has no idea of 1857, India’s first war of Independence. The Bengal Army of the East India Company, which remained at the forefront of the war’s long and torturous course, comprised of soldiers from the Haryana, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar belt. They rebelled against what was seen as the insensitivity of a multinational company—the world’s largest that managed a huge country like India plus other colonial stations—towards the sense of dignity, pride and religion of both Hindus and Muslims.

It is imperative to note that the Manesar incident arose following an anti-Dalit, caste slur issued by a supervisor to Jiya Lal, a worker. Then Jat-Gujjar-Tyagi-Dalit workers—belonging to the Haryana region—and UP-Bihar Poorabias—united to give a fitting reply to the miscreants belonging to the management. The management brought in hundreds of bouncers to beat workers to submission. In fact, the official statement of the Maruti Suzuki Workers’ Union, states that the bouncers started the fire that killed a senior manager.

## Celebrating Harmony and Peace

**Ram Puniyani**

So class solidarity overcame caste divisions—a similar phenomenon had occurred during 1857.

Both 1857 and Manesar incidents arose out of cultural slights inflicted by an insensitive foreign/part-foreign management. At the other end of the spectrum, it can be seen that like the Manesar incident, the cultural aspect of 1857 carried a slew of wage related issues, and other socio-economic grievances, nursed by soldiers against the British East India Company.

It can be seen clearly that though India runs on the workforce of UP, Bihar, Delhi and Haryana, the people of these regions have historically resisted the homogeneity, uniformity and conformity demanded by global corporate culture. These workers demand their own indigenous-capitalist ethic, different from the west. They are in no mood to comply. After twenty years of enormous liberalization, India is on the threshold of a gigantic working class unrest. Indian people regard economic reform and the English speaking managerial elite with disdain. They have tasted wealth—but they also know that, foreigners and their lackeys have amassed riches a thousand times over. With people of North Indian origin—their culture of constructive violence and non-submission to power intact—leading this battle, the stage is set for new class struggles of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Like the Anna Hazare movement of August 2011, the Manesar incident has taken all political parties by surprise. Their political response system is simply, not attuned to the new, 21<sup>st</sup> century Indian reality.

Communal violence is the sad reality of South Asian states. India in particular has been witnessing this violence more so after the coming of British. British in pursuance of their policy of 'Divide and Rule', introduced communal historiography and sections of population who wanted to preserve their feudal privileges, picked up this version of history and used religion as a cover for their politics. Both Hindu and Muslim communalism, in a way played a supplementary role to the British policy of divide and rule. The communal violence, which has been stalking the streets of India is due to numerous factors and is causing immense suffering to society. Many a social group and many an individuals are doing their bit to ensure that the flames of communal violence are doused and amity prevails in the society.

In this light, it was heartening to note the observance of 'Peace and Harmony' day, on the anniversary of Vasant-Rajab on 1<sup>st</sup> July in Ahmadabad. Vasant Rao Hegiste and Rajab Ali Lakhani were two friends who were working for the amity in the society. In the communal conflagration which broke out in Ahmadabad in the wake of post-partition tragedy, both of them went in the city to restore peace and amity. The crowd, maddened by the feeling of hate, killed them. The day of their martyrdom is being celebrated in Gujarat by various groups. One recalls that there have been many outstanding individuals, thinkers, social activists who have sacrificed their lives on the altar of communal peace. The name of

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi comes to one's mind for his selfless work in the Kanpur violence of 1931. For Gandhi, father of the nation, the Hindu-Muslim amity was on the top of agenda and when the whole nation was celebrating the release from the clutches of colonial powers he was doing his best in the riot ravaged Noakhali and other places. His efforts were superhuman, as he did not care for his safety, what was paramount for him was as to how to restore the sanity amongst the violent mobs. It is because of this that Lord Mountbatten the last Viceroy of British Empire and First Governor General of Independent India called him as the 'one man army'.

One is sure there must be various glorious examples of such superhuman efforts in our community, who need to be remembered with respect. One needs to learn a lot from their values while celebrating their anniversaries. It is all the more important in today's India as communal violence is, unfortunately marching with relentless speed, changing its form and nature constantly. One has seen that since the decade of 1980s the violence in many a north Indian cities, Meerut, Malyana, Bhagalpur and Delhi was in a way revival of this horrendous phenomenon in the Independent India. The massacre in Nellie and Delhi were too dangerous in their extent and damage to human lives. Further down the Mumbai violence of 1992-93 gave us a warning signal that things are worsening on the front of intercommunity relations. This was followed by targeting another

minority, the Christians, and brutal murder of Pastor Stains and later the Kandhmal violence came as yet another eye opener for us.

The root cause of the communal violence is the politics in the name of religion. In this the political, social, economic agenda of vested interests are presented in the language of religion. Unfortunately in India this phenomenon is running parallel to the process of global aims of Imperial powers that in pursuit of their control over oil wells have promoted fundamentalism and terrorism in the name of religion. The imperial power has also demonized one of the major religious communities of the world. This present era has been the one where the deeper process of 'alliance of civilizations' has been undermined and the flagship of the vested interests has been the thesis of 'clash of civilizations', which is a falsification of the reality of the human history. One knows that human society has progressed due to alliance of diverse civilizations and cultures. While the rulers and affluent have been fighting for increasing their power and wealth, the average people of the world have been allying, intermixing with each other leading to high degree of synthesis in all aspects of human culture, be it food habits, clothing, language, literature, architecture, or be it even the religious traditions followed by people. Social interaction is the moving engine of human progress.

The divisive politics in the name of religion begins by changing the paradigm of human understanding from the socio-economic differences to religious ones. The core aspect of human stratification runs around economic and social

factors while the politics in the name of religion presents it as if the differences amongst the practices preached by clergy are the core points of difference. For the last some time the syncretic aspects of society are being undermined and the divisive aspects are being highlighted. The communal politics has the base in the spread of hate other propaganda. This hate other sentiments are the foundation on which innocent people are killed during the carnages. The carnages also polarize communities along religious lines and ghettoization of minorities follows. This ghettoization further traps the communities into becoming inward looking and being further demonized. Today we in India are witnessing a very concerted attempt to marginalize the religious communities.

The way out is very hard and a long struggle to restore the humanism of our society. We, the people of different religious communities have a common heritage and our aspirations for better society are also common. What prevents our efforts for a better society is the hysteria created by religion based politics. This hysteria is created around the emotive issues. There is a dire need to change the paradigm of social thought, the one from identity based issues to the one revolving around the rights and livelihood of weaker sections of society. There is a need to overcome the impact of prevalent myths about minorities and stereotypes about them and strengthening the tradition of syncretism, which is our basic hallmark. There is a need to uphold the values of Bhakti and Sufi traditions, there is need to uphold the values of likes of Gandhi,

Ganesh Shankar Vidyarthi, Vasant-Rajab and their tribe. We do salute this spirit of peace and amity in our traditions and hope this will show us the path to progress and peace in the long run.

## Appeal

Here in Alleppey, it is very clearly decided that the leader of Kerala Swathathra Malsya Thozhilali Federation Dominic was murdered by the CPI(M) members. All except the first accused have to undergo life-long imprisonment. We are waiting for the punishment for the first accused. What have the leaders to say about this murder by the CPI(M) cadres? Is there no end to the criminal violence in politics? This is applicable to every party and trade union. Are we ready to learn from this judgment? Let us once and for all stop Violence in Politics.

—Thomas Kocherry

**Acharya Javadekar**

A Satyagrahi Socialist

by

**G. P. Pradhan**

**Price: Rs. 20/-**

**Janata Trust**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W),  
Mumbai 400 007.



## **GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.**

New Excelsior Building  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, A.K. Nayak Marg,  
Fort, Mumbai - 400 001

TEL: 91-22-2205 1231      FAX: 91-22-2205 1232

TELEGRAMS: "LOOMS" OR "DYNAMIC"

E-MAIL: [gdho@vsnl.com](mailto:gdho@vsnl.com)

**CIVIL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS  
MANUFACTURERS AND TRADERS**

**GANNONS** are specialists in:

**Industrial Structures, Bridges (RCC and Prestressed Concrete), Thermal Power, Fertilizer, Chemical, Paper and Cement Plants, Public Health Engineering works, Piling Foundation & Foundation Engineering. GANNONS are also pioneers in Material Handling works, erection of Mechanical Equipments and Piping and supply of Textile Machinery and Light Engineering items.**

**BRANCHES AT**

**\* AHMEDABAD \* COIMBATORE \* HYDERABAD \* KOLKATA  
\* MUMBAI \* NEW DELHI**

\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*\*\*\*



# janata

**Vol. 67 No. 28**  
August 5, 2012

**Assam and Bodo-Muslim  
Clashes**  
Asghar Ali Engineer

**Priority Issues**  
S. Viswam

**When Dreams die Young**  
Harsh Mander

**Greater Clarity on  
Social Democracy**  
D. K. Giri

**Combustible Northeast**  
Kuldip Nayar

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

## An Apology to A Gentleman Justice

**Mastram Kapoor**

Dear sir,

I owe you an apology for dragging your name in the President's election which I hoped could be an occasion for bringing about a healthy change in the dull political atmosphere of this country. I am sorry, the occasion turned out to be more dull and more sickening in view of the total surrender of the opposition to the will and manipulations of the ruling party.

What I conclude from this sordid drama is that there is an all round crisis, which is not limited to the state management (meaning now facilitating corporate sector) but has extended to the minds of the politicians, academicians and various kinds of intellectuals. No one questioned why in a democracy, there should be a President selected by consensus of party-bosses rather than a President elected in a democratic way. No one raised the point that in no democratic country, the opposition gives smooth walk-over to ruling party's candidate. It seems that the Congress is behaving as if it has a divine mandate to rule even though it has lost the capacity to steer and has given up to mere

drifting. The opposition has lost the will to power (in Lohia's words) and their leaders seem to be enjoying their present status as regional satraps or caste leaders or as shadow prime minister, ministers and governors.

Surprisingly, Lord Meghnath Desai, a London-based Indian intellectual and member of House of Lords, in his column in The Indian Express (July 8, 2012) gave a small hint that the tendency to select the President by consensus, is due to love for dynastic rule, which the Congress never tried to cast-off. According to Shri Desai, the only time when this effort was made when after the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi in 1991, President R. Venkatraman suggested to his Vice-President Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma that he should accept the post of President of the Congress Party, so that he could become the Prime Minister. He says it was Congress Party's own device to change the tradition. What really happened on that occasion could not be imagined by Shri Desai due to long distance. This scene is aptly described by (Late) Madhu Limaye in one of his articles. According to him, it was a clever

move on the part of the President, R.Venkatraman, who wanted to secure for himself a second term of presidentship, after forming a national government with Shankar Dayal Sharma as Prime Minister, Shankar Dayal Sharma cleverly refused because he eyed on permanent promotion as President rather than a purely temporary promotion as Prime Minister. This was a repetition of the trick played by Gyani Zail Singh on his Vice-President, R.Venkatraman. When Zail Singh's term was about to end, he wanted to dismiss Rajiv Gandhi and form a national government with R.Venkatraman as Prime Minister, with an eye on second term for himself. But the offer was refused because Shri Venkatraman too, wanted to be a full time President rather than a temporary Prime Minister. Lord Desai was not in a position to see this internal struggle of the noble minds.

I can't exactly say what transpired in my mind when I thought of your name as an ideal President. May be, I was moved by your two judgements regarding black money and Salva Judum which you delivered together with your colleague justice S.S. Nijhar, before your retirement or may be, it was due to your lecture on Dr. Lohia, in the Law Institute of India. The main consideration in my mind was that the President should not belong to the ruling party and it would be best if he didn't belong to any party. In the present situation I thought that a man with deep understanding of and commitment to the Constitution would be best as President, since our whole political set-up is being taken over by some unconstitutional elements and there must be someone worthy to keep an eye on them. I also thought that if a person like you

will enter the Rashtrapati Bhavan, it may respond to some of the calls of Mahatma Gandhi, say of austerity and openness.

I also had in mind some other things which I used to discuss with my sagacious friend Ravela Somaiya whose proximity to you suggested to me that I should request you to agree to stand for election without expecting a win, according to Lohia's prescription of '*Nirasha Ke Kartavya*' (to act without hope). Your first reaction was to laugh out the suggestion but after thinking over seriously you agreed to become sacrificial goat. I was deeply moved by your generosity.

But in working for all this, I was not merely thinking of the present political conditions. There were also some other questions in my mind which I thought could be solved with your little help from Rashtrapati Bhavan. It has pained me after the experience of 72 years of my political awareness that the whole structure of the State—Executive, Legislature and Judiciary—had so far doggedly opposed the highest goal of the Constitution, to ensure equality and fraternity to all. To eliminate inequality, abolition of caste was necessary for which the scheme of reservations or special opportunities to the classes who have suffered from the caste-system, was laid down in the Constitution. It was confirmed by Supreme Court in Indira Sahani Judgement (1992) that the aim of reservation is abolition of caste. But the governments never tried seriously to enforce Article 16(4) (which provided reservations), nor the Supreme Court directed the government to do so. Neither the government nor the Supreme Court defined the words 'adequate representation', nor did they order

the caste-wise census along with general census to obtain the figures of 'social and educational backwardness of the classes of citizens' on the basis of which adequate or inadequate representation could be ascertained and classes having got adequate representation, could be removed from the reserved category to the general category thus ensuring approximate equality among all sections of population and ultimate elimination of caste system. All governments, right from Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru's to Dr. Manmohan Singh's, with the exception of that of H.D. Devegowda, firmly opposed the caste-wise census, which used to be carried out by the British government from 1872 to 1932. When Devegowda's government sanctioned it, the Congress withdrew its support to that government resulting in its fall and the subsequent government headed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee, after taking oath, performed the first act to cancel the order issued by Devegowda's government. Compelled by people's agitation and clamour in Parliament, Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, gave an assurance in the Parliament that this government will soon order caste-wise census, but he soon forgot his promise and instead sanctioned about Rs 45000 crore scheme of Unique Identification Cards to facilitate corporate sector and enforce mass surveillance over people in the style of a fascist state. Even the Supreme Court didn't extend a helping hand to this problem and it refused to even entertain the special petitions requesting for caste-census, one moved by Madhu Limaye, in 1992 and other by this writer and several others in 2010 and 2011. How could the reservation scheme of the Constitution be

implemented when even the first step of obtaining reliable and scientific data regarding castes was so resolutely resisted. I am sure, all this is not merely “measurable underachievement” (in Amartya Sen’s words) it is willful non-achievement. It is open defiance by the upper castes in order to protect their centuries old privileges bestowed upon them by the caste-system.

The other question in my mind was that of language of administration and instruction. The Nehru government imposed a permanent slavery of a foreign language on Indian people. A language spoken and understood by not more than two and a half or three percent population made the whole business of state mystic utterances of the sorcerers for the 97 percent of population. This gave full freedom for corruption, nepotism and inefficiency to all concerned with the business of the state. Not only this, the slavery of the foreign language, stifled the growth of our languages (which have history older than of English) resulting in dumbness of masses and all round backwardness of our vast population.

The two big road-blocks described above (leaving aside some others) have been simply ignored by English-educated classes and some of their select individuals have even threatened a civil war over the demand to remove them. But the injury they have caused to the nation is beyond the imagination of these people. The first road-block has snatched from 90 percent population of this country what they had earned through centuries of sufferings—the hope of freedom from caste-slavery. The other road-block has hit even harder by erasing the memory of the

nation which is unpardonable crime in history. With a foreign language as medium of instruction, all hopes of providing education to all of our children are lost forever since we could provide education to only 10 percent of our child population in last 65 years.

I hoped that these two logjams of reservations and language could be broken or at least considered seriously by the central government and the Supreme Court, if a President sympathetic to these

causes was in Rashtrapati Bhavan. His reference to the Supreme Court or advice to the Prime Minister could make a definite dent on the stone wall.

I am sad, for we failed and caused you embarrassment but I assure you that we will not give up our determination to find out a new path to come out of thick jungle for which we may again seek your cooperation.

*With regards,*

---

## Lohia and Einstein

Dr. Einstein was seated on the porch of his small farmhouse talking to String fellow Barr, President of the Foundation for World Government, when we arrived. For the next few hours Lohia and Einstein carried on the rarest conversation of the trip. Best of all were the great, hearty laughs which the two men shared as they surveyed the ironic state of mankind. For a time they talked in German, but mainly they were generous enough to speak English.

Einstein’s curiosity required that Lohia talk Indian politics and outline the Socialist program. The abolition of landlordism and the re-division of land he approved of rapidly. When Lohia answered a question about a compensation for the landlords with a firm stand against it, proposing only rehabilitation settlement, Einstein said, ‘good, good’. Why had Nehru not done these things? Lohia did not know. Einstein laughed at Lohia’s remarks: ‘Some men can write admirably - but act miserably’.

Einstein seemed to like the concept of small machine, and he strenuously

supported the idea of decentralization of authority. They briefly differed on Communist China, which Lohia opposed as completely as he opposed Chiang’s China of status quo. Perhaps they would differ about Europe, too, for the one moment when Einstein seemed almost hurt when Lohia said, ‘You know I’m not one of those who believed that the European is more cultured than the American.’ ‘What?’ Einstein asked, and Lohia reiterated that he believed America to be the natural fulfillment of the European mind, and that Europeans were jealous even of American plumbing and pressure cookers: ‘It is only that America has more of what Europe wants.’

Einstein finally laughed, ‘I see you have an independent mind.’ ‘May I ask you a question, Dr. Einstein?’ Lohia began. ‘Not about politics. I have come here to learn from you, and in politics I suppose I might even have some thing to tell you. But in the higher field of the human mind we need your help. In India I have said that our century has had only

*(Continued on Page 7)*

# Assam and Bodo–Muslim Clashes

**Asghar Ali Engineer**

Much has been written in newspapers by now about the disaster that occurred in lower Assam - Kokrajhar and three other districts. About 58 persons have died since 6th July though main clashes occurred from 19th July onwards and now some kind of uneasy situation prevails. More than four lakh have become refugees living in 27 different camps of which three lakh are Muslims. Newspapers generally narrate events and hardly analyze or give reasons on the basis of in-depth study.

Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi was angry when someone said Assam was burning Assam is indeed burning. The conflict there is much wider than Bodo-Muslim clashes in Kokrajhar or in BTC (Bodo Territorial Council). Assam communal riots are one, among many other manifestations of this conflict. There will be no peace in Assam unless the false propaganda about migration of Bangla Deshi Muslims is resolved.

AASU movement of eighties and its concomitant bloodshed in Neli in 1983 was its first manifestation. In Neli it was between Bengali speaking Muslims (branded as Bangla Deshis) and Lalung tribe and in these riots more than 3,000 Muslims were killed. They were all killed in the name of Bangla Deshis and there was terrible fear among the Assamese Muslims too. When I went for investigation no Assamese Muslim was prepared to speak due to fear.

In 2008 too there were clashes between Muslims and Bodos and around 55 persons were killed. Most of these Muslims described as Bangla Deshi are quite old migrants from British period. In Neli, Bengali Muslims had told me that they had migrated in early thirties or even before and most of them were brought to till char lands of Assam. They are quite hard working and Assamese Ahoms and hill tribe Lalung are easy going and are not willing to work hard on char lands. Unfortunately in Neli though almost 3,000 people were killed, these riots have been totally forgotten. Even no official inquiry was held as if no major disaster had taken place.

The rightwing BJP had added much fuel in propagating that Bangla Deshi Muslims are migrating in large numbers giving highly exaggerated figures without any basis. Today there is widespread network of RSS, since eighties, and it has been systematically working there to create cleavage between Hindus and Muslims though historically there has been communal harmony between Hindus and Muslims and in creating this harmony Shankr Deo on one hand, and, Azan Fakir, on the other have played very important role.

This harmony does not suit BJP for its Hindutva politics and hence it has picked up Bangla Deshi issue to divide Hindus and Muslims. It is because for BJP it is not easy to attack Assamese Muslims due to historical harmony but easy to create division in the name of Bangla Deshi Muslims. It is not to deny that there

are Bengali speaking Muslims in Assam and that few Bengali speaking Muslims have migrated in recent times too both from Bangladesh and other areas like West Bengal.

But most of them are from the British time and there is no scientific collection of data to show how many have recently migrated from Bangladesh. There is no national register too. After all it is propaganda and propaganda is based, at best, on half truth and only succeeds in creating confusion and division among people. And the allegation that the Congress is allowing Bangla Deshi Muslims to migrate to convert them into its vote-bank has naturally powerful appeal among anti-Congress forces.

Assam will be on turmoil until this issue is resolved and it is not only Bangladesh people or Bengali speaking Muslims who are migrating to Assam but many others like Biharis are also migrating who are Hindi speaking. Marwaris from Rajasthan have also migrated and control trade in all parts of North East. But the propaganda machinery is in full swing talking about Bangla Deshi Muslims thanks to certain political design.

Another cause of these clashes is creating of Bodo Territorial Council in an area where Bodos are only 29 per cent and the rest are non-Bodos including Bengali speaking Muslims settled there since the British period and the British had brought them there for cultivation of

jute more than 100 years ago. The Central Government did this to buy peace with militant Bodos who are demanding Bodo state in Assam.

How can one create Bodo Territorial Council and give them powers for development and other matters when they are just 29 per cent? All non-Bodo people feel aggrieved and want the Council to be repealed. They feel they are not getting due share in development. The Bodos, on the other hand, want to increase their number in that area so that they become the majority and creation of Bodo Territorial Council could be justified.

Another thing which is the cause of this turmoil is that Bodo militants who were supposed to surrender arms never did so and these militants roam around freely with their guns. The flow of arms has never stopped and government has never taken steps to disarm these Bodos, mainly for political reasons. The ruling alliance has Bodo National Front as its constituent and the Chief Minister does not want to displease the Bodos.

What happened in Kokrajhar district began with four Bodo youth who came on motor cycle on 6th July with guns and killed two Muslims and ran away. Nothing was done by the district administration as both Deputy Commissioner and Collector were Bodos. Subsequently unknown people (assumed to be Begali Muslims) killed four ex-militant Bodos and Kokrajhar was on fire. It is now that the Dy. Commissioner and District Magistrate have been removed (of which District Magistrate has been suspended).

If that action had been taken in time much bloodshed and destruction could have been avoided. However,

Chief Minister remained a silent spectator and did not take stern action. Of course after killing and destruction spread Chief Minister asked for central help and requested for military deployment which was delayed and things went out of control. It, however, must be said that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh urged upon the Chief Minister to take effective steps to stop this madness. He also made it a point to visit the affected areas though Gogoi did not bother to visit when people were being killed and their homes destroyed.

It must be borne in mind that this is not the first or last rioting in Assam or in Kokrajhar for that matter. If proper steps are not taken much more killing and destruction can follow. The first urgent step to be taken is to disarm Bodo militant youth. In other areas of conflict arms are freely flowing and Bodo youth are seen roaming freely with guns and threatening non-Bodos in the area, particularly Muslims.

They are also extorting money from non-Bodos and if they do not pay they walk away with their animals and poultry. This has become great irritant for the people in that area. Disarming them is an urgent measure but it is anybody's guess whether the Government will be able to take this step as Bodos are part of ruling political alliance but there is no other way also.

Secondly, some solution has to be found to the problem of Bodo Territorial Council as Bodos are no more than one-third of the population in that area (even less than that). This probably can be done by increasing share of non-Bodo people in the Council. It was an unjust measure on the part of Central

Government to give all powers and majority representation to a minority at the cost of majority non-Bodo people. Besides Muslims there are other people too like Koch Rajbongshis, Santhals and Adibashis though Muslims constitute majority of non-Bodo people. Either the February 2003 agreement about Territorial Council should be annulled or increased share should be given to non-Bodos according to their population.

Thirdly the exaggerated propaganda about Bangla Deshi Muslims should stop and all facts about it be kept before the nation through scientific data. This has become a major irritant not only in Assam but also in other parts of India.

These are some of the measures which must be taken urgently to defuse the situation. It should not be treated merely as a law and order problem but a political one and political solution has to be found. Some Bodo leaders are making highly irresponsible statements and unfortunately the National Council of Churches of India General Secretary Roger Gaikwad has also played to the gallery by saying that Bangla Deshi Muslims have occupied 10,000 square kms of territory. It is very unfortunate and irresponsible statement. It is the result of general propaganda going on about Bangla Deshi Muslims.

It is unfortunate that the next door in Myanmar Rohingya Muslims are being killed under the same excuse by the Military Government and here in India Bengali Muslims are being killed though we are a democracy. Only difference is that here Central Government, especially Manmohan Singh has taken some urgent steps

to put out the fire and to render financial relief by announcing a Rs.300 crore package and Myanmar Military dictatorship is mercilessly destroying Rohingya Muslims and justifying it.

Migration cannot be stopped altogether but it should not be allowed to be politically exploited by highly exaggerating the figures. In order to maintain peace one has to use political wisdom and ensure stability for the linguistic and ethnic communities who have been living here for more than a century.

### **Janata Subscription**

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque  
on

Mumbai Bank  
in favour of

### **JANATA TRUST**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai 400 007

### **Madhu Dandavate By**

**B. Vivekanandan**

**Price: Rs. 20/-**

**Janata Trust**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W),  
Mumbai 400 007.

## **Priority Issues**

### **S. Viswam**

A week after Pranab Mukhrjee's elevation as President, prime minister Manmohan Singh has begun addressing priority issues of national importance. The first of these apparently was finding a replacement for the former finance minister. When the PM decided to retain the finance ministry with himself after Pranab's resignation, certain sections of the Indian and international corporates were overjoyed. Obviously, they expected the speedy implementation of a series of economic reforms which Pranab was disinclined to undertake. We wonder what their reaction would be now that the PM has brought P. Chidambaram to the North Block. Chidambaram is no stranger to the finance ministry, and he is known to be an advocate of reforms. He may attempt what Pranab was reluctant to undertake, if the opposition, whose allergy towards him was amply manifested during the last few sittings of Parliament, lets him. Their non-cooperation may be a big hurdle to overcome which Chidambaram may have to bring into play all the patience, tact and goodwill he is capable of. The other change effected by the PM is to replace Chidambaram with Shushil Kumar Shinde whose performance as Power Minister was anything but remarkable. On the day of Shinde's "promotion" as Home Minister, the entire northern half of the country was plunged into darkness. Whatever reasons the Power Grid Corporation has adduced for the massive (and unprecedented) outages, they occurred when Shinde was in charge. However, after making due allowance for the fact that things

went out of control due to unanticipated technical problems, one is tempted to say that Shinde was overwhelmed by the challenge of ensuring unrestricted power supply to the nation. We hope he will not find the challenge of running the home ministry a task beyond his competence. The Home Ministry is one of the handful of central ministries which calls for a high degree of competence, understanding, tact, patience and ability to carry along diverse sections of the national political class who are whimsical and temperamental in their attitude to the Centre. Alone Mamata Banerjee can keep the entire Home Ministry on tenterhooks! Shinde must cultivate the ability of pleasing everyone, an attribute that has escaped many of his predecessors. Chidambaram had acquired this attribute after some trials and errors. Shinde can take a few lessons from his immediate predecessor. We hope also that Veerappa Moily, who gets additional charge of the power ministry, will measure up to the twin challenges of keeping corporates as well as energy consumers in good humour till such time as the prime minister goes in for a full-fledged cabinet shake-up after the current session of parliament. The next major reshuffle of the Union Council of Minister may well be the last before the run-up to the 2014 Lok Sabha polls.

While the exercise of filling vacancies has met an immediate challenge, the prime minister's major challenge will come when he attempts that reshuffle. It is on such occasions that the compulsions of coalition politics become both an

advantage and a disadvantage. In the normal course of things, logic would have suggested that the topmost post in the government after the prime minister's goes to Sharad Pawar, who is not only the most senior among the ministers but most experienced. On his own, and without any pressure from the opposition, Sharad Pawar has ensured that the serious problem of drought which has several states in its grip is addressed without delay. The government has announced a financial assistance package of schemes estimated to cost Rs. 1900 crores for the rain-deficient states. One wishes that all of the government's ministries were as vigilant as the one under Pawar's charge in keeping abreast of the challenges of the day and times!

One other major development of the week gone by was the resumption of Anna Hazare's anti-corruption campaign. Fasts, particularly prolonged ones which endanger lives are no longer acceptable as pressure points to secure demands and get redressal of legitimate grievances. We agree entirely with the outgoing Chief Economic Adviser Kaushik Basu that while civil society pressure on government is a useful rallying point for mobilization of public opinion, fasts have only a limited value. Anna Hazare and his colleagues should abandon the mode of fasting for their campaign which acquires overtones and undertones of blackmail and intimidation when life is threatened. However, Team Anna's proposal to find a political alternative to their campaign against corruption is welcome and calls for deeper examination before finalization. A new political party's effectiveness depends on a variety of factors, its composition and leadership being only two minor features.

*(Continued from Page 3)*

three great men, Gandhi, Bernard Shaw, and you.

In Berlin, I said that our age has thought only twice, Mahatma Gandhi and atomic energy; one is gone, and your invention is a source of death. How is the human mind to get out this stagnation, this confinement and rigidity which is stifling it? Do you see a new integration which can free thought for new voyages of discovery?

In this vein they surveyed the world for a while, and Lohia wanted to return to continue this discussion with, for him, 'the best man in America'. When the two parted, Einstein said, 'It is so good to meet a man – one gets so lonely.'

–Selected by Qurban Ali from Harris Wofford's "Lohia and America Meet";: courtesy Lohia Today website)

## Rajesh Khanna and Mrinal Gore

Last fortnight two prominent citizens of Mumbai passed away within a day of each other. Rajesh Khanna, the superstar and Paniwalibai, Mrinal Gore. Both of them were popular in their own way and both dealt in dreams. Rajesh Khanna made us dream of glamour and romance and Mrinal Gore was given a very subdued homage. The media went berserk with reams of paper, including editorials, in adulation of the film star. The electronic media aired continuous programs on him ignoring all other news in the country. The usual panel had elaborate discussion on the life and times of Rajesh Khanna. Rajesh Khanna, the phenomenon, deserved all this hero-worship.

However, at the time when the credibility of politicians is at its nadir, a little attention to Mrinal Gore was in the interest of the nation. She fits the slogan '*Desh ka neta kaisa ho*' perfectly. She was as rich or poor when she passed away as she was when she entered public life. In spite of being in politics all her life, she never hankered after power. She led many demonstrations and agitations for the common man, but never for any particular caste, creed or region. Not once was her agitation aimed at inconveniencing the aam admi. There was absolutely no damage to public or private property. Her slogans did not end with the threat of 'or else'. Yet she was no less effective than the present leaders in their purpose. She could have been presented as a perfect role model of what a public leader should be!

This is not to disrespect Rajesh Khanna or grudge adulation given to him, but the fact remains that he was long past his prime and could not create the magic again. He was no longer relevant to the country while Mrinal Gore is all the more relevant in today's polity. The media did score on TRPs but sorely missed out on social responsibility!

–Anil Bagarka

# When Dreams die Young

**Harsh Mander**

In restlessly industrialising India there are millions of children who are unlikely ever to see the inside of a school. Formal education, with all its limitations, alone carries within it the potential to free these children from life-sentences of hard labour in poverty and want, to which they are otherwise condemned.

The law today mandates that there should be a functioning school within two kilometres of every child's home. Governments have exponentially expanded the network of government primary schooling, bringing schools physically closer to most children in the country (although the quality of many of these schools remains a huge problem). But there remains a core group of children who are unable to enter these schools, or remain in them, even if they are literally located across the road from where they sleep.

Who are these children, and what are the formidable barriers they face to enter schools, and remain within these? There are masses of children whose childhoods and dreams of education are lost in labour in the mines, kilns, agricultural fields, factories and home-based work. Child workers are expected by their own families to be at work and not in regular school, and long hours of work are physically, emotionally and mentally draining, even if there are provisions to attend non-formal schools after work.

Children who are disabled find it difficult to enter school, negotiate its infrastructure, keep pace and

continue education, and often face ridicule and shame in the hands of school management or even fellow-students. Children living in conflict zones are unable to access schools in a climate of abiding fear and insecurity; often schools in these areas are occupied by security forces. Children whose parents lead nomadic and semi-nomadic lives, or migrate to the cities due because there is no food and no work in their villages are effectively barred from schools. Several hundred thousand children who together with their families live and work in brick kilns of India, for instance, find it difficult to access schools — even if those are located near the kilns.

Children of stigmatised parentage such as those living with HIV/AIDS or leprosy, or those engaged in manual scavenging, sex work and so on, face intense forms of societal and educational discriminatory exclusion. The unjust stigma of their parents is transferred to children in the shape of multiple discriminations and humiliation heaped on them — in school and outside school. I recall all teachers in a small district town I worked in threatening to strike work if I insisted on admitting in schools children of parents who had leprosy and begged for a living. Children of manual scavengers report being shamed by being forced to clean toilets in schools.

Millions of children are condemned never to enter schools because they have no home, or no family, or both. The streets of every city house children who have run

away from violent and abusive families, who recycle waste, retail at traffic lights, or beg for a living. Some who live on the streets may have one or both parents, but they are destitute and homeless, and feel they have no option except to send out the child to work on the streets.

The Constitution of India envisaged free and compulsory education for all the children within 10 years of the promulgation of the Constitution. Fifty nine years later, the Indian State finally passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act in 2009. However, since the actual realisation of this right by children of powerless and marginalised communities remains limited and problematic, this requires special provisions and additional investments for such children.

For certain disadvantaged children — like children without adult protection such as orphans and street children; and children of migrants and nomadic communities; internally displaced children and children in some conflict areas; or children of remote tribal communities — it is impossible to access their right to education without safe residential hostels or schools. A child who lives and works on the streets, or without adult guardians, for instance, cannot be expected after sleeping the night on the streets, waking early to pick rags, to simply walk into school. This right of these disadvantaged children to residential schools, and not just neighbourhood day schools, needs to be written into the law specifically,



otherwise the right to education of these children will simply remain on paper.

The law makes a modest provision, bitterly contested by elite private schools, for admitting disadvantaged children from a private school's neighbourhood to 25 per cent of seats in the earliest class of the school. But almost no schools recognise a street child, or child worker in eateries of factories, or migrant children, as eligible for this small reservation, and they remain excluded even from this opportunity.

The law laudably provides that a child should be admitted into school at an older age, even if the child has not been to school before, and special training classes should be held in every school for these children. But this rarely happens, as teachers are not trained or sensitised to respectfully accept and work with these older children. There is no reason why an out-of-school child should not be taught in a class within the same school, run at the same time as regular classes; and why the child should not otherwise be fully integrated with other activities of her or his age-appropriate class, such as sports, extra-curricular activities, and mid-day meals.

Since they are the most vulnerable of our children, ensuring the rights of these "last" children should be the first obligation of every Government. But for this to actually happen, these children, condemned by violence, neglect, oppression and poverty to difficult lives, should be the country's highest priority; they should be recognised as the first duty of any government, and our hidden national treasure.

– *Aman Biradari*

## Greater Clarity on Social Democracy

**D. K. Giri**

Idea precedes action; clearer idea leads to better action as well as greater impact. This is, perhaps, what had inspired the leadership of 'Centre of Socialist Studies', Bangalore to organise an orientation camp for a cross-section of activists on "Ideology, Clarity of Thought and Perspectives". The camp was fully residential running for three full days, 20<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, and 22<sup>nd</sup> July. There was vibrant participation from the attendees leading to intensive discussion with and between Resource Persons on issues related to Social Democracy. Interestingly, many participants felt that instead of gaining greater clarity, they were getting confused about: what Social Democracy meant in the current context, how was it different from Democratic Socialism, and even Communism, the State v/s Market, individual v/s community, globalization and socialism and so on. On most of these issues there were two clear positions - one, traditional and national, and the other new and transnational. These two lines of interpretations may have confused the participants. As a Resource Person, I was trying to draw a "middle path", "build a consensus" or "reconcile the positions". I was also reminding the camp of the famous words of Socrates, "confusion is the beginning of wisdom". It is natural to be bombarded with varying perspectives of Social Democrats: whilst there is unanimity on core organizing principles of Social Democracy – liberty, equality, solidarity and pluralism - there are contextual differences on

implementing policies, which was amply evident in the camp. It was also made clear that Social Democracy is a constantly developing project and the debates on its renewal and repositioning are continuing exercises that enable it to occupy new political space and embrace new organizational forms. Let us recapitulate some of the major debates.

### **State v/s the Market**

Social Democrats emphasized the primacy of State for social justice and equality. So they built the welfare state as the bedrock of Social Democracy. But the welfare state was seen by many as a corrective of or compromise with capitalism. The liberal criticism of the State was that any social arrangement reliant on the state (however democratic) including a tax serviced public service sector was economically inefficient which also curtailed individual freedom. Social Democrats treated markets as exploitative, breeding inequality and injustice in the societies. Yet the third way of Blair, the former Labour Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Schroeder, the former Social Democrat Chancellor of Germany suggested market economy and communitarianism, as major instruments for achieving social democratic values. There could be a fourth way in favour of cooperation, ending the false dilemma between the State and the market. One must understand that both markets and the State have their own imperfections and

limitations. It is not either/or, but how to work with both as a society needs them both. Markets constitute an economic and social reality and free markets are necessary for productivity and growth. Markets also make efficient use of productive resources and stimulate progressive innovations. For Socialists, market is a useful tool, but only as long as it promotes common good.

The basic market principle is to exclude those who cannot pay. The markets are incapable of redistribution of income for the sake of social justice. This is where the State is needed. It must provide the basic human needs and investments in public interest and attend to those disadvantaged on the free market. Social Democrats make the mistake of trying to replace the market without having tangible alternatives. Instead they should focus, through democratic institutions including the State, on improving the production, distribution and consumption. This can happen when a broad range of private, cooperative and public initiatives are fairly and actively encouraged. In practical terms, one should foster investment in social capital, institutional design, and community building in order to generate prosperity and equality by producing social, economic and political cooperation between State, Market and Civil Society.

### **Individual v/s Community**

The popular understanding of dilemma between individual and society is that the liberalism advocates full and unlimited freedom of an individual, whereas Socialism focuses on the collectives. This is again a false dilemma. Free and unlimited development of each

individual is the purpose of Socialism and enjoyment of freedom is the precondition for such development. But for Social Democrats, freedom has several contexts – individual, societal, political, social, economic and cultural. But, an individual's freedom need not and should not harm others. Along with one's own freedom, the principles and practices of tolerance, respect and accommodation are equally important. These accompanying principles mean an individual exists and flourishes only in a society. Hence Social Democrats talk of synthesis between individual and community, uniting responsible aspects of individualism with liberating aspects of communitarianism. Social Democratic individualism is exercised by free and responsible individuals who seek full realization of the liberties and rights of all in the community, while seeking their own full potential. It is the combination of responsible freedom and social responsibility that creates a base for Social Democracy.

### **Globalisation v/s Social Democracy**

There was heated debate in the camp on the impact of globalization and social democratic response to it. One view, the transnational one, was that globalization was irreversible at present, and instead of fighting it, we should negotiate or engage with it. The other was globalization has been driven by multinationals who were out to “rob the developing world of their resources, cause ecological destruction, and gross inequalities.” The Special Economic Zones are given away to MNCs on a platter. Each country should decide the level of its own growth and redistribution, not fall for induced growth driven by

loans forced upon the recipient. These positions on globalization were hard and were difficult to reconcile.

There are obviously losers and winners in globalization but in the near future, no society can any longer successfully escape global economic integration and interdependence of peoples across the globe. The concept of “independent” or self-reliant nations is history, although national sovereignty need not be given up to undemocratic market forces. Globalization is said to have increased the gap between the rich and the poor. But in the present capitalist societies, the inequality is manifested not just in economic terms, but in gender, class, caste (India), ethnicity and race, etc. These social dividers are exacerbated by globalization.

There are regions in the world which have lost out on globalization. Most countries in Africa burdened by heavy debts have lost their links with global markets. Countries belonging to former COMECON are unable to modernize their economies and civil societies due to lack of competitiveness and opportunities. They cannot develop single regional markets for consumption and investment. They continue to remain providers of raw material for Northern industrialized countries.

The international economic institutions like WTO do not help the situation for those countries that have been left behind. On the contrary, it gives a free hand to MNCs to maximize their benefits, and curtail the power of the nation states. The free trade prevents people from developing fair trade. Consequently conflicts arise in the poor countries

out of an explosive mixture of poverty, underdevelopment and non-perspectives. These conflicts are nothing but eruption of desire for good living. How does one counter the evils of globalization and engage with it? Globalisation has other elements, not just movement and domination of global capital; such as liberalization, de-bureaucratization, and openness and so on. It fosters modernization and competition in the economy. It is important to benefit from such changes which in the longer run benefit the economy. On the other hand, strong political processes and systems can withstand the pressure of global capital and can take advantage of the movement of goods, services and capital in a global market. Take the case of China, which has made maximum gains from globalization. A strong or firm State, authoritarian in China, but democratic in Brazil, South Africa, Turkey and others does benefit from globalization.

### **Social Democracy v/s Democratic Socialism**

This raised a minor discussion as both these are now-a-days interchangeably used. There has been, of course, a difference between the two in their approach to capitalism. Social Democracy sought to reform capitalism by creating the welfare state and decided that it was possible to live with capitalism if it did not lead to exploitation and undermining of the State. On the other hand, Democratic Socialism aimed at eliminating capitalism by gradually democratizing the means of production and distribution. If Social Democracy was on the left of capitalism, Democratic Socialism stood on the right of Communism. Social Democracy emerged out of revisionism, whereas Democratic Socialism embraced

peaceful revolutions. However, both are now synonymous. For instance, the British Labour Party, in its Charter, calls itself a Democratic Socialist Party but the party leaders call themselves Social Democrats. On difference with Communism, it was suggested that one should use either Social Democracy or Democratic Socialism, as socialism alone gave the impression that it is a transitional step towards Marxian Communism.

The camp concluded with a resolution that the debate should continue to deepen the understanding of Social Democracy. Intellectual perspectives on Social Democratic positions and interpretations on several current issues—both Indian and international—should be generated and disseminated for activists in different sectors, and members in different organisations. The quest for understanding and practice of Social Democracy must go on.

---

## **Combustible Northeast**

**Kuldip Nayar**

India's northeast is the most combustible region. Some 250 ethnic groups are arrayed against one another and New Delhi to fight for their identity, some seeking even an outside-India status. Religion-wise, the proportion of Hindus, Muslims and Christians is more or less the same. Infiltration, mostly from Bangladesh or what was East Pakistan, has only aggravated the problem. Even the Assamese who were given a separate state in 1955 when India was reorganized on the basis of language have become a minority in Assam itself.

The Bodos, an ethnic group which hurred part of its state, Assam, into communal conflagration—the Bengali-speaking Muslims were the target—are far from peace because they have even attacked the relief camps. The Bodos want to get back their land which the infiltrators and outsiders have occupied since the British left in 1947. They also demand a Bodo state of their own, like any other

distinctive group in India, even though they wield a lot of authority through their autonomous council.

When some ethnic groups separated from Assam and constituted their respective states—Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura, the Bodos preferred to stay with the state of Assam. But the administration at Guwahati has not been able to cope with the diversity that the Bodos represent. The violence they have committed and the sufferings which Bengali Muslims have undergone have made Prime Minister Manmohan Singh say after his visit to Kokrajhar, the hub of Bodos, that “Assam is a blot on the nation.” Yet why should Assam be singled out for the mess by New Delhi? In fact, the blot is on the centre which has been inept in handling the situation in the northeast.

New Delhi's pet formula is that whatever happens in the northeast is a law and order problem. Already, the army is in overall command for

maintenance of peace and has under it all the paramilitary forces there. Even the state police have to look up to the army which has repeatedly said that the problem is political. Apart from sending some home ministry officials to the northeast, there is very little that the centre has done to sort out what is the northeast.

To administer with a free hand, the army has the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), a draconian measure which authorises a soldier to kill a person on mere suspicion. Since the overall command has become refuge for the harassed people and the inefficient governments in the region, the administrations, wanting in all respects, depend on the armed forces. Therefore, it is not surprising to hear repeatedly that the army was late to reach the trouble spots. Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi has publicly said that the army came late and the centre withdrew nearly half of the paramilitary units when they were badly required.

It is difficult to say why the army took three days to reach Kokrajhar when it is legally bound to come to the aid of civil authorities after a magistrate has sent a requisition. One report is that the army did not want to get involved in communal riots while another is that the overall command at Assam was seeking permission from the Ministry of Defence before acting. If these reports are correct, they raise a very basic question. That is, the army is not bound to assist the civilian authorities, as it is enjoined in the

law, but would deal with each case on "merit."

The matter requires a consensus among political parties but they are busy quarrelling among themselves and avoiding the real issue. Frankly speaking, political parties have no idea how to deal with the situation. Both the Congress and the BJP governments at the centre have been found themselves out of depth whenever they have tried their hand at a solution. Nagaland is the largest state in the region. Since independence there has been a ceasefire between New Delhi and Kohima, both sides negotiating over a status which has the trappings of independence, without diluting India's sovereignty. Both go over the same exercise of finding a solution, without anything concrete emerging.

Arunachal Pradesh, bordering China, is a state within India. Yet New Delhi "accepts" Beijing issuing a separate visa for people of Arunachal Pradesh and, for some reasons, for people of Jammu and Kashmir. Never has New Delhi stopped those from visiting China who have a separate visa from Beijing.

Manipur is under curfew after the sunset. Years of this practice have inured people to such restrictions. But there is Irom Chanu Sharmila, who is on fast for the last 10 years, demanding the withdrawal of the AFSPA. Since New Delhi's dependence in the region is on the armed forces, it refuses to even relax the rigours of the Act. A few years ago a committee appointed by New Delhi suggested the withdrawal of

the act but the armed forces had the last word and the centre gave in.

Meghalaya faces the problem of ethnic identity. But people there have tasted peace and do not want to go back to the days of violence. Insurgency is there but New Delhi feels satisfied that the neighbouring countries, both Bangladesh and Myanmar, no longer now provide insurgents any shelter.

One problem accentuating the situation is infiltration. The Congress itself encouraged it in the fifties to increase its vote tally. Then Congress president Dev Kant Barua told me that they would have Ali (Muslims) and Coolie (Bihar's labour) from their places and win at the polls.

The Congress should have at least implemented the accord between Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and All Assam Students Union (AASU) to detect foreigners and delete their names from the electoral rolls. Assam Chief minister Gogoi does not want to do so because foreigners give the Congress an edge in elections. The last two elections in the state which he has won have been primarily because of the "voters" from across the border.

The Bangladeshis come to India for economic reasons. Had there been work permits, they would have got them and returned to their home after work. But there is yet no such provision. In any case, their problem should not be mixed with the northeast complexity which is still awaiting New Delhi's serious attention.

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

# janata

Vol. 67 No. 29  
August 12, 2012

## Party rises from ashes of movement

Kuldip Nayar

**Whose side are we on?**  
Madan Sharma

**Role of Science and Technology  
in Development**  
K. S. Chalam

**Codification of Muslim Personal  
Law and Gender Justice**  
Asghar Ali Engineer

**Unconstitutional Means**  
Bapu Heddurshetti

**A Paradigm Shift is  
Need of the Hour**  
NAPM

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

It is not the first time that the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India has disclosed the government's involvement in a scam. What is disconcerting this time is that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh has been accused of keeping away the CAG report from parliament on coal bungling, running into Rs. 1.45 lakh crore.

The Prime Minister told parliament on May 23 this year that the CAG report was only a draft while the fact which has come to light is that the final report was received on May 11, both by the government and the President's office. It means that there is nothing sacrosanct for the Congress-led coalition, even parliament's privileges, much less transparency that one expected from a government headed by Dr Manmohan Singh.

The government is only a forwarding agency as far as reports by the CAG are concerned. He directly reports to parliament through the government as he did in the case of corruption in coal, a portfolio directly under the Prime Minister. How he rationalizes the delay - he is a master in doing so - will be something, which I await. Yet the corruption part is really serious. Certain private parties

and individuals are said to have been given benefits. They must have rendered service in kind and cash to the ruling party.

The sad part is that when a movement against corruption was needed the most, Gandhian Anna Hazare, who was leading one, changes his strategy and thinks about contesting elections in 2014. Although he looked reluctant and expressed doubts in public, he seemed to have been prevailed upon by those who have always focused their eyes on the electoral politics. Some of them may well be members of the team which Hazare has now disbanded.

Yet abandoning a movement which had come to ventilate the resentment of civil society was leaving a job in the middle. True, the government was obtrusive and did not want to give a strong Lokpal (ombudsman). Equally true, the opposition parties were indifferent. This was all the more reason why the movement for a Lokpal needed to be intensified.

The failing health of some members who went on fast was one reason why the movement had to be restructured to give an excuse for dropping the fasts. In fact, fasts

are a wrong strategy to begin with. Mahatma Gandhi's fast was never against anybody. They were always positive in their demand and he was engaged in wresting freedom from the unwilling hands of the British.

With no immediate challenge on corruption, the government has blessed the move of Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) not to go in appeal on the rejection of disproportionate assets case against former UP chief minister Mayawati. Even her 21 votes in the Lok Sabha are important for Manmohan Singh government to show a majority in parliament.

And it seems obvious that the Congress will stick to the office for the rest of the term, roughly 22 months, even if it has to play false as it has done in the case of CAG report on coal and even if it has turned a blind eye to Mayawati's assets which are unexplainable. She has reportedly amassed a wealth of Rs 116 crore since 2003.

Indeed, this is the best time for Anna to enter the political field. But can a party rise from the ashes of a movement which had swept the intelligentsia off its feet and had kept the media focused for 18 months? In concrete terms, the movement has nothing to show. But the awakening of civil society is itself an achievement of sorts.

Whether Anna can convert the awakening process into voting process is yet to be seen? One thing which is in his favour is that he is being associated with an alternative to the Congress and the BJP, the two main political parties. People generally want a change and not either of the two at the helm of affairs again.

Gandhian Jayaprakash Narain (JP) was forced into a similar

situation but accepted the Jana Sangh, the predecessor of BJP, after the Jan Sangh promised him to cut off relations with the RSS. He was betrayed but in the process the Jana Sangh got credibility of a non-communal setup.

A similar situation faces Anna when Baba Ramdev wants the two of them together. Secularism and parochialism do not mix well. JP made the mistake and parochial forces gained from it. Anna should not traverse the same path. He has to stand alone when Baba Ramdev and his musclemen try to make a united stand. Their culture is different and civil society is not willing to accept them.

The mantle of JP has fallen on Anna. But JP traveled throughout India to awaken people to the need to have an alternative and defeat the rulers who have mutilated the very system to serve their purpose and sustain the status quo which gave them power and unfettered control.

I am not against Anna taking part in elections. He himself is having second thoughts. Yet it would have been far better if he had held wider consultations with activists like Medha Padkar and Aruna Roy. Such consultations did take place before Anna had begun stir against corruption. He must string together the various movements, however small, which are visibly working at the grassroots. These activists will provide grist to the mill of change that Anna is contemplating.

Maybe, a political platform, instead of a party, may serve a wider purpose. Some can work with the people's movements and some contest elections. They will help each other and together they will be a force to reckon with. Mahatma Gandhi had separated constructive

workers from those engaged in the legislative field.

JP did not form the party till after winning at the polls. Yet he saw to it that his candidates would fight on one symbol. What proved to be his Achilles heel was the wrong candidates he chose. They were not the people to effect changes. They used the system to benefit themselves.

And then JP's health failed and he could not reach out to the people. Anna should be careful about his health and slowly but relentlessly harness support among those close associates who have the commitment and faith in basic values. He should take time. But he cannot afford to fail for the second time. Politics is not bad. Those who dominate it at this time have given it a bad name.

*Letter*

## Sycophancy

Hardly four decades back, the then President of the Congress party, Late Dev Kant Barua had no qualms in proclaiming "Indira is India, and India is Indira". It is now reported that Mani Shankar Aiyar, a Cabinet Minister admitted that "Gandhi family is the Congress Party". This unfortunately is an indication of continuing mental degeneration of Congressmen inasmuch as such sycophancy exposes nothing but their own spinelessness.

It is not known whether Congressmen themselves are aware of this reality. In any case, it is tragic – not amusing. For, the Congress of the original Gandhi has been left far behind on being taken over by the fake Gandhis.

**- Kashinath A. Divecha**

## **A Paradigm Shift in Development Planning and Land Reforms is Need of the Hour Not Further Acquisition and Cash Compensation**

Amidst all the controversies and conflicts related to Lokpal and Jan Lokpal politics, a very major enactment (in Bill form) is to be tabled before the Cabinet this week for approval and thereafter tabled in the Monsoon session of the parliament. While this has been in the offing for last many years, people's movements across the country from farmers to fish workers, landless workers to Dalits, adivasis as well as urban poor, are closely watching and reacting or responding to every move on the issue: Land Acquisition and Rehabilitation. The much awaited new "Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Bill" has now been renamed "Right to Fair Compensation, Resettlement, Rehabilitation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Bill, 2012 with a claim to better reflect Government's Commitment towards securing a legal guarantee for the rights of project affected, and ensuring greater transparency in the land acquisition process. It is also claimed that the Bill will ensure, in concert with local institutions of self-government and Gram Sabhas established under the Constitution, a humane, participative, informed, consultative and transparent process for land acquisition.

The Bill has no doubt sought comments and suggestions through the website but limited only till 30 days and no regional or state consultations were held by Ministry for Rural Development as was strongly suggested by NAPM, NFFPFW and many other organisations across the country. This is a kind of disrespect shown to a large number of organisations and millions of people engaged

not only in conflict over the issues of land, water, forest minerals or aquatic wealth but also proposing a new, truly democratic, just and sustainable 'Development Planning Act' as an alternative since years.

Now that the all party Parliamentary Standing Committee's report (on Rural Development) on the Bill is out and the Ministry of Rural Development has also made its views/reactions clear and open, we, the people's movements, have taken serious cognizance of the fact that the strong position taken by the Standing Committee on certain critical issues are either diluted or rejected by the Ministry of Rural Development, which is shocking. The Ministry that is supposed to protect the rights and powers of the rural communities has not accepted some of the standing committee recommendations, towards that end, which are presented with our comments, herewith:

### **Food Security and Agricultural Land Acquisition**

1. No forcible acquisition of agricultural land, for non-agricultural purpose including single crop and multi crop land.
- Ministry says only multiple crop land can be excluded.

*How can the in-between farms that may be unirrigated, rain fed, single crop be left out, we ask. India has 75% of the agricultural land as rain fed and most of it single cropped. Such land is mostly held by Dalits, Adivasis and marginal farms. Protecting them and all farm land for food security, which comes not from PDS but self sufficient agriculture, is a must!*

### **Acquisition for Private and PPP Projects**

2. No forcible acquisition for private projects, or for PPP, which can not be categorized as public purpose projects.

- Ministry has rejected this and justified this with a provision that consent of 80% of project affected People will be sought before acquisition for any private projects

*In this era of neo-liberal economic reforms, private projects with corporate investment and interests are taking a much larger toll of land and other rich natural resources as also uprooting by killing communities which are generations old. This must come to an end and the same can happen only with stopping the State playing a role of facilitator and land dealer. At the cost of the livelihood of the nature based sections and working class section of society, the state can't transfer the most valuable livelihood resources such as land, water to the profiteering bodies in the garb of 'public interest' and 'public purpose'.*

### **Bringing 16 Central Acts Under Purview of this Bill**

3. The standing committee has recommended that all 16 central acts should be brought under the purview of the new act, to make all equal before law (Article 14 of the Constitution).
- Ministry of Rural Development wants to exclude 13 out of 16 Acts including Industrial Development Act, Land Acquisition (Mines) Act,

National Highways Act and others from the purview of the new act. This means that 90% of the land acquired as on today will continue with injustice and force used, with no change at all. *The standing committee recommendations must be upheld to end brutal unjust acquisition for all projects.*

### **Role and Consent of Gram and Basti Sabha**

4. The Committee asks that all studies - SIA, EIA, expert committee appraisal be done in consultation with the gram sabhas and the corresponding reports be made available to the gram sabhas.

- Ministry emphasises that 80% consent of PAFs provision is there in case of linear projects where “consultation”.

*Consent and direct involvement of majority of the Gram Sabhas must be there in each and every project, including public projects for public purpose. 80% consent of the project affected population for the private projects alone is not sufficient. Why should the linear projects be left out? If it's consent of 80% affected, there are to be a number of manipulations that people will have to face. Experiences of 70% consent in Slum Rehabilitation Scheme in Mumbai are quite telling.*

### **Return of Unutilised Land to farmers and Land Bank**

5. The Committee recommended that the land, if not used till 5 years, should be returned after 5 years from the date of possession to the land owners.

- Ministry accepts the reduced five years time period but opposes its return to the landowner and suggests it to go to State Land

Bank.

*The ownership over the land is of those who till it and if not used and unutilized then it must be returned to the owners or distributed amongst the project affected people. We oppose any such feature which will promote land bank, since it has promoted large scale acquisition in the past and later illegally transferred the same land to corporations for real estate and other purposes.*

### **Retrospective Application of the Law**

6. On the question of retrospective application of the R&R provisions Committee has suggested to Ministry to re-examine the issue and incorporate necessary provisions

- Ministry has not accepted it and refused to do so.

*It needs to be noted that nearly 100 million people have been displaced since independence and with a dismal 17-20 percent rate of resettlement and rehabilitation we had suggested that not only the retrospective application of the provisions of the new act but a National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Commission be established to deal with the claims of the projected affected people from various projects.*

### **Resettlement and Rehabilitation Benefits**

In terms of the resettlement and rehabilitation benefits Committee apart from suggesting some cosmetic changes have accepted the provisions of the Bill, we think this is unfortunate since provisions don't stand up to livelihood based R&R, it merely promotes the principle of cash compensation. It will be a retrogressive step since it negates the land and employment based R&R as mandated in the Narmada

Water Dispute Tribunal Award, and various other projects. The proposed provisions of compensating employment with money and high rates for land acquired will only lead to speculative land market and will destroy the fragile economy of the rural hinterland which will lead to further urban migration.

### **Urban Eviction**

The Bill and the comments by both, Standing Committee as well as MoRD almost totally excludes and have unaddressed the situation in the urban areas, where there is no land acquisition, but eviction, brutal and unjust, for any and every elitist real estate development to infrastructure without guaranteeing right to shelter, right to life and livelihood. The only provision is to compensate with 20% of developed land for land owning families in urbanisation projects, which is not with regard to the cases where land belongs to the government or private entities but people are evicted. We demand a separate section or a separate act for the millions of the urban persons and urban land from getting misappropriated. The Bill with the presently proposed content need to be called only “Rural Bill”.

The rapacious use of Land Acquisition Act 1894 by the government to secure land for ‘development’ projects has caused over 100 million people to be displaced from their land, livelihoods and shelters. The country is dotted with communities resisting State sponsored land grab which resonate the demand for a just law to ensure that there is no forced acquisition of land and resources, including minerals and ground water. The government must respond to the voices from movements across places such as Narmada, Koel Karo, Singur, Nandigram, Sonbhadra, Chindwara, Bhavnagarm, Kalinga Nagar, Kashipur, Raigarh,



Srikakulam and mining areas in central India with genuine efforts to address the longstanding crisis concerning land Acquisition and resettlement & rehabilitation.

If the UPA government is serious about addressing the conflicts over the land and other natural resources then it must listen to the voices of those struggling or else it will only aggravate these conflicts all across the country. The need of growth, infrastructure and urbanisation can't be fulfilled on the graveyard of millions. A pro-people Development Planning Bill with complete participation of the Gram Sabha will go a long way in stopping the massive corporate corruption and lead to decentralization of power having an overall impact on the politics of the country.

We the people's movements and various alliances such as National Alliance of People's Movements, National Forum of Forest people and Forest Workers, Kisan Sangharsh Samiti and others will hold a public discussion (13 August 2012, Constitution Club, New Delhi) on the forthcoming Bill with activists, people from movements which are fighting for land rights and representatives from national political parties. Thousands of people displaced by 'developmental' projects in Narmada, Bhakra, Polavaram, Mundra, Pune (Lavasa), Nandigram, slum displaced people from Mumbai and fish-workers displaced by coastal and tourist projects will camp in Delhi to warn the government and protest against passing any such act in this session of the parliament on 21-23 August 2012.

–**Medha Patkar, Roma,  
Dr. Sunilam, Rupesh Kumar**  
napmindia@gmail.com

*Letter to the Editor;*

## Unconstitutional Means

Anna Hazare has disbanded his team and the 'India Against Corruption' has announced that it will float a political party and participate in the electoral process. It means that Anna Hazare and his team has decided to give up un-constitutional methods like fasting and satyagraha in the name of the 'civil society', at forcing the parliament to enact an anti-corruption law of their choice. I am sure that all will be very happy if Anna Hazare's team wins a majority in the 2014 elections to the Parliament, Anna Hazare becomes the Prime Minister and his team become cabinet ministers and enact the Jan Lok Pal bill into a law, say, within a fortnight. I would like to know what will be their attitude if a dozen liberty loving citizens launch a 'fast unto death' saying that the Jan Lok Pal law creates a monster institution and thereby destroys liberty of the citizens. Even if they do not come to power, I am sure at least they will understand the limitations and at the same time advantages of a parliamentary democracy.

Not that the team has not contributed its little 'might' in perpetuating the corrupt society. While one has produced fake bills another has produced fake certificates and still another feels free to spend trust money on his birthday and feels washed of the sin after the some 'friend' reimburses the money to the trust.

The petering out of the India Against Corruption also has another lesson to teach. Even under the British Raj people's movements

could not have lasted long and that is why Mahatma Gandhi not only knew when to start a people's movement but also when to stop them. Anna Hazare team has not only lost several good opportunities at achieving their purpose but has outright mishandled the whole movement thereby betraying the confidence millions of Indians had reposed in the movement. In a democracy such movements cannot be sustained for long. In a way they denigrate democracy. If there are defects in a democracy, the efforts should be aimed at removing those defects by electoral reforms rather than denigrating the system itself by abusing democracy and democratic institutions like parliament.

There is another lesson for those who are in a hurry to call somebody a 'Second Gandhi' and a movement a 'second freedom struggle'. The way the Anna Hazare movement was handled, will be another lesson for the people as to how not to start and continue a popular movement. Mahatma Gandhi never allowed his followers to manipulate him.

Dr. Ambedkar was not very wrong when he had said in the Constituent Assembly "If we wish to maintain democracy not merely in form, but also in fact, what must we do? The first thing, in my judgment, we must do is to hold fast to constitutional methods of achieving our social and economic objectives. It means we must abandon the bloody methods of revolution. It means that we must abandon the method of civil

*(Continued on Page 7)*

## Whose side are we on?

**Madan Sharma**

Anna Hazare's battle against corruption isn't just his battle. It's every Indian's battle. If Anna fails, we fail. Politicians across party lines stand to lose most if the movement succeeds in getting a strong Lokpal Bill legislated in parliament.

Anna is a catalyst in the fight to mitigate corruption in public life. He has no personal motive, no personal gain, no financial interest. Instead of criticising his methods, help him improve them. No one is perfect – certainly not Anna and his team members.

But most of them are a lot better than the 162 MPs in the Lok Sabha and 39 MPs in the Rajya Sabha who have criminal charges against them. Some of the charges are politically motivated. But many are not. For example, 75 Lok Sabha MPs, again cutting across party lines, face court-framed charges of murder, rape, extortion, kidnapping and dacoity. No wonder many parliamentarians are dead set against Anna and his anti-corruption crusade. They will do anything to discredit his movement. And in this task they have found witting and unwitting abettors in sections of the media and the intelligentsia. All have one trait: they mock Anna but have no alternative to offer in India's battle against corruption. Some are so witless they don't even realise how wrong they've got it. Anna is not the problem. The system is. Anna's prescription may not be perfect. But it's every citizen's job to help improve it. The government, as a beneficiary of institutionalised

corruption, isn't going to go out of its way to do so.

Take just one example to illustrate the serious nature of the court-framed charges many Lok Sabha MPs face. Kameshwar Baitha of the JMM has 11 charges related to murder and 17 charges related to attempt to murder filed against him.

As many as 28 ministers in Akhilesh Yadav's UP cabinet have criminal cases pending against them. The most notorious is Raja Bhaiya who has 45 criminal cases against him. He spent three years in jail on POTA charges and is today UP's Food and Civil Supplies Minister. It is such politicians who threaten our democracy and our institutions – not Team Anna members with their inflated travel vouchers and income-tax arrears due to a technical interpretation of paid study leave for a then-IRS officer.

It has been obvious since Indira Gandhi's government first introduced – but did not legislate – the Lokpal Bill in 1968 that politicians fear a strong, independent Lokpal. Their argument, parroted by their media handmaidens, is that the Lokpal will be a monstrous bureaucracy accountable to no one.

This of course is nonsense. The Lokpal would be accountable in five ways. First, through an internal complaints redressal authority; second, via an annual performance and financial audit by CAG; third, through a Lokpal appellate bench; fourth, from overall jurisdiction

over the Lokpal bench of the High Courts and the Supreme Court; and fifth, through a special parliamentary committee.

The Lokpal is obviously not a panacea as some Congress spokesmen say *sotto voce* to deliberately obfuscate the issue. It would be just one of five powerful instruments in the integrated, interlocked grid of governance that would include the EC, CAG, the new proposed National Judicial Commission (NJC) and an independent CBI. An independent CBI is central to this interlocked governance grid. With the Lokpal exercising jurisdictional oversight, the CBI would thus be accountable to an independent statutory authority which itself would be subject not only to the five internal checks and balances outlined above but to the discipline of being part of an integrated, interlocked governance grid.

Some critics warn that 40,000 extra staff will be needed to man the Lokpal body. This is a deliberate falsehood. In the interlocked grid model, no more than 1,000 new staff will be needed to investigate and allow prosecution of complaints against 60 lakh central government employees (including 78 Union Ministers and Ministers of State). The reason? An independent CBI will, under the Lokpal body's supervision, investigate cases forwarded by the Lokpal bench. Special fast-track courts will prosecute them. State Lokayuktas, with similar mechanisms, will

supervise the investigation and prosecution of state-level public servants through local CIDs and courts. These institutions already have adequate personnel which the Lokpal will deploy. Remember too that police autonomy has been mandated by the Supreme Court in September 2006 under a seven-directive order. When it is implemented by the government – a contempt of court petition against non-compliance is pending in the Supreme Court – not only will the CBI be freed of political control, so will state CIDs.

The Mumbai and Delhi police forces alone have over 40,000 personnel each so a central Lokpal body with 1,000 staff and a 7-member bench (not one individual “Lokpal” as some motivated reports misleadingly claim) hardly constitutes a bureaucratic monstrosity.

The so-called elite – intellectual, media, business – disparage Anna because he is not “people like us”. This wannabe-elite is comfortable with the status quo with its cosy nepotism, clubbiness and rich pickings.

A red herring is meanwhile used by the government: “Team Anna members are themselves corrupt – people in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones”. That unthinking logic would disqualify 90 percent of the police force from arresting criminals because the police themselves take bribes. Only the corrupt use this spurious argument to deflect the accusations they have no real answers for.

Those who castigate Team Anna for denigrating our institutions

are falling into the trap set by politicians: discredit the largely honest whistleblower and therefore by default exonerate the largely dishonest politician.

MPs are lawmakers. They are elected to uphold standards of public life, not lower them. As public servants, they exist to serve citizens. “In a democracy,” as US Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter declared, “the highest office is the office of the citizen.” Indian public servants – including the Prime Minister and his cabinet – are subordinate to every Indian citizen. The poorest, most destitute Indian is more important than the President of India. That is the way real democracy operates.

Some of the comments made by government ministers against Anna’s anti-corruption movement border on the infantile. The MoS in the PMO, V. Narayanasamy, said of Anna’s fast: “It is an attempt to fool the people.” He added: “It is good they told very openly today they are forming a political party. Their intentions are exposed.” Fasting as a protest against corruption and forming a political party are both entirely legitimate. That a government minister can categorise either in the way he did says more about Narayanasamy than Anna. And yet there are those in the chattering classes who support this unhinged government reaction rather than encouraging a movement against corruption which, if put on the right track, could improve all our lives.

Then there are those, in the government and the media, who insouciantly challenge Anna’s team members to stand for election.

But if fighting an election were a criterion for fighting corruption, every activist and – yes – every journalist who exposed corruption would need to first get elected. Such is the thoughtlessness – deliberate and inadvertent – that has lowered the standard of argument over the anti-corruption movement.

Whose side are we on? An imperfect Anna fighting our battle? Or a corruption-riddled political system? If Anna is not doing the job of fighting corruption well enough, help him do it better. Don’t help the corrupt by denigrating a movement’s methods when the end is just.

---

*(Continued from Page 5)*

disobedience, non-cooperation and satyagraha”.

It is necessary to note here that socialists also agreed with this kind of formulation. They also felt that the methods of civil disobedience and satyagraha should be used after exhausting all other methods. When the Socialist Party and the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party merged, they said in the merger document that “The Party believes that non-violent class struggles such as satyagraha and strikes are also a necessary method of democratic action. But these methods are to be used only when other available methods have been exhausted”.

Unfortunately, even the socialists these days have started blindly believing in un-constitutional actions even when constitutional means are available and more than that, in the ability of a ‘leader’ than the ‘collective wisdom of the masses’.

– **Bapu Heddurshetti**

# Role of Science and Technology in Development

K. S. Chalam

The curiosity about science particularly as to physics is broadened after the Higgs-Boson experiment at CERN in Europe, both among laymen and experts. It is necessary that common people should be made to appreciate science and its contribution to development in a country like India that pledges for scientific temper under Art. 51A(h). Science as an organized body of knowledge and technology being the application of scientific intelligence to solve practical problems of humans has been in existence ever since hominids appeared on earth (about 20 lakh years back). Man had started using tools and fire without the rudimentary knowledge of chemistry or physics about a lakh of years ago during the lower Paleolithic age. Agriculture and domestication of animals were found around 10 to 30 thousand years back as per scientists. The intellectual development of man could be seen in correspondence with the use of tools, material and equipment.

India, as the home of one of the ancient civilizations, had contributed to the development of human knowledge through its philosophical and speculative sciences. However, the triumph of modern science, according to many scholars, has developed only after science got separated from religious bond during the renaissance movement in Europe. The Galileo and Copernicus jolt given to the then existing ideas such as the centre of universe, in a way, had freed tremendous intellectual potential to develop and understand the universe around us.

This has led to the breakthroughs in scientific advances to make the life of man comfortable. Science as per Bertrand Russell has enabled us to know things and to do things. This has facilitated the development of several disciplines of sciences and technology including the science of technology during the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The recent Higgs Boson particle experiment has further reinforced the role of Indian scientists in the world of science and technology. The role of Satyendra Nath Bose in the experiment as an original collaborator of the theory (big bang) and linking his name with the most costly experiment in human history is a great recognition of our contribution to science in the modern period. But, the importance of science is not generally accepted by common man unless it directly affects his or her life. Religion as a sigh of relief of the common people is more directly and immediately recognized through a temporary and false consciousness than the oblique way through which the scientific discoveries being translated into providing comfort, long life and sustenance. It were the economists starting from Marx to the present generation of scholars through Schumpeter, Kuznets, Solow, Dennison and several others who have proved the positive role of technology in the economic development of a country. The economic theories of development have considered the total factor productivity as a measure of technological progress, and found its function in the development of modern economies

much faster and steadier than pre-modern age. Economists have given importance to S&T as a productive force and recognized its role in all human endeavors. Interestingly, the practical application of science is also responsible to some extent for limiting its use or expanding the abuse of science for exploitation of resources including humans.

The role played by our scientists, engineers, technocrats and others in diversifying our economy and society after independence is to be linked with the efforts made by our ancestors. The foresight shown by Jawaharlal Nehru in bringing scientists like Mahalanobis to Planning Commission and encouraging them through his personal rapport and calling Bhakra-Nangal and Nagarjunasagar dams as temples of modern India have paid rich dividends in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The present achievements of our scientists and technocrats are only a continuation of what our indigenous scholars had given us till the arrival of the modern scientists whose results are now measured in terms of their market value. However, the progressive role played by our scientists in different fields of study either in India or after getting the basic training in India in a migrated country like USA, is substantial. It is really surprising to find that a poor country with minimum investment in science and technology and hardly any funds by the private sector in R&D till recently, our scientists could achieve recognition in the world of scientific knowledge not only in terms of getting Nobels but

even in getting patents registered in their names. We are all proud of the achievements of our scientists. Yet, India being a member of the WTO and an enthusiastic participant of globalization, needs more investments and focus in terms of the strides made by others particularly our neighbors like China and Far Eastern achievers like Korea, Japan and others. Our investment in R&D is less than one percent of GDP while developed countries spend more in the range of 2 to 4 percent.

The application of scientific theories, technology and engineering operations in designing products, machinery, communication, infrastructures, vessels, defense products, etc have revolutionized the life styles in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. However, this has not happened not just in year. It took several decades through transformation of education, research and innovative methods of scientific enquiry to make it possible. The role played by scientists and particularly philosophers of science in sustaining and continuing the traditions of science and also in shifting the paradigms when new tools and methods are invented and applied. This has been accomplished perhaps through the modern and open ended traditions of science education and research. The contribution of technology in the growth of an economy and the individual corporations is acknowledged through the continuous investments in R&D.

Some of the contributions of our scientists have been made possible even during the time when we have pursued import substitution policies without any external support. We have not only achieved capability but also have remained as one of the very few countries that have

their own standing in the area of Satellite Engineering, Nuclear science, Telecommunications, Missile technology, IT and other emerging areas. This could not have been possible without our own effort and potential particularly after the country became independent about six decades. The achievements of our scientists and technocrats need to be recognized as legitimate inheritors of not only the Vedanta and Advaita systems of philosophy, but also the materialist culture championed by the Lokayatas and Satdarsanas that have rudimentary knowledge of modern approaches to science.

It is perceived that most of our modern scientific discoveries have taken place in the organized university labs and through the travails of scholar teachers. The Indian system of education was based on the University of London model where teaching, research and other academic activities are combined in one job. For instance, C.V. Raman, the first Indian scientist to get Nobel had his early education at Mrs A.V.N. College, Visakhapatnam and worked in Andhra University labs. The relationship between the teacher-cum-research guide and the scholar was one of the traditional *Guru-Shishya parampara* and not that of a client and master. Teacher was considered as *Gyanadata* and was respected. I always maintain that Professors are supposed to create knowledge and impart it to the students while the teachers are supposed to transact knowledge already available (text books) to the school children. Thus, science education including the formal conception of Science Congress and other research bodies were originated in the university system. Scientists like Meghanad Saha,

Vikram Sarabhai, Homi Bhaba, J.C Bose, Srinivas Ramanujam and several others emanated from our university system. However, the present universities are in very bad shape due to several reasons.

The structure of an economy is generally reflected in the higher education system of the country. As we have transformed our economy from that of a primary to a service sector, the weights given to courses that impart skills to sustain the sector are reflected in our university programmes. The substantial increase in the number of Engineering and Technology colleges and the mad rush for IT can be looked at from this angle. However, this cannot be taken as a development of science and technology as the courses pursued by students have neither developed interest in science nor have genuine desire to pursue research in science, engineering, bio-technology, agriculture, etc with a promise to use it for the exploitation of the native resources. Majority of them are doing it with an eye on the western market. There is some hope around the corner now as the system of higher education in the country is slowly picking up to create a culture of scientific advancement.

We have today 520 universities both in the government and in private sector with a substantial increase in enrolments in science and applied science courses. It is heartening to find that we have today 20 lakh Science, 16 lakh Engineering, 2.7 lakh Medical and 80 thousand Agriculture undergraduates undergoing training annually in the country. The figures at post graduate courses that have bearing on R&D is 3.8 lakh in Science, 1 lakh in Engineering

and 10 to 30 thousand in Medical and Agriculture, appears to be an encouraging trend. But, the research output in terms of number of PhDs or publication of scientific papers, seem to be not up to the mark. It is reported that we have been producing about 9000 Ph.Ds per year in different disciplines compared to 50000 in China and 19700 in USA around the year 2010. This can be related to the expenditure devoted to R&D in the budget. We have been devoting less than 1 percent of GDP (0.9) for R&D while China spends 1.4 percent, USA 2.7 per cent, Japan 3.3 per cent and a small country like Israel 4.4 percent. This is naturally reflected in the quantity of scientific research output. However, the quality of research output is becoming a cause of concern for many serious scientists as there is mad rush for R&D to attain economic endurance in the market rather than providing solutions to human problems.

The innovation of a new institution to protect the investments in science and technology particularly that of advanced countries in the form of WTO and the patent regime has eased the tensions in commercialization of output of R&D. The development of visible and invisible technologies through the process of what Schumpeter called; the innovations, has facilitated the public and private corporations to reap returns on their investments. Interestingly, there is a rapid growth of transfer of technology from advanced countries to LDCs after liberalization, is due to the fact that the scientific manpower in LDCs is much cheaper compared to their home grown HR. Therefore, the advanced countries are found to have been diverting the R&D resources to the third world for the use of cheap labour to produce output here and then to export them again

to the advanced countries. This has reduced the burden of cost of R&D in the advanced countries and some fringe benefits to the third world including India. This is reflected in the structure of the economies relying heavily on service sector and reducing their dependence on manufacturing and agriculture.

India being one of the ancient civilizations and a substantial contributor of mind power in the area of abstract speculations and indigenous endowment in the form of Siddha, Ayurveda etc in Medicine, Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and Astronomy, is not far behind. We can definitely find a place for India in the world of Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine and other areas of modern advancements in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The country achieved self-sufficiency in food, and developed indigenous missiles like Brahmos, Pharmaceutical formulations etc through our own research efforts. We have today world class research laboratories developed by DRDO, CSIR, DST, Biotechnology, ICMR, Space Science and other departments of the government with collaborative research with universities.

The shift in accentuation from manufacturing to service in the West has modified the university research from fundamental to applied areas. This can be seen in terms of the kind of unfair combinations of narrow fields of study that have very limited application emerging at an enormous cost. The West (with its putrid wealth) could afford it. We must learn lessons from China that has built its economy on cheap products with the help of Walmart would soon face the music once the level of development of society and their aspirations

ascend to demanding quality. Higher education has an important social function of envisioning the future and maintaining stability through its innovative courses that suit our history, resources and culture. Let us hope our university system would soon meet the expectations! *(Excerpts from an AIR talk broadcast on 10-8-2012)*

... The affluent want more and more exclusivity and thereby the poor get more and more marginalised. In today's urban society, lines are increasingly being drawn between the haves and have-nots. The subtler the divide, the more dangerous it is, as we don't even realise its impact. The class divide has already become all pervasive and not any less threatening than the evils of the caste system. So it is in the interest of our growth, both as individuals and as a society, that we remain inclusive, diverse and classless. But the reality is different. Real estate prices are so high in urban areas that there are fewer and fewer mixed neighbourhoods of the working class and the elite. The upscale public spaces like malls and coffee shops are so expensive, unwelcoming and inhibiting to poorer people that they become private without even stating it. And the few accessible and inclusive public spaces like the parks and sea-fronts that are left are cramped by those who have nowhere else to go. So again they end up being less heterogeneous. Our private spaces are already too private, as the circle we belong to is shrinking and those outside are many more. So who is going to speak up about more spaces for all?

—Nandita Das in *The Week*

# Codification of Muslim Personal Law and Gender Justice

Asghar Ali Engineer

Centre for Study of Society and Secularism, Institute of Islamic Studies and BMMA (Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan) and Muslim Law academy, Trichi, Tamil Nadu, recently have tried to codify the Muslim personal law as applicable in India after wider consultations with Ulama, Muslim lawyers, Islamic scholars and women activists and the draft is being widely discussed in concerned circles and the draft is also open to suggestions.

The question is why codification is at all necessary? We thought of codification after we began to receive number of complaints about misuse of shari'ah laws by men to harass and exploit women. The misuse is possible as the Muslim personal law is not codified and is applied often arbitrarily and unthinkingly injuring the very spirit behind these laws. Also, all Muslim and non-Muslim countries with sizeable Muslim minorities have, in other countries, already codified it long ago. India is the only exception where Muslim Personal Law Board (MPLB) has been resisting any change doggedly.

The question is does codification amount to change in Shari'ah law? Certainly not. It only amounts to regulating these laws in strictly keeping with the Islamic laws as formulated by various schools of Islamic jurisprudence. And it is of course not a first attempt but in the past too such attempts have been made the best example of which is the 1939 Act called Muslim Marriage Dissolution Act of 1939.

Before we throw more light on codification and its contents

we would like to discuss some important doctrinal issues. First we have to understand and we have on several occasions drawn attention to this fact that fiqh (jurisprudence) is a human approach to the divine pronouncements in Qur'an in the light of authentic ahadith (*sahih ahadith*) in the given circumstances. And it is for this reason that the Prophet (PBUH) allowed *aadaat* (customs and traditions) of the given society to be included in formulations of Shari'ah laws.

Thus the present shari'ah has Arab *aadaat* included in it. This was to make these laws easily acceptable by the people of that particular society. Also, acceptability very much depends on practices of people in the given period. If something is totally alien to the given period and its norms people would not practice those laws. All sociologists agree that social change is a very complicated process which among other things, include understanding of people's psychology and resistance to change.

The Islamic jurists (fuqaha) had to keep this in mind while applying Qur'anic injunctions and those of authentic *sunna* while formulating shari'ah laws even if it meant a degree of compromise with the ideals and values. Thus it was very complex process and varied from time to time and place to place. It is for this reason that Imam Abu Hanifa and Imam Shafi'I differed from Imam Malik and Imam Hanbal on many issues as both of them were in places (Iraq and Egypt) where there were composite cultures. In Iraq 60% population was of non-Arabs who were of Iranian and Babylonian

origin and in Egypt Arabs were living with those who were of Coptic origin.

Imam Shafi'I changed his opinion when he went to Egypt from what he held when in Madina because he was confronted with new situation in Egypt. It is for this reason that so many schools of Islamic jurisprudence came into existence. In Sunni Islam there exists today five schools of law i.e. Hanafi, Maliki, Hanbali and Shafi'I and then there are three school of jurisprudence in Shi'ah Islam i.e. Ithna Ashari (Ja'fari). Isma'ili and Zaidi.

In India most of the Muslims follow Hanafi school whereas in Kerala and Tamil Nadu a section of Muslims (Tamil) and (Malayli) follow Shafi'I school and also the Konkani Muslims in Western India too follow Shafi'I school as Islam in Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Konkan came through traders from sea route whereas in North and Central India it came through Iraq, Afghanistan through conquests as these regions followed Hanafi law.

It is said that in early period of Islam there were more than 100 schools of law of which these schools (named above) survived. This shows that there was no rigidity in applying Qur'anic injunctions and *sunnah* and people were free to interpret these injunctions as per their social needs, customs and traditions. Thus human approach to divine injunctions was no less important and the doctrine of *ijtihad* (exerting utmost ones intellectual capacity to serve ones needs). Ijtihad is very crucial and provides dynamics of social change.

We would here also like to throw some light on basic values of Islam which constitute the central core of Islamic values: justice and equality. Qur'an greatly emphasizes these core values and no Shari'ah law can be acceptable if it violates these two central values. And it is these two values which distinguished Islamic laws from other laws then in existence. Roman laws before Islam played central role in the world. However, as Islamic laws emphasized these values its laws began to replace Roman laws and Islamic laws acquired centrality.

However when Islam spread to various parts of the world from Arabia to Central and South Asia to Europe, it was confronted, as pointed out above, with complex social and civilizational situations. It was not possible for people to accept change in keeping with these two central values i.e. justice and equality. Age old customs and traditions asserted themselves and local practices remained in force in many cases. Indonesia and India are good examples of this. In certain communities in India like Cutchi Memons and Khojas Hindu customs and traditions prevailed until they were replaced by Shari'at Act of 1937.

Also in 19<sup>th</sup> century when Muslims came face to face with colonial cultures of the West they felt need for change and new debates started for changes and many Ulama and scholars as well as intellectuals began to argue in favour of change using the principle of *ijtihad*. Ulama like Muhammad Abduh of Egypt who rose to the eminent position of Chief Mufti of Egypt also argued in favour of change and issued several epoch making fatwas Abduh had spent several years in France during his exile from Egypt and hence he

realised the importance of central values of Islam like justice and equality and argued in favour of change in Shari'ah laws which had stagnated over centuries losing its original dynamics.

India too scholars, Ulama and intellectuals like Maulavi Chiragh Ali, Maulavi Mumtaz Ali Khan and Justice Ammer Ali argued in favour of change. Maulavi Mumtaz Ali Khan and Maulavi Chiragh Ali were particularly concerned with the plight of Muslim women and their subjugation to men in clear violation of Islamic spirit of justice and equality. Maulavi Mumtaz Ali Khan wrote a book *Huquq al-Niswan* (Rights of women) in which he argued on the basis of Qur'an and Sunna that woman must get equal rights and she is in no way inferior to men as generally believed in the society. This book was systematically suppressed and was never published by anyone as his cogent arguments were so strong that Ulama could not easily reply to them and patriarchal society like that of India (Arab society too was highly patriarchal and hence could not easily swallow the Qur'anic values of justice and gender equality and tried to scale them down in various ways through fabricated ahadith). Thus Maulavi Mumtaz Ali Khan's book never saw light of the day after its first edition published by Maluavi sahib himself, went out of edition. Maulavi sahib wrote the book in his own handwritings as no *katib* (calligrapher) would write. Such was the furious opposition to his book.

These laws which came to be known as Mohommadon laws during the British period and now called Muslim Personal Law in post-independence India have remained unchanged wrongly arguing that these are divine laws and cannot

be changed. In fact laws are always human but values are divine and cannot be changed. Law must change to keep the spirit of central values in tact.

The Qur'anic injunction for gender equality pronounced in the verse 2:228 is very clear and yet because of complex social situation it was never applied in practice except for a brief period of Holy Prophet's life. Over period of time woman was deprived of her rights and by 4<sup>th</sup> century she, under the influence of feudal cultures of Iran, Central Asia and Europe of medieval ages was totally subjugated to men.

The concept of gender equality is so important in Qur'an that this scripture of Islam does not use words like husband and wife as husband is indicative of authority over wife. The word for husband in Arabic is *ba'ul* which is used in Qur'an only twice and it uses instead the word *zawj* i.e. couple indicating complete equality. Even today in marriage forms (nikah forms) word used is *zawj* and *zawjah*.

Also, a careful study of Qur'an shows that it is the men who are exhorted repeatedly to safeguards rights of women (wives, mothers, sisters and daughters) and nowhere women are exhorted to perform their duties towards their husbands. However, in practice and in personal laws as applicable today it is women who are exhorted to perform their duties and men are hardly ever reminded of their Islamic duties towards their women i.e. wives and others.

It is this distortion of Qur'anic injunctions which needs to be attended to through codification. It is codification which would correct this imbalance. Now question is



what is codification and does it amount to changing the Shari'ah law? Codification is nothing but regulating Shari'ah rules and in no case it amounts to any changes in substantive law. In fact if anything it would bring it nearer the spirit of law and the values underlying it. It will remove the anarchy in its application today. It would mean regulating and avoiding injustices prevalent today.

For example take polygamy. In India there are absolutely no rules regulating it today. Anyone can marry up to 4 wives at one's will. It is thus injurious to the Qur'anic spirit. Qur'an does not intend to encourage polygamy but subject it to rigorous process of justice to women. In fact polygamy in Qur'an has been allowed to ensure justice to widows and orphans and the verse on polygamy (4:3) has been revealed only in connection with war widows due to battle of Uhud in which 10 per cent of Muslim men were killed leaving behind many widows and orphans.

It was to take care of these widows and orphans that Qur'an allowed taking up to four wives from amongst these widows and to look after their properties. However, soon Muslim men began to marry more than one wife from amongst other women treating this verse as general permission to marry any number of women up to four. This is far from Qur'anic concept of polygamy. In fact our Ulama today when asked about polygamy said that if polygamy is not allowed it will promote prostitution.

This shows how ignorant these Ulama are about the concept of polygamy in Qur'an. Qur'an treats extra-marital sex as great sin and says clearly in 4:3 that if you cannot

do justice to four wives better marry one (*fa wahidatan*). Thus where is the question of encouraging prostitution, if one is allowed to marry only one? Also when Prophet (PBUH) was asked what to do if one has no means to marry the reply through Qur'an was to restrain oneself until Allah makes means available. Our Ulama treat man as sexual animal to which Qur'an is strongly opposed to. Qur'an on the other hand wants man to restrain and lead a pious life. Justice to women is most fundamental and as 4:129 clearly states justice is far more important than number and if one reads 4:3 and 4:129 together polygamy should be an exception.

Codification has laid down rules which must be followed to take second wife in order to ensure justice to co-wife or wives. It proposes a marriage council in every district to comprise of qazi, Muslim lawyers and prominent women activists or lawyers to which one will have to apply if one wants to take second wife and the council will scrutinize application and give chance to first wife to represent her case whether there is need for second wife and whether she gives her consent and man will also be closely questioned as for the need for second wife and also look into his capacity to do justice to both wives and then only will allow, if need by, to take second wife.

Such regulations have already been introduced in almost all Islamic countries to ensure justice to women and no one can take second wife without going through this judicial or semi-judicial scrutiny. Some countries like Morocco and Tunisia have abolished polygamy altogether. However, our codification does not propose abolition but regulation of polygamy. Today incidence of

polygamy among Indian Muslims is not very high but nevertheless many men do marry more than one wife and first wife complaints of total neglect or humiliation. In some cases men take second wife to humiliate first wife which is prohibited by Qur'an (see 4:129).

### Triple Divorce

Another common complaint is of misuse of triple divorce which is permissible in Hanafi as well as Shafi'i law but is prohibited among ahl-e-Hadith among Sunni Muslims and among both Ithna Ashari and Isma'ili Shi'ahs. In Hanafi law unfortunately triple divorce is valid even if pronounced in a state of anger, inebriation or even pronounced by way of joke. Thus it has become very easy for men to pronounce three words *talaq-talaq-talaq* and permanently alienate his wife.

In fact this was customary law among Arabs before Islam and wife so divorced could not be taken even if man repented until she married someone else and her second husband divorced her to allow her to marry the first husband. Thus in the Arab customary law woman was punished and humiliated for man's mistake. This is grossly unfair and hence the Prophet (PBUH) strongly condemned triple divorce in one sitting as is obvious from hadith of Rukkana.

When Rukkana divorced his wife through triple divorce (*talaq-e-thalatha*) and this was reported to the Prophet (PBUH) he stood up, his face became red with anger and said Allah's laws are being violated in my own life time. It is for this reason that ahl-e-hadith do not allow triple divorce and treat it as one. Triple divorce in one sitting was prohibited during Prophet's (PBUH) life time

as well as during Hazrat Abu Bakr's time.

Hazrat Umar allowed it after initial two and half years of his reign as some men started misusing it by divorcing their first wife thrice and taking second wife from countries like Syria, Egypt etc. and taking back their first wife after coming back to their own country saying the Prophet (PBUH) had disallowed it. These women complained to Hazrat Umar who enforced it again to stop its misuse but it was not absolute enforcement as he also flogged those who gave triple divorce.

Imam Abu Hanifa allowed it for similar reason but one of his disciple disagreed with him and anyway it was banned by the Holy Prophet and it would be quite in the Islamic spirit of justice to treat three talaqs as one as ahl-e-hadith do. In any case in 1939 when serious problems arose with Hanafi law in case of disappearance of husbands (in Hanafi law one has to wait for 90 years before woman could re-marry) and took from Maliki law in which waiting period is only 4 years which is quite reasonable. Thus the Dissolution of Muslim Marriage Act 1939 was passed. In this case we can take from ahl-e-hadith and treat triple divorce as one. Thus our codification proposes that triple divorce be treated as one. The Shi'ah law also treats triple divorce as one.

In case of divorce too man has to approach Shari'ah court or Marriage Council whatever the case and apply for divorce and also serve a notice to the Marriage Council or Shari'ah Court and Marriage Council shall set up an arbitration as per Qur'an's injunction 4:35 to bring about reconciliation failing which divorce will be allowed through one divorce i.e. talaq-e-ahsan. Today talaq is

generally given only through triple divorce which is nothing but sinful form of divorce and best form of divorce is talaq-e-ahsan

### Case of Khula'

As per present rule husband's consent is a must for khula'. This is in contradiction to Prophet's Sunna. Prophet (PBUH) granted khula' to Jamilah as she insisted on it and he did not consult her husband who wept bitterly when he learnt about it that the Prophet (PBUH) has granted khula' to his wife. Moreover the Fiqh Council in its session this year (2012) in held in Mhow has also recommended that khula' be granted, if necessary, without the consent of her husband.

At present in India among Sunni Muslims and they constitute overwhelming majority of Muslims the only form of divorce is triple divorce which results in gross injustice to women. Our Ulama even do not educate general Muslim masses that this is sinful form of divorce and that only form of divorce they should resort to is talaq-e-Ahsan so that they can take back their divorced wife or remarry her if iddat period is over. And they do not tell Muslim masses that Qur'an requires reconciliation process before they pronounce final divorce and that they should have two witnesses when they finally pronounce divorce (65:1-3)

Thus codification would bring great relief to victims of such arbitrary triple divorce. Many men repent after pronouncing triple divorce in a state of anger or in a state of drunkenness but then our Ulama tell them that if they want to take their wives back they will have to marry another man and if they divorce them then only they can re-marry them. It is grossest form

of injustice. Why a pre-Islamic oral customary law should be binding on Muslims especially when Prophet (PBUH) had strongly condemned it.

### Other Issues

There are of course other issues which have been covered by codified law i.e. mehr, inheritance, custody of children, age of marriage etc. It has been proposed that minimum mehr should be one year's earning of the man and that it should be paid not in cash but in terms of gold or silver as cash loses its value every year. But there are different opinions as most of the Muslims are poor and may not afford one year's income. Anyway one can be more flexible on this question but in any case mehr should not be very meager as it tends to be.

### Inheritance

Two issues have been taken as far as inheritance is concerned: 1) Daughter's share should increase if she is earning and contributing to family wealth and made half or her earnings should be allowed to be accumulated separately which she can take with her at the time of marriage. And if she is not able to marry, for whatever reason, father should give her up to 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of his wealth to her (which father has right to make *hiba*) so that she can lead independent life. Qur'an allows women full property rights so she can accumulate her own earnings which will be hers and hers alone. 2) There is problem about grandson's inheritance if his/her father dies in life time of grandfather. In that case too grand children should be given up to 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of grandfather's wealth so that grandchildren are not deprived of share in inheritance.

### Custody of children

In all four schools of Sunni jurisprudence different ages have been fixed for sons and daughters

for custody to father. These ages were fixed according to the opinions held by Imams and in keeping with the ethos of time. Custody of children should, instead be decided keeping welfare of child in mind and should not necessarily go to father at certain ages. The Prophet (PBUH)

is reported to have given custody of son to mother when he found out that mother was more concerned with the education of her son compared to father.

Thus these are some of the suggestions unanimously

recommended in various consultations held with Ulama, lawyers and judges and women activists. Consultations were held jointly by BMMA, CSSS, Muslim Law Academy Trichi, Tamil Nadu and Institute of Islamic Studies.

## Inequality rising in India, shows data on spending

India's growth story is undeniable. But the 68th National Sample Survey Organization's (NSSO) findings seem to reaffirm that the benefits from this boost in the economy have been cornered by the upper crust, while the poorest continue to languish in near destitution.

Compared with the previous survey, which was conducted in 2009-10, the monthly expenditure of the poorest 10% population in rural India has risen by only 11.5%, while that of the richest 10% has gone up by 38% in the two years. A similar widening of gap is witnessed in urban India as well. While the monthly expenditure of the poorest 10% of urban population has risen by 17.2%, that of the richest 10% is up by 30.5%.

The poorest 10% living in rural India spend on an average only Rs 16.8 per day to survive, and half the rural population in India spends less than Rs 35 per day, says the provisional results of 68th round of the NSSO conducted in 2011-12 to find out the monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE).

The MPCE is considered a good proxy to measure the inequality in society and prevalence of poverty in the country. The MPCE survey covers the money spent in a month by a household on the entire gamut of life — from food, education, medicines to durable

consumer goods and entertainment.

In urban India, the poorest 10% spend Rs 23.4 per day on an average in stark contrast to the richest 10%, who spend Rs 255.1.

The economic divide, irrespective of the massive surge in economic activity over the past several years, is persisting as revealed by the startling figures, where 90% of rural Indians spend less than Rs 68.47 per day per person and 90% of urban Indians spend less than Rs 142.70 to survive in cities, where costs of living are exponentially higher. Two years ago, the NSSO report had revealed that 90% of rural Indians were spending less than Rs 55 per day per person, while 90% of urban Indians had expended less than Rs 122. Considering the average inflation levels prevalent over the last two years, the comparison suggests a majority continue to live with stagnant or reduced spending power.

The numbers also show that the gap between the poorest in villages and the richest in cities is rising at a fast clip. The poorest 10% living in villages spends on an average 15 times less than the top 10% living in cities. And, the gap between the two segments has increased with successive surveys.

Even the affluent in rural India are no match for the rich in urban centres.

The monthly expenditure of the creamy layers in urban India (the top 10% population) is 221% that of the rich in rural India. The affluent urban Indians' (the top 10% population) average monthly expenditure is Rs 7,651.68, and the expenses of their rural counterparts are Rs 3,459.77.

Preliminary results underscore a widely-held perception that the top 10% of the population in both rural and urban India is a class far-apart from the rest. And, the 10% just below the creamy rural Indians spend almost half of the rich. In cities, the rich class spends more than twice the amount on an average that the next 10% richest decile can afford to spend.

While the detailed report from the survey is not expected till next year, the preliminary results shed some light on how growth may not have trickled down.

The average monthly expenditure for 2011-12 has been estimated at Rs 1,281.45 in rural India (Rs 42.72 per day) and Rs 2,401.68 in urban India (Rs 80.06 per day). The figures reassert the fact that agriculture and rural economy remains highly unfavourable, with the per capita expenditure level of the urban population on an average 87.4% higher than that of rural Indians.

—The Times of India



## **GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.**

**(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)**

**REGISTERED OFFICE**

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,  
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

**TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232**

**Website: [gannondunkerley.com](http://gannondunkerley.com)**

**E-mail: [gdho1@mtnl.net.in](mailto:gdho1@mtnl.net.in)**

**GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.**

**GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.**

**OFFICES AT:**

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD  
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

# janata

*Independence Day Number*

**Vol. 67 No. 30**  
**August 19, 2012**

## **65 years young and counting!**

**S. Viswam**

**Co-operatives and Socialism**  
Bapu Heddurshetti

**Nation-building in  
Tri-sector Partnership**  
D. K. Giri

**The Power of the Religions and  
the Helplessness of the Leftists**  
Saral Sarkar

**How to start a riot  
out of Facebook**  
Yousuf Saeed

**The battle has just begun**  
Kuldip Nayyar

**Declaration  
For Building A  
CommonSchool System**

Some spectacular achievements, some notable setbacks, some unpardonable failures, some impressive progress. In balance, not a totally dismal record for a young nation that is celebrating 65 years of its birth and stepping into its 66th year on a clear note of hope and ambition. Independence Day on every August 15 gives us the occasion to attempt to strike a balance between successes and failures. Admittedly, while successes can be counted on finger tips, the list of failures runs long. This has been so year after year since 1947, but India has managed to blunder along on the road to progress and consolidation not losing heart over the failures. Indians do remember on every August 15 that they have not even touched the fringe of the target its forefathers set before the nation on the eve of independence: namely, to wipe the tears off the face of every citizen. That objective remains distant, true, but there has been no let up in the fight against that challenge. The most noteworthy aspect of that challenge itself is that it has to be contained in a democratic environment with democratic institutions and traditions serving as the principal weapons in the nation's armoury. The need is to register progress each day and each month and each year so that at year-end we can show something tangible for our efforts at nation-building.

Since we are a huge country with a billion plus population, our problems and challenges are also numerous and diverse. These are times when even postage-stamp-sized countries find it tough to register significant economic progress, and many well-developed countries are struggling to retain and live on the fruits of the achievements of years. However, in the case of most countries, there are enough achievements to offset the failures. And, in the case of most countries again, failures occur in spite of honest and sincere attempts by the people of those countries to take their nations forward through hard and sustained work. Often, one gets depressed over the failure of the Indian population, by and large, to understand and appreciate that India can do much better as a member of the global comity of nations in several sectors of endeavour, if only they were better organized, more disciplined and certainly more dedicated.

This is particularly so in the field of international sports where India can do much much better if those who manage national and international sports display

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

more discipline and dedication. The just-concluded London Olympics highlights this fact in all its agonizing poignancy, gloom and disappointment and at the same illustrates what good faith and good resolve can do. There will be widespread agreement nation-wide that a large country like India with a billion plus population can do far better in global sports events than its overall performance in London demonstrates. No gold, two silvers and four bronzes. This is certainly not to be scoffed at when there would have been no eyebrows raised, or to be more accurate, only eyebrows would have been raised, had India returned home empty-handed! Since no one expected any spectacular achievements, the ensuing disappointment from London has been carried over with the required skepticism. In the event, even six medals have been hailed as a mark of impressive achievement!

But, this is a kind of complacency that a nation aspiring to play a major role in world politics and economics, including international competitive sports, cannot afford to nurse and promote any longer. Indeed, it is sheer

generosity and large-heartedness and the abiding Indian spirit of tolerance and understanding that has engendered cheers for the sporting fraternity returning from London. The time has come for introspection. The current system and arrangement of self-absorbed self-centred politicians managing national and international sports has failed to deliver. It must be replaced forthwith with persons who know, understand and appreciate sports in all its aspects. Since the present system runs (and can run only with) government patronage, the authority that sanctions and ensures a drastic re-vamp from the grassroots level has to be the government. The government and officialdom must release their stranglehold on sports and help usher in a thoroughly, imaginatively and comprehensively re-vamped system whose sole objective will be equipping India and Indian sportsmen to put up a vastly improved performances in global sports events. Without such a long over-due overhaul, sports and sports management will remain hostage to the greed of individual politicians and to their wily manipulations to further their own selfish interests in the name of Indian sports.

## **Western Railway Employees' Union**

Central Office: Grant Road Station Building (East), Mumbai-400007

P&T: 23083813 Rly- 43662, 43663 -Fax: 23003185, Rly. 43666

E-mail: wreuhq@rediffmail.com

The Western Railway Employees' Union ("WREU"), earlier known as Bombay Baroda & Central India Railway Employees' Union was established in 1920 at Parel, Mumbai. WREU is one of the oldest trade unions not only in Railway but also in the country, its registration number being 5. After enactment of the Trade Union Act, 1926, the WREU got itself registered on 30.10.1927.

WREU is a founder member of All India Railwaymen's Federation ("AIRF") and All India Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), WREU, AIRF and HMS are free, independent and democratic trade unions.

WREU fought for upliftment of railwaymen and their family in particular and labour class in general for the last 87 years. WREU-AIRF is instrumental in creation of Permanent Negotiating Machinery ("PNM") for solving the grievances of railwaymen in 1951. Productivity Linked Bonus, large scale upgradations, etc. To the Railwaymen, these are some of the major achievements of WREU. WREU is the most popular union amongst the railwaymen on implementation of modified recommendations of the 6th CPC w.e.f. 1.1.2006

WREU was led by prominent trade union leader, late Miss. Maniben Kara and in memory of her, WREU established "Maniben Kara Foundation", a charitable trust fighting against the evils of the society.

Apart from trade union activities, WREU along with Maniben Kara Foundation is conducting various non-bargaining activities such as organizing Health Checkup Camps, Blood Donation Camps, Family Planning Camps, Anti-Dowry campaigns, HN-AIDS Awareness Campaigns, Trade Union Education Class, etc. for the benefits of the railwaymen and the general public.

**Umraomal Purohit**  
**President**

**J.R. Bhosale**  
**General Secretary**

# Co-operatives and Socialism

**Bapu Heddurshetti**

The United Nations has declared the year 2012 as the International Year of the Co-operatives. Co-operatives and Socialism have symbiotic relationship. Co-operatives are one of the three institutions invented to transit the society from capitalism to socialism, the other two being the political party of socialism and the trade unions. Co-operatives are an institution that engenders the third of the normative ideals of socialism, namely fraternity or solidarity. They bridge the gulf between the need for individual initiative and the need for associative action – being the harbingers of fraternity they bridge the hiatus between liberty and equality.

It would be interesting to note that the word “socialist” was used for the first time in 1827, in the *Co-operative Magazine* to designate the followers of Robert Owen (1771–1858). It is not without reason that Robert Owen, considered as the founding father of Socialism, is also considered the founding father of co-operatives and trade unions. In the cotton mills at New Lanark, Scotland, Owen put his ideas of providing a good environment with access to education for workers and their children in practice. It was here that he opened the first co-operative store. He even wanted to form ‘villages of co-operation’ where workers would escape from poverty by growing their own food, making their own clothes and ultimately becoming self-governing. Even Charles Fourier, another of the Utopian Socialists, who conceived of a commune *phalange* wanted all its activities, ‘the complex activities of the life of a community, to be carried on by the people, in a co-operative manner’.

India’s socialist leader Asoka Mehta pays tribute to Robert Owen when he says “If for nothing else, for having given us the picture of these two types of organizations, for having developed them and nurtured them for twenty years, he earns an abiding place in the socialist pantheon”.

In his book ‘Democratic Socialism’, Asoka Mehta considers the co-operatives and the trade unions as the two of the most creative and abiding organizations that have emerged in our time. He calls them the ‘two wheels on which the chariot of social progress moves’. He says that in trade unions, which are combative organizations,

“men and women come together and fight for their rights; while the co-operatives are constructive organizations *par excellence*, they are the schools of associative work”.

In its ‘Statement on the co-operative identity’, the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) defines a co-operative as “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social, and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise”. According to the ICA, co-operatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity and they believe in the ethical values of honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others.

The United Nations also conceives the co-operatives as instruments for ‘building a better world’. Co-operatives ‘balance both social and economic demands’. They also help ‘improving the livelihoods of the people and strengthen the economy’ as also ‘enable sustainable development’. UN considers co-operatives as a ‘pathway out of poverty’. In the Declaration of Principles adopted at the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress at Stockholm in 1989, the Socialist International states that the self-managed cooperatives of workers and farmers are a means to bring about social control of the economy.

## Humble Beginnings

Co-operatives had a humble beginning. The first serious attempt was ‘The Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers’ established in 1844 by a group of 28 weavers and others in Rochdale, England. As the capitalist industries pushed the workers into the abyss of poverty, these persons known as Rochdale Pioneers decided to come together and open their own store selling food items at affordable rates. With great efforts they pooled 28 pounds from 28 persons at one pound sterling per person and opened the co-operative store on 21<sup>st</sup> December 1844 to sell butter, sugar, flour, oatmeal and candles. Within three months, they were selling tea and tobacco also and were soon known for providing high quality, unadulterated goods. The Pioneers decided that they should be honest, open and treat others with respect and that they should share the profits with the members and

that they should have a democratic right to have a say in the business. Every customer of the shop became a member and thus acquired a stake in the business. The co-operative which was kept open only on two nights a week in the beginning, soon grew so big that it had to be kept open five days a week.

In view of the failure of the earlier co-operatives, they formulated the now famous Rochdale Principles for successful running of a co-operative. These principles have been adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance in 1937 and then restated in 1966 and 1995. These principles today form the basis for the development and growth of the modern cooperative movement. These principles are : 1. Voluntary and open membership, 2. Democratic member control, 3. Economic participation by members, 4. Autonomy and independence, 5. Education, training and information, 6. Cooperation among cooperatives, 7. Concern for community.

The third of the principles i.e., economic participation by members is of the essence of these principles. The ICA elucidates the principle as follows: Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their co-operative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the co-operative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing their co-operative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the co-operative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership”.

Even the United Nations has emphasised the point. It says that the “Cooperative enterprises are member owned, member serving and member driven”. In Scandinavian countries the co-operatives distribute the dividends on the basis of the purchases made by the members and not on the basis of the shares held by them.<sup>1</sup> “This principle should provide the standard by which to measure as to what extent a co-operative is a true co-operative.

### **Socialists on co-operatives**

Capitalism had created a society in which an individual worked for his individual ‘profit’ and it was ‘competition’ which ensured that the economic activity was conducted with efficiency. Socialism sought to replace ‘individual profit’ with ‘benefit for the community’ and ‘competition’ which created a situation of conflict of interest between

two individuals with ‘co-operation’ which eliminated the conflict and replaced it with fraternity or solidarity.

In his book ‘Future of Socialism’ Anthony Crossland says that “socialism was a protest against the material poverty and physical squalor produced by capitalism and the inefficiencies of capitalism” and that the co-operatives are a “means for substituting unrestricted competition and the motive of personal profits”. They replace ‘competitive social relations by fellowship and social solidarity, and the motive of personal profit by a more altruistic and other-regarding motive’. He feels that though because of economic progress the arguments of material poverty and inefficiency have receded to the background the co-operative aspiration of society remains.<sup>2</sup>

Socialist historian George Lichtheim goes further and says that ‘the solution of the social problem, lay in establishing labour exchanges where workingmen’s co-operatives and independent craftsmen could exchange their products according to prices based on labour-units, thus at one blow circumventing the market and realising the ideal of social equality’.<sup>3</sup>

It would be interesting to note that after the Bolshevik Revolution, when Russia was confronted with the problem of accumulating capital, three solutions were offered. Asoka Mehta says “The least painful was the one put forward by Bukharin. He said that the peasants should be permitted to produce as much as they can and by inducing them with advantages of co-operative marketing, credit facilities, and other incentives bring them into co-operatives and through their help build up agriculture and get the resources for other economic development”.

### **Indian Socialists on Co-operatives**

Socialists in India recognised the importance of co-operatives from the beginning. In 1934 itself, in the draft proposals for the formation of a Congress Socialist Party, they said that “organisation of co-operatives and entering them where they exist for the purpose of helping producers and consumers and for providing credit for workers and peasants” would be one of the programmes of the party. In the ‘Programme for adoption after the attainment of independence’ they wanted “gradual replacement of private (internal) trade by State (distributing) co-operatives” and that the “state shall encourage and promote collective and co-operative farming with a view to ultimate collectivisation of all agriculture in the country”.



The programmes of the party mentioned in the constitution of the party included “organisation of co-operatives for production, distribution and credit in the unsocialised sector of economic life and encouragement and promotion of co-operative and collective farming by the State”. They also mentioned ‘encouragement of co-operative farming’ as an immediate demand of the socialists.

Mahatma Gandhi who considered himself a socialist wanted that as far as possible every activity in a village should be conducted on co-operative basis.<sup>4</sup> Gandhi’s “notion of co-operative was that the land would be held in common by the owners and tilled and cultivated also in co-operation”<sup>5</sup> As Dr. T. N. Prakash Kammaradi says the “emergence of genuine, autonomous, co-operative associations, (which) naturally take away their share of power from the State”<sup>6</sup> and that would endear the co-operatives to Mahatma Gandhi’s anarchist proclivities.

The doyen of the Indian socialist movement Acharya Narendra Deva wanted the Indian peasants to be brought in line with “socialist reconstruction through the medium of co-operative societies.”<sup>7</sup> He wanted ‘the development of medium and cottage industries on co-operative basis’. He felt that in co-operation lies the salvation of small unit economic enterprises. Referring to the success of the co-operatives in Scandinavian countries he said “it was co-operation that enabled the Scandinavian peasants to pull through the economic crisis of the thirties of this century and to organise their dairy industries on sound foundations. Co-operation alone will enable cottage industries and small unit enterprises to flourish in India.”<sup>8</sup>

For Acharya Narendra Deva, co-operatives were not only economic organisations but also a psychological tool, an instrument to ‘change the attitude of the masses’. He said “the co-operative movement is a new way of thinking and living. It is not merely a question of joint farming or consumers’ co-operatives. There are many types of co-operatives which can be established. It must serve every need and aspect of rural life. That is what is expected of the co-operative movement”.<sup>9</sup>

Jayaprakash Narayan, in his ‘My Picture of Socialism’ had said “Each Grama Panchayat, among other things, will also function as a farmers’ co-operative. The Co-operative will conduct all farming operations including buying, selling and borrowing”. JP had even said “I visualize all small industries to be organized into producers’ co-operatives, who would own and manage their industries”.

For JP ‘socialism in agriculture’ meant co-operative and collective farming. He said this ‘was essential for the success of any attempt to recast Indian life on a socialist basis’. He explains what is a co-operative in his tract ‘Why socialism’. “Under this, individual holdings remain (though much equalised by the redistribution of the land of the landlords and the capitalist farmers); the old agricultural instruments remain individual property; but for the purposes of cultivation, the holdings are pooled together and the crop is raised and harvested with joint labour. The produce is distributed according to the size of the holding and the amount of labour put in, after costs have been accounted for. This is the first lesson in social living”.

In an article ‘Socialism and Sarvodaya’ written in Janata in 1951, JP said “The ideal that the Plan sets out to achieve is that of a non-violent, non-exploitative co-operative society which shall not be based on caste or class and in which there shall be equal opportunity for all. The present competitive economy shall be replaced by a social economy based on co-operation.”

Asoka Mehta considers co-operatives as one of several institutions, along with Parliament, State Assemblies, District Boards, Village Panchayats, Ward Committees, Community Centres etc., in which the power of state needs to be distributed to achieve decentralised democracy. Co-operatives are very much a part of the ‘pulsating fabric of a democratic state’.

As Dr. T. N. Prakash Kammaradi would say, “Asoka Mehta strongly vouches that the co-operation can be the key stone of the arch of planning in India and asserts emphatically that co-operation and the decentralization are the essential ingredients of the planned economic development under the system of democratic socialism that suits the situation of India well”.<sup>10</sup>

Asoka Mehta also feels that the co-operatives are not just economic organisations but institutions for bringing about attitudinal change in human beings. Though co-operatives form a part of the pulsating fabric of democratic state, they should ultimately replace even democratic state. Co-operation must ultimately replace authority. According to him “philosophic anarchy is the ultimate objective of *all* socialists, utopian as well as scientific” and that “*all* socialists aspire to achieve *stateless society*. State, as an instrument of compulsion, must ‘wither away’. All socialists, from the days of Saint-Simon to those of our times, have believed in,

and worked for, the time when the governance of men will yield place to administration of things: where there will be no police, no bureaucracy, no judiciary, no army, where by spontaneous co-operation, by the flow of human goodwill the social life will be kept free from friction”.

### Co-operatives today

Today Co-operatives all over the world are playing an important role in ameliorating the rigours of capitalist society. In India too they are playing an important role. Dr. Praksh Kammaradi, draws our attention to two co-operative experiments, one at a macro level and another at a micro level. He says, “One has to study thoroughly the case of AMUL, the most successful co-operative experimentation at the macro level and Koppa Transport Co-operative, at the micro level and seriously ponder over the issue of establishing genuine co-operative farming system throughout India”<sup>11</sup>.

Amul, the acronym for the Anand Milk Union Limited, in Gujarat, has become the mascot of cooperatives in India though there are many such equally successful co-operative federations. Formed in 1946 Amul today is managed by the Gujarat Milk Marketing Federation Limited and is owned by more than 3.1 million milk producers, collects 9.4 million litres per day from its members and disburses Rs. 150 million in cash every day on an average. With an annual turnover of Rs. 53 billion, it is the biggest milk handler in Asia. It exports milk and milk products to more than 37 countries with a turnover of more than Rs. 1.5 billion. It has 7 lakh retail outlets. It would be interesting to know that the movie ‘Manthan’ by Shyam Benegal produced in 1976 and which won the National Film Award for Best Feature Film in Hindi was based on the Amul experiment and was financed by more than 5 lakh farmers in Gujarat who contributed Rs. 2 each.

While Acharya Narendra Deva felt that in co-operation lies the salvation of small unit economic enterprises, the Amul experiment shows that Co-operatives can be the socialist answer to the multi-national corporations engendered by capitalism.

Transport Co-op Society Ltd., Koppa, Karnataka, was started by about 200 drivers, conductors, mechanics etc., who were working for a private transport company which threw them out because they went on a strike. They took their Provident Fund money and purchased two condemned buses from the Karnataka State Transport Corporation, repaired them and started running them.

Today the co-operative is running more than 150 buses and is the biggest transport operator in the hilly region of north-western Karnataka running buses to every nook and corner of the region. Now it has its own Bus Stand and its own garage to repair the buses.

While the pioneers of Amul and Koppa are in fact socialists who do not know that they are socialists or call themselves as socialists, even those who know that they are socialists or call themselves as socialists have been actively involved in the co-operative movement. To the best of my knowledge, at least in Karnataka and Maharashtra the sugar manufacturing industry is overwhelmingly in the co-operative sector. Socialists have been active in the housing and consumer sectors also. The ‘Apna Bazar’ of Mumbai is an example of socialist efforts in the consumer co-operative movement.

Even in the United States, the so-called bastion of capitalism, there are over 29,000 co-operatives employing 2 million people with over \$652 billion in annual revenue. In the UK, co-operatives formed the Co-operative Party in the early 20th century to represent members of co-operatives in Parliament. The Co-operative Party now has a permanent electoral pact with the Labour Party, and some Labour MPs are Co-operative Party members.

The co-operatives and co-operative federations, the world over, have formed ‘International Co-operatives Alliance’ in 1995 and today it has, as its members, 245 co-operatives or co-operative federations from 92 countries with a total membership of more than 100 crores. 12 national federations from India with a total membership of 24 crores are members of the ICA. India’s membership exceeds even the membership in China.

1. see International and National Politics by B.Vivekanandan – p. 25
2. Pages 53-54
3. A Short History Of Socialism - page 76
4. The Life of Mahatma Gandhi – Louis Fischer page 408
5. JS and AS Mathur in Economic Thought of Mahatma Gandhi page - 335
6. Janata, 13th November 2011.
7. Towards Socialist Society – page 176.
8. Towards Socialist Society – page 287.
9. Towards Socialist Society – page 418.
10. Janata, 13th November 2011.
11. Janata, 13, November 2011

# Nation-building in Tri-sector Partnership

D. K. Giri

As we observe the 65<sup>th</sup> year of India's independence, another annual occasion to remember the glorious efforts and results of our national liberation movement, we take time to reflect on the nation-building process. Presently, there are two issues that concern almost all countries in the world in varying degrees: Globalization and Climate Change which are somewhat interrelated. Under the impact of globalization, new ideologies and new activisms have come up across the globe – neo-liberal capitalism, monopolistic multinational corporatism, religious revivalism, extremism, ecologism and so on. But, deeply worrying part of these developments is the heightened violent conflicts between state, business and civil society organisations. These conflicts are of course exacerbated by climate change and globalization, but they go back a long way due to deep seated suspicion, rigidity of views and prejudices. For instance, it is very common for the government to be viewed as bureaucratic, buck-passing and control seeking; businesses to be seen as profit motivated, insensitive and greedy; and civil society is perceived as idiosyncratic, inefficient and having an attitude of holier-than-thou.

These are superficial clichés, at the very best half-truths. They give us a very good excuse to stay within our own domain and think everyone else is rubbish. This is not acceptable because this is not healthy for promoting development and building a good society. I propose in this article a new approach of collaboration, called Tri-Sector Partnership between the state, market and civil society. This is based on the research and nation-wide consultations done by my development organization, Schumacher Centre. The process started with an international conference, which was preceded by three sector-wise workshops to clear the air and set the agenda. Then, the deliberations of the conference were put to three regional workshops for feedback.

## The Conference

On November 4, 2009, an international conference was held at the India Islamic Cultural Centre, New Delhi, to promote the concept of Tri-Sector Partnership - a partnership between the State, the business sector, and Non-Governmental Organisations, all three working together structurally, as equals, for development.

This first-of-its-kind India meet was organised by the Schumacher Centre - a Delhi-based NGO that exists to support the marginalised rural Indian poor.

Schumacher Centre believes that government, business corporate social responsibility departments and NGOs, acting independently of each other, have failed rural India. They have failed individually because they have been acting without unity. Government holds power and legitimacy but struggles to reach the grassroots. Business has the money but not the knowledge of rural poverty issues. NGOs have the knowledge but lack the resources. The barriers of suspicion between the three sectors must be torn down, for only a unified approach can truly tackle poverty and a related danger lurking in the wings - the threat of climate change, which potentially can decimate the livelihoods of the poor. Of note here is US Senator John Kerry's warning that agriculture in India and the livelihoods that depend on it could be catastrophically hit as a result of rising sea levels that are forcing salt water into the Ganges and through the river, on to millions of acres of fertile soil.

Candidly acknowledging the Indian government's inability to deliver its rural people from the scourge of poverty, leading Congress M.P. Dr. Keshava Rao declared at Schumacher Centre's Tri-Sector Partnership meeting that more than 60 years of government-led rural development initiatives had "failed" and that government alone could not solve the deep-seated problems that plague rural India. Referring to the country's rural hinterlands, Rao said: "After 60 years, we still have people who do not get one square meal a day". The M.P. identified poverty and social oppression as salient issues, and regretted that politicians were cut off from the people's concerns. He lamented: "We feel so cut off sitting in Delhi. We come to power in the name of people we cannot reach or understand. We cannot see their tears, we cannot hear their voices". Rao's plea was that we "let government do its job", but as a "partner and ally" of business and the NGO sector. Welcoming the Tri-Sector approach, he said there was a need to break the mould and think of new approaches.

## Defining Tri-sector Partnership

We have heard of Private-Public Partnerships, but Schumacher Centre's approach talked about a private, public and people's partnership. Let us briefly introduce the Tri-Sector concept, explain its rationale and elaborate how the concept could be put into practice. T. K. Oommen, the chairman of the Schumacher Centre, came up with a robust theoretical foundation for building tri-sector partnership. He suggests fostering an atmosphere of Tri-Sector co-operation, and the kind of citizen we must breed to allow Tri-Sector to flourish.

What is typically in vogue to-day is co-operation between the government/state and business/private sector. But we, at Schumacher Centre, are advocating tri-sector co-operation; the three sectors being the State, market and civil society. This advocacy is based on recent historical experience: state-sponsored development was in existence in socialist countries and market-driven development prevailed in capitalist economies and both have come to grief, for different reasons. We do not intend to dwell upon the reasons for their failures but only want to indicate the rationale behind tri-sector co-operation.

The State is a coercive agent. Therefore, the process of acquiring and exercising power needs to be well-designed and regulated through appropriate mechanisms such as periodic elections contested by different political parties, and the preservation of the autonomy of the legislature, executive and the judiciary. Economic activity is motivated by material incentives and is regulated by market mechanisms in terms of free exchange and open competition. But often it is found that self-regulation by the market does not always succeed and hence, the State needs to intervene when required. Civil society is a space for free voluntary activity for citizen; it is a space between market and state, which can and should moderate the authoritarian tendency of the State and the rapacity of the market.

A State may be authoritarian or democratic; the market could be monopolistic or competitive. Similarly, the civil society contains both negative and positive elements. In the final analysis, a good society is one in which the democratic polity, competitive market, and the positive elements of civil society co-habit. Tri-sector co-operation refers to the co-operation of these positive dimensions. The three entities produce three creatures - the State begets the citizen, the market produces the

consumer, and civil society, the communitarian.

The citizen is expected to be committed to democratic values - a refrain we hear frequently. But consumerism is unleashed without any restraint, which is playing havoc not only in society but also in nature. The current concern with climate change should actually address responsible consumer behaviour. It is absolutely necessary to evolve a code of ethics for consumers. The creature that the civil society produces is the communitarian, whose concern is the welfare of not only his immediate community but also the wider society. All of us, all individuals, combine within us the three roles - those of citizen, consumer and communitarian. But these three roles need to be balanced to create a consensual equilibrium in society, which would be qualitatively different from the coercive equilibrium produced by the state-led and market-driven equilibrium, the mediating element being the role of communitarian propelled by civil society.

The tri-sector approach thus advocates not only institutional co-operation between State, market and civil society but is also aimed at creating individuals who can balance the roles of citizen, consumer and communitarian. The product of such an endeavour would neither be a combination of capitalism and democracy nor a combination of socialism and one-party rule, both of which have failed, but that of socialism and democracy; call it Democratic Socialism if you are not prejudiced. As we see it, only the tri-sector approach can provide equity, nurture emancipatory identity, deliver dignity to all and be the instrument of comprehensive security.

## Looming Crisis

Schumacher Centre is inspired by the great 20th Century economist and philosopher, E. F. Schumacher, who declared that "the starting point of all our considerations is poverty, or rather, a degree of poverty which means misery, and degrades and stultifies the human person". Rural India, which is steeped in human misery and degradation, is the focus of our work in Schumacher Centre. We take a leaf out of the book of Mahatma Gandhi who told us, not too long ago: "India is not Calcutta or Bombay. *India lives in her seven hundred thousand villages*".

The situation in rural India, which has long been bleak, has now reached a tipping point – a point of no return: it is threatening to get much, much worse. The

move in that direction began with globalisation, which widened the gap between the “Two Indias”. Now the gulf between the Two Indias has widened further still following the global recession. There are many aspects to the looming crisis threatening rural India. One issue is that of the rising debt that has led Indian farmers to a range of extreme and desperate measures this summer, including selling their wives and even threatening mass suicide. The Hindustan Times reported on June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009, that a written suicide pact signed by 5,000 farmers in Jharkhand simply said: “We cannot live a respectable life, we should be allowed to die a respectable death”. This signature campaign, taken to the Indian government in a bid to garner financial aid, spoke of the pathetic conditions the farmers had to contend with.

Beyond the lingering economic crisis, a deeper and more serious threat that has led rural India to a tipping point is the climate crisis. Back in February 2009, the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit saw US Senator John Kerry address delegates by video-link from Washington. Describing India’s future in a world of climate breakdown, he said: “Scientists are now warning that the Himalayan glaciers, which supply water to almost a billion people, could disappear completely by 2035. This would reduce the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers to cracked earth.” Kerry warned also that “rising sea levels are forcing salt water into the Ganges, with the potential to destroy millions of acres of fertile Indian soil”, and that farming output in India is projected to fall by as much as 30 percent to 40 percent by 2080. If this grim prediction comes true, millions of rural livelihoods will be lost.

There are already precedents of climate change causing all-out conflict. In 2007, we heard a watershed announcement: the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon told the globe it was witnessing its first climate change war. Ki-moon said the ethnic bloodshed in the Darfur region of Sudan was triggered, at least in part, by man-made climate change. UN statistics revealed rainfall in Darfur had declined 40 per cent in two decades, as monsoons were affected by a rise in Indian Ocean temperatures. Ethnic Arabs and Africans, who had co-existed peacefully for generations, fell into catastrophic war over diminishing water supplies and farm land. We may see the same hell breaking loose in this part of the world also.

Adding to this ghastly mess of economic crisis and impending climate chaos, we have the Naxalite rebellion.

The movement has always drawn support from those for whom agriculture is simply not putting enough food on the table. However, the Naxalite insurgency is being fuelled by *both* economic injustices as well as by climate change. The discontent that fosters the insurgency is liable to be compounded and the insurgency widened, deepened and prolonged if climate change is allowed to ravage our nation’s rural areas. The Naxalite crisis has persisted for too long. It must be confronted now – before it is too late.

I said that rural India has reached a tipping point, and rural India should remain our concern. But urban India is also at risk. Wealthy India exists within the most exclusive suburbs of our cities – ‘mini Americas,’ as they are known, but within our cities too, we also find terrible poverty. If we do not save village India, then the country’s cities will forever be handicapped, for every day, thousands of Indian villagers swarm to the urban slums in the big cities, desperate for a livelihood they could not find back home. They come because they have no hope in the villages. All too often, they find no hope, no home and no job in the cities either. Thus, rural Indian poverty breeds urban Indian poverty.

### **Land Of Opportunities**

So far I have presented a gloomy image of rural India. But it is a land that also offers so many opportunities. C. K. Prahalad of the University of Michigan gave us a glimpse of the potential in his book, *Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid* – a volume that speaks of dynamic new models of doing business with the poorest of the poor and defeating poverty through profit. Prahalad argued also that the fastest growing new markets and the most exciting entrepreneurial opportunities are to be found at the bottom of the economic pyramid.

Business must realize that rural India contains one third of a billion potential consumers, and that this potential is simply not being tapped. Those who grasp this opportunity first will deservedly prosper; the urban market is, after all, fast reaching the point of saturation. Also a source of optimism is the promise of good, transparent and responsive governance at the grassroots, which Panchayati Raj is mandated to deliver. If Panchayati Raj delivers as it has been conceived, India will have contributed to the world a replicable model of bottom-up planning and grassroots democracy.

*(Continued on Page 13)*

# The Power of the Religions and the Helplessness of the Leftists

Saral Sarkar

Recently, in two Arab countries – Tunisia and Egypt – the struggle to liberate the country from the tyrannical rule of a despotic regime began under the leadership of the democratically oriented educated youth. But when elections were held to form a legitimate government, it was the Islamists who won in both countries. In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood had not joined the revolt in the beginning. Yet it is they and the fundamentalist Islamists called Salafists who overwhelmingly won in the elections to the new Parliament. And in the ensuing election for the post of the President a till then unknown member of the Muslim Brotherhood won. The internationally well-known secular politicians Amr Musa and El Baradei fell by the wayside; they did not even come out second. Reports from Tunisia indicate that a process of Islamisation of the country is well under way. In Egypt it may have already begun under the leadership of the Salafists.

We had witnessed a somewhat similar process in Iran in the wake of the 1979 revolt against the Shah regime. There the left and secular forces had fought side by side with the religiously motivated forces. But then the masses welcomed Ayatollah Khomeini to take over the leadership and establish an Islamic republic. The leftists had to flee the country.

Today, in Syria, the dividing line is not clear. It appeared in the beginning that the masses revolted against a tyrannical regime. Then observers started saying that it is the Sunni majority (60 percent of the population) led by the Muslim Brotherhood that is fighting against the dominance of the Alawites and the Shias. For a few weeks now, it is also being reported that the middle-class Sunnis, particularly Sunni businessmen support the regime of Assad and that it is mainly (however, not only) the poor and the unemployed Sunnis that are doing the fighting against the regime. Another observer reported that the fighters of the Free Syrian Army who pushed into Damascus could dig in in the poor districts of the city. If the latter reports are true, then we can see in the conflict also a class divide. One thing however is clear: the secular and left forces are on the defensive (Assad's Baath Party was originally a socialist one. Today it is still a secular one).

The passages that follow were written in December 2004, after an Islamist young man in Amsterdam killed the Dutch film maker Theo van Gogh because the latter had insulted Islam and the Muslims in general and because, in particular, in a film he had projected a verse of the Koran on the naked back of a woman. The contents of these passages however are as valid today as they were in 2004.

The power of the religions that makes us so concerned for quite some time now is manifested in three phenomena: religious fundamentalism, political religion (e.g. political Islam) and religiously motivated violence. All big religions – except perhaps Buddhism – have one or all of these expressions of power for quite a long time, more or less. Already in 1947, the power of militant political Islam led to the partition of the Indian subcontinent, the then British India, and the creation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The initially socialist (in Algeria) or half-socialist (in Egypt) Arab nationalism has long been edged out by radical Islamism. Today, the Arab struggle against imperialism and Israeli colonialism is being led mainly by militant Islamists. The Thirty Years War of the seventeenth century among the European Christians is being repeated, so to speak, in Northern Ireland. In the USA, the fundamentalist Evangelicals, who want to Christianize the whole world, have taken over power.

What is needed in this situation is not just to be agitated but deep and concerned thinking on these phenomena. For they not only represent a second defeat of socialism, they also mean that the spirit of the Enlightenment is increasingly losing ground.

## Search for the Causes

Many among us cannot understand that anybody at all believes in a God and a religion. But let us not make it so easy for ourselves. A deep root of religiosity lies in the human condition itself. We do not know everything. What science tells us about the origin of the universe and of life on earth are after all only the most plausible hypotheses at the moment. Moreover, several fundamental questions remain unanswered: Why did all that originate at all? What is the purpose, the meaning

of all that, of life? And what is the purpose of human life? Where do we have our consciousness from, our intelligence, our sense of morality? Are we, the human species, only an accidental product of evolution? If yes, why do members of such a species, only one among several millions, have a sense of morality? Cats, for example, do not bother about other populations of the cat species, about nature or about the future generations. Why do some humans suffer and the others don't? What is death? Is there anything after death?

Such questions can lead one straight into believing in God(s) and a religion or, in the most favourable case, to harmless spirituality. Especially an oppressed, exploited or somehow disadvantaged person or one who is shattered through cruel strokes of fate needs a source of consolation. If that cannot be found in this world, then it is at least understandable that such a person believes he/she can find it in another sphere, where a God allegedly loves him unconditionally or where he would be happy at long last. As we know, the search of the young Siddhartha (later the Buddha) for insight into the human condition and his passage to religiosity began when he for the first time saw a seriously ill person, then a very frail old man, and then a corpse. After the collapse of the Soviet Union large numbers of formerly atheist and newly impoverished Russians thronged the churches again. Marx had already realized that Religion is "the expression of real distress", "the sigh of the oppressed creature".

According to Marx, religion is also "opium". But he recognised that it is also "protest against real distress". It is better to say that it *can also be* that. In fact, in history it has often goaded humans to protest, in many forms including violent ones. In the 16th century, Martin Luther led the revolt against the corrupt Christian religious authorities. Thomas Muter, a protestant reformer led a peasant revolt. Some Marxists see him as a precursor in the struggle for a classless society. In the 19th century, in Sudan, Muhammad Ahmed Ibn 'Abd Allah – a Sufi, who gave himself the title *Mahdi* – led a mass movement and a revolutionary army in order both to reform Islam and to liberate his country from the oppressive rule of foreigners, namely the Egyptians.

Both Müntzer and the *Mahdi* led an armed struggle against a worldly order that they, for various reasons, held to be unbearable. And Luther had been the spiritual leader of the kings who carried out the military revolt against the rule of the Pope. The *Mahdi* and his followers

wanted to lead Islam back to its pristine form, in which the Prophet wanted it to be practised. They were therefore, in today's jargon, fundamentalists. What these examples say, is that in history often militant religious fundamentalists or only religiously motivated political activists, who were not necessarily fundamentalists, fought in various ways against some real or felt injustice or against some deplorable state of affairs.

### **The Betrayed Enlightenment, the Betrayed Human Rights, Violated Dignity**

Since the Age of Enlightenment and since the various declarations of human rights, at the latest since the world-wide spread of the revolutionary socialist movement after the Second World War, there should not have been any need for any religious drive for such struggles. But the Enlightenment as well as the human rights and socialism were betrayed by the very people who had brought forth these ideals, namely the Euro-Americans. In the name of the white man's burden and his alleged civilising mission these people waged colonial wars. The peoples of the conquered countries were not only exploited and oppressed but also treated in racist ways. The slave trade went on till 1864. France waged a brutal war until 1962 in order to maintain her colonial rule in Algeria.

Already the armed struggle of the Mahdi was directed not only against the Egyptian rule in Sudan, but also against the British imperialists, who supported the Egyptians. The British colonel Gordon, who went to Sudan for saving the Egyptian rule there, was killed after being taken prisoner. But why did the Mahdi have to be a religious fundamentalist? It is perhaps a law of social history that a people, or at least a part of it, falls back on its own religious-cultural tradition whenever, even without foreign rule, its general condition appears to it to be miserable, whenever it sees itself as living in a materially desolate or morally decadent state, particularly when, in our times, the promises of the modern age prove to be illusory. It then wants to revive the supposedly past golden age of its history, which must not be understood only in the material sense. But also in terms of simple material wants, in the Arab-Muslim countries, it has been the Muslim Brotherhood and similar Islamist organizations (e.g. the Hamas in Palestine) that have provided succour to the needy, whereas the state led by a secular Western-educated elite (that may also have included leftists) did not care. That is also a strong reason for the popularity of the Islamist organisations in Muslim countries.

This orientation does not always appear as an additional aspect of the struggle for worldly power. Also in an independent country in which some kind of crisis situation is obtaining for a long time, it can come up with the goal of a peaceful socio-cultural renaissance. Thus in India under British colonial rule, in the 19th century, some Hindu leading personalities started the *Aryasamaj* and *Brahmasamaj* movements in order to reform Hindu society on the basis of the ancient *Vedic* tradition. In 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood was founded, which strove for establishing the *Koran* and the *Hadith* as the source of guiding principles for a healthy and modern Islamic society. A similar development can be observed today among Christian fundamentalists, who feel a deep disquiet over the moral degeneration of modern Western societies and therefore want to lead them back to Biblical values. And in India, many Hindus have reacted to the moral degeneration of their society by envisioning the revival of the mythical *Ramarajya*, the ideal kingdom of God incarnate Rama (the hero of their epic *Ramayana*), or, in our days, by reviving what is called *Hindutva* (hinduness). Of course, many politicians, parties and militant groups instrumentalize these feelings, thoughts, and dreams. But they do exist in society.

For this discussion the recent history of Algeria is the most instructive example. After a successful liberation war, a socialist state was founded in this predominantly Islamic country, which was, to boot, blessed with a large oil and gas wealth. Of course, there were some purely economic causes of the crisis of Algerian society, but the leading, westernised francophone stratum of the ruling FLN was also *morally* degenerated. Against this background, the underprivileged strata – particularly their youth suffering from mass unemployment, whose absolute number as well as share in the population rapidly increased – could be easily won over by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) for its politics. FIS achieved this in the name of pan Arabism and upholding the religious-cultural identity of the people. The rest of the story – civil war and reciprocal massacres – is well known.

As we know, the Islamic terrorists of today do not generally come from the poor under-classes, but, in their majority, rather from the educated middle and upper classes. If they come to power in any country, they would not abolish the exploitation of the under-classes by the upper classes. Here many western observers, including leftists, make an error in their reasoning. In the case of Islamic terrorists, their motive force is

not primarily anger at economic exploitation and their primary goal is not redistribution of the wealth of the world or of their own country. What drives them is their sense of dignity, and hate and revenge as two means of restoring lost dignity. Anyhow, the sense of dignity and honour of the Arab Islamic peoples, actually of all Third World peoples, is suffering since long because of material underdevelopment. Additionally, for decades, it is being violated by Western imperialist countries, to which also Israel belongs. Although a few bombs or Katyusha rockets will not enable them to defeat imperialism, they will at least assuage the thirst for revenge of these humiliated peoples. This is the more important purpose of the violent attacks of militant Islamists against westerners. Only so can one explain the murder of Theo van Gogh.

It is obvious that the motivation for satisfying this kind of needs cannot come from the ideals of Enlightenment and socialism, but it can very well come from fundamentalist interpretations of the great religions (except Buddhism), nationalism or ethnic loyalty. The motivation for the Islamists' struggle against the West and that of the Chechnians against the Russians is fed by both of these sources.

It is not without reason that one hardly thinks of a Turk when one hears the term "Islamist terrorist", although there have also been two bomb attacks in Turkey perpetrated by Turkish Islamists. Turkey has never been a colony or semi-colony. On the contrary, it was itself a colonial power. And today it is a member of the OECD and the NATO. Turkish political Islam can therefore take on a mild form. That shows that only the combination of being a Muslim and origin or roots in a (neo)colonially humiliated country makes one particularly susceptible to militant Islamism.

### **The Function of Identity**

In Algeria, the FIS could successfully utilise the religious-cultural identity "Arab-Islamic", because the identity preferred by the leftists, namely "worker", had been of little use to the Algerian under-classes in their struggle against the FLN bigwigs and the upper classes, who claimed to be socialists. It was of little use especially because class differences existed even within the working class. The identity "worker" has also been of no use in the struggle against imperialism, because, seen objectively, Euro-American workers are beneficiaries of the modern imperialist system. So the Islamists became stronger. By using the identity-term "Islamic", they could also sweep the class problem within their own ranks under the



carpet. It is a weakness of the leftists generally, and of the Euro-American leftists in particular, that they refuse to see the objectively existing conflict of interests between the working classes of different nations, ethnic groups and regions, particularly between those of the imperialist countries and those of the Third World countries. They may still shout the slogan “workers of all countries unite!” But they do not care to ask why this unity has not materialised yet.

### **What Is To Be Done?**

What should we do in the face of these phenomena? Everybody knows that the vast majority of the believers in one or the other religion do not take their holy scriptures very seriously. They are realistic, pragmatic people. Live and let live, that is their attitude towards people of other faiths. Although we have to tolerate their being religious, co-operation in political matters is possible. In Algeria, the masses, who were more or less devout Muslims, supported the initially socialist policies of the FLN. Likewise, Christians have their Liberation Theology and political groups calling themselves Christians for Socialism. In practical political work, we can negate the importance of the question of religion; we can reduce it to a private matter. We can take an agnostic position; we can say that we do not and cannot know whether there is any God or Gods. And we can finally put the rhetorical question: even if God exists, why should we rack our brains over the question when we know that He cannot help us?

But we must also differentiate. The fundamentalists, who want to impose on society the (often only supposed) dictates of their holy scriptures – the Koran, the Sharia or the Bible – as laws for everyday life, must be opposed. But there are also those who for their struggle against the numerous evils in this world do not find any other source of strength and inspiration than their religion. To them we must offer a different source of inspiration. After the murder of Theo van Gogh, the Dutch journalist Joost Kircz deplored:” The left cannot offer any alternative to the young people influenced by Islam. .... There are also no comparable heroic struggles against the prevailing conditions, struggles in which the youth could learn a new emancipatory purpose and try it out” (SoZ 12/04). This deficit of ours must be overcome soon, for which a strong revival of the ideals of socialism is necessary.

---

*The German original was written and published in December 2004. Revised and updated English translation made in July 2012.*

---

*(Continued from Page 9)*

### **Roots of Failure**

Alas, all sectors - state, business and civil society - have either failed to grapple with the problems of rural India or to build on the prospects. Why is this so? We believe that the roots of the failure lie in a lack of unity, synergy, and partnership. The state has the authority, but lacks the ability to mobilise the people. Business has the resources and expertise, but not the knowledge of rural poverty issues. NGOs have the proximity and the ability to mobilise the rural people, but lack the resources. To make matters worse, the relationship between the three sectors is currently marked by ignorance of how the others operate and what motivates them. There is sometimes even open hostility between these actors.

### **Way Forward**

I want to make a proposition here that partnership between the three sectors, what we call Tri-Sector Partnership or TSP is the only way forward. This is in our own interest, and in the interest of our people.

Tri-Sector Partnerships might not be exactly what we think they are. They are not Public-Private Partnerships, which purport to unite the two sectors of government and business but often simply amount to government sub-contracting. They are not Corporate Social Responsibility initiatives which are led by business and involve a compliant NGO. Tri-Sector Partnership can be defined as a partnership for development between government, business and civil society in which *parity* is accepted by the partners with respect to their respective monetary and non-monetary contributions to the development process. TSP offers an exciting opportunity to accelerate the rural development process beyond CSR and PPPs.

It is important to make it clear that you don't have to be the CEO of a multinational bank, a government minister or the boss of a multinational NGO to be an instigator of TSP. Tri-Sector Partnerships can take place in large, medium and small formats. Small and medium enterprises can get together with local political representatives and town NGOs to instigate dynamic change in their local communities.

## *Chennai Declaration*

# For Abolishing Commercialisation of Education and Building A Common School System

*We, the members of students, youth, teachers and women organizations, trade unions, parents' associations and school-level committees; organizations engaged in the struggle for Fundamental Right to free holistic early childhood care and cost-free education of equitable quality from pre-primary to Class XII and further for equitable access to free higher education as a democratic Right; groups fighting for equal educational rights with dignity of dalits, tribals, OBCs, religious and linguistic minorities, various gender identities and disabled people; jurists, social scientists, scientists, educationists, doctors, engineers, lawyers, administrators, writers, artists, journalists, researchers and other intellectuals/professionals drawn from 20 states/UTs of India and having assembled at Valluvarkottam in Chennai, Tamilnadu, India on 30<sup>th</sup> June-1<sup>st</sup> July 2012 for the 'all India conference, organised by State Platform for Common School System, Tamil Nadu in association with All India Forum for Right to Education hereby endorse and resolve to carry forward the following Declaration:*

The historical, politico-economic and policy analysis undertaken in this Conference leads us to collectively assert that,

- i) education has historically meant a socio-cultural process that unfolds the creative and humane potential of children and youth in the larger and collective interest of the society and, instead of maintaining status quo, plays a socially reconstructive and transformative role to fulfill civilisational aspirations for republicanism, liberty, equality, justice, human dignity, plurality, social harmony and universal peace;
- ii) the Constitution of India, drawing upon the legacy of rich educational discourse during the freedom struggle against British imperialism, further requires education to create citizenry for a "SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC" and which will help build and sustain an egalitarian, just, plural and enlightened society, in consonance with the principles and values enshrined therein;
- iii) education system must promote pro-people national development and, at the same time, build resistance to market-dictated pro-corporate development; sensitise children and youth to people's aspirations for equitable distribution of material resources and an economic order that does not result in concentration of wealth and means of production; optimize socio-cultural and knowledge-related diversities; and help secure civil liberties and democratic rights, as guaranteed by the Constitution;
- iv) the Constitution forbids an education system that reinforces inequality, socio-economic stratification, patriarchy, religio-cultural or linguistic hegemony, discrimination and/or alienation from societal concerns;
- v) the Constitution calls for building education to fight against intolerance, communalism, fascist thought or the notion of supremacy of any one community, race, religion, gender identity, culture, language or region over another or of the so-called 'normal' bodied people over 'disabled' people;
- vi) hence, in the Indian context, the concept of educational quality must emerge from and be defined within the above framework and in accordance with the Constitutional vision, rather than being dictated by either the global market and neo-liberal economic order or communal, sectarian and other reactionary forces;
- vii) as long as commercialization of education continues, it will be impossible to provide education of the quality as defined above in either the government or the private educational institutions, from pre-primary to higher education stage;
- viii) as long as the government school system does not improve, there is no possibility whatsoever to ensure education of equitable quality in the above framework to all children irrespective of their class, caste, religion, gender, language, region or disability;
- ix) in order to ensure education of equitable quality to all children, the state must (a) provide free holistic early childhood care along with full support for nutrition, healthcare and socio-psychological and cultural security for children below six years of age; and also (b) pursue the historic option of establishing a fully state-funded

- Common School System based on Neighbourhood schools from pre-primary stage to Class XII for all children up to eighteen years of age such as to guarantee entirely cost-free education without any discrimination whatsoever and, at the same time, exclude disparities and include diversities; however, this historic option cannot be pursued without abolishing commercialization of education;
- x) acknowledging the organic relationship between school education and higher education, the concept of fully state-funded Common School System must be designed to evolve, within a specified time-frame, into a fully state-funded Common Education\_System in order to guarantee entirely cost-free education of equitable quality from 'KG to PG';
- xi) the provision of holistic early childhood care including nutrition, healthcare and security and education of equitable quality to all children and youth is the Constitutional and moral obligation of the state which alone is in a position to mobilize necessary resources – political, human, financial, technical or otherwise – for the same and must not be allowed to abdicate these in favour of corporate and market forces, religious bodies and NGOs under any excuse whatsoever; and
- xii) as long as the above Common Education System along with other fundamental entitlements such as people's Right to *jal-jangal-zameen* (water, forest, land), *jeevika* (livelihood) and *jnana* (knowledge) is not established and enforced, the survival of India both as a democratic, progressive and peaceful society and as a sovereign nation will remain at great risk, its survival being continuously challenged by the desperate neo-liberal capital and greedy financial markets as well as the allied communal, sectarian and other reactionary forces.
- ✓ In this context, Buddhist contributions to questioning social stratification and hierarchical social order in a sustained manner over centuries and building enlightened and egalitarian educational institutions, even at higher education levels, are of historical significance.
  - ✓ Deeply instituted structures of patriarchy intensified gender discrimination and violence against women across classes, castes, religions, regions and cultures.
  - ✓ Absence of compassion marked this iniquitous social system within which the disabled were targeted as bearers of misfortune and mocked at as being less than human.
  - ✓ Throughout history, in different parts of the sub-continent, sections of the toiling masses have challenged and resisted their oppressors through spontaneous and organized struggles for the Right to have access to an equitable and just share of natural resources and knowledge, in order to live with dignity in society.
  - ✓ British colonialism reinforced historically established structures of stratification and oppression in order to exploit the sub-continent's rich natural resources, productive skills and diversity of knowledge forms, leading to impoverishment of the people, on the one hand, and growth of the British capital, on the other.
  - ✓ Macaulay in his Minutes of 1835 instituted an education policy in support of the British *Raj* which denigrated Indian languages and knowledge, established the hegemonic influence of English as medium of colonial '*instruction*' (not *education*) and used the ploy of limitation of resources to "form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern - a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. . . ."
  - ✓ Rejecting Macaulayan policy framework, the pursuit for a National System of Education was grounded in the history of the freedom struggle. From mid-19<sup>th</sup> century onwards, Mahatma Jotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule questioned the role of British education in reinforcing class- and caste-based stratification and sought state's role in redefining access to education, medium of education, curricular goals and social relations. Although Dadabhai Naoroji raised the issue of universal primary education in 1880s, it was Gokhale in 1911 who demanded legislation for providing free and compulsory primary education *as a Right*. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, rulers of princely states like Baroda, Bhopal, Gondal, Kolhapur and Travancore either supported or set up school systems to universalize free primary and/ or secondary education. The 20<sup>th</sup> century is marked by efforts of visionaries like Gandhi, Tagore and Zakir Husain to reconstruct education as a means of

### Historical Context and Perspective

The following outstanding features constitute the historical context and perspective of the educational crisis we face today -

- ✓ From the ancient times onwards, the dispossessed and exploited toiling classes of the Indian sub-continent have been systematically denied access to knowledge and the Right to live with dignity through rigid codification based on various criteria like birth into castes and sub-castes, being women or having physical or mental disabilities, which resulted in a highly stratified and hierarchical social order. The hegemonic influence of these prescriptive codes continued to determine the social order in the subcontinent for long regardless of the exceptional legacy or influence of egalitarian ideologies and intellectual trends of Buddhism, Jainism, Charvak, Lokayat and others.

decolonization of mind, cultural sensitization, universal harmony and building an alternative development model i.e. alternative to the capitalist exploitative development model of the British *Raj*. Emphasizing the historic role of cultural and literary renaissance through mother tongue, Shahid Bhagat Singh viewed educational reconstruction as an organic part of the march to building of a socialist India. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's historic debate with Gandhi in the early 1930s introduced the radical question of class and caste in the emerging Indian education discourse and gave a new turn to the politics of education, placing the issues of equality and social justice at its centre. Throughout this long period, social reformers and educators like Syed Ahmad Khan, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Begums of Bhopal viz. Sikandar Begum, Shah Jehan Begum and Sultan Jehan Begum, Madan Mohan Malviya, Lala Lajpat Rai, Karmaveer Bhaurao Patil and many others promoted education by opening schools and colleges, often with public support. However, it was due to the radical questioning and rational social vision of thinkers and leaders like Kandukuri Veeresalingam, Narayan Guru, Iyothee Thassar, Gurajada Apparao, Singaravelar and Periyar that public consciousness could be mobilized to challenge social stratification, oppose irrational traditions and practices and advocate education as a means of modernization of society.

- ✓ Clearly, the emergence of the demand for free and compulsory education for all children as well as for higher education with equality, social justice and dignity *as a Constitutional and democratic Right* and the conception of the critical role of education in socio-economic transformation, is grounded in the history of the freedom struggle across the country.
- ✓ This rich and multi-dimensional legacy of educational discourse inherited from the freedom struggle became the source of the basic ideas for drafting education-related provisions in the Constitution under Ambedkar's visionary leadership. The transformative conception of education as envisaged in the Constitution thus paves the potential path of reconstructing the diverse Indian people into a democratic, secular, egalitarian, just and enlightened society.

### Post-Independence Period

As the first Minister of Education of the Union Government after independence, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad constituted the B. G. Kher Committee in 1948 to recommend how to universalize free and compulsory elementary education. He also took initiative in conceiving and setting up a national institutional structure through the University Grants Commission, IITs, Central Institute of Education for teacher education and central institutions for promoting literature of Indian languages, music and performing arts. Nehru advocated

education for scientific temper and promoted higher education institutions as sites for modernization of education. It is during the same period that E. M. S. Namboodripad and K. Kamaraj, the then Chief Ministers of Kerala and Tamilnadu respectively adopted a series of progressive measures to strengthen the government school system and universalize elementary education. In spite of these visionary beginnings, it took 17 years after independence and 4 years after the deadline set by Article 45 of the Constitution for providing free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14 years to constitute the Kothari Commission (1964-66) - the first Commission to examine the question of elementary education (Class I-VIII). Yet, even after three National Policies on Education of 1968, 1986 and 1992 and two high profile World Bank-sponsored programmes viz., District Primary Education Programme (1993- 2002) and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (2000-2010), almost half the children of the relevant age group continue to be deprived of even eight years of elementary education. Of those admitted to Class I, only 15-17% are able to clear Class XII. Since higher education and professional courses (including vocational courses) require Class XII as eligibility, the vast majority of children are denied access to means of livelihood in the modern economy. The situation is even worse when the caste and religious minority break-up is looked at. Only about 10-11% OBC's and around 9% Muslims cross the Class XII barrier. Among SCs and STs, the comparable figures would be 8% and 6% respectively. This means that almost 92% of *dalits* and 94% of tribals never become eligible for the benefits of reservation under the social justice agenda.

A matter of great concern and alarm is the total absence of any publicly available objective analysis within the Planning Commission or the Ministry of HRD (or their counterparts in the states/UTs) as to why successive policies and programmes have collapsed. The Right to Education Act, 2009 seems headed down the same path. It is clear that the successive governments, representing various political dispensations, blatantly ignored the lessons that a democratic government is expected to draw from previous policy failures. Rather, the ruling political class has taken the worst option of promoting private commercial players through creation of an education 'market' designed to serve corporate capital on the one hand, while denying the vast majority of India's children the Right to get education of equitable quality, on the other.

### Neo-Liberal Attack on Education

The first evidence of the Indian state's readiness to kowtow to the neo-liberal policy framework in education is the change made in 1985 in the name of the concerned Ministry from Ministry of Education to Ministry of Human Resource Development. This implied a change in the very purpose of education from one of social development and preparation of citizenry as envisaged in the Constitution to one of supplying skilled but slavish workforce for the global market. The ground for the neo-liberal structure in India's educational system

was prepared by the National Policy on Education, 1986. It first proposed the multi-track and discriminatory system by introducing a layer of about 3 lakh Non-Formal Education (NFE) Centres of inferior quality below the mainstream government school system and another of much-hyped Navodaya Vidyalayas, one per district, above it. For the first time, there was a policy declaration that more than half of the children would not enter regular schools but would be 'taught' by the low quality NFE Centres. Again, for the first time in the government school system, the Navodaya Vidyalayas introduced the sociologically and pedagogically questionable practice of selection through merit embedded in the social privileges of upper classes and castes.

The IMF-World Bank diktat of Structural Adjustment in the early 1990s required reduction of expenditure on education which was effected by a range of measures imposed through the World Bank-sponsored District Primary Education Programme (DPEP). These included (a) replacement of regular teachers by under-qualified, untrained and under-paid instructors appointed on short-term contract ('Para-Teacher'); (b) one teacher teaching two or more classes simultaneously in a single classroom ('multi-grade teaching'); (c) promotion of multi-layered school system rooted in discrimination; (d) reducing curriculum to literacy and numeracy; and (e) declining budget allocations as % of GDP.

Implemented in 18 states and more than half of the districts, DPEP 'succeeded' within ten years in its agenda of deteriorating the quality of the government school system, leading to a significant loss of its public credibility. With this, a rapidly expanding market for private schools was opened up by the end of the 1990s, which was precisely the mandate with which World Bank intervened in India's education system. In 2000, the flaws and lacunae of DPEP were re-packaged and presented to the public under the shining label of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). By the time SSA ended in March 2010, the credibility of the government school system had hit the rock bottom even as the twin problems of out-of-school children and retention of those enrolled remained essentially unresolved. Its impact on state-funded higher education has been damaging, to say the least. With only 12% of the relevant age group of 18 to 24 years in post-secondary institutions, the state is able to push the flawed argument that higher education is a private good. With this mind, the World Bank's 'user pays' principle is being firmly applied in combination with the falsehood of resource crunch, to turn knowledge into a 'tradable commodity'. In pursuance of offering higher education in 2005 for being brought under WTO's General Agreement for Trade and Services (GATS), a series of higher education Bills are being pushed presently through the Parliament in order to provide the required legal framework for facilitating global investment and corporatization of Indian higher education. Apart from increasing the cost of higher education way beyond the capacity of more than 90% of the

students, the commoditization of knowledge distorts the very role of higher education in building a democratic, secular, just and enlightened society. This policy has resulted in restriction of freedom of expression and democratic space on our college and university campuses. A clear agenda of depoliticisation, in its worst sense, of the student community and the faculty in higher education is being ruthlessly pursued.

Policy support for privatization and commercialization of both school and higher education is being accelerated through Public Private Partnership (PPP). It has become the major instrumentality for direct transfer of public assets and resources to private corporations, NGOs and religious bodies that are blatantly profiteering through education. Many steps are being taken to indirectly further this trend like inclusion of special allowance in Sixth Pay Scales of government employees for sending children to expensive private schools, reimbursement of fees of SC, ST and OBC students and giving refinanced loans to students. The RTE Act, 2009 has also provided for reimbursement to private schools under the garb of "25% provision" for a minority of children (no more than 10%) from disadvantaged sections instead of utilizing these funds for improvement of the quality of government schools where the vast majority of SC, ST, and OBC children are going to pursue their education.

### False Premises

The neo-liberal policy framework is being justified on the basis of a set of false premises that,

- the economic capacity of the State is limited and there is no option but to depend upon private domestic and foreign investors for funding education;
- education is a 'service' and not a Right or Entitlement and, therefore, equal provision for all need not be ensured and educational quality must be proportionate to one's capacity to pay; and
- education is a tradable commodity; hence, profiteering in education is a legitimate objective, just like in any other trade.

The neo-liberal agenda radically redefines the character and purposes of education policy. Instead of being viewed as an instrument of social transformation, education is treated as an instrument for producing human resource for corporate market needs. Therefore, the character of knowledge is to be determined by supply and demand considerations, rather than by its disciplinary requirements, welfare need of society or role in social development. This gives rise to the erroneous beliefs that,

- private agencies provide better education than public agencies, because they operate on corporate principles of

cost efficiency in providing services; and

- Constitutional principles of *equality* and *social justice* can, therefore, be substituted by the neo-liberal principle of *inclusion*. This privileges a dominant market model as the *norm* and then demands that all diverse and heterogeneous productive, socio-cultural and ideological forms *conform* to this market-determined *norm*. In contrast, principles of equality and social justice require the creation of democratic spaces, supportive ambience for analysis, debate and creative thinking and institutions for engagement on equal terms among diversities.

A central task of the education movement shall be to demolish the above false premises of the neo-liberal agenda by engaging with the public mind in order to take our struggle forward.

### Future Agenda of Struggle

Being held in Chennai and attended by representatives from all over Tamilnadu, this All India Conference feels deeply inspired by the historic mass movements of the oppressed classes and castes led by visionary thinkers and leaders like Iyothee Thassar, Singaravelar and Periyar. The movement, drawing inspiration from the Buddhist path of rationality, placed the values of equality and social justice, including gender equality and women's emancipation, at the core of the socio-political agenda of the state. It is on this foundation that Tamilnadu could build a strong state-funded school education system in the post-independence decades, with potential for growing into a Common School System. Policy measures to eliminate class- or caste-based segregation and socio-cultural or economic barriers in schools along with progressive features such as tuition-free schooling, noon meals, free uniforms and books and mother-tongue as medium of education made Tamilnadu's education policies as pace-setting for the whole country. In this context, the Conference acclaims the bold policy measures adopted by Late Kamaraj as the Chief Minister during 1950s in universalizing school education in the state.

The Conference expresses grave concern that these exemplary gains were steadily diluted due to pro-elite and neo-liberal policies adopted by the Tamilnadu state government during the recent decades. Emergence of multiple Boards became the basis of discrimination and exclusion. Over the years, the private school lobby has become so powerful as to dictate terms to the state government and openly defy court orders. This Conference calls upon the Government of Tamilnadu to reverse its policies of privatisation and commercialization forthwith and join hands with the people of the state to reclaim its former progressive equitable and non-discriminatory school system. Further, the Conference demands of the Government of Tamilnadu to enact its own Right to Education Act banning commercialization of school

education and building a Common School System based on Neighbourhood Schools in the state, thereby putting public pressure on the other state governments to emulate the initiative.

Having acknowledged the above Tamilnadu experience and its significance, we hereby adopt the following three-fold comprehensive agenda for our future struggles throughout the country –

- Abolishing commercialisation of education.
- Establishing a fully state-funded Common School System based on Neighbourhood Schools from pre-primary stage to class XII.
- Building mass movement for educational transformation.

### 1. Abolishing Commercialisation of Education

We recognize that the phenomenon of opening private educational institutions has now entirely lost its philanthropic character and social welfare dimension that were its hallmark during the freedom struggle as well as in the 2-3 decades following independence. Instead, with the growth of neo-liberalism, the growing pace of privatization of education as a policy has become integral to commercialization of education and represents the desperate search by the financial capital for new markets.

Hence, we resolve to,

- ◆ oppose all policies that promote privatization of educational institutions from 'KG to PG';
- ◆ fight for state's regulation and monitoring over the existing fee-collecting educational institutions of all categories and creating provision for duly empowered teachers' and parents' associations to supervise the same;
- ◆ mobilize public opinion against (a) World Bank's 'user pays' principle in education and people's other fundamental entitlements; (b) the very idea of profiteering through education; and (c) envisaging education as a private good;
- ◆ resolutely resist the dangerous policy of Public Private Partnership (PPP) in all its overt or covert forms as these are cleverly designed to transfer public funds and other critical resources (land, buildings, equipments and materials) to corporate houses, NGOs and religious bodies, apart from legitimizing latter's role in education as investors by giving them official recognition and policy support;
- ◆ reverse Supreme Court's TMA Pai Foundation Judgment

(2002) either through the judicial process or an appropriate Constitutional amendment.

- ◆ amend Article 19 (1) (g) to read “[All citizens shall have the right] to practice any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business, provided that the right to carry on an occupation, trade or business does not apply to education, health, water and other fundamental entitlements of the people.”
- ◆ resist the market-oriented Higher Education Bills pending in the Parliament that are designed to ‘open up’ an exclusive higher education sector for the elite for facilitating profiteering by foreign and domestic capital in accordance with the WTO-GATS agenda of commoditizing education.
- ◆ compel the government to withdraw the offer of higher education made to WTO-GATS for global trade before the Doha Rounds lest it becomes irreversible.
- ◆ retrieve and reclaim education as a public good.

## 2. Building State-funded Common School System Based on Neighbourhood Schools from Pre-primary Stage to Class XII

We resolve to carry forward our ongoing multi-pronged struggle in the following dimensions and forms:

### A. Engaging with Constitutional and Legislative Imperatives

- i) Campaign for a review of 86<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment Act (2002) and, if required, its repeal followed by a fresh Constitutional amendment to guarantee *unconditional* Fundamental Right to *entirely* free education of *equitable* quality for all children up to 18 years of age (i.e. up to Class XII), including Early Childhood Care and Pre-Primary Education for children below six years of age; the amendment will exclude Article 51A (k) through which the state has managed to shift its Constitutional obligation for provision of elementary education to the parents; the amendment will further place an obligation on the state to provide equitable access to free higher (including technical) education within ten years of such an amendment.
- ii) Fight for replacement of the farcical Right to Education Act, 2009 by a new Act that (a) unambiguously upholds the Preamble to the Constitution in relation to education; (b) guarantees Fundamental Right to education read with the relevant Directive Principles of State Policy holistically; (c) bans all forms of commercialization of education, including PPP; (d) acknowledges inter-linkages of multiple sources of bias and discrimination in society with issues such as curriculum, pedagogy, medium of education, teachers & teacher education and

negative impact of market on educational quality; (e) excludes disparities and includes diversities; (f) binds the state legally to provide adequate resources in order fill up the cumulative gap and meet the new demands; and thereby (g) builds a fully state-funded Common School System based on Neighbourhood Schools within a specified time frame.

- iii) Seek a public review of all existing Constitutional provisions and various laws relating to the issues of malnutrition, lack of health support for children and insecure childhood; child labour and child abuse; physical and mental disabilities; linguistic and cultural rights and impact of increasing impoverishment, displacement, migration, disemployment and unemployment on child rights, especially educational rights and build public pressure for appropriate Constitutional amendments and laws accordingly.
- iv) Insist on a law that unambiguously bans all forms of child labour.
- v) Compel the central and/or State/UT governments to enact a law prohibiting the transfer of land, building, equipment or any other facility of an educational institution belonging to the government or local authorities to any corporate house, religious body or NGO, irrespective of the circumstances; similar act is also required in the case of private aided or unaided educational institutions and the Trusts/ Societies operating them since their assets have been created only through student fees and other community resources in the name of education.
- vi) Demand a fresh look at the issue of payment of inadequate wages to the vast majority of parents that prevents them from exercising their Right to Life with dignity as per Article 21 read with Article 43 (living wage, decent standard of life, full enjoyment of leisure, social & cultural opportunities), thereby depriving their children of healthy and secure childhood (Article 39 e, f) as well as opportunity to devote themselves to pursue education without being compelled to be engaged in child labour and domestic support activities.
- vii) Taking cognizance of the miserable nutritional record in respect of pregnant women and children and the fact that the country has maximum number of stunted children in the world, who endure this disability all through their life, we note that no amount of arbitrary measures would succeed in providing Right to Education. In order to ensure, therefore, that no child is born with any disability that would constrict her life chances and readiness to access Right to Education, the state should enact a legislation to provide full nutritional and health support to the pregnant women who need it.

- viii) The Central and State/UT governments are collecting taxes from the people for fulfilling their Constitutional obligations and, in the case of education, further collecting additional cess on all taxes (2% for elementary and 1% for secondary & higher education). Yet, the people are required to pay fees in both government and private educational institutions. A government that allows this practice does not have a moral right to govern. We call upon the Central Government to enact an unambiguous law to ban collection of fees for education from 'KG to PG' in government as well as private educational institutions, since education is a Constitutional and Democratic Right.
- ix) Until a consensus is arrived at to restore education to the state list, build public opinion that the concurrent status of education should be utilized to involve all states/UTs in a collective nation-wide plan with a sense of ownership for establishing a democratic, secular, egalitarian, just and enlightened system of education, rather than to impose the Centre's decision over those of the States/UTs, as is the prevailing practice.
- v) Demand replacement of multiple Boards by a single Board in each State/UT along with a common language education policy founded on mother tongue of the child in dynamic interface with multi-linguality.
- vi) Resist measures of PPP and intervention by international funding agencies, corporate houses, religious bodies and NGOs in government schools, including taking over their lands and buildings to set up private schools.
- vii) Expose and resist the state-led agenda of abdication of its Constitutional obligations by promoting NGO-isation of government schools and its various critical functions.
- viii) Provide and also ensure access to all required support structures and facilities, including appropriately trained and paid staff in combination with Information Technology-related and other technological means, for enabling physically and mentally challenged children to learn, play and enjoy studying with dignity in regular classrooms along with other children; the retrogressive concept of home-based education for the disabled to be banned entirely.

#### **B. Protecting and Strengthening Government Schools**

- i) Resist all policies, programmes, budget allocations (especially, deductions) and periodic official orders that are aimed at diluting and distorting the government school system.
- ii) Compel the government to replace the prevailing discriminatory multi-layered school system, whether in government or private sectors, by a school system with equivalent norms and standards related to infrastructure, teachers and other staff, equipment and teaching-learning aids and other curricular and extra-curricular facilities. To begin with, these norms and standards in all schools, government or private, must be raised at least to those of the Central Schools, following which further improvements will be pursued as the next agenda of struggle for enabling the schools to act as sites for providing equitable and transformative education.
- iii) Extend the struggle to seek overhauling and reconstruction of curriculum and pedagogy, medium of education, evaluation and assessment (i.e. examinations) and school environment in order to transform the schools to become means of providing democratic, secular, egalitarian and enlightened education as elaborated at the beginning of this Declaration (see Section D below for details).
- iv) Fight against the cynical policy of closure of government schools by state governments on the flimsy ground of declining enrolment which is primarily a consequence of policy-directed deterioration of the quality of government school system.
- ix) Without compromising or diluting the Constitutional obligation of the Central and State/UT governments, mobilise people, especially parents, and Panchayati Raj institutions, to monitor and fight for appropriate infrastructure, qualified, trained and properly paid teachers in adequate numbers, required curricular support and related facilities and nutritious mid-day meals, rather than being limited by the inferior and discriminatory norms and standards prescribed in the RTE Act, 2009.
- x) Do not allow the State/UT governments to use the inferior norms and standards of the RTE Act, 2009 to shift teachers and infrastructural facilities from their present location on the ground of these being extra in light of the schedule of the Act.
- xi) Acknowledging people's aspirations for education beyond school, demand opening up of state-funded post-secondary institutions in adequate numbers to increase access to all types of higher education of equitable quality that is absolutely free of cost from 'KG to PG'.
- xii) Struggle for steady increase of budget allocations for government school system both as percentage of the budget and GDP until the cumulative gap of investment building up steadily since 1986 policy is filled up and all requirements for providing education of equitable quality are met with; ensure that the increased budget allocations are not siphoned off to private parties through PPP.



### C. Ensuring Retention of Children from Pre-primary Stage until Class XII

- i) Fight for comprehensive support in the form of nutritious meals (breakfast and lunch), health services, cultural and emotional security, gender rights, linguistic rights, disability rights, discrimination-free environment and protection from all forms of child abuse, especially in the case of girls.
- ii) Insist on additional and specialized support, including economic support, for enabling impoverished, unemployed or disemployed, displaced, migrant and nomadic families and disabled parents to continue to send their children to schools until they complete senior secondary education.

### D. Excluding Disparities, Including Diversities: Battling Bias and Discrimination

- i) Structurally incorporate the concerns of SCs/STs, OBCs, religious and linguistic minorities, women and disabled in designing the system of neighbourhood schools towards social transformation through Common School System.
- ii) The RTE Act, 2009 has deliberately misconceived Neighbourhood School such that the state is at liberty to provide inferior quality schools in the neighbourhood of the vast majority of the downtrodden and the dispossessed classes and castes, thereby legitimizing discrimination and *status quo*. In contrast, the Neighbourhood School of the Common School System is a transformative concept since it calls for a legislative provision under which each school - government, local body or private - would have a prescribed constituency and all the families residing within the constituency would be obliged to send their children to the concerned school, irrespective of their class, caste, gender, religion, language, region or disability. In the case of a sizeable concentration of a particular community in an area (e.g. a *dalit* or tribal locality in villages or urban ghettoisation), it would be obligatory under law for the prescribed authority to draw the constituency such as to optimize diversity.
- iii) The Common School System, in contrast to the prevailing school system, shall be designed to exclude disparities of all kinds and to include all forms of diversities, provided the diversities have been democratically negotiated and optimized.
- iv) For the aforesaid purpose, it is required that the Common School System eschews the centrality, finality and rigidity of the present school system and incorporates decentralized decision-making, openness and flexibility. Hence, it is crucial that state funding is not allowed to lead to state control, as is normally the case. Instead

of state control, the state shall provide an overarching policy framework. Within this broad policy and curricular framework, the Common School System will be governed in a decentralized (to be distinguished from World Bank's notion of decentralization for giving space to the market), democratic and participative mode. It is this mode of governance that lays the essential ground for optimizing cultural diversity and plurality of knowledge forms and productive skills in the classroom as well as the curriculum and pedagogy.

- v) Acknowledge inter-linkages between multiple sources of bias and discrimination inbuilt in society relating to class, caste, gender, religion, language, region and disability with educational issues such as curriculum, pedagogy, medium of education, teachers & teacher education and adverse impact of market on educational quality and fight for the following changes in the socio-cultural and political character of education –

- **Curriculum and Pedagogy:** Discrimination and exclusion takes place not only because of the prevalence of the multi-layered school system but also because of the nature of the dominant curriculum and pedagogy. Rooted in middle class and upper caste values and norms, especially patriarchal, the curriculum and pedagogy are entirely alienated from the social reality, life experiences and ways of learning of the vast sections of society. Further, both the curriculum and pedagogy are being increasingly influenced by the requirements of the global market for new areas of investment, control over natural resources and ever rising profit margins. This “official knowledge” representing the interest of the ruling class and the global market is responsible for large scale exclusion and persistence of high push-out rates (no child ever drops out but is pushed out). The building of Common School System calls for challenging the “official knowledge” by creating space for pedagogic interaction with the knowledge and learning styles of the children of the masses. This agenda of resistance to “official knowledge”, however, must not be construed to imply that its objectives will be achieved without the state's obligation to promote progressive values, rational thought and critical analysis. The Constitutional values also call upon the state to engage with the hegemonic influence of class, caste, race, patriarchy, language and ‘normal’ body while formulating the curriculum and further take cognizance of reinforcement of this influence by the neo-liberal structure and values. Clearly, in order to achieve this transformation, the examination system cannot be allowed to follow either the colonial or the now rapidly emerging neo-liberal framework. While the centrality, finality and rigidity of the present school system is being questioned, the building of Common School System requires the creation of a new curricular and pedagogic

paradigm wherein the plurality of values, knowledge, productive skills and life styles of “We, the People” would have a legitimate space for influencing, tilting and eventually transforming the school in their favour.

- **Medium of Education:** Time has come to challenge Macaulay’s advocacy of English as the “medium of [colonial] instruction” for the upper classes and castes that has further disempowered the historically “dispossessed and exploited toiling classes and castes of the vast Indian sub-continent”. Hence, this colonial tool of discrimination and exclusion is to be replaced with the universal conception of mother tongue of the child in a multi-lingual environment as pedagogically the most appropriate “medium of education” or the “language of learning” (multi-linguality here refers to the languages spoken in child’s neighbourhood, kinship and family). It is imperative that the mother tongue along with its multi-lingual context as medium of education is introduced forthwith in all government and private schools across the country. One of the significant commonalities of the Common School System will be the plurality of mother tongues in dynamic interface with multi-linguality of child’s neighbourhood. This would duly include Braille and Sign languages as well. According to this radical and dynamic conception of language education, mother tongue with a multi-lingual interface is acknowledged as the most potent medium of education to enable the child to (a) think, analyse and act; (b) acquire, internalize and transform modern knowledge critically; (c) learn other languages, including English, proficiently; (d) catalyse cultural and literary renaissance; (e) negotiate with the dominant process of alienation with advantage, thereby avoiding to be pushed-out; and (e) question and resist oppression and explore the path of liberation. Since the mother tongue of the child may not be the State/ UT language, the language policy of Common School System requires that the State/UT governments,
  - provide all necessary support for equitable development of the languages of the linguistic minorities as curricular languages, at least in the early years of elementary education;
  - envisage Braille and Sign languages as ‘languages of the linguistic minorities’ and provide all necessary support, including IT-related technologies and appropriately trained staff, in order to develop them as curricular languages;
  - develop appropriate pedagogy to enable children of linguistic minorities to have the option of switching to State’s language as their medium of education in all subjects until they complete senior secondary education; however, in case of languages of the Eighth Schedule, the children must also have the option of continuing

education in their mother tongues in all subjects at all levels, including higher education; and

- In light of the perspective on medium of education and language education elaborated above, the State/UT governments may consider, if necessary and appropriate, introducing other languages in schools at pedagogically appropriate stage(s), in accordance with the aspirations and needs of the people to be consulted through debates organized by both the state and non-state bodies.

However, the Central and State/UT governments are required to jointly undertake the following additional and urgent measures with a view to make Indian languages a powerful tool of learning, knowledge generation, cultural advancement and exploring an alternative model of development:

- ✓ Ensure that a common language education policy, with the inherent diversity as indicated above, is implemented in all schools, government or otherwise, throughout the country and gradually extend the policy in a planned manner to higher education (including technical education) as well.
- ✓ Create a fully empowered and well-resourced National Translation Commission that would have the mandate of identifying and translating the highest form of literature, texts, documents or research papers in any discipline from each of the Indian languages of the Eighth Schedule into the rest of the languages and also doing the same from all major languages of the world and bringing global knowledge into all languages of the Eighth Schedule.
- ✓ Implement a time-bound programme to ensure use of the Eighth Schedule languages at all levels of legislature, executive, judiciary, science & technology and business.
- ✓ Accord political attention and financial resources to make IT friendly to all Indian languages on a priority basis so that the prevailing sense of difficulty and discrimination in using IT for Indian languages, in comparison to English, is eliminated.
- ✓ Formulate/ design all required laws, programmes and schemes to ensure that no citizen faces discrimination while her/ his knowledge in mother tongue is evaluated for higher education and/or employment and the same is accessible through one’s mother tongue in interface with multi-linguality.
- ✓ Based upon the above commitments, a common National Policy on Languages is formulated and implemented.
- **Teachers and Teacher Education:** As Kothari Commission (1966) declared, “The destiny of India is now being shaped in her classrooms.” If the teacher is to

play her/his decisive role in 'shaping the classrooms', she/he has to be accorded the highest social status and priority in preparing her/his to meet this crucial task of social development. Hence, the following policy-level decisions are required:

- ✓ All teachers, without exception, must be fully qualified and appropriately 'trained' (i.e. educated) before recruitment and paid a regular salary scale with social security that is comparable throughout the country, as is the case with senior government officers. This implies that the neo-liberal policy being implemented since mid-1990s to appoint under-qualified, untrained and under-paid 'para-teachers' on short-term contract through Panchayati Raj institutions is to be reversed forthwith.
- ✓ The required Constitutional amendment must be made and law enacted in order to ensure that no teacher is ever asked, except in cases of a calamity, to do any non-teaching task, including elections, census and other non-teaching duties. This means that the anti-educational and discriminatory provision (Section 27) of the RTE Act, 2009 requiring only government school teachers to undertake non-teaching tasks like elections and census is repealed forthwith. In case it is contended that election and census are crucial for democracy and development of the country and necessarily require the engagement of the teachers at least in supervisory roles (i.e. not for conduction), this provision must then apply equitably to the teachers of both the government and private schools, aided or unaided, so that the children of the government schools do not face discrimination in their studies.
- ✓ In order to carry out the educational transformation agenda of the Common School System, it is imperative that a new kind of teacher would have to be prepared who would be culturally transformed to relate with the children of the downtrodden and dispossessed classes and castes, especially girls and disabled, with dignity and respond to the expected curricular and pedagogic challenge of drawing upon their life experience and knowledge in the classroom. For this, the prevailing outdated teacher education programmes (Diploma in Elementary Education, B.Ed. and M.Ed. and the recently introduced Teacher Eligibility Test) would need to be radically restructured and teacher education institutions to be transformed into vibrant state-funded institutions of pedagogic creativity and cultural transformation. Clearly, there would then be no space for the money-minting commercialized institutions promoted by the state in the private sector.
- ✓ For creating the above teacher education institutions, the present universities and colleges, from where these

teachers graduate, would themselves need radical overhauling and a renewed commitment for required funding by the state.

### 3. Building Mass Movement for Educational Transformation

The comprehensive analysis in the Declaration has provided ample evidence that the state has decided to abdicate its Constitutional obligations and stand on the side of the desperate financial capital and greedy global market forces. The history of the struggle since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century for Right to education of equitable quality through a state-funded public education system from 'KG to PG' and fresh neo-liberal attacks mounted rapidly by the state during the past two decades leave no option for us but to build a nation-wide people's movement based on mass consciousness. It may further be noted that the democratic space for negotiating with and convincing the state of the rationality of one's proposals for policy changes through participation in the government committees stands entirely eroded. In democratic polity, therefore, a peaceful resistance movement within the Constitutional framework would indeed be a legitimate path.

The objective of our struggle may be elaborated in the following three dimensions:

1. **The transformative goals for building a National System of Education** for providing democratic, egalitarian, secular and enlightened education through a fully state-funded public education system from 'KG to PG' which ensures cost-free education of equitable quality without any discrimination whatsoever and includes pluralities.
2. **Immediate Demands against neo-liberal attacks** such as fighting for replacement of RTE Act, 2009 by a fresh Act within the framework of a state-funded Common School System based on Neighbourhood Schools, abolishing of all forms of PPP or asking for holding up all market-oriented higher education Bills in Parliament in abeyance until a nation-wide public debate is conducted.
3. **Substantial elements in the transformative national-level goals** include seeking prohibition of commercialization of education, abolishing all forms of child labour and demanding to raise the level of all government schools as per the norms and standards of the Central Schools as a pre-requisite for building a National System of Education.

The struggle may be envisaged as a three-tier struggle:

- i) In the first instance, we have to fight against new attacks on the existing meager Rights e.g. reversing state government orders of school closures; resisting handing over of whole or parts of government school campuses

or other facilities to private bodies; or building public opinion against higher education bills designed to pave the way for WTO-GATS agenda.

- ii) We have to organize struggles to achieve demands that constitute substantial elements of transformative goals national-level goals (see list above).
- iii) We should prepare for a protracted struggle for the transformative goal of establishing a state-funded public education system from 'KG to PG', including Common School System based on Neighbourhood Schools.

These struggles have to be conducted at three levels almost simultaneously viz, all-India level, state- or district-level and at the level of educational institutions, depending upon the emergent issues and the potential of mobilization of public opinion.

### **Role of Students, Teachers and People's Organizations**

The people of India were fighting for a democratic, egalitarian, secular and patriotic education system during the pre-independence period. They had hoped that such an education system would be established after independence. Their hopes were essentially belied. Precisely because of this, the struggle of the people continued even after independence for an education system that guarantees education of equitable quality for all without discrimination, promotes social mobility of the disadvantaged and catalyses social transformation. While the Radhakrishnan Commission Report (1948) on higher education, Mudaliar Commission Report (1952) on secondary education and Kothari Commission Report (1966) on the entire education system gave some relief to the people, their pro-people aspects were hardly implemented with sincerity. Rather, in 1980s, the Union Government, with the state governments falling in line, initiated fresh attacks on meager and hard won educational rights of the people. A comprehensive attack was made on education by the National Policy on Education, 1986 (NPE-1986). The policy institutionalized retrogressive ideas such as privatization, along with elitisation, of higher education, parallel layers of school education, reducing education to skill training after elementary stage in the name of vocationalisation, attacks on campus democracy and, last but not the least, introducing obscurantist ideas in the name of 'Indian ethos'. Several organizations of students, teachers and democratic sections of the people waged new struggles against these maladies. While privatisation of education was continued unabated by successive governments at the centre, the BJP-led governments both at center and states in 1990s attempted to communalise education along with commercialization. The struggles against the increasing trends of commercialization, communalisation and centralization in policy making and destruction of campus democracy continue to be waged to date.

Continuing in this spirit, the Chennai Declaration calls upon

all democratic organizations of students, teachers, parents and different sections of society to intensify their struggles for preservation, restoration and extension of educational rights until the cherished goal of a democratic education system is achieved. The teachers and teachers' organizations in government, local body and government-aided institutions have got a special obligation. On the one hand, the people expect them to do their moral duty with the highest of commitment in spite of the deteriorating supportive conditions and work environment in these institutions in order to educate the children and youth of the masses and instill democratic, egalitarian, secular and other progressive values in them. On the other hand, they are also expected to lead the struggle for transformation of the education system. Not fulfilling these expectations would amount to falling in the trap of the neo-liberal attack on the government education system.

We further call upon the parents' organizations not to confine their struggles only against unjustified fee hikes but also to stand up for the rights of the teachers and students in the private institutions. They must also realize that good education cannot be delivered through the medium of the market. The private institutions are, by and large, miseducating the children and youth by equating education with performance indices, rather than with knowledge, values and societal concerns. The parents' organisation of the private schools may do a great service to the society by establishing linkages with the parents of government institutions and work in solidarity with them to fight for transformation of the education system. In Tamilnadu, the parents' organisation of private schools have indeed set an inspiring example by converting their anti-fee hike struggle to a struggle for Common School System.

The students organizations can become harbingers of the movement and act as catalysts for taking forward the process of mobilizing people in democratic struggles for social transformation. We appeal to the progressive intellectuals to associate with the movement reclaiming people's educational rights and not to succumb to manipulation by the state in the name of its farcical 'inclusive agenda'. This Declaration realizes deeply that the struggle for educational rights of the people must be inter-linked with the struggles being waged by the people all over the country against neo-liberal attacks on their democratic rights over *Jal- Jangal-Zameen* and *Jeevika* (water, forest, land and livelihood).

### **Looking Ahead with Hope and Faith**

Undoubtedly, the forces of financial capital and global market we are up against are formidable. History, however, assures us that no dominant force, howsoever powerful, could last long enough by ignoring the will of the people. Presently, people have been overwhelmed by the devious and deceitful propaganda unleashed by the government for the past two decades with euphemistic phrases like 'education for all', 'education guarantee' and 'sarva shiksha abhiyan' and now

'right to education', 'right to information', 'right to food' or 'inclusive growth' but they would soon realize that these were neither guarantees nor Rights nor inclusion; rather in reality they meant precisely their denial, if not even withdrawal of whatever little was previously available. Strategically, therefore, we would continue to span out to the people, learn from them and, in turn, educate them and involve them into numerous struggles that would ensue in relation to the

implementation of various neo-liberal laws and programmes. However, being acutely aware of the revolutionary potential of our struggle, we would not stop short of completely winning the real Rights of education of equitable quality and a democratic education system, which may indeed mean the defeat of the vile neoliberal system itself. Victory is ahead of the struggling people!

*With Best Compliments*

*From*



**APNA BAZAR CO-OP**

**MUMBAI KAMGAR MADHYAWARTI GRAHAK SAHAKARI SANSTHA MARYADIT**  
(Multi-State Consumer Co-operative Society)  
Govindji Keni Road, Naigaon, Dadar (East), Mumbai-400 014.

**MAIN CHARACTERISTIC**

- 60 YEARS SERVICE IN CONSUMER SECTOR
- ONLY ONE MULTI-STATE CONSUMER CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY IN INDIA
- MORE THAN 40 RETAIL OUTLETS
- ANNUAL TURNOVER IS 100 CRORES
- 15 LACS LOYAL CUSTOMERS
- AWARD WINNER OF JAMNALAL BAJAJ UCHIT VYAVHAR [1989 & 2001]

➤ **HEALTH SERVICES**

- ★ DADA SARFARE AROGYA KENDRA - NAIGAON
- ★ H. N. PATIL AROGYA KENDRA - VASHI
- ★ FREE HEALTH CAMPS
  
- ★ MARKETING THE PRODUCTS OF SMALL PRODUCERS

**APNA BAZAR FOR ALL**

हार्दिक शुभेच्छा !

शतकाकडे वाटचाल करणारी व कामगारांचा आवाज बुलंद करणारी  
मुंबई बंदरातील पहिली कामगार संघटना

मुंबई पोर्ट ट्रस्ट, डॉक अँड जनरल एम्प्लॉईज युनियन

(स्थापना : ३ मे १९२०)

(संलग्न : हिन्द मजदूर सभा)

कर भला सो हो भला

“ सर्वात जास्त आनंद  
कोणत्या गोष्टीत असेल तर  
तो दुस-यांना आनंद देण्यात ”

- कवी वर्डस्वर्थ

डॉ.शान्ति पटेल

अध्यक्ष

अँड.एस.के.शेट्ये

सरचिटणीस

पोर्ट ट्रस्ट कामगार सदन,

नवाब टँक रोड,

माझगांव, मुंबई- ४०० ०१०

दूरध्वनी : २३७७ ६३२०

२३७७ २३६१

६६५६ ६४८७

फॅक्स : २३७५४७९४

इ-मेल : mbptdgeu@vsnl.net

# How to start a riot out of Facebook

**Yousuf Saeed**

I am shocked and pained to read about the violent rally that many Muslims took out at Azad maidan in Mumbai on 11th August 2012 in protest against the recent communal carnage in Assam and Burma. More than the accidental death of two men and 50 injured in yesterday's protest, what alarmed me was the public anger targeted on the media for "not reporting about the violence against Muslims in Assam and Myanmar". Several vans of TV channels and their equipment were smashed or burnt besides a number of police vehicles destroyed. Of course, the authorities are still probing as to who really began the violence in an otherwise peaceful rally (and we are open to the results of such a probe). But my worst fear came true with this assertion of one of the protesters in a newspaper report: "Why is the media not covering Burma and Assam? We learnt about the incidents from videos posted on the Internet." This seems to be a very disturbing statement on various accounts. Of course, the media can sometimes be biased, and the Muslims do feel victimised by it all the time. But are the random videos and images posted on the Internet any less biased or misleading?

Some of you may have recently noticed a number of gory and blood-soaked images being forwarded and shared on various social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter that claim to show the dead bodies of "20,000 Muslims butchered in Burma in the hands of Buddhists" along with the assertion that the world's media is silent about the plight of Muslims in Burma and so on. Most

of those images are really disturbing, capable of making anyone's blood boil. Some show mounds of rotting dead bodies and a few Buddhist monks standing near them. Some even looked digitally tempered with to enhance their anti-Muslim violence. But there was no sign of where these images were sourced from. A couple of them even had Jama't-e Islami Pakistan stamped on them. But if, as the people posting them claim, the world's media is silent about the Muslim carnage in Burma, how did these images and the disturbing news come from Burma in the first place? Where did they find them before posting? I asked this question to many friends sharing these images and they didn't have a clue. They simply believed in what they saw. In fact, from the Internet these pictures were picked up by many Urdu newspapers from Mumbai, Hyderabad and Delhi and printed with inflammatory titles and headlines. Many new caricatures and info-graphics started appearing on Facebook ridiculing the "peaceful" image of Buddhists or the "silence" of Burmese leader Aung Suu Kyi on the carnage of Rohingya Muslims and so on.

Many of us were sceptical of these images and knew something was wrong. Some images do show the facial features of the victims to be Mongoloid, but that doesn't prove they are from Burma. In any case, most Rohingya Muslims are not clearly Mongoloid – some look like Bangladeshis. With some investigation it was revealed that almost none of the gory images titled "Muslim slaughter in Burma" were actually from Burma. They

## Mumbai Violence

We strongly and unequivocally condemn the attack on media in Mumbai by a section of people gathered at the Azad maidan to protest the violence in Assam and Burma. Using violence in a protest against violence is an insult to the suffering victims in whose support the protest was purportedly organised.

There are many non-violent and democratic ways to communicate and protest any grievances, including against the media. This mindless and shameful action by a few misguided individuals discredits protest and becomes a disservice to a cause.

We offer our solidarity with media; sympathy with all those injured and wish for their quick recovery. We urge the government to take immediate and exemplary action against the guilty. We also appeal to all citizens not to get swayed by this isolated and dastardly incidence and allow the situation to become a cause of conflict. Any communalisation of the situation will be harmful for everyone and totally against the interests of the nation.

Lalita Ramdas- Ali Bagh, Mazher Hussain – Hyderabad, Admiral L. Ramdas- Ali Bagh, Mahesh Bhatt- Mumbai, Ram Punyani- Mumbai, Kamla Bhasin- Delhi, Sandeep Panday- Lucknow, Jatin Desai- Mumbai

came from different sources, mostly showing people killed in natural disasters in China, Thailand and even self-immolation attempts in Tibet. The best investigation of these fake pictures was made by Faraz Ahmed in a blog of the Express Tribune newspaper from Pakistan (“Social media is lying to you about Burma’s Muslim ‘cleansing’”), where he busted the myth about 3-4 of the most circulated of such images, tracing their origins in China, Thailand and Tibet etc. One image actually shows Buddhist monks cremating thousands of people killed in a Chinese earthquake. In fact, a few images of dead bodies or people escaping from violent situations are clearly from places like Syria or Africa. The only authentic images of the affected Rohingya Muslims are those showing them in the boats waiting to enter Bangladesh. Nevertheless, many of our Muslim friends in India, Pakistan and other places continued to post and share such fake and fabricated images, adding more and more vitriolic comments on them to spread hatred against Buddhists. I and a few friends even tried to bust these postings by warning them about the fake pictures, but our efforts had little impact.

Now, I must clarify that I am not denying the killing and persecution of Muslims in Burma. I did some research as to what exactly happened and how many Muslims were really affected. Contrary to the popular belief that the world’s media and human rights fraternity is silent about Burma’s Muslim carnage, I did find a lot

of detailed reporting and analysis of the human rights violation (including from Aljazeera, BBC and New York Times, though very little from India), which ironically very few protesting Muslims may have read. The most comprehensive report on this has been brought out in August 2012 by the Human Rights Watch of US, titled “The Government Could Have Stopped This - Sectarian Violence and Ensuing Abuses in Burma’s Arakan State”. This 57-page report states that it was a communal violence between Rohingya Muslims and ethnic Arakan Buddhists which took the life of 78 people (according to government figures) – a number that includes both communities. Many villages of both communities were torched and over 100,000 people were displaced from their homes. But there is clearly no mention of 20,000 or more Muslims butchered as claimed by many on the Facebook.

Of course, none of the protesters read these detailed and balanced reports. For them the fake pictures of blood and gore were provocative enough to come to the streets. This is not the first time that social networking has been used to a large extent to bring people on the streets. We have seen more revolutionary uses of Facebook in the case of overthrowing of regimes in Egypt and other Arab countries. But to start a communal riot using visual rumours is not the most desirable uses of Internet. If you study the social networking sites deeply, especially if you have a wide range of ‘friends’ including the

## Raza Academy sees conspiracy, apologises

The Raza Academy members on Sunday offered unconditional apology to the media and citizens of the city for the violence and riot on Saturday, terming it as a conspiracy to create a gap between Muslims and the media.

Representatives of Raza Academy, All India Sunni Jamaatul Ulema, All India Sunni Ayema-e-Masajid, Jamaat-E- Raza Mustafa and 20 other Sunni Muslim groups said they felt “deeply ashamed” over Saturday’s violence and condemned the riot at a peaceful protest march against attacks on Muslims in Assam and Myanmar.

According to the academy members, the attack was “unprovoked and a conspiracy”. On behalf of everyone, Raza Academy president Mohammed Saeed Noori sought “forgiveness” of the police and media, which have always supported different causes in the past.

Founded in 1978 and regarded as a secular outfit, Raza Academy’s reputation suffered a serious setback

after Saturday’s violence left two persons dead and another 54, including 45 policemen, injured.

“This was a planned attack by non-Muslims who want to create a rift between the media and Muslims as the people who started the violence did not belong to our academy,” said a spokesperson.

“The people who indulged in violence cannot be Muslims. No Muslim would dare to do anything like this during Ramzan. Some mischief mongers have taken advantage of the situation,” Noori said.

A statement issued by the academy stated that the Ulemas, on behalf of the entire community, tender an official apology to the media, the policemen and the innocent people for this act and call for a strict inquiry into the violence and book the perpetrators. While reposing complete faith in law and the police department, the Ulemas appealed to the community to remain calm and promote peace at every level.

**-The Indian Express**



possible rumour-mongers, you may find postings that are deliberately trying to provoke in one way or the other. Just yesterday I found on Facebook a photo showing cut-up and mutilated body parts of two dead women lying in a forest, with a caption saying “Wake-up Hindus. These are bodies of Hindu girls who were raped and killed by Mullahs”. Of course, this image has been “liked” and shared by thousands of people throwing choicest of abuses on Muslims. But no one tried to reason out that there is no proof that the picture actually shows dead Hindu girls – there is not even any indication of where and when this picture was taken. But for a new generation of net-savvy youngsters (some of whom may have come to Mumbai’s streets yesterday), simply seeing on Facebook is believing. I shudder to think that such rabble-rousing use of Internet might increase especially when some people realise that such an action can have practical repercussions. We have seen that in almost all communal riots, people deliberately initiated nasty rumours just to “have some fun”. But in the past, rumours spread in localised areas by word of mouth, whereas today it is possible to spread hate-filled messages over large areas of the world within seconds. The spread of Burma’s fake images has even allowed the Tehreek-e Taliban of Pakistan to issue a threat to Burmese people, and it needs to be taken seriously.

We don’t know if there is a ready solution to this menace. Censorship of the Internet as suggested by some (especially in the Indian government) is clearly not the answer since that may suppress even some of the harmless content. But what is definitely required is an advocacy among the net-users on how to read the content more critically. Unlike in the more conventional media such as newspapers, TV or radio, its possible today for anyone to ‘track-back’ any content posted on the Internet to see where it originated from. For instance Google’s reverse image search allows you track who may have originally posted a certain image and who manipulated it later. Just a few days ago an Austrian newspaper Kronen Zeitung published a photo showing a Syrian couple with a baby escaping from a bombed building. Later, it turned out that they had cut-out the couple and the baby from an earlier photo and morphed it on the image of a ruined building, just for the effect! Hence, media manipulation by big and small players is here to stay. The only way one can avert possible riots and violent mobbing is to stop believing (and forwarding) everything that is posted online and investigate how true a picture is, and most importantly, where it came from.

–<http://kafila.org>

*With Best Compliments  
from*

**Transport & Dock Workers’ Union, Mumbai.**

P.D’Mello Bhawan, P.D’Mello Road,  
Carnac Bunder, Mumbai, 400 038.

Tel.No.: 2261 6951/52                      Telegraphic Address :  
Fax No.: 2265 9087.                      “DOCKUNION” Mumbai-38.  
E-mail : [dockunion1@rediffmail.com](mailto:dockunion1@rediffmail.com)  
[Dockunion2010@gmail.com](mailto:Dockunion2010@gmail.com)

**CHAMPIONING THE INTEREST OF  
PORT, DOCK & TRANSPORT WORKERS**

**S.R. Kulkarni  
(President)**

**P.K. Raman    S.R. Yadav    Rajaram Shinde  
Baban Mete    Madhukar Bhondve    Nivruti Dhumal  
(Secretaries)**

**Anil Golatkar                      Shivaji Mudhe  
(Treasurer)                      (Jt.Treasurer)**

To know the strength of a person it is  
not necessary to hit another person.

Therefore Boxing is an inhuman and  
uncivilized game.

**STOP IT.**

**K.K. KRISHNAN**

*Between the lines*

## The battle has just begun

Kuldip Nayar

Movements against corruption have been, of late, successful in India. They have brought the scourge of dishonesty before the public. That both movements, one led by Gandhian Anna Hazare and the other by yoga guru Baba Ramdev were non-violent is a tribute to those who guided the movements and the thousands of people who participated in them. But both have failed to move the government. In fact, the Manmohan Singh government has become more adamant, more intractable and involved in corruption which is seething the system.

The government's attitude remains a mystery for me. It appears that the party has already come to infer that it is not going to return to power in the 2014 elections and, therefore, it is better for it not to react either way. This mulish stance may, however, cost the party dearly. The word has gone around that the Congress has much to hide. In fact, people have begun to link corruption with the party, like the Bofors gun scandal with late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in the 1989 elections.

By disclosing the list of names the government has received from some foreign countries, it could have retrieved some ground. But if the allegation that some top Congress leaders figure in the lists is true, it is understandable why the government is hiding the names and dragging its feet on every move to bring back the black money stashed abroad. It could have initiated action against bureaucrats, if not political leaders, to dispel the impression that the Congress was hand in glove with bureaucrats to get bribes on the purchases made abroad. But then the party probably fears that they might spill the beans.

It must be said to the credit of the opposition that it did articulate black money issue before parliament. In the Rajya Sabha one member quoted CBI director A.P. Singh, alleging that Rs 25 lakh crore worth Indian money was kept abroad. A serving CBI director making such a statement is an indication of the seriousness of the issue. Still, the government preferred uproar in parliament to the disclosure of black money stashed abroad.

It is more than a year now that the BJP members said in individual affidavits submitted to the Speaker in the Lok Sabha and the Chairman in the Rajya Sabha that they did not have any foreign account. Although pressed, the Congress members have not done so. It only confirms suspicion against its members that they

do have something to hide. In fact, there should be a law for all the legislators, whether at the centre or in the states, to declare foreign accounts as they do in the case of assets in India.

However, a disturbing part of rallies, particularly of Baba Ramdev's, is that they convert themselves into a mob, gathered at a particular place. The mob can be misused or it can run amuck on its own. President Pranab Mukherjee has rightly warned that institutions should not be weakened or bypassed. Indeed, a democratic system can be stretched up to a point, but not beyond the limit because the string that has bound the institutions together can snap. All political parties should see how the institutions can be strengthened because they have been messed up since Indira Gandhi came to power.

The still more disturbing part is the presence of General V.K. Singh, who was chief of the army staff till a few weeks ago, first at Anna's rally and then at Baba Ramdev's. How could the retired army chief take part in politics and say at the rallies that they would tell the people how to cast their vote? It means that he had political ambitions when he commanded the armed forces, which are apolitical, for two years. His has been the first endeavour since independence to politicize the army. Thank god, his term did not get extended although he used the pretext of wrong birth date to stay on for one more year.

The reaction can be what the government seems to have adopted is to ignore him. Yet this does not convey the nation's concern which was that of bewilderment and confusion. The other reaction can be to see that no Bonapartism takes birth in India. The latter would be the correct reaction. The officials from all the three services should be barred from taking part in politics for five years after retirement. By that time the halo around them because of the weapons they carry would fade away. This type of restrictions should also cover government servants on the civil side.

Yet the sad part of V.K. Singh's episode is that he has not realized the wrong which he has done to the institution he has served. He does not seem to possess the sensitivity which would guide him to differentiate between wrong and right, moral and immoral. An army chief occupies a big position in India or, for that matter, any country. The Manmohan Singh government did not realize that such persons, although appointed on the


basis of seniority, should not be given a position which, if misused, can wreck the entire polity.

President Truman is remembered for his bold decision to dismiss General McArthur after he won the Second World War against Japan. Truman saw in McArthur the signs of Bonapartism which no democratic state could tolerate. V.K. Singh is, no doubt, a history now. But imagine what he could have done with his eyes fixed on politics.

Both Anna and Baba Ramdev cannot be absolved of the blame of parading a former chief of army staff from their platform. Again, their move had no thinking behind, nor any regard for the norms of democracy.


What kind of setup they propose to place before the nation, already groaning for democratic space, if an army chief is called upon to tell the people to which candidate they should vote?

Baba Ramdev was wrong in singling out the Congress. In this bath all are naked. There are serious allegations against the political parties like the the BJP, Mulayam Singh's Samaj Party and Mayawati's Bahujan Samajwadi Party. Even the Baba himself is said to not above board. True, some of his trusts are under the scanner. Yet there is no mention of the property which a pickle dealer had purchased and given to the Baba. All those who want equity should ensure that their own house is in order. The battle has just begun.




## Rural India Focus


### PRESENTING THE NATION WITH A REPLICABLE MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



**ADIVASI GIRLS HOSTEL AT TARA, PANVEL**



**WEEKLY EYE CAMPS AT THE YMC HOSPITAL, TARA, PANVEL**



**RUNS THREE HIGH SCHOOLS**

#### YUSUF MEHERALLY CENTRE AND YOU

There are ways in which you can join the YMC movement in bringing education, healthcare, women empowerment, employment generation, relief and growth to our rural villages. Visit our Centre, volunteer your help, buy our products, become a Life Member. You could also support the cause by donating to our various initiatives.

#### SPONSOR AN ADIVASI GIRL'S HOSTEL STAY


It takes Rs.15,000 per year to meet the expenses for supporting a girl child's stay at the hostel in Tara, Panvel Taluka.

#### FINANCE A CATARACT SURGERY

10 to 15 eye operations are performed at the weekly eye camp held at the Maharashtra State Government funded hospital building. Sponsor a cataract operation for Rs. 15,000/-.

#### CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCHOOL CORPUS

YMC runs 3 high schools - 2 Marathi, 1 Urdu medium. With only 2 of these on government aid, the Centre needs Rs.1 crore as corpus to run the 3rd and maintain, conduct extra-curricular activities in all 3 and finance its building expansion plans. Give generously.



Yusuf Meherally Centre  
D-15, Ganesh Prasad, 1st Floor,  
Naushir Barucha Marg,  
Grant Road (West),  
Mumbai 400 007

Visit [www.yusufmeherally.org](http://www.yusufmeherally.org),  
Call: (022)-2387 0097,  
Fax: (022)-2388 9738 or  
E-mail : [yusufmeherally@gmail.com](mailto:yusufmeherally@gmail.com)

### Space Donated by A Well Wisher



## **GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.**

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

**REGISTERED OFFICE**

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,  
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

**TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232**

**Website: [gannondunkerley.com](http://gannondunkerley.com)**

**E-mail: [gdho1@mtnl.net.in](mailto:gdho1@mtnl.net.in)**

**GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.**

**GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.**

**OFFICES AT:**

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD  
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

# janata

**Vol. 67 No. 31**  
**August 26, 2012**

## North-Eastern turmoil

**S. Viswam**

**A flicker of hope, at last**  
Kuldip Nayar

**Common Sense of  
Urban Planning**  
K. S. Chalam

**Outbreak of Violence  
in Mumbai**  
Asghar Ali Engineer

**Hate begets hate**  
Harsh Mander

**Mamata and Judiciary**  
Bapu Heddurshetti

**Development of Tribal Women**  
Vibhuti Patel

**Socialist International  
in Cape Town**  
D. K. Giri

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

Belying all hopes, the post-independence decades have not succeeded in ending the deep sense of alienation nurtured by the people of India's north-eastern region. While the attempts at geographical integration of the region with the rest of India have borne fruit, the same cannot be said of the efforts at emotional integration. The "seven sisters" have always felt cut off from "mainstream India" even though there is enough inter and intra-regional movement of people. The fault lies more with mainstream India than with the citizens of the region. By and large, the former has failed to convince the people of the north-east that they enjoy equality with fellow Indians in every measure. Consequently, the north-easterners feel discriminated against and have not developed the sense of belonging that is a pre-requisite for their emotional integration with the rest of India. They have been unable to get over the feeling that they are only second class citizens of this great country.

The situation has remained depressing over the decades. It has been made worse by the failure of the Indian political and administrative class to address the problem of alienation effectively. Now, consequent to the upsurge of

communal violence an unprecedented number of people within Assam, estimated to exceed five lakhs, have been displaced. They have had to seek shelter in other areas of the region. Elsewhere within the region, ethnic-cum-religious oriented politics has polarized the people and unfortunately impacted adversely on communal peace in other areas far removed from the north-east like Bangalore, Pune, Hyderabad and Mumbai. In Mumbai, the reaction to the communal violence in Assam has been most unfortunate and has in turn provoked the Hindutva elements to mount retaliation against innocent Muslims. Bengali-speaking Muslims in Assam have been subjected to violence and have been uprooted from their areas of domicile. The Bangladesh government has predictably remained insensitive to the plight of the displaced Assamese, just as Dhaka has till now refused to take back its citizens who have illegally settled down in Assam and other north-eastern states.

One has yet to learn the full story of how hundreds of thousands of people from the north-east were driven by panic arising from sheer fear to flee their respective areas of employment and study and head home, suffering enormous hardships in crowded trains. The massive exodus from

Bangalore, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad and Pune was of a kind rarely if ever witnessed in any part of the world leave alone India. Various theories abound on what set off the panic. One theory that has found favour with officialdom attributes it to the mischief of death and destruction morphed in cyber sites into so-called evidence of anti-Muslim violence in Assam and distributed through the Internet. Another theory attributes it to loaded websites created in Pakistan and Bangladesh by anti-Indian interests, in the process launching a new form of international terrorism creating domestic disorder in India with a view to upsetting communal harmony and peace.

The happenings of the last fortnight that began with the shocking exodus of the people of north-east has turned the focus yet again on a problem that has defied Indian policy-makers and politicians for the last six decades. But merely because earlier attempts to address the problem have failed is no reason to give up. The problem is not a regional one as many in India tend to dismiss it. It is a national problem since it concerns the well-being and happiness of a large segment of India and must be treated as such. This means that high priority has to be given to the urgent need to restore peace and normalcy in Assam and other states where unrest has raised its head, and then to launch a campaign to eliminate the sense of alienation among the people of the north-east. Instead of dismissing that challenge as something which concerns only that area, it must be regarded and tackled as a matter of national importance and urgency. The political class and the national media need to undertake confidence-building measures aimed at restoring normalcy.

### *Between the lines*

## A flicker of hope, at last

**Kuldip Nayar**

Some recognition at last: that both President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh should send messages of goodwill to the Hind-Pak Dosti Manch is a welcome development. The Manch is engaged in an endeavour to improve relations between the two countries. This was the 17th year for its members from the manch and SAFMA in Pakistan to light candles at midnight on August 14-15, when the two countries were born, on the Attari-Wagah border. The sky was rent with slogans like: Long Live India-Pakistan Friendship and *Dono bhaiyon ko mil ne do* (Let brothers meet one another). Messages by the two governments are an admission of their mistakes to have run down the tiny step taken in 1995, which has become a long stride, towards improving relations between India and Pakistan. Zardari has commended the efforts "in pursuit of shared destiny in the sub-continent." He has paid homage to all those who have been making systematic and concerted efforts for promoting peace and cooperation in the subcontinent.

"The present democratic government and the people wish to see peace and cooperation flourish in the subcontinent. We are committed to it and hope that the search by the two countries together for a peaceful resolution to all disputes through a sustained and productive dialogue will bear fruit...The two countries need durable peace and security to focus on the social and economic development of their peoples..."

said Zardari.

Manmohan Singh too wrote in the same vein. In his message, he said: "I am happy to know that the Hind-Pak Dosti Manch is organizing the 17th India-Pakistan Peace Festival at Amritsar on 14-15 August, 2012 as part of its efforts to build public opinion for peace and friendship in South Asia. The Manch is pursuing a worthy cause because sustained peace and friendship in this region are necessary for South Asian countries to effectively focus their energies on tackling challenges such as hunger, poverty, illiteracy and disease..."

It has not been a pleasant experience to light candles at the border. The anti-Pakistan feeling was dominant when we started the journey. Threats, demonstrations and abusive letters were hurled at us whenever we came to the border to light candles or held seminars to determine what was wrong between the two countries and how it would be eliminated. All these years we have not faltered in our resolve that people-to-people contact is the only way to normalize relations.

Both the Congress and the BJP would scoff at the effort and call us "mombatti wale" to belittle the efforts made to rise above the bitterness of partition. The Indian government has become somewhat cooperative because it gives us permission to go right up to the zero point, even though the border is under curfew from 8 p.m.

However, the Pakistan government has given permission to go to the border at midnight after the Zardari government has assumed power.

At the border, we exchange flags and sweets and we also sing together Faiz Ahmed Faiz's couplet: Hum dekhenge..." It is an emotional journey for all of us because for the most who come to the border, it is not a nostalgia but a commitment to see that the line drawn does not divide the centuries' old composite culture. Both Hindus and Muslims have lived together for hundreds of years and shared joy and grief, apart from festivals like Id and Diwali. Why could not they have lived side by side after partition?

I feel that it is possible to bring back that spirit provided people from both sides consider that the happenings during partition were a blot on their long history of togetherness. It should be written off as an aberration. Still I wonder why the relationship going back to hundreds of years collapsed like a house of cards. True, the seeds of bitterness were sown long before partition. Yet killing the neighbours or kidnapping their women shows that both sides have not risen above the medieval, religious thinking.

We still carry the baggage of history. Books on both sides depict partition from their point of view and underline the differences over religion. Therefore, it becomes inevitable that the borders between India and Pakistan should soften so that people can go into each other's country without the hassle of visa or police reporting. But the worst is the role of fundamentalists, more in Pakistan than India. They are out to wreck the democratic polity on this

*(Continued on Page 9)*

## Common Sense of Urban Planning

**K. S. Chalam**

Our former President Abdul Kalam in his address to a group of young girls of a Junior college in Hyderabad last fortnight is reported to have said that they should start their battle against corruption at home. The reason given by him is interesting. He said that 30 percent of the houses or flats are built or bought with black money. This statistic provides us a rough estimate of the kind of illegal constructions we have in the urban areas particularly in the metropolitan centres like Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad. Assuming that some of them are getting their plans approved by the municipal or city agencies as per norms, there is scope for misgivings about the sanctity of such building plans. This would also indicate the amount of pressure put on Babus and political executive in getting orders passed favoring the powerful, leaving aside the mafia. It is reported in the media that several crores of rupees of revenue is estimated to have been lost by the Greater Hyderabad city due to the failure to enumerate the number of constructions in the city. It is here one can look at the circumstances that dictate the contours of urban planning, despite elegant and intellectually alluring models of city plans or master plans. Notwithstanding different dimensions of a plan, life becomes miserable during monsoon seasons.

We have been boasting about our historical legacy as one of the most ancient urban civilizations in the world in Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. I have visited one of the Harappan sites in Lothal near Ahmedabad, Gujarat sometime ago. The site relates to a dry dock belonging to the fourth millennium BCE. It reflects the same archeological facts as were

found in Mohenjo-daro particularly the drainage system that carries the dirty water from homes to a larger sewerage. Though scholars have not paid adequate attention to the medieval urban formations except Champakalakshmi and Irfan Habib, the Indus valley urban culture seems to have been recreated in the form of fort towns. According to one estimate, Agra had a population of 5-6 lakhs in 16th century AD. Our own history of Golkonda and Hyderabad old city is passionately narrated by our friend Vasanth Bawa in his writings. Bawa as one of the earliest civil servants in charge of Hyderabad urban development laments now for the decadence that has set in. How is this happening?

Those who are familiar with the woes of urban dwellers during the monsoon season in Hyderabad, Mumbai, Noida and other cities in the country indicate that there is some muddled design in the original plan of cities. We can identify different factors that have contributed to this fall. But, the dissolution seems to be striking after the use of European models of city or urban planning. It is also recognized that the pressure of population and the rural out-migration in search of work in urban areas are also responsible for this. But, the European cities had also experienced the same trends as in India in the past. It appears that the designs of urban and metropolitan centres in Europe and North America were related to their geographical location. I am not an engineer to comment on the technical aspects of it. But, I think, the European cities do not have the problems of torrential rains. Monsoons are experienced in the West-Africa and Asia-Australia regions only. Europeans have a

different kind of problem during winter. They have perhaps designed their cities particularly sewage and sanitary disposal system based on their meteorological conditions. European scholars and teachers must have prepared texts books based on their experience. It is likely that the same text books have been used in our Civil Engineering, Public Health Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Urban Planning etc, courses by default. Similarly, some of our bureaucrats are sent abroad to develop skills of planning so that urban infrastructure plans could be implemented at home without a hustle. Yet, majority of them seem to have failed to tackle the concerns of common man during the monsoon when the sewage tanks and drinking water pipes break in to one another and runoff with storm water on the main roads displacing not only humans but even vehicles.

I have personal experience with urban life in Delhi, Hyderabad, London, New York, Warsaw and Mumbai. The care taken by the West for the easy flow of traffic is exemplary during the winter. Those who are familiar with the 'salt satyagraha' may not know why the British were exporting ship loads of raw salt from India at the displeasure of natives? The salt was not used for human consumption; it was used to clear their roads during winter. Now salt is replaced by snow blowers, throwers and high velocity impellers. The engineers and technocrats have developed designs based on their existential conditions to make human life comfortable there. Though some of our Engineers particularly at the policy making level are very competent and are acquainted with our conditions, the supervisory staff at the junior engineer and below level are alleged to be responsible for breakdowns.

If you have a chat with the junior staff, they would narrate a different

story making the seniors and even bureaucrats responsible for the troubles. Otherwise, how could you appreciate lack of proviso on the sidewalks and pathways for runoff to sink or flow in the elegantly laid roads in cities? Why the capacity of the drains is much lower than the quantity of storm water expected during rainy season? How the designs are made or changed (the anarchy of frequent road cuts)? Is it not the duty of the engineering staff to inspect and supervise how do the contractors execute work as per designs or leave it to their caprice? Why has the Total Sanitation Campaign devoid of social ethos failed? How far the FAR, huge budgeted infrastructure based on European models solve our immediate depraved conditions of living?

It is in this context, one can look at the National Urban Sanitary policy prepared by the Ministry of Urban Development and Poverty Alleviation for an insight in to our planner's unimaginative ideas. The policy document seems to have failed to address the poignant appeals of Safai Karmachari Andolan that claims even today lakhs of SKs carry night soil on their heads to clear the backyards in small towns and even in city agglomerations. If the SKs are not available in a city, the sewerage is allowed to pass into the dirty water drains that pass through slums or impecunious habitations to make the life of inhabitants de-humanized. What kind of urban planning is this if we fail to address our basic prerequisites of humane living?

### **Mahila Dakshata Samiti**

Mrinal Gore was one of the prominent leaders like Dr Sushila Nayyar, Suchita Kriplani, Pramila Dandavate, Mangla Parikh, Smt. Hingorani, Suman Krishnakant and Rani Jethmalani who decided to launch Mahila Dakshata Samiti under the inspiration of the great revolutionary leader, Jayaprakash Narayan. At that time, in 1973, the Samiti's first concern was the steep price rise which was hurting women and their house-holds and anti-price rise agitations were launched by it in Mumbai and Delhi. It also started a laboratory to test food articles against adulteration. Belan (rolling pins for making bread) brigades were also organised by different women organisations all over India to express solidarity with the agitation. We can proudly claim that Mrinaltai along with Mangla Parikh, Pramila Dandvate and other socialist leaders pioneered women's movement in the post-Independence India.

The Mahila Dakshata Samiti organised series of seminars and demonstrations against dowry and bride burning and created mass awareness among women. It also helped to bring about amendments in the existing anti-dowry legislation, legislation against criminal assault of women and propagated for legislation in favour of women's property rights. The samiti under the leadership of Smt. Dandavate, Smt. Gore and Smt. Krishnakant worked hard to get a legislation for the appointment of a National Commission of Women adopted. Smt. Dandavate got the issue inscribed in the agenda of the National Front. This effort of the Samiti met with success. On another issue - amino synthesis - also women succeeded in getting the test ill-legalised. The Samiti also agitated to get reservations in jobs as also union and state legislatures. Yet another success of the Samiti and other organisations was the appointment of special family courts and also the induction of larger number of women in police service so that crimes against women can be investigated by women police cells.

**- Manjoo Mohan**



# Outbreak of Violence in Mumbai

Asghar Ali Engineer

The way things were happening for the last few weeks it was not surprising that violence on such scale took place. It was, as if, in store; large scale propaganda was going on that Muslims are being killed all over the world. There is conspiracy to kill Muslims everywhere and on Bodo-Muslim clashes and about Rohingyah Muslims in Burma prayers were being organized in every mosque and SMSs were circulating about it. Urdu papers were carrying articles saying there is world-wide conspiracy to kill Muslims. Articles simply appealing to emotions, not to reason.

I have not seen any sober and analytical article in the Urdu press in Mumbai. The Muslim leadership was creating a psychology of victimhood in the minds of Muslims and pent up emotions were waiting to explode with some triggering event. The photographs about killing of Muslims in Burma had greatly disturbed the Muslim youth. All photographs, I must say, were not authentic but they circulated on large scale and ignited emotions.

Muslim leadership which hardly does anything for the real welfare of the community always has an eye on such sensitive situations and wants to grab the opportunity to enhance their own interests. Also, mosques were used to announce about rally giving it further religious colour. For those who go to mosques to pray, in large numbers, particularly in the holy month of Ramadan, are gullible and the moment religious colour is given to an issue they become extra-sensitive.

These religious leaders and also some non-religious leaders of Muslims neither fully understand the problem - what is the conflict about - nor they care to know the facts about what is going on the ground. They simply make it a case of conspiracy against Muslims. In Azad Maidan too where rally was organized despite knowing that huge crowd is there with all sorts of people, including anti-social elements, the speakers made highly emotional speeches especially attacking media for not covering killing of Muslims in Burma. Then what more do you want to incite emotions for anything to happen.

It was not only a question of managing the crowd; it was utterly irresponsible act on the part of leadership of the rally. If they had expected only 1500 persons to come and 50,000 turned up the leaders should have clearly understood that situation can get out of control any time as they were simply dealing with raw emotions. A wise leadership would not have allowed highly emotional speeches in the midst of such huge crowd and fuel emotions further.

It is also not correct to say that they expected only 1500 people to turn up as they were making announcements inside the mosque on Friday and also posters were put up. It means they aimed higher and made efforts to mobilize large number of people and succeeded in it. Ideal thing would have been to have a *dharna* by about 1000-1500 seriously interested people for a day long *dharna* and then they could

have met Chief Minister or Home Minister. There was no need at all for such a huge rally.

And if at all such a huge rally was organized why such emotional speeches were made? They should have understood the sensitivity of the problem. But then if they did, how can they be Muslims leadership without arousing religious sentiments? In fact as far as Assam is concerned hardly any one of those who actively organized the rally knew anything about the nature of conflict except that Muslims were killed.

What was the history of Bodo-Muslim conflict in Assam? Bodos are not killing Muslims because of their Muslimness but the fundamental problem is of land. Bodos are in conflict with other communities also like Adibashis, Santhals and others and they have come in conflict with all these communities. Though it is not true that Bangladeshis are migrating in large numbers (this is largely the Sangh Parivar propaganda) but unfortunately Bodos, in order to fulfill their ambition of Bodo-land and for evicting Bengali Muslims and other ethnic communities from the four districts of Bodo Territorial Council, are using this propaganda for their own purposes. One can of course blame the Congress Government for giving Bodos BTC to buy peace with militant Bodo outfits. They should not have done so without taking other ethnic communities in confidence and giving them proper representation. We have dealt with this issue on our last article on Bodo-

Muslim riots in Kokrajhar and other districts.

As for Rohingyah Muslims it is the Military Government of Myanmar which is to be blamed. I visited Rangoon after the recent riots and interviewed large number of Rohingya Muslims. No such problem existed until 1981. They were treated as regular citizens and had voting rights. It was the Military Government of Myanmar which suddenly and without any proper reason, took away their papers from them and tried to expel them from Rakhine district of Western Myanmar.

It treats these Muslims as foreigners and wants Bangladesh to settle them in its territory which is totally unjust. Rohingya Muslims have been in that province for centuries and there is no case to describe them as outsiders. Most of them had settled there with Muslim rule. But the Military Government of Myanmar has been killing Burmese of other provinces too and killed several Buddhist monks also during pro-democracy demonstrations.

It is true that some Buddhist monks have issued pamphlets against Rakhine Muslims to show solidarity with their co-religionists which they should not have done. But then like others Buddhists monks also are getting politicized as their pro-democracy demonstration also shows. But in both cases (i.e. Assam and Rohingya Muslims) it is not part of any worldwide conspiracy to kill Muslims as it is being propagated.

In Mumbai violence media came under attack for no reason except that provocative speeches were made against media. It was quite ill-advised. A wise leadership would rather try to win over media rather than antagonize it this way. Also, one

cannot tar the entire media with the same brush. Both print and electronic media have different ideological and commercial approaches. A blatant attack is totally wrong and even if a section of media is ideologically against or indifferent to Muslim problems, solution does not lie in attacking its journalists, or OB vans. It is at best foolish.

Urdu papers often write that let Ulama-kiram (Honourable Ulama) guide the Muslim ummah and give it a lead. How can one expect Ulama who hardly have knowledge of the modern world and for whom provoking religious sentiments is part of their orientation, can provide leadership. It is not to say that all Ulama are like this but a large number of Ulama – and this has been proved repeatedly in political matters - behave either in opportunistic or emotional way.

And let us remember all this happened in the holy month of Ramadan. The ulama never tire of telling us that this month of fasting is there so that we become more patient and able to control our anger and we must devote us entirely to 'ibadat i.e. acts of worship, compassion and charity. What was then hurry to take out this rally in this holy month when no fresh incidents were taking place. The Assam situation had come under control and what was urgently needed was to collect money, clothes, shoes and medicines for those in relief camps in those four districts.

In this holy month of charity they could have concentrated on collecting relief for those unfortunate four million people who are rotting in relief camps in most unspeakable conditions. Many Bodos also have been killed in retaliatory actions and quite a few Bodos are

also living in these relief camps in as bad a condition as Bengali speaking Muslims. As a good and compassionate Muslims, in this month of charity they should adopt inclusive approach and collect relief for Bodos too. This is what the Holy Qur'an also requires of them.

If instead of making it a conspiracy against Muslims, if they had condemned killing of Bodos too and prayed for all it would not have acquired such emotional proportions. Also the rally also should not have been exclusively a Muslim rally but a rally with the support of all sections of Indian society i.e. Hindus, Christians, Buddhists and all others – besides Muslims – to strengthen our secular character. It was not only exclusively Muslim but organized by Raza Academy – representing Bareilvi Muslims. What a sectarian approach. Deobandis were to organize separately a day after but was postponed because of violent turn which the rally on Saturday took.

If we have to be against violence and it should be our serious commitment – we have to be more and more inclusive. Whenever sectarian approach is adopted, it becomes easier to resort to violence and if it is inclusive of all sections it is not only more democratic but also likely to be more non-violent. Sectarian approach also results in competitive approach and inclusive approach is also cooperative approach.

The police is now saying the violence was pre-planned which may result in harassment of many Muslim youth. It is shameful that some rallyists molested women constables and seized revolvers from them. The police may take

*(Continued on Page 9)*

# Hate begets hate

**Harsh Mander**

The country is once again dangerously adrift in a stormy sea of competitive hate politics. The signs are both ominous and familiar — the systematic creation of hatred against people because of their ethnicity or religion; rumours and hate propaganda choking the internet; the public moral justification of violence against targeted communities on grounds of ‘larger’ alleged wrongs; and weak-kneed State action against people and organisations which preach hate and organise slaughter and arson.

In what is probably the largest displacement of human populations by hate violence after Partition, four lakh Bengali Muslim and Bodo people are driven away from their homelands after attacks and the burning of their villages. They are living fearfully in cramped makeshift relief camps. In Mumbai, mobs protesting the Assam attacks and slaughter of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, run amuck, criminally set aflame public property and attack media and police personnel. Rumours of retaliatory attacks by Muslims against people from North-east India in many southern cities have led to a panic exodus of migrant students and workers.

In district towns in which I have worked, I observed during the 1980s how dedicated communal organisations skilfully spread rumours, which manufacture hatred locally and provoke communal attacks. But hate propagandists are today equipped with sleek new vehicles of cyberspace and mobile phone technology, which

they deploy to transport provocative falsehoods, rumours and emotive messages of hate across the country — and indeed across the world. These recast people of different ethnic or religious identities as the dangerous ‘other’, and foment suspicion, dread and loathing against them. Morphed pictures of bloody corpses near robed Buddhist monks in Myanmar, circulated through the internet and mobile phones, provoked protestors who gathered in Mumbai. Messages claiming that people from the North-east would be attacked in retaliation for the killings in Assam led to their panic exodus.

Even more hazardous is the creation of an alternative moral universe in which violent attacks on people of specified communities is accepted as defensible, even justified. The underlying ethical assumption is that it is acceptable to physically attack people who belong to a community which has committed a real or perceived wrong. The same rationale was meted out for the slaughter of Sikhs in 1984, ‘understandable’ anger against all Sikhs because two Sikh bodyguards murdered Indira Gandhi. Even today I hear people say that the carnage against Gujarati Muslims in 2002 was a natural outcome of spontaneous mass anger because Muslims allegedly burned the train and killed pilgrims in Godhra. The demolition of the Babri Masjid and the years of violence which accompanied it were explained by warranted anger because Muslims had demolished temples in medieval times. Whenever Christians are attacked, people immediately speak

of missionary ‘conversions’, as though this in any way is cause for the killing of Christians.

In Assam, the violence of indigenous Assamese against the Bengali Muslim community is described by leaders of the BJP, All Assam Students Union and the Sangh organisations as righteous anger against ‘outsiders’. Economic refugees are emotively described as ‘infiltrators’ from Bangladesh, and although scholars estimate that only around 10 percent of the Bengali Muslims in Assam are illegal residents, by implication the attacks and ethnic cleansing of the entire community is rationalised. Likewise, radicalised Islamist leaders use persecution of Muslims to provoke and justify mindless violence of the kind witnessed in Mumbai.

It is long overdue that the people of this vast diverse nation affirm that nothing — nothing — can justify the shedding of blood of even a single person, or sexual assault, or the burning of her properties, for no reason except that she belongs to the religious or ethnic community of a perceived wrong-doer. We cannot be selective in our espousal of non-violence, democracy and rule of law. If, for instance, we believe that there are illegal residents in Assam, the only legitimate demand is not mass violence and ethnic cleansing, but for due process of law to identify the illegal residents and if proved to return them to their homeland.

This clouded moral universe is further blurred by compromised or weak-kneed political and

## Our heart must bleed for everyone

Adnan

administrative leadership, which fails to uphold the equal rights of all persons, regardless of their faith, caste or ethnic identity. In Assam, the government entered into an accord with the Bodos for autonomy in Bodo-dominated areas. Bodo militants drove out Santhal descendants of tea plantation workers and Bengali Muslims in successive waves of attacks since 1993, and 1.75 lakh displaced people continue to live even today in refugee camps, for nearly two decades. The government did nothing to restore these displaced people to their homelands, and thereby incentivised ethnic cleansing. It is terrifying to consider the destinies of people now in fresh camps, if they, too, are not firmly assisted by a fair and caring state to return to their villages.

But amid these storm clouds, hope still shines through. In a blog, Siddhartha Roy reports a meeting called by the Police Commissioner of Pune regarding the fear exodus of Northeastern people. He reports that the hall was full of Muslim people who unequivocally said ‘my home is open for them’. A maulvi mourned that 30 Assamese workers cleaned and repaired the old Masjid, left suddenly yesterday. “How am I to celebrate Eid without them?” The Mufti said, “If you receive an SMS that tells you to get angry about what’s happened in Assam, delete it. We will not fight battles in the name of Assam in Pune.”

In Bangalore, Akbar Ali, convener of the Muslim Welfare Association appealed to people from the North-east who were fleeing the city, “Those who feel unsafe in their homes are welcome to come to our homes and mosques to take shelter. We will protect you, but please do not leave the city. It is your city as much as ours.”

Two recent incidents — the protest over the ‘discovery’ of the Akbarabadi mosque in Delhi, and the agitation at Azad Maidan in Mumbai over the violence in Myanmar and Assam which turned violent — must serve as a wake-up call for all Indian Muslims.

I’ll come back to them but just a recall: In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Urdu newspapers in India Nida-e-Millat and Nasheman would spend gallons of ink on the plight of Palestinians, perennially.

This was not just an interest but an obsession. With the decline of the Urdu press for a phase in the 1980s, there was a marked decline in Indian Muslim interest in the faraway territory.

This was the era when Muslims here faced the heat due to the Ayodhya movement. But whether it was the Babri Masjid demolition or major communal riots, we never heard any Muslim country or people in other lands shedding tears for Indian Muslims or issuing any statement for them. Was there any strong voice over Gujarat from a foreign power?

In fact, there was no need for any outsider to speak for us. We are a democratic country. Like most nations and societies, we will have our issues and will sort them out ourselves. There is no need for intervention. Mostly our Hindu brethren are fighting the cases for justice for minorities.

Still, whenever there is an issue in a faraway country, Indian Muslims

are the first to hit the streets. Of course, not when Muslims kill Muslims in an African country, or when Ahmadiyyas (or even Shias) are blown to pieces in supposedly ‘Muslim nations’ on a regular basis.

Some of us unfortunately might look at Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries as model states, despite the fact that they are monarchies, despite their rigid and regressive attitudes to women, minorities and even Muslim settlers from other countries, who are not given equal treatment or citizenship.

Have you ever seen Arab Sheikhs protesting the killing of Muslims in Myanmar or their citizens? From Egypt to Lebanon, Iran to Turkey and Kazakhstan to Bosnia, which Muslim country saw such huge numbers pouring out on streets to protest the killings?

Frankly, we have the right to protest but we are perhaps misusing it. We don’t join other communities to protest against injustice on others, but our blood boils when we hear or see images of attacks on Muslims.

Don’t we realise that the world looks at this as a case of Muslims just thinking about themselves and none else? Our heart must bleed for everyone who is facing injustice, not just for Muslims.

In any case, what is Bangladesh, a predominantly Muslim country, doing? It closes its border to the Rohingyas, forcibly sends them back and doesn’t hold serious talks with the Myanmar regime over this issue.

They did the same with Urdu-speaking Biharis for decades. They remained in camps and both Pakistan and Bangladesh avoided taking responsibility. Only recently did Bangladesh give them citizenship.

Forget the Gulf countries, what about Malaysia, another Muslim majority country, close to Myanmar? It is also an economic force and just a bit far away is Indonesia. What are these governments doing? If Indian Muslims want to feel the pain of the Rohingyas, it's okay. But holding demonstrations of such size that can go out of control, what message do we want to send?

On the issue of ethnic cleansing in Myanmar, for the last month, we have seen demonstrations not just in capitals but districts, even towns and at smaller places. Why? In cities, where twenty people aren't ready to join a delegation on a matter of genuine concern at delay in recognition to a school in a minority-dominated area, 2,000 people easily come for such a gathering or protest. Isn't that amazing?

It tells us a great deal about the emotions which the Indian Muslims seem to have in excess. It's better to use and channel this energy elsewhere. Whether it's Akbarabadi mosque, over which passions were whipped up by an MLA, or the Myanmar issue, our priorities are misplaced.

Isn't it a better idea to have funds collected for victims of violence in Assam, both Bodos and Muslims, than giving advertisements in papers and then heading for rallies? In the Akbarabadi mosque case, the issue was handled in such a way that it could now cause severe embarrassment to the community.

Just a few decades ago, a senseless emotional movement over a frail old woman turned Muslims into villains in this country. The Shah Bano case strengthened right-wing forces, led to the rise of the BJP, the destruction of the Babri Masjid, and the entry of the word 'appeasement' in the Indian

political dictionary.

Despite going through so much, the Muslim leaders seem to have learnt nothing. Everywhere, one sees misplaced priorities and 'josh' prevailing over 'hosh' that only harms us.

*(The author is a blogger, who writes under the pseudonym Indscribeat anindianmuslim.com.) The Hindu*

---

***(Continued from Page 3)***

side. They are still waging a war of jihad and the messages and images sent by them to foment the migration of people of Northeast from the different states to Assam show that. Some Indians too have helped the fundamentalists from across the border in this devious move. I am glad to see that the two countries are cooperating in detecting the guilty and punishing them.

However, the manner in which people from northeast were forced to migrate to Assam is a sad commentary on our secular polity. Mere two hundred messages from across the border have exposed India's secularism. Suppose there were to be two thousand next time, what would be the state in the country. This is a serious matter which civil society and government should ponder over because even after 65 years of independence, we have not been able to achieve national integration.

My greatest worry is to find India and Pakistan stuck in the status quo. Both the countries are traversing the same old beaten path and making no progress. The visit of India's Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna early next month provides both sides with a new opportunity to span at least some distance, even if they do not sign any specific agreement.

What they should be discussing is Afghanistan. If Kabul is taken over by the Taliban, it would have disastrous consequences in the entire region.

The recent attack on the Pakistan air force base near Islamabad should be a warning. This means that the Taliban have the capability to strike at any place at any time. On the other hand, Pakistan is not seen doing enough to eliminate terrorism. When people in India find that Islamabad is dragging its feet on punishing the perpetrators of 26/11 attacks on Mumbai, they wonder whether the statements by Pakistan against terrorist are credible. Pakistan is sending mixed messages. It wants to increase business but some of its leading firms have cancelled big deals at the last minute. In economic ties lie the hope. The two countries must realize this.

---

***(Continued from Page 6)***

revenge for this. Let us hope police does not. But one must say the police had shown lot of restraint and Police Commissioner Arup Patnaik himself had come and spoken from the platform appealing Muslims to show restraint in this holy month of Ramadan.

Let us hope wiser counsel will prevail and peace would not be disturbed.

# Socialist International in Cape Town

D. K. Giri

The XXIV Congress of the Socialist International (SI) taking place in Cape Town, South Africa on August 31 and September 1 is of great interest and significance for two reasons. First, it is for the first time in the history of SI that an African country is hosting the Congress. To be sure, Africa should provide a new context and perspective for future activities of SI. Second, for the first time, since last 22 years, there is a going to be an open contest for the leadership position in SI - the incumbent Secretary General has been in this position since 1989. Whoever wins the elections, there will be new dynamism as the onus will be on the winner to perform. In this promising scenario of continental shift and leadership contest, it is time to reflect on the past, role, reach and efficacy and the future of SI in world politics.

From this part of the world it does not look hopeful as Socialist International has practically no active presence here. But even comrades from Europe, where SI is supposed to be strong, despair of its inability to influence events. Some observers say, "Socialist International failed to evolve from a mere soap box and loose federation into a real fighting International Democratic Socialist force". Many others consider it to be a 'broken dream'. No doubt, SI has done much to reach out and enroll members, but it is time to ask why it fails to play a significant role in international politics.

## The Biggest Coalition

The Socialist International is a coalition-organisation of Social

Democratic parties from across the world. It is by far the biggest coalition, having 161 parties and organisations as members drawn from over 100 countries in all the continents. It was created in the present form in 1951, although its genesis goes back in the previous century to 1864 when the First International of Working Men was formed. As a non-governmental organisation it has consultative status with the United Nations.

The Geneva Congress in 1976 became the turning point for SI in terms of expansion of the organisation. Until then, SI had a few members outside Europe. In 1976, twenty five years after its formation, the Socialist International elected as its president, Willy Brandt, the former chancellor of West Germany, and the winner of 1971 Nobel Peace Prize. Thereafter, under his inspiring leadership, SI went truly international. It began systematic efforts to expand beyond Europe, into Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It also expressed solidarity with those fighting for freedom and justice. It sent missions to Southern Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America on various occasions. And now, the XXIV Congress of Socialist International takes place in Cape Town, South Africa. The Congress, the supreme decision-making body of SI, meets every four years, and brings together, delegates from the member parties, including heads of governments and invited guests.

However SI failed to fill the vacuum created by the collapse of communism. It was a great opportunity to demonstrate the

ideological edge by actively campaigning for an economy that generates growth, employment and equity. From communism, the political economy in the world swung back to capitalism. But the global financial crisis exposed the holes in unbridled capitalism. This was the time when SI could grab the lead and present democratic socialism as the viable and credible alternative - an ideology that can handle market rapacity and instability, and restore the faith in the government as both productionist (facilitating production) and distributionist (for social justice). The challenge of climate change could be best addressed by democratic socialists who had been championing the cause of sustainable development. Furthermore, in the absence of progressive politics, the right-wing ideologies focused on race, ethnicity, and religion are gaining currency. One naturally wonders why Socialist International fails to be the alternative to capitalism and authoritarianism, to be the voice of progressive politics in the world. The puzzle can be explained in terms of SI's structure, which is rigid, inflexible and non-inclusive and the strategy that seems old and outdated.

## The Structure

Socialist International seems to be rigid in its structure that was built in the aftermath of the Second World War. Since then, it has not carried out any significant organisational reforms. The internal decision making is not transparent and the working method is ad-hoc. It enrolls members, but cannot easily expel or discipline them. It recruits

political parties in the hope that they will spread democratic socialism in their respective countries, but when they fail to do so, or go back on the principles; SI cannot easily terminate their membership, although in extreme cases it has expelled a few members. Secondly, in the present context, there are multiple political actors in politics and economy, not just political parties. Even the parties need to co-ordinate with such actors - think tanks, NGOs, and social movements, business associations. Socialist International should form a broad alliance for practical progressive politics by enrolling them as associates and observers. Another notable deficit is that SI has no institutional link with major countries like USA, Brazil and India. To elaborate, India, which is the most fertile ground for social democratic politics, in fact, democracy and socialism are written into the Indian constitution, is left out of the priorities of SI. It has accorded the observer status to Janata Dal, then to JD(S), which is a small splinter of the former. Socialist International did not deeply study the Indian political configuration and in its confusion, began courting the Congress party, as it is, perhaps, the ruling party. The absence of strong, big and genuine social democratic parties need not lead it to embrace parties which are neither democratic nor socialist. Surprisingly, one of the Congress ministers is member of a SI committee. SI should have adopted a different approach to deal with hugely populous and diverse countries like India. From smaller countries, there are more than one member parties; so why not big countries like India, and Brazil. Finally, there is a secretary general of SI since 1989, for 22 long years. Either comrade Luis Ayala is too good to be changed or no one else was interested in this

position. In either case, it is not good for an organisation as new leadership means freshness and sharing of leadership space. The SI should stipulate in its statutes that the President and Secretary General should not stay for more than two consecutive terms, but can come back after a break of one term.

### **The strategies**

The perception of the SI is that it is a talking shop producing platitudinous speeches, communiqués and declarations. The objective of SI needs to be revisited: whether it seeks to serve as a forum or a force that represents progressives in global politics. The purpose of the International as mentioned in its statute speaks of the forum function only. It says, “The purpose of the Socialist International is to strengthen the relations between the affiliated parties and to co-ordinate their political attitudes and activities by consent”. So, clearly, the strategy is internal, it does not enjoin the responsibility on SI to set or seize the progressive agenda in world politics. Second, it does not help the consolidation of parties mainly in the developing world who are in tune with social democracy but lack ideological resources and organisational skills. This is the story in most democracies in the developing world; while their political and economic conditions are compatible with social democracy, their political organisations are not. This is where SI should seriously step in to help them build their organisations by facilitating exchange of experiences and imparting training and orientation. The socialist parties from individual member countries are engaged in this task, but SI is conspicuous by its inaction. In fact, Socialist International should sponsor country or region specific strategy papers

in building democratic socialism - the institutions, the ideology and processes.

### **The Way Forward**

Cape Town, in an African country should provide the context to initiate organisational and strategic changes. Some of them could be: First, constant updating of policies – while the core of social democracy is universal and timeless, the policies need to be updated in order to address new challenges like globalisation, climate change, terrorism, fundamentalism, revivalism and so on. Second, the organisation needs to be more open, it needs to be more transparent. In the age of new media, it is not difficult to do so. Third, the strategy must change to reposition SI as the voice of progressives in international politics, not a just a discussion forum. It should put the ideology in the forefront, and accordingly react to international events. Fourth, it should be in the frontline in international solidarity; the gross inequality within the countries and the so-called north-south divide must end. Fifth, it must fight intellectually other ideologies, the most divisive ones like fundamentalism, extremism, racism and so on. Sixth, it should function as coalition of progressive forces, not just parties, as politics is now influenced by campaigns, movements, think-tanks, and various civil society actors. Hence, SI should not only coordinate with such multiple actors, but build their capacities and awareness on democratic socialism, through workshops, orientation camps, exposure visits and training. Such actors then will reinforce each other in promoting democratic socialism. Seventh, it should be the clearing house for the philosophy of

*(Continued on Page 12)*

# Mamata and Judiciary – the Devil quoting the Bible?

**Bapu Heddurshetti**

Mamata Banerjee, as is her wont, has attacked the judiciary this time. She has said that judgements can be purchased as a few judges are corrupt. It should be remembered that even if it is devil which is quoting the bible, it is the bible that it is quoting.

The Calcutta and Delhi lawyers are moving against her in contempt of court. While ignorance of law is no excuse for ordinary citizens, it is for lawyers and judges. They would very conveniently not look at Article 194 of our Constitution which gives immunity to the members of state legislatures from any proceedings in court for the speeches made by them on the floor of the house. The relevant portion of the Article reads “No member of the Legislature of a State shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in the Legislature or any committee thereof”.

And the privilege is subject only to the other provisions of the constitution and not subject to any other law. The relevant portion reads “Subject to the provisions of this Constitution and to the rules and standing orders regulating the procedure of the Legislature”. Thus on a plain reading the privilege is not subject to the provisions of the Contempt of Courts Act also.

However it is not necessary for Mamata to take shelter only under constitutional privilege. After the amendment to the Contempt of Courts Act, now truth is a valid

defence to the charge of contempt of court. While the Supreme Court itself had castigated the Allahabad High Court for corrupt practices the recent case of a former Karnataka Minister giving Rs. 3 Crores as bribe to a judge to merely obtain an interim bail and the subsequent arrest of all concerned including the Judge himself should suffice for the Calcutta High Court and the Supreme Court to stop thinking in terms of contempt of court and start thinking in terms of improving the quality and integrity of judges. Karnataka has not been able to find an ‘untainted judge’ to become the Lok Ayukta. People do not mind if a traffic cop pockets Rs. 100 paid as fine for a traffic offence but can a Supreme Court Judge be excused because he procures a site in gross violation of the rules of the housing society and justifies it.

However more important is the perception of the people. While the apologists of judiciary keep repeating that the people of this country trust judiciary, they only have to talk to some litigants about it to know the truth. Almost all litigants, while entrusting their cases to the advocates ask the question as to before which judge the case will come. Senior Advocates keep the cases pending till they can come before a good judge. Intellectual corruption is more dangerous than taking of bribe. It is time all concerned think seriously about taking drastic steps to cure the cancer before it kills the judiciary. Corruption in the executive is relatively easy to deal with since the Minister perceived

to be corrupt can be made to resign. But judges not only cannot be made to resign if perceived to be corrupt, but they do not resign till threatened with impeachment.

One has to wait and see whether the judiciary will respect Article 194 of the constitution or just ignore it or judicially amend the constitution itself to suit itself as it did in the Judges’ Case.

---

*(Continued from Page 11)*

democratic socialism, disseminate new ideas, bring in other traditions, and define different contexts, in order that the ideology is appealing to all its members and applicable in their respective countries.

Finally, Cape Town should prove to be a turning point for Socialist International. An African country should bring that breath of fresh air. Also the election for office bearers in Cape Town congress is certainly a healthy sign. Whoever wins on 30th August 31–1st September, we can hope that the organisational structure and functions will be revamped.

**Madhu Dandavate**

By

**B. Vivekanandan**

Price: Rs. 20/-

**Janata Trust**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W),  
Mumbai 400 007.



**Book Review****Development of Tribal Women****Vibhuti Patel**

Rekha Talmaki has made a serious and commendable effort at conducting survey based research on socio-economic status of tribal women in Valod, South Gujarat (Socio-Economic Development of Tribal Women: Changes and Challenges Delhi: The Women Press) where committed Gandhian workers have dedicated more than five decades of their lives in village development activities based on Gandhian principles. Her personal field visits have played crucial role in bringing new insights and analysis with gender lens. She has examined tribal women's predicaments in the context of status of women in India in general where main factors in determining socio-economic status have been income, education and occupation. She has provided an exhaustive literature review focusing on occupational life, health profile of tribal women and tribal women's status in the family decision making. She has also evaluated the situation to find out to what extent Gandhian ideology of Antyodaya is implemented vis-a-vis tribal women, who are the poorest of the poor in the economic ladder and at the bottom of the pyramid.

The author has rightly used a conceptual framework of social exclusion that includes socio-economic parameters of inequality, poverty, social exclusion in India. She has provided definition of tribe. She has highlighted indicators such as working status and demographic aspects of tribes in Gujarat as well as size and distribution of scheduled

tribe. She also reveals that sex ratio of tribal women in Gujarat is relatively higher than the rest. The question is, does that indicate they enjoy better status in socio-economic, cultural, educational and political lives? Social geography of Surat reveals volatile changes due to industrialization, urbanization and globalization. In what way have these factors affected lives and survival strategies of tribal women? The author has made an honest attempt to answer these mind boggling questions.

With the help of questionnaire for tribal women that was administered on 498 women respondents from 11 villages selected as sample who were falling in the category of 18-59 years age group, for Gandhian institutions working among them and for financial institutions, nationalized and cooperative banks, the author has tried to analyse various development efforts. She has revealed that large number of Halpatis or Dublas is found very prominently in Surat district. They are very poor, because they do not get permanent employment. They are very good in taking care of animals. SUMUL and local milk co-operatives encouraged them for animal husbandry and since then they have started keeping cattle and other animals for milk production. It emerges from this study that the tribal communities, particularly women have been excluded from the mainstream economic development for the last so many decades. The study was conducted to find out

the socio-economic status of tribal women in Valod. Though their improved status is showing positive changes, it is also necessary to pay attention on many other aspects for the better and overall development of these women.

The most attractive feature of this study to bring to the fore efforts of veteran Gandhians such as Babubhai Shah, Savitaben Chaudhari and Dashriben Choudhari. Popularly known as Dashariba, the eminent Gandhian and freedom-fighter, who was born in 1918 in a tribal family (as she told) has been the role model for all tribal women in the region. At present she is residing in Vedchhi. She took part in the freedom struggle and taught reading and writing to Kasturba Gandhi. It can be a very good example of how these tribal men and women were actively participating in the freedom struggle. After independence, also, Dashariben devoted her full life to educating people.

The author states that women in Valod perform various income generating activities. They are either engaged mainly in agricultural activities or in Papad Udyog or in dairy production. Very few women in this sample, i.e. 11, are engaged in Anganwadi activities and only four women work in government jobs. Those women, who are involved in agricultural activities, are also involved in Papad Udyog or in milk production. For example, Halpati women are basically agricultural labourers but they are doing well

in dairy production. Women do not possess any land but those who are members of Self Help Groups are managing livestock and are having their own accounts in the banks. They are owners of those animals, who give them not only economic self-sufficiency but also make them empowered. Their economic status has improved only because of Lijjat Papad and Milk Co-operatives. More than 50 per cent women also know the market value of their product. Women's leadership in micro finance has been a marked feature of the activities of Gandhian institutions in the region. They are active in Vedchhi Pradesh Seva Samiti (VPSS), Valod; Lijjat Papad Grihaudyog, Sampoorna Kranti Vidyalaya And Gandhi Vidyapith-Vedchhi. Traditional agriculture sector could not give them better economic status and social status as well. However, because of the above mentioned occupations their economic and social status has improved in the last two decades. There are only 11 women working in Anganwadi, but today along with Papad Udyog and Milk Co-operatives, Anganwadi activities are also increasing as Sakhi Mandals are emerging with the help of Anganwadi workers.

Decision making, economic status and empowerment always go hand in hand. More than 70 per cent women told that their status has changed drastically. They see themselves in a different perspective and are thinking about the empowerment of their own daughters and well-being of the entire family. More than 50 per cent women said that, improvement in the economic status gives them status in the family and in the society. Remaining women, though their status has not been improved, are well aware of their future. They wish that their future would be good.

They do not want their children to suffer as they have suffered. They demand good educational and job facilities for their children. They want good educated husbands for their daughters. The habit of alcohol is still persisting in tribal communities; hence mothers want good non-addicted partners for their daughters.

It is so encouraging to note that respondents from Vedchhi want to do something for their community and village. Respondents from Ranveri want their daughters to be educated, so that they would teach their children. It shows that, women from all the villages are well aware of their status. They have understood the importance of education. In the sample, there were very few widows, but nearly 50 per cent women said that there should be some special schemes only for widows. Those women, who stay below poverty line, want to improve their economic status.

Educational process among tribals started with Vedchhi Movement and was later on flourished under late Jugatram Dave, founder of Swaraj Ashram – Vedchhi in 1930. Udyogwadi Unit started in 1954 and various programmes were undertaken by late Babubhai Shah. Separate women's section was started in Udyogwadi Unit. Women started getting guidance, income generating activities and vocational training from this Unit. Lijjat Papad Unit provides occupation based on self-sufficiency. All these institutions make women empowered in Valod.

Self Help Groups, milk co-operatives, increasing participating of women in political activities, agitation against deforestation and alcohol by Self Help Groups, educational status of women and their children, accessibility to all

kinds of infrastructural activities, improved decision making capacity in all important aspects, knowledge and use of contraceptives show positive changes in the socio-economic status of tribal women in Valod. This improvement has not taken place overnight. Gandhian ideology definitely played a very important role in this respect. Self Help Groups are emerging on a very large scale in Valod taluka. Development from the grass-root level, a dream of Gandhiji, is now coming to reality.

It is noteworthy that the author's recommendations emphasize investment in tribal women's education, vocational training, meaningful participation of tribal women in local self government bodies, anti-alcohol efforts and prevention of domestic violence among tribal families through collective efforts and social intervention.

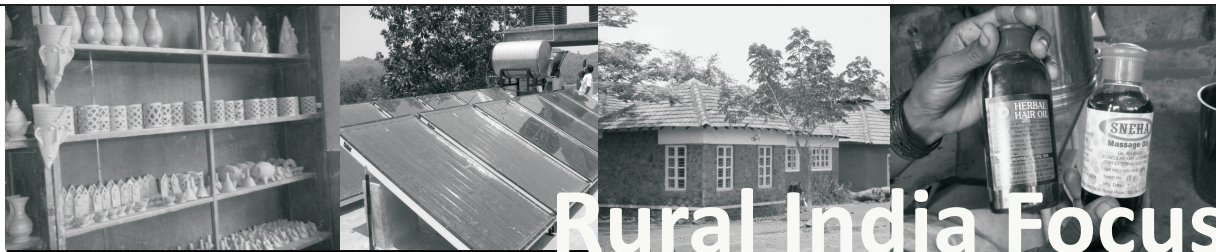
I congratulate Ms. Rekha Talmaki for her praise worthy efforts and hope that readers from wide variety of backgrounds social scientists, political activists, researchers, policy makers and women's organizations will deliberate on the issues raised by this book.

### **Janata Subscription**

Annual Rs. : 260/-  
Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on  
Mumbai Bank  
in favour of  
**JANATA TRUST**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai 400 007



# Rural India Focus

## PRESENTING THE NATION WITH A REPLICABLE MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



**ADIVASI GIRLS HOSTEL AT TARA, PANVEL**



**WEEKLY EYE CAMPS AT THE YMC HOSPITAL, TARA, PANVEL**



**RUNS THREE HIGH SCHOOLS**

### YUSUF MEHERALLY CENTRE AND YOU

There are ways in which you can join the YMC movement in bringing education, healthcare, women empowerment, employment generation, relief and growth to our rural villages. Visit our Centre, volunteer your help, buy our products, become a Life Member. You could also support the cause by donating to our various initiatives.

### SPONSOR AN ADIVASI GIRL'S HOSTEL STAY

It takes Rs.15,000 per year to meet the expenses for supporting a girl child's stay at the hostel in Tara, Panvel Taluka.



Yusuf Meherally Centre  
D-15, Ganesh Prasad, 1st Floor,  
Naushir Barucha Marg,  
Grant Road (West),  
Mumbai 400 007

### FINANCE A CATARACT SURGERY

10 to 15 eye operations are performed at the weekly eye camp held at the Maharashtra State Government funded hospital building. Sponsor a cataract operation for Rs. 15,000/-.

### CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCHOOL CORPUS

YMC runs 3 high schools - 2 Marathi, 1 Urdu medium. With only 2 of these on government aid, the Centre needs Rs.1 crore as corpus to run the 3rd and maintain, conduct extra-curricular activities in all 3 and finance its building expansion plans. Give generously.

Visit [www.yusufmeherally.org](http://www.yusufmeherally.org),  
Call: (022)-2387 0097,  
Fax: (022)-2388 9738 or  
E-mail : [yusufmeherally@gmail.com](mailto:yusufmeherally@gmail.com)

Space Donated by A Well Wisher



## **GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.**

**(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)**

**REGISTERED OFFICE**

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,  
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

**TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232**

**Website: [gannondunkerley.com](http://gannondunkerley.com)**

**E-mail: [gdho1@mtnl.net.in](mailto:gdho1@mtnl.net.in)**

**GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.**

**GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.**

**OFFICES AT:**

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD  
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

# janata

**Vol. 67 No. 32**  
**September 2, 2012**

## Debasing democracy

S. Viswam

**A torn democratic fabric**  
Kuldip Nayar

**Waging of War -  
Case of Seema Azad**  
N. D. Pancholi

**Status of Minorities:  
A Tale of Two Neighbors**  
Ram Puniyani

**Judiciary vs Democracy**  
Bapu Heddurshetti

**Understanding Pascal Lamy**  
D. K. Giri

**Bhagat Singh Memorial  
Committee in Lahore**  
Qurban Ali

**Divergent Visions of Economic  
and Financial Advisers**  
K. S. CAhalam

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

Parliament's monsoon session has been virtually washed out thanks to the BJP's refusal to allow it to function in peace and order. It may be prudent for the presiding officers of the two Houses to adjourn their respective houses sine die at this stage and save a substantial amount of money for the exchequer. It may be even more prudent for all the parties represented in Parliament to resolve not to ever allow proceedings to be suspended for long durations. While political parties may reap temporary political advantages through halting proceedings for the right or wrong reasons, the long-term victim of such strategies is democracy itself. If political expedience demands long stoppages of proceedings in every session, the nation may as well abandon parliamentary democracy in favour of another system which permits sustained political irresponsibility. On two occasions in the recent past, the first when we celebrated the golden jubilee of our independence and the second when parliament completed 60 years, MPs took a solemn pledge not to indulge in politics of disruption inside parliament. The current exercise sponsored and executed by the BJP shows how the MPs observe those pledges in the breach. The BJP has

refused to listen to reason. It has no compunctions in being a party to the destruction of parliamentary democracy in India. Indeed, it gloats over the fact that it has been isolated within parliament, claiming that it prefers to be in "magnificent isolation". Parliament's winter session was a casualty because of the BJP's disruptive tactics. Now the monsoon session has also been lost.

After the Prime Minister's detailed statement on the "coalgate" affair and the CAG's lengthy report, the BJP lost whatever justification it had in holding parliament to ransom. The statement provided the face-saving opportunity for that party to abandon its agitation and participate in a debate on the entire issue. By rejecting the statement and deciding to persist with its disruptive strategy, the BJP has vindicated Sonia Gandhi's charge that it is indulging in the politics of blackmail "which has become the political bread and butter of the party". God knows, the Congress and the UPA it heads has much to answer for in all the scams, including "coalgate", which have been exposed to public view during the last three years. However, accountability also has to be established and demonstrated in an orderly manner. Ultimately, debating

*Between the lines***A torn democratic fabric****Kuldip Nayar**

issues on the floor of parliament is closely linked to the credibility of both the accused and the charges of mala fide against the accused. The public must be given an opportunity to determine guilt or innocence on the basis of the proof of credibility.

It initially seemed that continued UPA-BJP standoff would inevitably lead to a political deadlock which in turn would lead to a mid-term Lok Sabha poll. That fear was well-based because the confrontation between the two parties seemed unbreakable and no initiative was forthcoming from other parties to break the logjam. However, the situation has improved somewhat following assertions by Mamata Banerjee in support of the UPA and by the Left that no party favours, or is ready for, snap polls right now.

Reflecting the growing frustration among the non-BJP parties over the prolongation of the parliamentary impasse, Sonia Gandhi has called on her partymen to mount an aggressive response to the BJP's blackmail politics. She has asked the Congress ranks to take the fight against the BJP to the streets if necessary. Her strategy is as alarming as the BJP's of debasing democracy and democratic institutions. An aggressive response should not be provocative and inflammatory, but an omnibus directive to partymen to "stand up and fight" can incite passions and tempers. The Congress leadership needs to guard against violence at a time when political cynicism is ruling the day.

The BJP should realize that political brinkmanship in Parliament will not bring it durable gains. It has already lost the support of its

Assam on brink is the headline one day. Mumbai on brink is on another day. And dominating all the news is the non-functioning of parliament that the people note helplessly—Rs. 1 crore is the daily expenditure on parliament. What the scenario indicates is that the political consensus, important for a parliamentary democracy, is beyond repair. The law and order machinery has broken down and faith in peaceful methods has drastically lessened. One may as well say that the Indian polity is coming apart from the seams.

The BJP is most to blame because it has taken the situation to a pitch which may leave the country with no option except to have a mid-term poll. Pushing Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to the centre of stage and asking for his resignation is driving the ruling Congress and its allies to the wall. Their defence is cutting less ice. The row over the Rs. 148-lakh crore coal scam is a symptom, not the disease. The disease is the BJP's calculation that this is the most opportune time for them to have elections in the country.

Two of the Congress allies, Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress in West Bengal and Mulayam Singh's Samajwadi Party in UP may ultimately come round to agreeing to a mid-term poll. Both have registered a thumping victory in assembly elections in their states and both provide the Congress the required numbers to have a majority

in the Lok Sabha.

The five state elections later this year in Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh and three in the northeast may help trigger the demand for a mid-term poll. Chief Minister Narendra Modi looks like winning in his state. Yet the general elections are 20 months away. The Congress can legitimately say that it should either be defeated on the floor of the house or allowed to complete its present term. However, the BJP is desperate and is not willing to find an amicable way out.

The BJP has already played the communal card and its mentor, RSS, has asked for the ousting of Bangladeshis since most of them are Muslims. Some Muslim fundamentalists have also jumped into the fray, as seen at Azad Maidan in Mumbai and Khokrajar in Assam. Communalism indicates, to the delight of the BJP, that the plight of secularism is not good. This may tell upon the prospects of the Congress in the elections due in 2014. More so, it may pollute the atmosphere of the country where people have come to live together with the sense of accommodation and tolerance.

Yet if the democratic polity has not collapsed, the credit goes to the people who believe that the situation will turn for the better. They have been sustained by the institutions, however feeble, and the rule of law, however emaciated. Politicians are doing their worst and have not learnt the lesson even

*(Continued on Page 3)*

from the neighbouring countries which, when challenged, made compromises with the military or the authoritarian forces on the one hand and fundamentalists and militants on the other.

Understandably, the two main parties, the Congress and the BJP, are trying to gain as much space as they can before the 2014 elections. But they are unmindful of the harm they are doing in the process. They are, in fact, wrecking every rule, every norm and every value in a society which is also deficient in virtues. Consequently, the people are suspicious of both because they do not find any difference between when the BJP ruled and now when the Congress is at the helm of affairs.

Assam is a political problem which all parties and activists can solve provided the Congress drops its know-all attitude. Mumbai is a law and order problem but the Congress government is too complacent and too weak to handle Hindu chauvinists. It is true to some extent that people have got used to corruption which both parties have indulged in whenever they have been in power, although the Congress beats the BJP hollow. The coal scam which has come to light indicates that the allocation of coal blocks was capricious and designed to benefit such companies which must have paid money to particular rulers. The minutes of the screening committee show that the coal blocks were allotted even to those who did not apply.

The Congress-led government appears to defend the Rs. 148-lakh crore scandal only half-heartedly. Its plea is that there was no loss to the exchequer because the coal blocks it allotted never extracted

any coal and hence did not sell any. The government gave the same zero-loss argument when the Rs. 180-lakh crore scam relating to the 2G spectrum was disclosed by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG). The Supreme Court had to rubbish the argument to make the government not to repeat.

How can Finance Minister P. Chidambaram say that there was no loss to the exchequer when 150-odd parties were given the coal blocks? They may not have extracted coal but it is their property and their balance sheets have gone up by crores. Such fallacious arguments coming from the government dents its own reputation. The Prime Minister's statement finds fault with CAG and does not fully explain the allotment when he was the minister in charge.

The Anna Hazare movement which was expected to provide an alternative has lost its ethos and has become another Naxalite group, mouthing laudable slogans but acting like the nihilists who want to destroy everything around them. People want an orderly change and admire those who sacrifice and suffer for it.

The third alternative which Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav has mentioned is the same old combine of practising casteists and ever-changing politicians in loyalty. They, including Bihar's Lalu Prasad Yadav, changed the complexion of governments which came in the wake of Jayaprakash Narayan movement, seeking a total revolution. It was sheer graft and self-gain.

Because of the acts of commission and omission by rulers, the very

fabric of India looks torn. Both Hindu and Muslim fundamentalists are marshalling themselves and spreading the politics of hate and parochialism. I do not know what was Health Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad trying to prove by offering *namaz* at the protected monument of Safdarjung. The purpose was probably to capture 31 such protected monuments. I wish he had focused attention on other mosques which are in dilapidated conditions.

*(Continued from Page 2)*

allies who prefer the resumption of proceedings to continued disorder. The BJP has chosen to ignore them. Even assuming that its current strategy is linked to or prompted by its electoral aspirations, stalling parliamentary proceedings can hardly be an election-winning gimmick. On the other hand, the fall-out could disastrously harm its long-term interests. It would be better for it to be seen as a builder and supporter of democracy than its destroyer. A word to the wise, it is said, is enough. The word has become a chorus and the BJP must heed the warning when there is still time.

## Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on  
Mumbai Bank  
in favour of  
**JANATA TRUST**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai 400 007

# Waging of War - Case of Seema Azad

**N. D. Pancholi**

Seema Azad, Secretary of PUCL(UP), along with her husband Vishwa Vijay, was arrested on 6th February, 2010, as per prosecution case, at Allahabad Railway Station. The charge was that both were active members of the Indian Communist Party (Maoist) which is a banned organization and that both were actively involved in its activities. As a proof of their involvement, the prosecution claimed to have recovered a lot of Maoist literature from them. However, there was no evidence of their involvement in any offensive action – violent or non-violent. Both were charged under section 121, 121-A, 120-B Indian Penal Code, in short IPC, and various sections of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, in short, UAPA. Both were convicted under sections 121 and 121-A IPC, and sections 13/18/20/38/39 of UAPA. Both were sentenced to life imprisonment under section 121 IPC and rigorous imprisonments for years ranging from five to ten under other sections. It is a welcome development that Allahabad High court has granted them bail.

This article is mainly concerned about sections 121 and 121-A IPC. Section 121 relates to the offence of 'waging of war' against the Government of India and 121-A about conspiring to commit the offence of waging war or to conspire to overawe by means of criminal force or the show of criminal offence the Central government or the State government. Section 121 is the most serious offence in the Indian Penal Code and provides

stringent punishment i.e. death or life imprisonment. Supreme Court in the case of Parliament Attack case (2005 Cr.L.J.3950: State of NCT of Delhi Vs. Navjyot Sandhu) has discussed as to what constitutes 'waging of war' against the state and has held that intention and purpose of the 'war-like operations directed against the Governmental machinery' is an important criterion and purpose must be achieved by the use of force and arms. The most important thing is that the accused must participate in the 'war-like' operations in order to attract the charge of 'waging war'. Given this interpretation of the Apex court, there was no question of charging Seema and her husband for the offence of waging war because there was no allegation that both had participated in any war-like operation against the Indian Government. Similarly there was no evidence that they were part of any conspiracy to wage war against the Government of India and therefore there was no question of charging them with section 121-A. Both should have been discharged even at the initial state of these two charges, including charges under UAPA. But shockingly, both were not only charged but even convicted, and sentenced to life imprisonment under section 121 IPC and to ten years u/s 121-A.

The anguish of the present writer is that a section of our judiciary, in free India, is using such sections of 121 and 121-A IPC to punish large number of innocents in such manner that even the British would not

have done so when we were under foreign rule. The most celebrated case during the British period relating to conspiracy to wage war is that of M.N.Roy i.e. Manabendra Nath Roy V. Emperor: A.I.R. 1933, Allahabad 498. This case makes very interesting reading and is also significant from the historical point of view as to how Marxism and communism were sought to be introduced and how efforts were made to organize communist party within India from 1920 onward. Giving a brief history of the arrest of Roy concerned judge of the Allahabad High Court i.e. Thom J. stated in the judgment:

“ ..... The appellant Manabendra Nath Roy was tried in the court of Session at Cawnpore on a charge under S. 121-A, Penal code. He was convicted by the Additional Sessions Judge and sentenced to transportation for 12 years. The charge preferred against him was that on or about 9th May 1923 and before and after, that is to say, from the beginning of 1921 to the end of 1924 he formed a conspiracy and conspired to deprive the King-Emperor of his Sovereignty of British India by means of violent revolution. The case for the prosecution against the appellant is that between the years 1921 and 1924, in co-operation with a number of other persons in India, the appellant who was in Europe, resolved to embark upon an attempt to introduce the doctrine of communism into India, the final objective of the conspirators being to set up a communist state in India,



a state which would be controlled by the workers and peasants. The institution of such a communist regime was to be preceded by the violent overthrow of the existing constitution in India and the destruction of the sovereignty of the King-emperor.

The means by which the appellant and his fellow conspirators attempted to compass their aims was to unite into one organization the extremist elements in India, revolutionaries, terrorists, the left wing of congress, labour unions, etc. This organization was to be utilized for the purpose of promoting a revolution in which the masses of peasants and workers were to be the troops and chosen communists, the officers, the masses were to be won by promises to economic betterment; strikes were to be engineered and if possible riots and the like such as occurred at Chauri Chaura, among the Mohplas and in the Punjab. Revolutionaries and terrorists were also to be enlisted by promises. With this aim in view, the appellant got in touch with his fellow conspirators in India, when exactly, is uncertain, but it is clear that the period of the conspiracy was from 1921 to 1924. During these years the appellant was acting in conjunction with his friends in India in endeavouring to prepare the way for the violent overthrow of the Government of India. He was unable to come himself to India where he feared arrest. It was therefore necessary that he should make use of the post to get in touch with his fellow conspirators and during the years 1921 to 1923 therefore numerous letters passed between the appellant and his fellow conspirators. This correspondence did not escape the vigilance of the Intelligence Service of the Government of

India. Numerous letters from the appellant to his fellow conspirators and from his fellow conspirators to the appellant were intercepted, some were retained by the authorities, others were copied or photographed and re-posted to the addressees.

This evidence consisted of (a) letters from the appellant to his associates in India and letters from them to him. These are the original letters which were intercepted and retained or found in the possession of the appellant's associates when they were arrested, (b) Copies of letters which were intercepted and either copied or photographed and re-posted, (c) Pamphlets, leaflets and other publications which accompanied the letters or were obtained from other sources."

The judge referred to host of pamphlets, letters, articles as well as the issues of the periodical "The Vanguard of Indian Independence" which Roy published from Europe. Large number of such material was produced as evidence against Roy and many such excerpts find place in the said judgment of the High Court. They make very interesting reading. To quote one from the judgment :

....."The appellant (M.N.Roy) refers to the meeting of the Congress( a meeting of the Communist International) and states: "The Congress is well on the way. Delegates from almost all the countries are here, even far on Java is not excepted.....I am in charge of the Eastern Section of the Congress, but 'here is no Indian delegation..... We are having numerous preliminary conferences on the Eastern question which is one of the principal points of the Agenda. It is only here that one can get a true perspective not only on the working

class movement in the West, but also on the revolutionary movement in the Eastern subject countries. It is too bad that our movement, which is the most powerful of the Colonial National Movements, should remain so isolated.... We were all very glad to know of the formation of the Socialist Labour Party ..... The question of forming a new party to assume the leadership of the Indian movement has been very much discussed here.... I take it for granted that the Socialist Labour Party of India understands the necessity of International affiliation and believes that the Communist International is the only revolutionary International body. Therefore I am sure that you will like to know the attitude of the Communist International towards the Indian movement at the present stage. In consonance with the point of view of the Communist International I make the following propositions about the role the Socialist Labour Party of India should play.....All Communists and Socialists should attempt to form a mass party embracing all the truly revolutionary element. In order that many available revolutionary elements are not frightened away by the name our party should have a "non offensive" name. We suggest "the Peoples Party". Of course, the social basis of this party will be the workers and peasants and the political direction of the party should be in the hand of the Communists and Socialists who alone can be the custodians of the interest of the toiling masses. But in order that the Communists and Socialists are not isolated in small sects and can take active and leading part in the mass struggle determining its course and destinies by revolutionary and courageous leadership, a legal apparatus of our activities is needed. The Peoples Party will provide this

legal apparatus. It is to be anticipated that no powerful political party with a Communist name will be tolerated by the Government and the latter will be able to count upon the moral and even active support of the native bourgeoisie in prosecuting a Communist party. Hence the necessity of a dual organization – one legal and another illegal. The Communist nucleus should take a very active part in the formation of a mass party for revolutionary nationalist struggle ....

“.....I have already written a pamphlet containing a popularized version of the programme we intend to put forward (This reference is to the pamphlet entitled “What do we want”).”

The above case is called ‘Kanpur Conspiracy Case’ and other accused were Nalini Bhushan Das Gupta, Mohd. Shaukat Usmani, Muzaffar Ahmad and Sripat Amrit Dange. All of them were arrested earlier and charged under section 121-A i.e. conspiracy to wage war and sentenced to four years of rigorous imprisonment on 20th May 1924. Roy was the principal accused but could not be arrested as he was away in Europe and actively engaged in various important tasks being one of the important members of Presidium of the Communist International. However, later on he developed differences with the policy pursued by the Communist International which according to him was subordinating the interests of international communist movement to the interests of the Russian State. He returned to India incognito in December 1930, knowing fully well that he would be arrested sooner or later. He was arrested in July 1931.

*(Continued on Page 7)*

## National Committee in Solidarity with Jaitapur Struggle

August 17, 2012

Dear Prime Minister,

We are deeply concerned that both the Central Government and the Government of Maharashtra do not seem to have paid due attention to the serious objections regarding the safety of the proposed Areva reactors and its costs raised by experts, parliamentarians, public figures and the local people.

We write to bring to your notice the following:

1. The project has not been subjected to an independent rigorous scientific techno-economic scrutiny and safety audit in the public domain. It is being pushed against the will of the local people. The ‘conditional’ environmental clearance granted by the Ministry of Environment and Forest in November 2010 is also based on an unscientific and deeply flawed Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report. NEERI, the agency engaged to prepare the EIA, is admittedly not competent on matters concerning nuclear hazards. The Environmental Clearance is subject to clearance by the AERB on matters concerning nuclear energy. We understand that AERB is yet to consider and approve the design of the Areva Reactor. The environmental clearance thus granted has not considered seriously the main environmental issues and hazards arising out of this project.

2. The 1650 MWe European Pressurised Reactors (EPR) of Areva is an untested design and has caused serious concerns among the

nuclear safety agencies of different countries. There are reliable reports that an internal audit of the French nuclear industry has criticized Areva and Electricity de France (EDF) for the undue complexity of EPR and that EDF itself may be planning to discontinue the EPR design.

3. There has been significant cost and time over-runs for the Areva EPR reactors. The first two EPRs under construction in Finland and France are yet to be commissioned and have already been delayed by more than four years due to technical and safety issues. The EPR project at Penly in France has been put on hold indefinitely. The initial cost of €3bn has proved to be a gross underestimation. The costs have already risen to well over €7bn for Olkiluoto (Finland) as well as Flamanville (France).

4. Areva is in deep trouble on the financial front, as is clear from recent statutory disclosures. The Areva group debt stood at €2.77 billion (\$3.75 billion) in June 2011. Areva’s operating loss for the year 2011 is more than € 2 billion.

Areva has announced major job cuts. It has shelved the uranium enrichment plant in the American state of Idaho and the expansion of uranium mines in South Africa, Namibia and the Central African Republic. It has also announced the cancellation of expansion of three nuclear plants in France in view of the financial crisis. Areva share

prices have fallen to 1/10<sup>th</sup> of its value between 2007 and 2012.

Siemens, the major technology partner of Areva, has announced its exit from the nuclear power business and its new focus on the alternative power sources in line with the decision taken by the German parliament to phase out their nuclear power stations by 2022 in the wake of the Fukushima disaster.

There are also reports that EDF and Areva have joined hands with a Chinese firm to develop a new reactor of 1000 MWe to replace the EPR in the long run. In view of the above developments it is unlikely that the Areva EPR would today pass even an elementary test of techno-economic due diligence.

5. NPCIL has pointedly refused to disclose the costs and resultant tariff for the JNPP. There is no justification for hiding the costs and tariff for a civilian nuclear power project. Our own calculations based on available information show that the investment cost for JNPP would be in excess of Rs 20 crores per MW, which is unacceptable. This would result in electricity tariff of not less than Rs 9 per unit at current prices. This is not viable, and would impose very high rates of tariff for Maharashtra and other consumers.

6. The Fukushima disaster has raised questions about the co-location of multiple nuclear reactors at a single location. Therefore, the plan of putting up 6 reactors in Jaitapur appears seriously flawed after Fukushima.

7. The Fukushima disaster has shown that the radioactive hazard due to spent fuel cooling and storage is not less than that from the reactor

itself. It has raised serious questions about design and location of spent fuel cooling and storage outside the main containment dome and at elevations above ground level. We understand that the present EPR design has both these defects.

8. Once the plant commences operations, the vast store of spent

fuel produced will be a long-term hazard. It does not appear that NPCIL has made any plans to address this issue.

In the light of the facts stated above, we are of the firm opinion that the contract with AREVA in respect of the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project should be cancelled.

With regards,

**Prakash Karat, A. B. Bardhan, Ram Vilas Paswan, MP, Nama Nageswara Rao, MP, K. Danish Ali, Sitaram Yechury, MP, D. Raja, MP, N. D. Patil, Bhai Vaidya, Dr. A. Gopalakrishnan, Dr. Sulabha Brahme, Dr. Vivek Monteiro, Prakash Reddy, S. P. Shukla, Pravin Gavankar**

---

*(Continued from Page 5)*

During the trial Roy did not deny the host of documentary evidence produced by the prosecution against him. He admitted to be the author of such documents. His main contention was that since ‘the British rule was established in India illegally by use of force, he and every Indian was entitled to throw the British out by the use of force.’

Roy and his colleagues had admitted and claimed that they had every right to indulge in conspiracy to throw out the British rule in India, yet he and his colleagues were not charged by the British under section 121 IPC, i.e. “waging of war against the King Emperor”. It is shameful that in free India Indian citizens are being charged for such stringent offence even when there is no iota of evidence. Another significant point is that under section 121-A the colleagues of Roy were sentenced to only four years of imprisonment by the British while in free India life and death sentences are given for mere asking of the police, usually

on fabricated evidence.

Roy was sentenced to 12 years of transportation by the session judge on the ground that he was the leader of the accused and that success of the conspiracy would have spelt disaster in India. But in appeal the High court reduced the sentence to six years on the ground that the sentence of 12 years was severe and that chances of success of the conspiracy were nil. However, in comparison our present rulers seem to be so terrified of the prospect that mere possession of so-called ‘offensive literature’ would shake the Indian State from its very foundation and think that sentencing the accused to life imprisonments were the best guarantees to protect it!

*(The abovesaid ‘Kanpur conspiracy case’ was argued on behalf of M. N. Roy by K. N. Katju, grandfather of Justice Markandey Katju, presently Chairman, Press Council of India)*

# Status of Minorities: A Tale of Two Neighbors

**Ram Puniyani**

Pakistan and India, these neighbors got Independence in the mid-August 1947. Today 65 years after the Independence where do these two major countries of the subcontinent stand vis a vis their religious minorities, is the question which we need to answer to ensure a better and more democratic area.

On August 11, 2012, a mob of over 50000, mainly Muslims, assembled in Azad Maidan to protest against the ill-treatment of Muslims in Assam and Myanmar. After some speeches full of provocation and after display of some provocative posters, the mob turned violent and vented its ire against the media for not covering the plight of Assam's Muslims displaced in the July violence involving Bodos and Muslims. (Needless to say that in Assam violence nearly 80 people have been killed and over 4 lakh people, mostly Muslims and Bodos, have been displaced, right under the nose of the ruling government.) It burned few OB vans. Mob also took on the police, humiliated-molested women police personnel and beat up other police personnel. While controlling the violence the police did the firing, which led to the death of two young men. In the whole scuffle many a police personnel also got injured. Now, the Raza Academy, the organizers, has issued an apology saying the meeting was infiltrated by provocateurs. Still the organizers cannot shun their responsibility from the whole tragedy. The protest has always to be on democratic lines, non-violent and the speeches in meetings have to be on moderate lines, the hate speech and inciting

the mobs is not excusable on any condition.

In the same week there is news that nearly 300 Hindus have crossed over to India from Pakistan. Ostensibly they have come here for pilgrimage, but many of them have stated that they will not go back as they don't feel safe in Pakistan. Most of these Hindus are from Sind and Baluchistan. There are reports of forced abduction and conversion of Hindu girls there and the religious minorities have to live the life of second class citizens. The religious minorities persecuted in Pakistan are not just Hindus, Sikhs and Christians but also Shias and Ahmadiyas, a sect of Islam.

Where do we find ourselves nearly six decades down the line after we committed ourselves to democracy and secular principles? India came into being as a secular democratic state and even Pakistan which was formed in the name of Islam for the Muslim majority areas of British India began with the secular principles as enunciated in the oft quoted 11<sup>th</sup> August 1947 speech of Qaed-e-Azam Jinnah. In the speech he said that the state has nothing to do with the religion, people are free to go to their mosques, temples and churches or whatever, as it is their personal matter. He also said that the white color in Pakistan flag represented minorities. Still the logic of communalism was 'built-in' in the whole system. One can make a secular speech but the social base which had resulted in formation of Pakistan, the one of feudal elements was intact. Mere secular speeches

don't change the social reality. The communalism caught up in Pakistan in due course of time and in the late seventies, with Zia ul Haq-Maulana Maududi duo ruling the roost, the Mullahs came to the forefront. The Mullah-Military complex backed up by the United States, which had a substantial say in the affairs of Pakistan, violated every letter and the core spirit of the speech of Mr. Jinnah, to the extent that today even the Muslim minorities, Shias and Ahmadiyas, are as much victims of religious intolerance and it is getting reflected in their political status in the country.

India with Gandhi and Nehru as the major pillars of shaping the values of Indian national movement, were unshakable in their commitment to secularism. Gandhi, the devout Hindu and Nehru the atheist had the vision of a state totally committed to respecting the people of all religious denominations, while keeping a distance from those trying to bring in matters related to faith in the ambit of the policies of state. Nehru while doing this realized two major handicaps. One that, while our constitution is secular, the society is in the grip of religiosity, so he found this as an obstacle in full implementation of secular policies. The second flaw he saw was that in his party, which was founded on the grounds of secular values has been infiltrated by communal elements. There was no one to heed to his warning, and in due course many an action of some Congress leaders were indistinguishable from those of the communal elements, those forcing the country in the direction

of religious nationalism.

The health of democracy in any country has to be gauged by the security and equity of minorities in the country. Through the complicated mechanisms, the influence of communal elements has risen exponentially during last three decades in particular. The whole trajectory of these two countries has been very different. While in Pakistan, there was always a space for communalism to creep in comfortably, task of communal politics became still simpler with the country falling in to the grip of military dictatorships time and over again. The intervention of United States and US policies in Afghanistan, in particular, added fuel to the fire.

In India, the opportunism, the fallacies of electoral system, first past the poll, the rising anxiety of sections of society, the successful effort of communal forces to project the fear of the small minorities to the big majority and the politics around emotive issues like Ram Temple completed the picture. Today roughly while Muslims are 13.4 per cent in population, their percentage amongst violence victims is 90 percent. Today they are standing at the bottom of socio-economic indices. Sachar Committee has demonstrated it beyond any shadow of doubt. In Pakistan, the percentage of Hindu minorities has declined over a period of time and their security and social status is abominable. The injustices on minorities in one country are no justification for heaping of injustices in other country. The reactionary communalism is used by political forces in their own ways. The communal forces in India look at

*(Continued on Page 10)*

## Pakistan – A case of Judiciary vs Democracy

**Bapu Heddurshetti**

It appears that this time around the Judiciary in Pakistan has decided to destroy the fledgling democracy there – the role so far played by the Army. The Supreme Court of Pakistan, under Chief Justice Choudhry, not satisfied with unseating the former Prime Minister Gilani, who had incidentally ordered the release of the very same Choudhry from house arrest, is now gunning for the present Prime Minister also. But it is necessary to realise that the fight is not between the executive and the judiciary, and certainly not about corruption, but between the judiciary and democracy.

Judiciary all over the world is said to be very conservative, i.e., anti-change. In Pakistan it appears to be much more than that. Pakistan's Supreme Court legitimised one after the other of the military dictatorships. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was executed on 4th April 1978 on orders of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court found Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif guilty of contempt of court and even sentenced him to, luckily for him, life imprisonment. Supreme Court found Prime Minister Gilani also guilty of contempt and ensured his resignation and is now likely to find the next Prime Minister also guilty of contempt.

When Gen. Musharraf became the military dictator by unseating Nawaz Sharif, the Supreme Court legitimised his rule by declaring what it called the 'doctrine of

necessity'. It 'heroically' gave three years to the military dictator to re-establish democracy in Pakistan. What happened later is in everybody's knowledge.

It would interest one to know the judicial history of the Supreme Court of Pakistan and particularly of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Choudhry who is rattling his sabre against democratically elected government. Gen. Musharraf declared a Provisional Constitutional Order on 14th October 1999 and directed the Judges to take oath under it as the judges had taken oath under the Constitution of 1973. The then Chief Justice Saeduzzaman Siddiqui and five other judges of the Pakistan Supreme Court refused to take oath as it would amount to betrayal of the Constitution of 1973 and were hence deprived of their offices. Two senior Judges of the Supreme Court had refused to take oath under the first PCO issued by Gen. Zia Ul Huq in 1981 also.

But Justice Choudhry readily betrayed the Constitution and took oath under the new PCO as the Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court on 26th January 2000 and on 4th of February 2000 promptly occupied one of the offices of the judge of the Supreme Court vacated by judges who had refused to take oath under the PCO. He was made the Judge of the Supreme Court and became Chief Justice on 30th June 2005.

When the opposition challenged the coup d'etat of Gen. Musharraf,

the Supreme Court by its order dated 12th May 2000, justified the coup invoking the 'doctrine of necessity' - *Necessitas facit licitum quod alias non est licitum* – (Necessity makes that lawful which otherwise is unlawful) and *salus populi est suprema lex*, (Public safety is supreme law). It even said that the take over was widely welcomed and little protested so it was a government by the consent of the people.

Choudhry as a member of the five judge bench of the SC validated the Legal Framework Order issued by Musharraf in 2002 and later on 13th April 2005, in what is known as the 'Uniform Case', he again dismissed petitions challenging the President of Pakistan being the Chief of Army Staff also. Perhaps he was immediately rewarded and made the Chief Justice on 30th June 2005.

But then later Choudhry fell out with Musharraf and with the help of his associate Judges resisted Musharraf's attempts to suspend him. When Musharraf declared emergency on 3 November 2007 and issued the PCO of 2007, Choudhry along with 6 other Judges ordered that Judges should not take oath under the new PCO. But that was after Justice Dogar was appointed as the Chief Justice by Musharraf. Choudhry was then arrested and kept under house arrest. On 15th February 2008 the full SC under Chief Justice Dogar validated the new PCO and directed the judges to take oath under the new PCO.

Worst anomaly was when the dismissed judges were restored, 14 Judges declared the oath taking under PCO a crime and said that those who took oath cease to be judges but did not apply the

judgement to 12 of themselves who had taken oath under PCO.

Not that the Supreme Court should not try to curb corruption and punish the corrupt. The point is that when Pakistan needed the judiciary most to save it from dictators the judiciary betrayed the nation by 'crawling' before the dictators and now that the going appears to be good under democracy it appears to have become intoxicated with its own power and popularity to the point of being detrimental to the very survival of democracy in Pakistan. One is reminded of

*(Continued from Page 9)*

the Hindus exiling from Pakistan and the Assam violence as the attack on Hindus. In Pakistan the atrocities on Muslims in India give them a handle to further intimidate the Hindus there. In response to Babri demolition, many a temples were razed to dust in Pakistan.

All said and done there is a gross contrast between the situation in Pakistan and India. Despite setbacks, the secular democratic values are the foundation of Indian system, though very much compromised in recent decades. In Pakistan on the other hand, democracy has been a marginal value, there are efforts to root it in Pakistan but the obstacles are immense. The common factor is the suffering of minorities though the degree of this suffering is very different in both these countries.

Where will all this lead us to? The communal issue is a big brake to the social development of the countries as a whole. The values of affirmative action for weaker sections of society, the going an extra mile to protect them and to bring them up in social area is what is needed.

how, when Indira Gandhi declared emergency in India and imprisoned political opponents and gagged the press, the Supreme Court in India also betrayed the people when the people needed it most. There is need for the judiciary in Pakistan to tread its path very very carefully since survival of democracy is very important not only for Pakistan but also for the whole region and in the background of fears expressed that the atomic weapons in the possession of Pakistan may fall in the hands of the terrorists, for the whole world.

Sixty five years after coming out from the yoke of colonialism, it is time we remember the values of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, the principles which guided our freedom movement. In India there is an urgent need to reform our electoral system to reflect our social and political needs. Communal violence and discrimination against minorities is an immense loss to our national ethos and humanism. Time to check it and reaffirm in practice, those values which made us India! And for Pakistan, high time to come back to the values outlined in the speech of Jinnah on 11<sup>th</sup> August 1947 - decline in the percentage of minorities and their exodus from Pakistan is a great insult to the founder of Pakistan!

**Madhu Dandavate**

**By**

**B. Vivekanandan**

**Price: Rs. 20/-**

**Janata Trust**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W),  
Mumbai 400 007.

# Understanding Pascal Lamy

D. K. Giri

Pascal Lamy is the Director General of World Trade Organisation; where he is on the second term. Before WTO, he was the European Union commissioner for Trade. He is also a social democrat, has been a member of the French Socialist Party since 1969. He has authored a suggestion, called ‘Globalisation of Social Democracy’, in one of the publications of the Foundation of European Progressive Studies. The publication, titled “the Next Mission of Cosmopolitan Social Democracy”, is a part of the study project, Renewal of Social Democracy, conducted by Foundation. I had written a similar piece in *Janata*, on 15 January this year, called “Globalising Social Democracy” and had suggested that, for various reasons, in order to be an effective force, Social Democracy must go global. Pascal Lamy makes almost the same suggestion, “Globalisation of Social Democracy is the key to its future”. But some of our strategies for going global may differ. That is why it is in order that we engage with Pascal Lamy, a comrade, not the Director General of WTO.

In his analysis of the reasons for decline of Social Democracy, Lamy contests the explanations put forward so far. He disagrees that social democracy has lost its relevance as it was absorbed by the liberal economic ideology. He also finds the other explanation that social democracy has become a victim of its own success with the social democratic ideas infiltrating the entire political spectrum and thereby losing their originality and

specificity flawed and inadequate.

Having said this, Lamy comes up with a new approach consisting of two fronts - Ideological, and the strategic. On the ideological front, he suggests a serious revamping of theoretical critique of market capitalism and on the strategic front, he outlines a new scope of actions.

## The New Approach

The new approach to understanding the prevailing system, according to Lamy, should go beyond the traditional economics of social democracy; it should include a thorough analysis of three aspects of current capitalism - globalisation, sustainability and anthropology. In this, the first two aspects have been discussed enough and there is almost a consensus among social democrats about them. The anthropological angle is new. Lamy argues that the western concept of separating body and spirit on the one hand and, perpetual struggle between individuals with irrepressible appetites and liberal theory of self-regulation on the other, are no more relevant. There are other civilisational values to explain and evaluate systems that say ‘man is no wolf to man’. I had tried to analyse the current system on the basis of three consequences it produces and how to address them - individualism, consumerism, and cynicism. All the three trends of self-aggrandisement, rabid consumption and public disengagement are bred by both neo-liberalism and capitalism. Lamy’s thesis is similar, except that he brings in, perhaps, as remedies,

the non-western values, non-western think-tanks, to evaluate and rectify the system. Lamy’s is a credible as well as inclusive approach. But the battle on the economic front, that or regulating global capitalism is tougher than one imagines. He rightly explains globalisation - it is not just expansion of a territory covered by capitalism, it is driven by technology; capital is not only finance, it is knowledge as well; labour is not merely force, it is imagination; capitalism cannot be countered by merely a welfare system. So far so good, but how do we counter capitalism qua globalisation? Lamy underlines the critical role of technology in expanding globalisation, at the same time, suggests non-western values to counter it. The western societies are based on modern technology, which also had given them power over others - economic and military; but it had undermined their social capital, the soft power, which is now critical for societal growth and stability. Let us also remember that global capitalism is somewhat backed by military strength. It is said ‘the American dollar is followed by American soldiers.

Therefore, it is important to understand the concept of technology. Technology and human values are interdependent. Technology brings its own set of values. It makes things faster and efficient, but it also leads to disintegration of society and alienation of people from work. The famous Russian novelist Maxim Gorky said, “Today’s man has learnt to fly in the air like birds, and swim

in the sea like fish, but has not learn how to live as a man on the earth, or live peacefully with his neighbours". Ernest Fritz Schumacher, a German economist, famous for his legendary book, *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, and the father of the concept of appropriate technology, had much to say on the evil consequences of technology like violence, exploitation and so on. He talked of appropriate technology which was tailored to fit the psychological and bio-physical context prevailing in a particular location and period. It was meant not to dominate nature, but to be in harmony with it. He strongly advocated that technologies should be such designed that are compatible with democratic and egalitarian societies. Social democrats need to seriously rethink values that will generate "appropriate technologies".

### Global Action

Pascal Lamy suggests that political action must shift from state to the global level. There are no two opinions on this. We have argued that the challenges confronting the humanity; the universal values of equity, justice and fairness can be tackled only by global efforts. Issues of climate change, migration, terrorism, globalisation, dealing with all of these is beyond the capacity of any single state. On the other hand, the single most challenge of using the market efficiency for public good can be faced by only collective efforts of states. But how to build this collective, that is the question. How do we build collective global political institutions is the question. Let us explore some answers to this question. In fact, this has to be done at two levels - national and international; as the international position feeds on the national system.

Lamy hints at the need for going beyond the state, as the only political actor. He argues: "Since we can assume that the position of the new players (new states on the negotiating table) will be the product of their domestic political systems, progressive forces in all those countries, including the trade unions must unite". This is a bit rhetorical, and needs to have deeper theoretical underpinning. The new collective within a state should consist of the progressive forces from all three sectors - government, market and civil society. Again, the coalition of these forces should be preceded by redefinition of their roles. The state should roll back and reposition, the market has to be responsible and the civil society should be engaging, constructive and accommodative. In order to bring about these changes, we have to draw inputs from all parts of the world – different political cultures, social traditions and economic systems; hence the case for Social Democracy to go global.

The second stage is the international. This is more problematic as the existing intergovernmental institutions are not adequate to deal with the contemporary challenges. Such institutions, including Lamy's WTO, are inequitable, functioning on the theory of bargaining in so-called national interests. Even a player like European Union fell to the trap of bargaining, creating a mismatch between its laudable internal political values, and external policy. So, we have problem with international organizations as well as their practices. While it is not easy to change the organizational structures or to create new organizations, the international political principles and practices can be changed. These changes again cannot be brought

about by the nation-states, but by ideologically progressive parties, and if they are in power or positions of influence in their respective countries, even better. Therefore, Social Democratic parties across the countries are called upon to undergo a collective reflection and embrace new thinking and adopt a new scope of action, as suggested by Lamy.

### Other Suggestions

Having read Lamy on his two-pronged approach to globalizing Social Democracy, which will have resonance from many, and be disagreed by few, Lamy sounds confusing when he makes some other suggestions, which make one wonder if he is then wearing his WTO hat and/or the former EU Trade Commissioner's hat, not the social democratic one. Let us take this one, "the only way to address this problem is to imagine and then build, new alliances with the countries that are now at the negotiating table: India, China, Brazil, Indonesia, Mexico, South Africa, Egypt and many others". Who will the Social Democrats talk to in these countries as we are talking of globalizing Social Democracy. Our confusion is deepened when he suggests that "instead of yawning their way through meetings the priority of the party of European Socialist is to start working with the Congress Party in India, the Workers Party (PES) in Brazil or the Communist Party of China". One is certainly lost here as a Social Democrat. We have produced trees of notes, letters and articles that the Congress party in India is not a Social Democratic party, it refuses to be a part of socialist movement, it has snubbed overtures made by international socialists.. One need not labour this point anymore. The reference to Communist Party of



China is even more baffling - how Social Democrats could talk to a party which is anti-democratic and repressive. The PES in Brazil is built in Democratic Socialist tradition; so, no problem there. But the Social Democratic Party (Centre-Left) and Workers Party (Left of the Centre) are bitterest enemies. Hence Social Democrats need to tread cautiously.

Another suggestion by Lamy is that, "our task is to build a new political space in a world which will have to be 'de-westernized' and exposed to the projects of other people, other civilizations and other sensitivities." One would think Lamy has gone to the 'extreme' here. It is correct that Western societies have had their successful run and need to re-invent themselves in view of the changes within Europe by events like the EU project and outside by globalization. They need to give up the arrogant assumption of white man's supremacy and embrace multi-culturalism. But everything Western is not bad. All societies and civilizations have their strengths and deficits. Therefore, one should go beyond the social categories and practices, one is accustomed to (Lamy makes this point), but de-westernizing lock, stock and barrel is not desirable. One of the major contributions of the West is the concept of rationality and all the values that go with it. This concept comes in direct conflict with the presence of 'communities' in the East. What is required is a balance or synthesis between the two – the East and the West, rationality and community, traditions and modernity and so on. Social Democrats could follow a synthesis of ideas, not a binary approach like black or white.

## Bhagat Singh Memorial Committee in Lahore

Qurban Ali

A meeting held in Lahore on 16 August, 2012, resolved to establish the Bhagat Singh Memorial Committee to celebrate the birth and martyrdom days of the great hero of the Indian anti-colonial struggle. The aim of the committee is to reclaim the revolutionary socialist legacy of Bhagat Singh and his comrades-in-arms, Sukhdev, Rajguru, Sohan Singh Josh, Chandarshekar Azad, Ajay Kumar Gosh, Yashpal and others. The meeting was called by Labour Party Pakistan, and presided over by Zahid Akaasi, senior journalist and documentary film-maker. The meeting was attended by representatives of various progressive trade unions and political and social organizations.

The meeting elected the following to the organizing committee: Amir Suhail, Senior Vice President, Punjab Union of Journalists Nasr Naqvi, President, All Pakistan Newspapers Employees Confederation Comrade Irfan, Deputy Secretary General, Communist Mazdoor Kissan Party Niaz Khan, Secretary General, National Trade Union Federation Punjab Ammar Ali Jan, general secretary Labour Party Pakistan Lahore Idrees Tabassum, Secretary General Pakistan India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy Mirza Zain ul Abideen, Convener, Progressive Democratic Alliance Pakistan Zahid Akaasi, Senior Journalist Zafar Iqbal, Chairman, Movement for Democratic Pakistan Shahzad Arshad, Revolutionary Socialist Movement Sonia Qadir, member LPP Lahore

Yousaf Baloch, Chairman, National Trade Union Federation Pakistan Khalid Malik, Director, Labour Education Foundation Saeeda Diep, Director, Institute for Peace and Secular Studies. The meeting agreed to expand the committee if more organizations and individuals take interested to join it.

Narrating the history of Bhagat Singh's struggle against British imperialism, participants recalled Bhagat Singh's key contributions to the Indian revolutionary movement: 1) He admitted his tactical mistakes (individual acts of terror) and encouraged Indians to strengthen the mass movement for independence from imperial rule and the capitalist system 2) His pioneering use of his trial as a platform from which to propagate his views on the need for a revolutionary struggle to free Indians from the yoke of imperialism 3) The long hunger strike that he and his comrades undertook to demand fair treatment of prisoners

Participants disagreed with the limiting of Bhagat Singh's legacy just to a symbol of Pakistan-India friendship and peace, or to Indian nationalism or to Sikh nationalism, and resolved to do their utmost to celebrate the entire spectrum of Bhagat Singh's thought and praxis: not just the idea of an Indian confederation, but also his struggle for the liberation of the oppressed classes of society which led him

*(Continued on Page 16)*

## Historical Verdict

Hailing the historic verdict in the Naroda Patiya mass murder case delivered by Judge Jyotsnanbehn Yagnik. Special Sessions Judge in Ahmedabad today by which one senior politician and several conspirators and ring leaders have been convicted, Victim Survivors and Citizens for Justice Peace welcomed the verdict. In all 32 persons have been convicted including former BJP MLA and minister in the Narendra Modi cabinet, Smt Maya Kodnani, Babu Bajrangi, Bipin Panchal, Ashok Sindhi and Kishan Korani (sitting corporator, accused No 20) have been convicted. Twenty-nine of the accused were acquitted.

Most of the accused have been charged with Sections 143, 144, 147, 148 with 149, 295, 427, 435, 436, 440, 153, 153a, 153a(ii), 323-326, 302, 307 (attempt to murder) read with 149 read with 120(b) and BP Act 135(1). Accused No 22 Suresh Langda Chara has also been convicted under Sections 354 and 376 (sections that deal with rape and gender violence). Quantum of sentence will be pronounced on August 31. Smt Kodnani had been convicted under Sections 295, 427, 435, 436, 440, 153, 153a, 153a(ii), 323, 324, 325, 326, 302, 307, 120-B of the IPC. Babu Bajrangi has been convicted under sections 143, 144, 147, 148 with 149, 295, 427, 435, 436, 440, 153, 153a, 153a(ii), 323, 324, 325, 326, 302, 307 read with 149 read with 120-B.

The raw courage of the victim witnesses, especially women witnesses who deposed fearlessly while still residing in Naroda Patiya is a reflection of the confidence

generated after the Supreme Court monitoring and the protection from Central Paramilitary forces provided by the Supreme Court. CJP had applied to the apex court for protection of eye witnesses. CJP through its legal team advocates Altaf Jidran and Raju Shaikh supervised by senior Adv Yusuf Shaikh provided legal aid to about 70 eyewitnesses since 2009. CJP would like to publicly acknowledge their contribution, also the seniors advocate MM Tirmizi (Gujarat High Court), Mihir Desai (Mumbai) and advocates Kamini Jaiswal (Supreme Court), Sanjay Parikh (Supreme Court), Aparna Bhat (Supreme Court) and Ramesh Pukhrabam (Supreme Court).

Eleven eyewitnesses have deposed in eye witnesses testimonies assigning in detail the role played by Smt Maya Kodnani, in inciting the mob to murder, fifteen witnesses deposed through eye witness testimonies against Babu Bajrangi, 48 witnesses testified to the crimes committed by Suresh @ Langda Chara including the offences of gender violence and rape. The CJP would like to state that it was the evidence through eye witness testimonies that enabled convictions. Corroborative evidence was provided through the phone call records provided by police officer Rahul Sharma and Tehelka's Operation Kalank. Without eye witness testimonies whoever convictions could not have taken place.

Victim witnesses supported by CJP had also filed separate applications under Section 319 praying for police officer and then

first PI KK Mysorewala to be arraigned as accused along with former Commissioner of Police PC Pandey and SRP official Dhantaniya. While the Judge rejected these applications, she has observed in the victim application for compensation for rape and gender violence that the application would be considered in the final judgement.

Names of accused who have been convicted. Naresh Agarsinh Chara (accused 1); Murlibhai Naranbhai Sindhi (accused 2); Ganpat Chanaji Deedawala (accused 4); Vikrambhai Maneklal Rathod (accused 5); Haresh @ Hariyo S/o Jivanlal @ Agarsinh Rathod (accused 10); Babubhai @ Babu Bajrangi Rajabhai Patel (accused 18), Kishan Khubchand Korani (accused 20); Prakashbhai Sureshbhai Rathod (Chara) (accused 21); Suresh @ Richard @ Langdi Kantibhai Dedawala (Chara) (accused 22); Premchand @ Tiwari Conductor (accused 25); Suresh @ Sehjad Dalubhai (Marathi, Charo) (absconding) (accused 26); Nawab @ Kalu Bhaiyo Harisinh Rathod (accused 27); Manubhai Keshavbhai Maruda (Bhangi) (accused 28); Shashikant @ Tiniyo Marathi Yuvraj Patil (accused 30); Babubhai Jethabhai Salat (accused 33); Lakshmanbhai @ Lakho Budhaji Thakor (accused 34); Dr. Mayaben Surendrabhai Kodnani (accused 37); Ashok Hundaldas Sindhi (accused 38); Harshad @ Mungda Govind Chara (Parmar) (accused 39); Mukesh @ Vakil Ratilal Rathod (accused 40); Manojbhai @ Manoj Sinhi Renumal Kukrani (accused 41); Hiraji @ Hero Marwadi @ Sonaji Danaji Medhwan (Marwadi) (accused

*(Continued on Page 16)*

# Divergent Visions of Economic and Financial Advisers

**K. S. CAhalam**

The North block in Delhi was deserted when the incumbent Minister Pranab Da left to occupy the Presidential palace a few yards from there. Along with him, Kaushik Basu, Chief Economic Adviser has checked out to rejoin his academic position as Chairman of the Department of Economics and Director Centre for Analytic Economics, Cornell University, USA. Interestingly, the two positions are now occupied by two south Indians who were known to the North block and the PMO earlier. This may seem to be a normal event in the executive culture. But, there is lot of significance in terms of the aura they brought in to the financial sector of the economy and particularly in the dominant media that was making some noise in the previous dispensation.

Kaushik Basu, a very competent economist, moved out under the hullabaloo allegedly involving his views on the political economy of development of the government. It seems he remained an uncompromising academic. He taught and published on different areas of economics proper before coming to North block. He knew the social and political foundations of Indian economy better than many scholars particularly some of the bureaucrats who occupy important positions of policy making. Perhaps, by now Basu must have gained enough experience as to how to work in the government and with the executives who are mostly trained in the West.

The office of the Chief Economic Adviser is in the Department of

Economic Affairs of the ministry of Finance. It is noted that CEA has to work independently with the support of his officers who are generally from Indian Economic Service. They have important functions to perform such as formulating policies relating to prices, production, public finance, trade, public distribution, preparation of Economic Survey, etc. Yet, most of them seemed to have grumbled that they were given tepid treatment by the babus who managed to get in to the lucrative ministry instead of the IES personnel. There are half a dozen civil servants in the rank of secretary including the Governor, RBI in the ministry. Some of them got in to the division jockeying through the World Bank/IMF assignments. Few of them have engineering or science background as graduates and not of economics. Therefore, professional economists were pleased when Basu became CEA and expected some positive changes as he has a comprehensive view of the economy unlike others.

Raghuram Rajan, an alma mater of IIT, Delhi is now occupying the seat of CEA. He came from the IMF and taught Finance at the Chicago Booth school of Business. The Chicago school of Economics is also known for its contributions to the neo-classical fundamentalism and the Washington consensus. Interestingly, most of the Indian economists who are in the USA and pursuing research studies in finance are attached to business schools rather than economics proper. The two finance experts who are now occupying the Ministry of Finance, apart from other officers, have

the management background. The present CEA is a known expert in the corridors of power in Delhi as he was flaunted as one of the few who predicted the 2008 economic downturn. Rajan was familiar with the Lucas' "paradox of capital" of 1990 and analyzed that net capital flow to high growth LDCs is smaller than to medium growth LDCs. He came out with a paper that discovered the obvious, high growth countries attract less foreign capital (as they have enough internal savings). It is expected that the new CEA would follow what he found in his studies, LDCs that have relied less on foreign direct investment (FDI) have grown faster than others. He has a challenge now when the government has almost decided to implement Wal-Mart entry as a part of FDI.

Economists have a grudge against management schools. It is alleged; the management has appropriated economics and converted it as finance. Many of the talented guys including the IITians like Rajan, joined business schools and became popular due to their skills in computation and model building (of course some of them doomed USA). We may recall here that scholars who worked on neo-colonialism have substantiated the argument that advanced capitalist countries have drained the economies of the third world, though experts trained by Bank-Fund institutes have been consistently denying it with their empirical studies with questionable assumptions. The world has experienced the consequences of some of their recommendations. Now Rajan has an important task

to convince the policy makers that we have enough reserves to fund our development projects and FDIs can be selective. There is no doubt that the presence of Chidambaram and Rajan in the North block has sent enough signals to the business to community not to get panicky.

The job of a CEA is not confined to finance alone as there are economic or financial advisers in several departments of the government to take care of that function. The CEA is supposed to work under the paradigm of the Constitution that aims at the welfare of the people and not necessarily business houses. Even economists like Milton Friedman, the high priest of monetary economics, has remained as an economist. Experts generally quote one of his paragraphs to indicate his vision for the USA. "Imagine that the US Federal Reserve sends out a helicopter for a cash rainfall upon US consumers. It is easy to picture US consumer showing no reluctance in picking up the bank notes and spending them, and to an important extent, on imported goods too. The Feds' helicopter payloads thus find their way in to otherwise half-empty container returning to Asia, finally ending up as official reserves in the coffers of Asian central banks, which are forever content with holding barren pieces of paper in exchange for the products shipped to the United states." India, like many LDCs, is fond of the barren paper supremacy (dollars), should learn from the above and formulate policies that "decouple" the sputtering US financial locomotive.

It is proved by data sets that there is direct correlation between our reserves and the share market.

The share market swelled seven times higher than the reserves in 1991 and now stands at staggering capitalization of Rs 6634387 crores when the reserves are only Rs 1361013 crores in 2010-11. It is strange to find how the financial

*(Continued from Page 13)*

to challenge the feudal lords, the nascent Indian bourgeoisie as well as the British Raj.

The meeting resolved to celebrate the upcoming birthday of Bhagat Singh on 28th September in Lahore and on 29th September in his native village, Bangha, Chak # 107, Tehsil Jaranwala, District Faisalabad. The meeting also resolved to arrange a rousing welcome for the Indian delegates to the celebration and decided to hold two days deliberations with seminar, cultural evening, welcome in Faisalabad (Lyallpur) and a visit to Bhagat Singh's village.

The meeting was addressed by Farooq Tariq, Ammar Ali jan, Yousaf Baluch, Irfan Comrade, Mirza Zainulabdin, Khalid Malik, Zafar Iqbal and others.

*(Continued from Page 14)*

42); Bipinbhai @ Bipin autowala Umedray Panchal (accused 44); Ashokbhai Uttamchand Korani (Sindhi) (accused 45); Vijaykumar Takhubhai Parmar (accused 46); Ramesh Keshavlal Dedawala (Chara) (accused 47); Sachin Nagindas Modi (accused 52); Vilas @ Viliyo Prakashbhai Sonar (accused 53); Dinesh @ Tiniyo Govindbhai Barange (Marathi) (accused 55); Santoshkumar

scams and Gali frauds have taken place (under FEMA regime) despite regulators like SEBI, RBI. The financial advisers in the North block seem to have a formidable task now to convert the resources as durable assets that educe wellbeing for all.

Kodumal Mulchandani (accused 58); Pintu Dalpatbhai Jadeja (Chara) (accused 60); Kirpalsinh Jagbahadursinh Chabda (accused 62).

Eight charge sheets were filed in this historic case that lasted several months. It was one of the nine cases being supervised by the Supreme Court and was investigated by the SIT.

Acharya Javadekar  
A Satyagrahi Socialist



**Price: Rs. 20/-**  
**Janata Trust**

*D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir  
Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.*

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

# janata

Vol. 67 No. 33  
September 9, 2012

## Delayed, but not denied

S. Viswam

**A verdict in Gujarat,  
silence over Delhi**  
Kuldip Nayar

**Let the healing begin**  
Harsh Mander

**Search for Third Front**  
Mastram Kapoor

**Anna's Political Alternative:  
Hopes and Apprehensions**  
Nishikant

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

The victims of the 2002 massacre of Muslims in Naroda Patia in Gujarat have had to wait for ten long years to secure justice. While this is unfortunate and reflects on the country's judicial system, the fact remains that justice was delayed but not denied. Indeed, those who have been convicted would have in all probability drawn the capital punishment had the trial ended and the verdict delivered sooner. While sentencing 32 persons to life imprisonment, the trial court special judge Jyotsana Yagnik said: "On account of lapse of time and the agony of the impending trial and suffering of their families, the case just falls short of the rarest of the rare category and the court feels somewhat reluctant in imposing the death sentence."

This does not of course mean that the crime for which the 32 were punished - 29 accused were acquitted for want of adequate evidence - was not of the rarest of the rare variety. In terms of the cruelty and heartlessness of the act, the crime was the worst of its kind. The judge took the most compassionate view keeping in mind the fact that the accused faced the agony of a lengthy trial, but she described the incident as one of "mass

extermination." Of the entire episode, the judge had this to say: "It was a day of cyclone of violence, one of the black chapters in the history of democratic India, where violation of human rights and constitutional rights were publicly done by the assaulters on the victims."

Syed Hameed, a member of the Planning Commission, was a member of an all-India team of six women invited by Janvikas, human rights organization, to visit Ahmedabad in the aftermath of the 2002 anti-Muslim massacre, which was ostensibly in retaliation to the killing of 59 Hindus in the Sabarmati Express at the Godhra station. In Shah Alam refugee camp the delegation met the victims of Naroda Patia. She recalls that when the victims wept for water they were given diesel to drink. "I was conscious," she says, "of being a Muslim in a place where Muslims had been killed for being Muslims." Syed Hameed has voiced a poignant truth. Muslims were killed in the aftermath of the Godhra incident for no other fault than that they were Muslims. And, as Special Judge Yagnik, points out, the assaulters took the law into their hands in perpetrating a blatant act of religious discrimination.

*Between the lines*

## A verdict in Gujarat, silence over Delhi

**Kuldip Nayar**

Chief Minister Narendra Modi's supporters have refused to concede all along that their leader had a hand in allowing the campaign against Muslims to succeed. They cite the fact in their defence that no court has formally charged Modi and no one has filed an FIR against him. Even so, his credibility has remained under question. Public memory is not so short as to forget the day-to-day reports that followed the Godhra tragedy of a vicious campaign against Muslims and also the plight of the Muslim refugees in camps not all of whom have been yet rehabilitated. The latest judgement turns the focus on Modi again. It reminds us that the post-Godhra riots were tacitly supported by the Modi administration and that the police were mere spectators when Muslims were being butchered. To those who periodically feel that the Indian judicial system does not deliver or that it delivers after an inordinately long interval, the Naroda Patia judgement is a morale restorer. It reiterates the well-known dictum that howsoever mighty you might be the law is still above you. The program succeeded because of the support of the BJP and other saffron organizations - they must understand that one lives in a society where rule of law "very much survives." Two close associates and supporters and fellow-partymen of Narendra Modi whose activities figured prominently in the program were three-term Naroda MLA Maya Kodnani, who got 28 years in jail, and Bajrang Dal leader Babu Bajrangji who got life imprisonment. Both symbolize the kind of communal, anti-Muslim and pro-Hindutva elements that sustained the program that Modi blessed and that embraced virtually the whole state in anti-Muslim hatred and vindictiveness. Justice has caught up with some of them.

Every time there is a conviction in Gujarat riots case, I begin to hope that the day is not far when the real culprit, state chief minister Narendra Modi, will be brought to book. The 28-year-long sentence awarded to Maya Kodnani, who organized the massacre at Naroda-Patya in Ahmedabad, makes me confident that justice can be delayed—the riots took place in 2002—but not denied. Modi lauded her role on the riots so much that he made her a minister. But the Supreme Court's Special Investigation Team (SIT) caught up with her crime even after the exoneration by the police which did its best to see that Kodnani's "involvement does not come on the books" ..

The question which nags me all the time is how to punish a chief minister who plans and executes the killing of his own people because they belong to a different religion. Some 2000 Muslims were killed, 95 at Naroda-Patya alone. A similar point confronted me when after the assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984, more than 3000 Sikhs were killed in the national capital, New Delhi. Then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was responsible for blessing all that was plotted to kill the innocents. His infamous remark still haunts me: "When a big tree falls, the earth is bound to shake."

Both in Gujarat and Delhi, the pattern of killing and looting was the same. The public was instigated, the police was instructed to look the

other way and the army's induction was intentionally delayed.. Had there been the institution of Lokpal (ombudsman) in position, it would have probably stepped in to name the culprits including Narendra Modi and Rajiv Gandhi. In the absence of any such remedy what do people, especially the victims, do to get justice? When the protector turns into a killer there is no remedy for the protected.

In fact, both Gujarat and Delhi have raised a general question about the independence of law and order machinery. The police is at the beck and call of rulers and it does not function independently. The police reforms recommended by the Dharamvira Committee as back as 1980 could have retrieved the situation to some extent. It would have meant transferring control of police to a committee, including the opposition leader. But no state has been willing to implement the recommendations. In real, there is a case for a federal police on the lines of America to pursue cases which transcend states' borders or those which fall under the category of segregation, discrimination and such other crimes. There is the famous case of Mississippi in America where the federal police broke the alliance between the local administration and politicians to bring the guilty to justice.

Since the states jealously guard their sway over the law and order machinery, it is difficult to imagine

that they would agree to any federal force when New Delhi itself has got politicized. Coming to the minorities, the experience of Muslims in Gujarat and of Sikhs in Delhi bring out the truth that the rulers go to any extent to save their party members. They have different names but in real terms they are the party's rough necks who have over the years become an instrument of tyranny in the hands of political masters.

The real disturbing aspect is that more and more Hindus are getting contaminated by the RSS and its parivar. It is heartening to find that one member of the Bajrag Dal, the militant wing of RSS, has been given life sentence in the Naroda-Patiya case. Still the bigger tragedy is that the majority community looks like turning its back on secularism which it should realize can undo India.

The BJP which expects to win at the 2014 election does not feel its responsibility in keeping the country safe from parochialism. True, the other national party, the Congress has become a carbon copy of the BJP, but it still supports the secular ethos. The party's stand is mostly opportunistic but it draws inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, not Guru Golwalkar. This may be the reason why the Congress, at times, takes a secular stand and confronts the forces which spew communalism.

I was, however, disappointed when the Congress government neither acted against the Shiv Sena, particularly Raj Thakre when he instigated the crowd at Mumbai in the name of national chauvinism. Nor did the government move against the Muslim fundamentalists who indulged in violence at Azad Maidan and killed two persons. I am

told that the person who goaded the mob at the Maidan is a local Congress Muslim leader. Regretfully, both the Congress and the BJP have come to believe that they would get more votes if they talked in terms of caste and community.

Had the Supreme Court not selected the nine cases of fake encounters out of many, no Maya Kodnani would have been punished. But there was no Supreme Court to intervene in the case of Sikhs' killings because the Rajiv Gandhi administration had cleaned the stains from the plate. No proof was left behind and the records were fudged. The entire massacre was orchestrated by the ruling Congress and executed according to a pre-prepared plan.

Thanks to the young lawyer H. S. Phoolka, who made a formidable case from the affidavits of victims.

Even then his experience and those of the others who have tried to get justice is that even now the Congress government is creating impediment at every step to block any persecution further. The conviction in Gujarat is an exception. At least there were still some records which helped the SIT to rebuild the case. But in Delhi, the Congress government has effaced all evidence lest the guilty of 1984 massacre could be traced.

There is yet another case of government's suppression. I am referring to the killing of 22 Muslim boys at Hashimpura in UP in 1987. The case has not moved from the lower court. The rioting in Assam too has been anti-Muslim. The lesson to be learnt from all these happenings is that the rule of law by itself does not mean anything unless the government is willing to follow it without fear or favour.

The Naroda Patiya verdict convicting 32 people, including former Gujarat minister and sitting BJP MLA Maya Kodnani and Bahrang Dal activist Babu Bajrangi, is both welcome and significant. Images from the Naroda Patiya riots - the murder of about 95 Muslims, a pregnant woman's stomach cut open brutally before she was set on fire - are still fresh a decade later. And so are the wounds.

Had the verdict gone the other way, it would not have been good for the nation as it could have dented the faith of minority communities in our judicial system. After all, what took place in Gujarat in 2002 has deeply affected them. The verdict has done them a world of good; it has restored the confidence of minority communities - especially Muslims, in Gujarat and elsewhere.

I was dismayed to see a Gujarat spokesperson trying to defend party MLA Kodnani by saying that she was not a minister during the Naroda Patiya riot. I want to know how Kodnani - a prime accused in one of the worst cases in of the Gujarat riots - was made a minister in the first place. The state government, which elevated Kodnani to minister, has a lot of explaining to do...The verdict will have little bearing on the JD(U)'s alliance with the BJP. Let me make it amply clear that our alliance is Bihar-specific. The party has put up a token fight against the BJP in some states, including Gujarat, in the past and may do so in the future.

**Shivanand Tiwari**, MP and national spokesperson of JD(U)  
in *The Indian Express*

# Let the healing begin

**Harsh Mander**

As news filtered in, of extended life sentences for 31 persons for the brutal slaughter 10 years ago in Naroda Patiya, a working-class suburb of Ahmedabad, my eyes clouded over. I remembered my first meetings with the traumatised survivors of the massacre in the crowded relief camps in the city, a full decade earlier. I was heartsick and stunned by their stories of incredible cruelty. I wondered if they would ever heal and hope again, and how we would defend the idea of India from the assaults of hatred

Today, 10 years later, I realise that secular democracy is never given to any people: it constantly must be claimed, and reclaimed. So many people and institutions have rallied in stout defence of secular democracy, and of much older ideas — of compassion, justice and truth.

Years ago, as I made my way through teeming crowds of broken people sheltered in the Shah Alam Camp, I unexpectedly found a sunlit corner of the dargah among the graves, ringing with children's laughter. A group of young people from Naroda Patiya had organised classes and play for the children in the camp. I sat among them, all working-class youth — auto and bus drivers, electricians, embroiderers — and heard their stories of loss and trauma. A bond grew between us. Many volunteered to work with us in Aman Biradari, as aman and nyaya pathiks, literally 'those who walk the path of peace and justice'.

They spoke of mobs led by MLA Maya Kodnani and Bajrang Dal

leader Babu Bajrangi, mercilessly setting aflame children, women and men. A citizens' tribunal recorded that "the burning alive of victims was widespread... (When) 6-year-old Irfan asked for water, his assailants at Naroda Patiya made him forcibly drink kerosene, or some other inflammable liquid, before a lit match was thrown inside his gullet to make him explode within".

Initially, justice seemed an impossible mirage. The first Eid after the carnage, I went to Ahmedabad to spend it with my young friends in Naroda Patiya. I found their mothers distraught. For the one Hindu person who died in the massacre, a dozen people had been charged and arrested, including many aman pathiks. Clearly, they wanted to crush their ardour for justice.

One of them, Yusuf and his father spent four months in jail. I was worried that this would break their spirit and radicalise them. He told me later that when he was depressed, his father would console him, "Do you know who was imprisoned here in this jail? Gandhiji. If he could spend time here, who are we?" After his release, Yusuf became a bus driver like his father. But he also studied law. Today he works as an assistant with a senior lawyer in Ahmedabad, and was a resolute witness in the Patiya case.

Initial police investigations absolved leaders like Kodnani and Bajrangi from the crime. But the National Human Rights Commission approached the Supreme Court for independent re-investigation,

and the highest court established a Special Investigation Team (SIT) which nailed the killers and their leaders.

Clinching evidence came from heroic police officer Rahul Sharma. He collected mobile phone records which later established that Kodnani and Bajrangi were actually at Naroda Patiya during the massacre. He was transferred and his evidence buried. But he bravely chose to voluntarily present copies of these phone records to the SIT, for which he has been charge-sheeted by the Modi government. This became crucial collaborative evidence in court of the participation of the leaders in the mass murder.

The witnesses braved penury, threats and intimidation, and spurned large sums of money offered to change their statements. Each of their testimonies painted a horrific picture of the slaughter. Farzana Pathan, for instance, described to the court how the mob "pulled away my mother and killed and burnt her in front of my eyes... My elder daughter Farhana was pulled away by a person from the mob. Her clothes were removed and ... 4-5 of them raped her". Shakilabanu spoke of how the "mob sprinkled petrol on my family members and burnt them alive. My three-month-old niece was thrown in the fire by this mob".

The Naroda witnesses were aided by Citizens for Justice headed by the indomitable Teesta Setalvad. In numerous legal battles being fought in Gujarat, witnesses are similarly supported by brave organisations.



She expresses satisfaction that the court reached beyond the foot-soldiers to the instigators and organisers, establishing that none are beyond the arm of the law. Judge Jyotsnaben Yagnik described the massacre as “brutal, inhuman and shameful” and held that it was a “pre-planned conspiracy” which “cannot be mitigated by just saying that it was a reaction to the Godhra train burning incident”. She awarded a rare 28 years imprisonment to Kodnani, and incarceration until death to Bajrangi.

“I find myself praying that Bajrangi lives a hundred years” laughs Imran, one of the nyaya pathiks.

Sharief responds soberly, “In Shah Alam Camp, when you first spoke to us of peace, justice and non-violence, I wanted to believe. But a part of me insisted that justice would come only from a gun. Today, hearing the judge, I believe. *Ahimsa se hi nyaya sambhav hai.*”

Yusuf, peace worker, bus driver, lawyer and witness, was present in the court the day the judge announced the sentence. “I was elated,” he says. “But then I saw the young sons of some of those sentenced for life weeping for their fathers. I thought of the children who lost their parents in Naroda, and how painful life is for them. These children too are innocent, even though their fathers are not. I wanted to run to the judge and plead with her to set their fathers free. How will they live 21 years without their fathers?”

I have much to learn from my young friend.

—Aman Biradari

## Search for Third Front

**Mastram Kapoor**

The search for the Third front, in fact, began in March this year when Uttar Pradesh voters gave clear majority to Samajvadi Party in the Assembly election. The result was unexpected and unpredicted. The expectations were raised by Samajvadi Party supremo, Mulayam Singh’s decision to hand over reins of UP politics to his son Akhilesh Yadav and devote his energies to central politics. These expectations were further strengthened when an attempt was made to get a non-Congress candidate elected as President, but the move failed due to fickle-mindedness of some opposition leaders. The one-sided election of Pranab Mukherjee as President and Hamid Ansari as Vice President, made the search for Third Front more urgent. A 31-point agenda was prepared and circulated among non-Congress—non-BJP parties and some intellectuals for their comments and suggestions. Their views are slowly trickling in but the debate is on and whosoever comes to know about this agenda becomes enthusiastic about the development. The agenda has the right material to fire the imagination of the common man as well as the intellectual classes.

The economic agenda comprises of eight points, such as: No FDI in retail business; No privatization of water, electricity, fuel and essential food products; No acquisition of land under food production (which includes the forest land providing food to tribal communities); ban on projects causing mass displacement and destruction of environment;

fixing prices of essential commodities; fixing ratio between minimum and maximum income; moratorium on wage increase for certain period and employment based development in place of GDP based development.

This economic programme is complete reversal of the neo-liberal policies being followed since the last two decades under pressure from world financial powers. The Congress and the BJP are both wedded to these policies and only the Third Front comprising of socialist democratic forces and people’s movements can take up this alternative programme. It is worth mentioning here that the world wide economic crisis of 2008 shows no sign of abating and neo-liberal economic policies are crumbling under its weight all over the world. The reversal of these policies is, therefore, a must.

As regards political agenda, it promises to tackle the most complicated problems like corruption, terror, communal riots and atrocities against weaker sections – women, children and minorities – with the help of people, using present resources and without resorting to unusual and drastic laws. For example for tackling the problem of corruption, the already existing set up of CVC will be strengthened with all powers of Lokpal instead of creating a new white elephant. Strengthening of Panchayat Raj by empowering Gram Sabhas, as mini Assemblies and setting up District Planning

Committees as per the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendments to the Constitution, will refurbish the grass-root democracy which will keep effective check on corruption. It is well-known that the Congress government led by PV Narsimha Rao, in spite of being in minority, ruled for five years by bribing the opposition MPs. It is this government which started the special fund for MPs (and now for MLAs too) which has become the main source of corruption of our political classes. It has sharpened the greed of these classes which has resulted in unprecedented scams witnessed in preceding two decades. A ban on these special funds together with check on unproductive government expenditure may introduce an austerity regime with more resources diverted to development schemes. A high power commission, like the Shah Commission of the post-Emergency era, shall be appointed to decide all long pending cases of communal riots atrocities against the weaker sections, genocides of 1984 and 2002 and corruption of massive scale. The work of revising the archaic laws of the British period, the failed laws like the Anti-Defection Law and anti-people laws like the Tada, Macoca, anti terrorist laws and special power of forces law will be entrusted to Law Commission. The most important item of political agenda is to make way for Indian languages for use in all political and administrative work as well as education so that the energies of millions and millions of people so far marginalized due to a language wall, could be harnessed in the development efforts and a direct supervision of the people over the government functionaries could be ensured.

The agenda includes a 4-point programme for electoral reforms

such as: simultaneous elections of Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, as was envisaged in the Constitution, state-funding of elections, meaning thereby ban on all type of private

expenditure and special tax on political parties and companies as well as cess from the people to finance the elections. The programme also includes ban in the matter of fighting

### Agenda for Third Front

#### *Economic Programme*

1. No FDI in retail business.
2. No privatization of water, electricity, fuel, essential food products.
3. No acquisition of land under food production.
4. Ban on projects causing mass displacement and destruction of environment.
5. Fixing prices of essential commodities.
6. Fixing ratio between minimum and maximum income.
7. Moratorium on wage-increase for a certain period.
8. Employment based development in place of GDP based development.

#### *Political Reforms Programme*

1. Strengthening the present set-up of CVC (providing him powers of Lokpal) to deal with all matters of corruption.
2. Special courts to deal with cases of communal riots, atrocities against weaker sections and minorities.
3. Austerity in government spending of non-productive nature.
4. Abolition of MP/MLA's special fund and pension only to the needy MP/MLAs.
5. Ban on all schemes and programmes which encroach upon personal liberty and impinge upon fundamental human rights.
6. Anti-defection law to be amended to provide for right of dissent and a corruption free atmosphere.
7. Strengthening Panchayat Raj by empowerment of Gram Sabhas as mini assemblies and setting up of District Planning and implementation committees as per 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> amendment.
8. Use of Indian languages in all government business with multi-lingual union.

#### *Electoral Reforms*

1. Ban on fighting election by persons who are convicted or against whom charges have been framed.
2. Elections for Lok Sabha and

- Assemblies to be held simultaneously.
3. All expenditure on elections by government (to be funded by cess and tax on political parties) and complete ban on money transfer of any kind.
4. Empowering Election Commission to use moral code of conduct for regulating election.

#### *For Equality and Social Justice*

1. Caste census to categorize whole population under SCs, STs, OBCs, Forwards and use of these categories instead of castes in all documents.
2. Review of reservations list after every 10 years on the basis of caste census figures, in accordance with article 16(4) and removal from reserved list of those classes who are found to be adequately represented.
3. 33 percent reservation to women in services, in all posts of the political parties and distribution of tickets for election.
4. Old age pension to all needy persons.

#### *Educational and Cultural Programme*

1. Neighbourhood schools with uniform facilities to all rich and poor students.
2. Education through mother tongue, other languages being optional.
3. Admission in higher education and professional institutions on the basis of school-college performance and ban on competition tests.
4. Regulation of mass media against promoting fanaticism, communal hatred, anti-social and anti-national tendencies.

#### *National Integration*

1. All round development programme for Himalayan regions and Naxal-hit regions.
2. All identities to be preserved side by side with promotion of national identity.
3. Strict control on infiltrators in border areas and firm commitment to preserve the socialist, secular and democratic character of the state.

election on persons convicted or charged by the courts for criminal offences and empowering the Election Commission to bring about the needed reforms through the discretionary code of conduct rather than a law enforceable by courts.

Another important section of the agenda deals with social justice and equality promoting programmes. The first programme of social justice, should be abolition of caste, for which the first step is caste census every 10 years, grouping of whole population divided in about 6000 castes in four categories of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes and Forwards and ensuring use of these categories instead of castes, in all private and public documents and revising of reservation lists under Article 16(4) in the light of fresh data obtained in caste-census after every ten years, to make the reservation scheme self-liquidating. To ensure 33 percent representation for women in the Parliament and State Assemblies, all political parties will be bound by the code of conduct to give 33 percent reservation to women in all party posts and distribution of tickets. Enacting a law for reservation for women in legislatures would be against the spirit of freedom movement and also of our constitution, because such reservations were based on two-nation theory which divided our country and triggered mass killing and displacement and therefore these reservations were abolished unanimously at the time of framing of our constitution. Employment guarantee or unemployment allowance to the youth and old age pension to all needy persons is a goal towards which full energy

*(Continued on Page 13)*

## Anna's Political Alternative: Hopes and Apprehensions

**Nishikant**

Anna Hazare's unexpected and sudden declaration of leaving the path of prayer, petition, persuasion and fasting for an effort to provide an alternative politics in terms of electoral challenge to the conventional political parties like the Congress, Bharatiya Janata Party, Samajbadi Party, Bahujan Samaj Party, Shiv Sena, Biju Janata Dal, AIDMK, DMK, etc. not only raised the hackles in the political circles but also has started a fierce debate in the civil society about its desirability, timing, effectiveness and long term implications. Even the supporters, volunteers of India Against Corruption (IAC) campaign and the members of core committee of erstwhile Anna team do not seem to be in unison about the decision to go electoral. Justice Santosh Hegde, Kiran Bedi, Medha Patkar and Kumar Biswas, the core committee members of Anna team have categorically declared not to join the electoral fray and will be continuing the civil society movement against corruption as before. Similarly; some volunteers of IAC have also decided to stay out of the electoral venture and will be continuing their struggle in the civil society arena. But, there are others who have whole-heartedly accepted the new challenge and responsibility thrown open to them by Anna Hazare. More than six lakh sms, e-mails, pollings at Jantar mantar supporting Anna's decision for political alternative as well as the staunch support from core committee members like Arvind Kejriwal, Manish Sisodia, Gopal Roy, Prashanta Bhusan, Shanti Bhusan, Sanjay Singh, Swati

Maliwal and others underline Anna's astuteness in reading the pulse of the public as well as substantiates his vision for the scope of people's front in politics.

As an insider of IAC movement from its beginning one and half years ago and after attending one informal preparatory committee meeting for shaping the peoples' front as desired by Anna Hazare and millions of people of this country I have prepared this write up to explain as well as to ward off some of the misunderstandings around the recent development. My endeavour will be to seek the public support for Anna's experiment as well as flag up the points of caution that have the potential to derail the electoral journey completely. While seeking the support I am clear in conscience that any public support in such a transition is to be conditional and people have a right to put all kinds of questions, seek accountability, ask for transparency and probe into the modalities of developments leading to the formation of the alternative as well as its post-formation contours. Ultimately it is the people who will decide whether the peoples' front put forth by Anna Hazare and his supporters is really a people's front or an addition to the existing number of undemocratic, intransigent, unaccountable political parties and therefore is to be shown the door.

### **The rationale for Political Alternative**

In the representative democracy that India adopted after independence,

political parties play a vital role in channelizing people's aspirations, demands as well as providing pro-people governance as an output of political power exercised by the winning parties through periodic votes. Political parties mobilize their support base on ideological grounds, on historical and regional basis, on ascriptive and manifest identities and on perceived or real discrimination ground. However, the present party politics dominated by landlords, capitalists, contractors, mafias, caste leaders, religious heads, emotive issues, regional discriminations, cultural barriers, etc. has created an atmosphere of opportunism, adhocism, vestedness and narrow vision inadequate to meet the demand of a complex, multi-structural, transitional polity like India. Here the mainstay of politics consists of fund allocation to states, renaming of cities, creation of new states and districts, reservation in place of substantive development of the marginalized sections, family legacy as an instrument of political ascendancy, autocratic leadership in the absence of intra-party democracy, freebies like Rs. 2 Kg rice, distribution of cycles, television and mobile sets, concession to the Haj and Amarnath pilgrimages, voluntary disclosure of black money, loan waiver and motivated discretions at all levels in all spheres. As a result, the casualty is issues of governance, accountability, transparency, public participation, decentralized decision-making process, informed debates on issues of national importance like privatization and liberalization, nuclear proliferation, rehabilitation and resettlements, deportation of immigrants, social and economic inclusion of marginalized sections, land acquisition, redistribution and use of common property resources vis-

à-vis displacement and exclusivist development models. Instead of stop-gap arrangements, the country requires fundamental changes in its political and socio-economic structure to realize the hopes and aspirations of the people. But to our horror the present polity and thereof the political parties indulge in self-aggrandisement, accusations of the other and small-time politics aimed at immediate gains and winning the elections. For example; the present grave situation in Assam is not debated to solve it, but to settle political scores on communal lines. Similarly, majority of issues remain unaddressed for want of political honesty, co-operation and genuine interest in furthering the public cause. Moreover, the present revelations of corruption at high places like the 2G scam, the CWG scam, the Coal scam, the defence scam, the rice scam, the aviation scam involving purchase of 111 aircrafts, corruption in higher judiciary, price for questions in the Parliament and various scams by ministers in different states have shaken the public faith in reformatory agenda and evolution of good governance. Criminalization of politics like abetment of murder of an airhostess by former Haryana Home Minister Gopal Kanda and criminal records of 163 Lok Sabha MPs and 39 Rajya Sabha MPs further stress upon the urgency to bring in drastic institutional and electoral reforms. Whether it is the need for a strong anti-corruption institution like the Jan Lokpal or the electoral reforms to ensure Right to Reject and Right to Recall, the public is in no mood to wait. But the travesty of electoral democracy is that the very reforms the public demands is to be done by the very politicians against whom these are proposed. Hence, day by day the spreading cynicism is strengthened.

Of course it is a fact that dismayed with the present party system in India, social movements and civil society organisations have been searching for political alternatives for long. In 2010, in Odisha some of the movement leaders of the state sat together and prepared a draft for alternative politics. It is another matter that after preparation of the draft there was nobody to carry it forward and the mission failed at its launching. Similarly, I remember National Alliance for Peoples' Movement (NAPM) in its annual session at Kushinagar, Uttar Pradesh had an inconclusive debate on political alternative and still now it is on although the public posturing is that of not getting into electoral politics. Panalal Surana, an avid socialist and a critic of IAC Campaign wrote an article against simplification of corruption by IAC movement and emphasized upon working on complex dimensions of corruption through employment generation, education and fighting liberalization. Presently; as the founder member of the Socialist Party he urged different sections to join the politics. Samajbadi Jana Parishad, a political party striving for long for alternative politics is convinced that political choice is to lead India away from the chaotic situation of vested mainstream party politics. Yogendra Yadav and Sunil, two of the stalwarts of Samajbadi Jana Parishad, have welcomed the decisions of Anna Hazare with ample caution and due apprehensions. On the whole, different movement leaders, political analysts, the intelligentsia, the middle class and the aggrieved population suffering from corruption at different levels and complete lack of accountability of the administration have welcomed Anna's political declaration, of course; with sufficient "ifs and buts". These reactions amply explain the

political vacuum that Anna and the public of this country experiences as well as the justification for an effort towards providing a political alternative.

### **The Timing of the Declaration**

There are certain discomfitures even from within regarding the timing of Anna's declaration for political alternative. Majority of the dissenters were surprised by Anna's declaration from the podium of the 25<sup>th</sup> July "Do or Die" fasting site at Jantar Mantar on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the fasting. Although they are agreed on the fact that the government was in no mood to listen the public cry and it was foolhardy to expect the government to deliver a Special Investigation Team as per demand to investigate its top 15 Cabinet Ministers or to accept a fast-track court to adjudicate the cases against the accused parliament members, they are of the opinion that Anna should have waited to allow the situation to deteriorate further leading to the subsequent manifestation of strong national anger against the political parties in power. Of course, a marginal section still is of the opinion that Anna should have never ventured into the political arena as it is dirty and bound to leave some marks on the clean image of Anna and IAC campaign.

It is quite immature to question Anna Hazare's political understanding and sense of timing as he has proved time and again his political sharpness, maturity and getting over the obstructionist government through perseverance, conviction and statesmanship. To emphasize the thoroughness of Anna's decision making process three things have to be taken into consideration. Firstly, Anna could see the political education and

consequent anger building among the public through his repeated fastings and baring of government fallacy about development and anti-corruption measures. People accepted Anna's open challenge to the government to establish people's supremacy in a democratic country like India. As a result, the people can see through the political mechanism and nail the political parties for their non-performance, under-performance and mal-performance. Sensing the public mood and lack of confidence in the existing political parties Anna gave the call for alternative political forum. Secondly, Anna realized that it was worthless to wait further and put the Anasankaris' (those on fast) lives at risk (Arvind Kejriwal was a diabetic and more than 40 Anasankaris were hospitalized). Therefore, he declared that he would work for an alternative politics and hence putting an end to the fasting. Thirdly, Anna knew that there would be varied criticisms of his decision to go political. Therefore, his declaration that he would help build up a political alternative but will remain outside to monitor the developments and if required to question the alternative as and when required just like his questioning the government on its performance. Here I find Anna Hazare not to be a reluctant politician but an astute statesman keeping his focus on statecraft and structural remedies.

Debates can go on and should go on. But if we have accepted Anna Hazare, the Gandhian, and his life of selfless service in the public cause as a sine qua non of the anti-corruption movement in the country that has been able to mobilize the public from all nooks and corners cutting across divisive lines like caste, religion, region and party then we have to respect

the sense of timing he has. This is not to say that the very democratic ethos that we are fighting for should be undermined or differences of opinion shouldn't be respected. My only contention is that opportunities in the nation's history come at times and if the public fails to capitalize on them for small differences they will miss the national sense as well as opportunity for fundamental changes and historical breakthroughs.

### **A Cautious Democratic Foray**

Arvind Kejriwal, the lieutenant of Anna Hazare, explaining the political alternative and Anna's idea of a democratic political party emphasized upon some key elements as the guiding principle for the IAC-led political alternative on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the fasting from the podium at the Jantar Mantar ground. The key elements as stated by him can be summed up as follows: Firstly, the party will be funded by people's contributions and all accounts will be open to the public at all times. As present political parties are raising huge funds from unknown sources without any transparency of the source of party income, there is scope for corruption and unholy nexus of the party functionaries with vested interests who fund the party for political mileage and policy changes in their favour. The recent generosity for the Reliance Company or the Coalgate Scam or the Scorpion deal can be explained in this light. Secondly, the alternative politics will put forth its electoral candidates based upon public opinion rather than sweet desire of the high command. Alternatively speaking, there will be no top-down approach, rather the party will function in a bottom-up manner. It will significantly decrease the money and muscle power as well as family lineage as a key to political leadership as it will stop decision-making on ticket

distribution by the political coterie of the high command. Thirdly; the alternative politics will focus on issues of structural changes that have remained long pending due to the political chicanery of the mainstream political parties and the dominant vote bank politics. For example; the creation of Jan Lokpal, Right to Recall, Right to Reject, power to the Gram Sabhas and local bodies, decentralized accountable governance, substantive empowerment instead of freebies, social inclusion instead of segregated placation, emphasis upon rights of the citizens rather than discretion of the ruling class will be the guiding principles for the alternative political agenda.

Ethical, people-centric, decentralized polity with public participation in the decision-making process is the hallmark of ideal democracy. Exercise of authority and power with constant checks and balances guarantees stability of a democratic system. But the IAC movement from its very beginning lacked this very basic experience of democratic practice as is obvious in a war-time situation where IAC was perceived to be fighting a battle against the government. Anna Hazare and the Core Team led from the front and the public followed their dictation. Whether it is timing of the dharna and fastings, whether it is the constitution of the Core Team or its dissolution nowhere we find the people's mandate or the IAC volunteers' active participation. Of course, it will be half-truth if we don't mention the open sharing of meetings whether with the government or in the Core Committee or on the issue of adopting an alternative politics with the public as an indicator of democratic functioning of IAC.

But now in the alternative political discourse challenging the present

undemocratic party system we cannot afford to be half-democratic. Not only in the functioning but also in the structure and process as well as in the outcomes we have to be democratic. People will expect that the constitution of the "Preparatory Committee" for the political transition, its deliberations, party constitution and manifesto, accountability structure as well as objectives are decided with proper public consultation and approval. It will be a challenge for Anna Hazare and his team to see that the voice of the public from the grassroots, the leadership building process from the villages as well as the party's bottom up structure is not only visualized but also realized in true sense of democratic polity. While most of India is acquainted with clientele politics and money and muscle power has dominated the electoral scenario it will be again a great challenge for the political alternative to bring in political education on a massive scale and raise the vote politics to the level of politics of issues and ideas as well as that of governance and right-based deliverance. In the absence of committed cadres, party infrastructure, experience and geographical spread it will be a cautious treading for the Anna Team to balance between immediate success and perseverance for a long term politics of structural change. With the manifest diversity of the sub-continent in terms of language, religion, culture, regional imbalances, economy, ecology and anthropological divergences it will be a challenge for IAC to successfully build up a political alternative with inclusive leadership and competing ideas. Again, no more the political alternative can hide behind the demand of Jan Lokpal only. It has to address the concerns of the public relating to

naxalism, terrorism, secessionism, communalism, discrimination, poverty alleviation, health and education requirements and above all to provide for a functional, effective, trust worthy governance. The political alternative definitely has to take certain decisions in the international arena where the previous governments' commitments may go against the professed ethos of the alternative politics as defined by people's mandate in the decision-making process.

### **The Challenges Ahead**

To rope in people from various walks of life as well as to ensure space for different people's movements to have a say in the alternative formation simultaneously accommodating leadership from various fields with their own ideas and visions in the process of formation of a composite, inclusive democratic ideal will be a testing point in the making of the political alternative. As Yogendra Yadav, an eminent social scientist, says the pilots of alternative politics will have to shed their ego if any and will have to keep an open mind to listen to all concerned. They can't afford self-patting and can't ride only on the euphoria generated on the streets during the Jan Lokpal movement. It will be a grinding task to see that the transition of the common man from the street to the parliament is effective and desirable. Already, signs of suspicion, provocation and contempt are there. The political parties fully realizing the potentialities of a people's uprising in terms of a people's front in electoral politics have started to spread their machinations of lampooning and belittling the effort unprecedented in post-Jayaprakash era. Some of the civil society actors with genuine intentions are also askance at the sudden transition

*(Continued on Page 13)*

## Mumbai Violence

...Despite all these steps, some questions remain. Is it not the organisers' responsibility to control the crowd they mobilise and ensure that no inflammatory speeches are made? Why aren't they being arrested, specially since one of the organisers has a record of instigating violence? Why has the man who made the inflammatory speech not been arrested?

Second: why has this flurry of activity not been seen on all the other occasions that mobs have "burnt Mumbai"? While this may be the first time that the police has been targeted, it's not the first time the media or BEST buses or cars have been vandalised. Indeed, in the last two months, Mumbai has seen frequent displays of such hooliganism. On May 31, observing the National Democratic Alliance-called Bharat Bandh, Shiv Sainiks damaged 42 BEST buses. This despite the chairman and seven of the 17 BEST Committee members being Shiv Sainiks. The chairman explained away the vandalism by saying that "protesters become uncontrollable" on such occasions, and demurred when asked if his party would pay for the damage.

Mid-June saw the new saviour of the Marathi Manoos "kick-off" a campaign against the payment of toll tax. Within 72 hours, three toll nakas were vandalised. Visuals of those actions are pretty similar to videos of Saturday's violence — the same iron rods, the same smashing of glass. But there was one important difference. After the violence, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) MLA Shishir Shinde declared in audibly slurred tones,

his party's intention to destroy toll nakas. The police obligingly waited till he finished addressing TV cameras before taking him away in their van. Saturday's videos had no such bravado — after smashing everything in sight, the topi-clad youth could be seen fleeing for dear life from police lathis. Two youngsters died in the ensuing firing.

The fallout of the two incidents however, may not be too different. Today, an MNS sticker on your car can exempt you from paying toll. And last week, the Maharashtra Chief Minister gave an audience to the man behind the violent anti-toll agitation. Accompanying Raj Thackeray at the meeting with the CM was Shishir Shinde. Two days after Saturday's violence, Maharashtra's Home Minister gave a clean chit to one of the organisers of Saturday's rally, the Raza Academy... However, those who rioted aren't getting the same treatment that Shiv Sainiks and MNS rioters do. It can be argued that attacking the police is more serious than attacking public property. But attacking unarmed citizens only because they belong to a particular faith or region — is that less serious? The MNS's attacks on North Indians, all televised, are just four years old. Two innocents were killed then. When the National Human Rights Commission directed the State to pay compensation of Rs.5 lakh each to the victims' families, the government spoke of financial problems. Incidentally, the MNS's unique way of protecting Marathi pride in 2008 cost the State a loss of Rs.500 crore. As for the Shiv Sena's record of targeting, often fatally, unarmed South Indians, Muslims, mediapersons, Valentine's

Day lovers, rickshaw drivers — it would be insulting the readers' intelligence to list the details.

Police failure to anticipate and prevent Saturday's violence is indeed blameworthy. But what's new? When the Mumbai police has had indications of Sena-led violence, has it ever tried to prevent it? Forget the 1992-93 riots. In December 2010, the Pune police, apprehending violence at a protest called by the Sena, tapped Sena leaders' phones and heard Milind Narvekar, Uddhav Thackeray's PA, instruct Sena MLC Neelam Gorhe (a former Socialist) to gather a mob, burn buses and inform TV channels. Everything went according to plan; 54 buses were burnt. Pune's Police Commissioner repeated the Maharashtra police's time-honoured motto: "Preventive arrests would have aggravated the situation" and R.R. Patil supported her, saying the police's priority was to "safeguard law and order and protect the public."

When Meenatai Thackeray's statue was desecrated on a Sunday in July 2006, the Sena ran amok. The same man produced another gem: "If the violence continues on Monday, the police will take action."

After the Sena attacked the IBN Lokmat office in 2009, senior journalist Kumar Ketkar, whose house had been earlier attacked by Nationalist Congress Party supporters because he had dared criticise the plan to set up a Shivaji statue in the middle of the Arabian Sea, told a news channel: "Mumbai has not become feeble, Mumbai has become used to [such violence]. It was in 1966 when the Shiv Sena

was born and ever since Maharashtra has been used to this culture. The Shiv Sena worship and encourage violence. So Mumbai's youth become more and more involved in this and this is a very dangerous trend."

The Muslim youth who went on

a rampage on Saturday are also part of Mumbai. Maybe they felt they would be treated like their Hindutva counterparts.

Their leaders, knowing that's not possible, have tendered cringing apologies on TV and asked the culprits to turn themselves in.

## II

...Rather, it is time to throw the spotlight on the Muslim leadership for building up the anger and not doing anything to rein it in. More than the police, no one in the Muslim community could have failed to note the misleading SMSes and MMSes doing the rounds in the run-up to the protest day. One SMS was designed to make every Muslim in India feel like a hunted animal and angry and victimised. According to *The Times of India*, the SMS read thus: "*Burma, Assam, Gujarat, Kashmir ke bad na jane kahan? Burma mein Musalmano ke qatl-e-aam or zulm ke khilaf Azad Maidan me Sunday ko rally hai. America me 5 Sikho ka katal hua to media or sarkar me hadkam hai, or lakhon Musalmanon ki zindagi ki koi keemat nahi. Sab ki ankhen band hai. Is SMS to Sunday se pehle Hindustan ki har Musalman or mantriyo or media tak pochhao..*". The bashing of the media and destruction of television OB vans can be traced to this SMS message.

Look at the number of deliberate truth distortions here. The Indian media has been more than fair in reporting the Bodo-Muslim violence in Kokrajhar – in fact, it has been balanced, and did not overtly take the Bodo side even though the Bodos have as much reason to

be angry as the Muslims, thanks to the influx from Bangladesh, some of them illegal immigrants. The fact that many people are infiltrators from Bangladesh is not even mentioned. Every word in the SMS is designed to feed a sense of victimhood without context. As for the Myanmar violence against the Rohingyas of the Arakan, the SMS assumes that it is somehow India's job to take up the issue. This is why the murder in the US Gurdwara is mentioned – to show that if India can take up that issue, why not the riots in Myanmar? That many of the Rohingyas are taking shelter on the India side (some have even shifted to Hyderabad) is not seen as a reason to be grateful to this nation which has not so far discriminated against the flood of migrants from Bangladesh and even Myanmar. Would Indian Muslims be so angry if told that we are providing shelter to these victims of violence?

Then, there were the fake MMSes doing the rounds – many of them put up on social media – showing pictures that purport to show that Muslims were being slaughtered by the hundred. A Pakistani journalist-blogger – Faraz Ahmed – who is no friend of the Myanmar violence, investigated these pictures and found that many of them were

Imagine any of the Thackerays or Togadias doing that. On the contrary, the celebrity columnists and indignant TV anchors now foaming at the mouth at "Mumbai burning" see nothing wrong in conducting long interviews with the Thackerays, where the latter brazenly defend their tactics.

–**Jyoti Punwani** in *The Hindu*

bogus, and possibly morphed by mischief-monger to enrage Muslims everywhere .

Ahmed's conclusion: pictures taken during the 2010 earthquake in China, protests in Thailand and Tibetans setting themselves on fire against the Chinese atrocities in Tibet are captioned as cases of Muslims being victimised and killed. A Thai picture of teargassed protestors in 2004 is captioned "More than 1,000 people killed in Burma" Writes Ahmed: "I do not deny the killings of Muslims in Burma – not even for a minute. I think it is horrific and I am sympathetic towards the immense loss being suffered by my Muslim brothers and sisters abroad. What I am against is being lied to. Imagine the amount of lies we are being fed through these pictures."

The Muslim protestors who went on the rampage in Mumbai were also fed lies and half-truths by the circulation of these mischievous pictures and by their leaders.

The incendiary statement of Asaduddin Owaisi in parliament the other day, where he "warned the central government..." about a "third wave of radicalisation among Muslim youth", and another one right at the protest venue (where one speaker talked



about biased media coverage) are clear examples of Muslim leaders trying to engender feelings of victimisation among Muslims. When Owaisi said he was warning the central government about the radicalisation, he was forgetting one thing: was it not his duty to combat this radicalisation, to tell Muslims the whole truth rather than just the one he wants to convey?

It is no one's case that Muslims are not discriminated against in India, or that they are not targeted occasionally in communal violence, but balance requires that Muslim leaders should speak the whole truth – that this is not a one-way street.

No Muslim in India is even told that Hindus in Pakistan are now being forced to consider seeking asylum in India. Owaisi, in fact, seemed to spread disinformation on the influx from Bangladesh. He told parliament: "I would say that the population of Bangladesh, when Bangladesh was created, Muslims were three crore; Hindus were three crore. As of now, Muslims in Bangladesh are 13 crore; and Hindus in Bangladesh are 1.5 crore. Sea cannot swallow so many Hindus of Bangladesh! Where have they gone? This is the question I leave it to the wisdom of Mr Advani."

The facts: the population of Bangladesh in 1971 wasn't divided

50:50 between Hindus and Muslims. The first census in East Pakistan after partition put the Hindu population at around 22 percent. It is now less than half the figure – below 10 percent. So when Owaisi asks where did these Hindus go, he has a point. It is more than likely that they were among the early migrants to the north-east after 1971 along with many Muslims who entered illegally seeking better economic prospects. But this nuance is lost, and Owaisi doesn't even pause to reflect on the implications of what he said: why did so many more Hindus than Muslims leave Bangladesh, assuming that is the case?

—R. Jagannathan

*(Continued from Page 7)*

of the Third Front will be geared. This goal will be achieved with internal saving by eliminating the useless expenditure and closing of all schemes the purpose of which is to keep the poor masses on charity.

In the field of education, our main thrust will be to provide educational facilities to all children in neighbourhood schools and in mother tongues. Indian languages will be introduced as medium of instruction on college-level too. The system which could provide educational facilities to only 10 percent children in 65 years (according to HRD Minister's statement) will be allowed to continue in private sector without any assistance from the government. However, admission to higher education and professional institutions will be on the basis of school-college performance and there will be complete ban on competition tests. The cultural goal will be to protect the cultural values and individual's privacy from the onslaught of mass media

by regulating it so as to curb the tendencies of fanning communal hatred and promoting anti-social, anti-national tendencies.

At present national unity and integrity is threatened not only by terrorist and naxalite movements but also by sectarian movements based on caste, religion, regional and cultural identities. Third Front will concentrate its energy on development of backward regions. A comprehensive Himalayan Plan will be prepared for the development of entire Himalayan region from Kashmir to Arunachal Pradesh. Similar plan will also be made for entire naxal-hit region. Strict control on infiltration and protection of borders will be ensured. For promotion of national integrity and brotherhood among all sections of population and regions, a country-wide movement of youth will be started under which youth from all sections of population will be trained for voluntary constructive work and combined resistance against anti-social and anti-national elements.

*(Continued from Page 10)*

of the people's movement against corruption into an alternative politics of the public. We have to assuage and address the genuine concerns, we have to debate to search for the right track and we have to scrutinize ourselves to remain on the right track at every juncture of our journey. Equally we have to handle adeptly the political challenges thrown open to us by the vested interests and the political parties catering to those interests. It will be a travesty of truth if we deny that there is no confusion among us regarding the path, process and goals to be achieved. But these confusions are not due to lack of clarity of ideas rather it is the lacking of experience that blurs our vision towards realizing the high ideals ingrained in our ideas. Hoping for a combined effort to ensure a hunger and corruption free equity based, nondiscriminatory socio-political and economic order, let us submit ourselves to public scrutiny and public action in the process of developing a political alternative for people-based politics.

## Socialist Party

Special State Conference of Tamil Nadu branch of Socialist Party (India) was held on September 2, 2012 at Srimushnam under the presidentship of Dr. N. Markandan, former Vice Chancellor, Gandhigram Rural University. National General Secretary Nurul Amin hoisted the party flag and State President of the Socialist Party Narana Natesan welcomed the delegates. National President of Socialist Party (India) Bhai Vaidyae inaugurated the conference.

Reports were submitted by the General Secretary S. Sundara Vadivelu and S. Karuppaiah, State Treasurer of the party. All the delegates took the pledge to work hard and fight for the establishment

of socialist society in our country. Following State office bearers were elected: President Narana Natesan of Srimushnam. Vice-Presidents: K. Vadivelu of Erode and K. Ramakrishnan of Cuddalore. Secretary General: Mazhavai Singaravelan of Thiruvarur. General Secretaries: V. R. Azhagesan of Ariyalur, S. Sundra Vadivelu of Udumalaipet, B. Amabaklavanan of Salem. Secretaries: K. Sundaram of Pennadam, Namachivaya Kuttiappan of Bhavani, A. Kolanjiappan of Thiruppanadal. Treasurer: S. Aruppaiah of Vadalur. Parliamentary Board Chairman: U. K. Senkottaiyan of Erode. A.C. Natarajan was appointed Cuddalore District President.

The resolutions passed in the conference a) opposed the Foreign Direct Investment in industries and retail trade, b) asked for total prohibition, c) supported linking of rivers, building of dams and improving irrigation facilities through Land Army, d) decided to co-operate with the TESO movement to remove the plights of Sri Lankan Tamils, e) asserted that it was the duty of the government to give all the children of our country free, compulsory and high standard of education. A pictorial exhibition on the socialist movement was arranged by Karnataka Socialist Education Centre. Secretary N. Govindarajan gave vote of thanks.

- N. Natesan

## Ban on Rallies in the Campus

The Socialist Yuvjan Sabha (SYS) strongly opposes the undemocratic ban imposed by the Delhi University authorities on holding rallies in the campus. Holding rallies by students, teachers and non-teaching employees for their causes is a democratic right which cannot be snatched away by an arbitrary order. If members of a particular organization have misbehaved, as stated by the authorities, they should be booked and punished as per the rules. As of now, nobody has been identified or arrested in this connection. This apparently shows that the university authorities have imposed the ban to hide and underplay their responsibility. The SYS appeals to the authorities to withdraw the undemocratic order and to take stern action against the guilty.

The SYS has planned to fight all the four posts in the DUSU elections

to be held on 14 September 2012. With this in view, the Delhi unit of the SYS had decided a week ago to hold a rally in the North Campus on 5 September. In case the DU authorities do not withdraw the order of ban, members of SYS will assemble at Vivekanand Chowk to convey/place the issues before the student community.

-Rakesh Kumar Dubey

### Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-  
Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on  
Mumbai Bank  
in favour of  
**JANATA TRUST**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai 400 007

Acharya Javadekar  
A Satyagrahi Socialist



**Price: Rs. 20/-**  
**Janata Trust**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir  
Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.



# Rural India Focus

## PRESENTING THE NATION WITH A REPLICABLE MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



**ADIVASI GIRLS HOSTEL AT TARA, PANVEL**



**WEEKLY EYE CAMPS AT THE YMC HOSPITAL, TARA, PANVEL**



**RUNS THREE HIGH SCHOOLS**

### YUSUF MEHERALLY CENTRE AND YOU

There are ways in which you can join the YMC movement in bringing education, healthcare, women empowerment, employment generation, relief and growth to our rural villages. Visit our Centre, volunteer your help, buy our products, become a Life Member. You could also support the cause by donating to our various initiatives.

#### SPONSOR AN ADIVASI GIRL'S HOSTEL STAY

It takes Rs.15,000 per year to meet the expenses for supporting a girl child's stay at the hostel in Tara, Panvel Taluka.

#### FINANCE A CATARACT SURGERY

10 to 15 eye operations are performed at the weekly eye camp held at the Maharashtra State Government funded hospital building. Sponsor a cataract operation for Rs. 15,000/-.

#### CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCHOOL CORPUS

YMC runs 3 high schools - 2 Marathi, 1 Urdu medium. With only 2 of these on government aid, the Centre needs Rs.1 crore as corpus to run the 3rd and maintain, conduct extra-curricular activities in all 3 and finance its building expansion plans. Give generously.



Yusuf Meherally Centre  
D-15, Ganesh Prasad, 1st Floor,  
Naushir Barucha Marg,  
Grant Road (West),  
Mumbai 400 007

Visit [www.yusufmeherally.org](http://www.yusufmeherally.org),  
Call: (022)-2387 0097,  
Fax: (022)-2388 9738 or  
E-mail : [yusufmeherally@gmail.com](mailto:yusufmeherally@gmail.com)



## **GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.**

(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)

### **REGISTERED OFFICE**

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,  
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

**TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232**

**Website: [gannondunkerley.com](http://gannondunkerley.com)**

**E-mail: [gdho1@mtnl.net.in](mailto:gdho1@mtnl.net.in)**

**GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.**

**GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.**

### **OFFICES AT:**

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD  
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Teesta Setalvad,  
**Secretary & Trustee, Citizens for Justice & Peace**

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

# janata

**Vol. 67 No. 34**  
**September 16, 2012**

## Scrap it soonest

**S. Viswam**

**We could have gone farther**  
Kuldip Nayar

**Undermining our Parliament!**  
D. K. Giri

**Maoists threaten  
constructive activists**  
Pannalal Surana

**Recognition syndrome  
or identity crisis?**  
K. S. Chalam

**Expanding Frontiers  
of Public Law**  
B. Sudarshan Reddy

**Scrap the Koodankulam  
Nuclear Plant!**

A controversy that should have been quietly and decently buried long ago flares up every now and again to torment us. The sedition law, as it stands today in the form of Section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code should have been reviewed and repealed when the Supreme Court released on bail Binayak Sen (who was charged with sedition under that law). Indeed, the then law minister Veerappa Moily had indicated that the law would be out from the statute book soon. However, like many things in India, assurances are mostly observed in the breach. With the thoughtless arrest of freelance cartoonist Aseem Trivedi, the issue of the sedition law has secured national focus again.

An enormous volume of public rage was built up within a few houses of Trivedi's arrest. Press Council chairman Justice Markandeya Katju thought that those who had arrested the cartoonist should be arrested for carrying out an illegal action. At the lighter level actor Kabir Bedi said that every opposition party in India could be jailed for sedition. Justice Katju's comment indirectly highlighted the consistent misuse of Section 124 A. Bedi's remark implied that the law enforcement authorities have no concept of what constitutes

sedition. When the Supreme Court upheld the section it ruled that it applied only to cases where an accused person intended to create public disorder or incite violence. Sedition, by definition, comes into play only when national security concerns are impinged by action or words or intentions. Criticism of the government, however justified or otherwise, on issues of governance and public weal, cannot legally be seen as being seditious. We already have laws which are applicable when racial or communal hatred is established or when the legitimacy of the authority in power is questioned. God knows, the opposition, in particular the principal opposition party in parliament, gets away with accusations against the government and the prime minister which border on seditious thinking. However, the fact remains that the police tends to interpret every speech critical of the government as fit for prosecution forgetting that there is a line that separates mere accusations of misgovernance from the deeper one of spreading "disaffection" against the government. It is possible to paint the government in the darkest of colours, tarnish its image and hold it to contempt without breaching the sedition law. As the combined

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

opposition in parliament led by the BJP demonstrated effectively all through the just-concluded washed-out monsoon session. Incidentally, it is quite legitimate to ask, in the context of the existing conditions in India, why the police are insensitive to anti-religious, pro-communal and inflammatory speeches but are ultra-sensitive to light-hearted political criticism of the Establishment in books, plays, public speeches and of late, cartoons. Action against so-called offenders in these fields is swift and drastic compared to the inaction in instances of anti-minority or anti-majority hate speeches. Aseem Trivedi's case is a typical example.

The question has been raised whether cartoons by and in themselves impact adversely on national security. Technically, it can be argued that indeed they can. Mahatma Gandhi was prosecuted during the freedom struggle for offences that really could and did shake up the colonial government even though he himself soft-pedalled the gravity of the charge against him by admitting that he had indeed committed sedition. After freedom, we gave unto ourselves a constitution that guarantees free speech (among many other freedoms) which we can exercise with some "reasonable restrictions". Sedition arises not when the freedom of speech is exercised but when the restrictions are breached wilfully, deliberately and irresponsibly.

The accused cartoonist has wisely agreed to be freed on bail after making a stand that he would rather be in jail than be charged with sedition. The Maharashtra government has indicated that the charge against him may be dropped.

*(Continued on Page 3)*

## *Between the lines*

# We could have gone farther

**Kuldip Nayar**

When Pakistan Foreign Minister Hina Rabbani Khar suggests that they are willing to view Kashmir from "another angle" to tackle the thorniest problem and Indian Foreign Minister S.M. Krishna changes the subject, it means that Islamabad has overcome pressures from within. Of course, Foreign Minister Khar's remark is primarily meant to reopen the problem which remains frozen. Yet the mere suggestion of "another angle" indicates a new confidence that the tottering Asif Ali Zardari government has assumed.

Therefore, the relaxation in visa facilities, limited no doubt, may be a small step in the long haul to a visa-less environment but it is, indeed, a positive development. "I promise you a borderless regime," the late Benazir Bhutto told me a few days before she left London for Pakistan. I am sure she would have tried her best if she had lived but ultimately she would have been defeated by the intelligence agencies which still rule the roost.

The intelligence agencies on both sides have seen to it that the visa possessors follow the same old humiliating process of reporting at a police station in the midst of jibes and threatening postures. It is apparent that there is no change in their attitude of suspicion and hostility. Several visitors may still be happy because the choice before them has either been a visa or no visa. I believe that senior citizens above the age of 65, who will get visa on arrival, will be exempt from

police report. And so will be the children below the age of 12.

Yet the most important point that Indian foreign minister and his counterpart have missed is how to deal with terrorism which is on the rise in both the countries. Who is more to blame or who started it first does not help at this time because the Frankenstein of a monster is on the prowl. Instead of reviving the joint commission for cooperation in various fields, the two countries would have done better to underline the serious proportions which terrorism has assumed. For this, a joint commission on terrorism alone—pooling of intelligence and fighting against terrorists together—would have given a stern message to the trouble makers.

That no such machinery was ever proposed is enough of a proof to the yawning differences over the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai. Krishna wanted the perpetrators to be brought to book quickly to soothe the hurt of people in Maharashtra and elsewhere in India. Hina apparently had her own compulsions and merely said: "We will not brood over divergences." My feeling is that the punishment of the culprits, especially Hafeez Sayed, the LeT chief, is a litmus test for India to judge Pakistan's earnestness.

Once the Pakistan judicial commission revisits Mumbai to cross-examine witnesses of 26/11 attacks, the cases should move quickly. Islamabad should be seen

to be keen to punish the guilty because the visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to Pakistan, rightly or wrongly, has got linked to the outcome of the 26/11 cases in the Pakistani courts. Krishna, more or less, said so when he was asked by even President Zardari how soon would the Indian Prime Minister come to his village near Jehlum in Pakistan.

The positive side of the meeting far excels the negative. Things would have proceeded faster but for the lack of preparations on the part of New Delhi. My information is that India's foreign office did not know how far Islamabad was willing to accommodate us. Pakistan Army chief Ashfaq Parvez Kayani had given the Zardari government, more or less, a carte blanche because Kayani wants to fight against the Taliban single-mindedly. He has even withdrawn troops from the Indian border to put them on the Waziristan front. India realizes that it indicates Kayani's confidence in normalizing relations with New Delhi. This was the best opportunity which we should have grabbed with both hands to reach an agreement on Sir Creek which Islamabad was ready to sign. One thing would have led to another.

Foreign Minister Krishna considers that India has achieved a lot. "Two years ago, Pakistan rejected the step-by-step approach when we suggested it. Now that is being adopted by both countries," said Krishna in a separate briefing for the large Indian media contingent travelling with him. In contrast, Pakistan foreign minister Khar did not contradict him but said the two countries were now seeking to build on convergences through the dialogue process. She did not want to go into history because she said she was born after 1971 war. Khar

really wanted to shed the historical baggage that the two countries have been carrying for the last six decades.

The real achievement of the meeting between the two foreign ministers is to introduce a new category of a visa—Business. This was long overdue. Had businessmen been allowed to trade from day one, the relations between India and Pakistan would have got normalized by this time. India's huge market is looking for customers to sell the products. Pakistan, on its part, more or less bottled up so far, is keen to break the shackles of steep tariff walls to reach India.

One another good development is the music competition among young singers of the two countries. Unfortunately, the Shiv Sena and its associate Raj Thackeray are so obsessed with the anti-Pakistan bitterness in which they have consumed themselves that they are threatening to stop the competition. The attitude of the Mumbaiwals should be that the dogs bark and the caravan passes on. The initiative taken by young singers on both sides is an example for politicians to emulate.

What still baffles me is why the two foreign ministers have failed to agree on the exchange of newspapers from both sides. Even the sale of books of one country to another has escaped a solution. These instances underline a trust deficit. Unless both countries try to narrow the gap of suspicion no liberalization of visa would be of any help. To begin with, both sides should go through the text books of each other's and delete the portions which evoke hatred and suspicion. The meeting of the two foreign ministers may well be a missed opportunity. It could have achieved more.

*(Continued from Page 2)*

So far, so good. However, the Centre should speedily undertake a review of the impugned section and either scrap it in toto or replace it with a more sensible one, one that addresses the sedition issue relevantly and credibly. We can do without another meaningless controversy on the subject.

The staggering escalation in inequality contributes to global and domestic economic and financial instability by fostering a political environment that lends itself to risky investment behaviour and the emergence of asset bubbles. The critical importance of inequality as a driver of crisis is clear when one is confronted with the fact that the average income of the world's richest five per cent is 165 times higher than the poorest five per cent. In a world where the richest five per cent earn in 48 hours as much as the poorest in one year, understanding the linkages between rising income inequality and the greater frequency and severity of the financial and economic crises is central to proposing policies that build systemic resilience and enable a less volatile growth process. .

—Anuradha Seth in *The Hindu*

**Dear Friends,**

On the birth anniversary of Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Narayan, on 11th October 2012, a veteran of Socialist movement and colleague of Acharya Narendra Deva and Dr Rammanohar Lohia and a personal friend of Chandra Shekharji, Shri Sohanveer Singh Tomar, ex- MLA, UP and President of Dr Rammanohar Lohia Sansthan cordially invites you for a "Socialist get together" at the Chamber of Commerce Hal (in front of Roadways Bus Stand) Meerut-UP, at 11 AM on 11th October 2012.

You are requested to kindly join this get-together.

—Qurban Ali



# Undermining our Parliament!

D. K. Giri

The paradox of Indian politics is that our democracy is being hailed, perhaps, as the only one in Asia sustaining since our independence, while our Parliament, the central institution of our democratic politics is being undermined. The parliamentary behaviour of MPs from across the political parties has been disgusting and reprehensible as it violates the dignity, discipline and decorum of the supreme institution. The entire last session was stalled, the whole winter session last year was wiped out, a bill was torn by a Member, two Members from two political parties were physically attacking each other, Members shouting slogans and rushing to the 'well' to make a point, forcing the Chair or the Speaker to adjourn the house. All these as the Members (from the BJP) were fighting against scams. The parliamentary paralysis is worse than anything happening resembling proverbial Murphy's Law, where the cure is worse than the disease. Every conscious citizen needs to take a serious view of this dangerous trend in our politics.

## Cromwellian Parallel

One wonders if the current parliamentary standards draw a parallel with the 'Long Parliament' that Oliver Cromwell prorogued in 1653. It is worth quoting his speech to that Parliament: "It is high time for me to put an end to your sitting in this place, which you have dishonored by your contempt of all virtue, and defiled by your practice of every vice; ye are a factious crew and enemies to all good government... Ye are grown intolerably odious to

the whole nation; you were deputed here by the people to get grievances redressed, and are yourselves gone; ..... So! Take away that shining bauble there, and lock up the doors. In the name of God, go!"

His admonition to the British parliamentarians then seems to apply very much to our MPs today. How did it happen? There could be many reasons. The quality of the parliamentarians leaves a lot to desire. In the last parliament, there were 125 members in the Lok Sabha with criminal charges levelled against them; in the present parliament the number has gone up to 175 odd. There is no training or orientation provided by the party leadership on parliamentary behaviour, or our rich heritage, or the good practices from other parliaments. Parliamentary rules and procedures are flouted by the MPs, and no immediate action is taken against them. For instance, the rules say (i) no member can tear off any document or bill, (ii) no member can shout slogans in the parliament, (iii) no one can run into the pit to draw the attention of the speaker. While such codified rules exist, how the BJP can, or for that matter any other party, disrupt the functioning of the parliament and physically prevent the sittings of the parliament. The BJP now says they had no option. The excuse is ridiculous; the option of using the parliamentary forums to debate and challenge the ruling party and allow the citizens - they are sovereign in a democracy - to judge. The BJP has 114 members in the parliament, so they cannot

win any resolution, let alone a no-confidence motion, or obtain the resignation of the Prime Minister. Hence they resorted to physical disruption, which is blatantly anti-democratic. How can one ask the Naxals to embrace democracy when major political parties are boycotting it? The only difference here is that Naxals use violence.

No one is holding a brief for the Congress either. Making a choice between the Congress and the BJP is like asking someone: will you like to be run over by a train or a truck. The Congress is known now for strategic flip-flops, and blowing hot and cold. Take for example: their handling of civil society movements, namely the one led by Ramdev and another one by Anna Hazare, their obstinacy on not having a JPC on 2G scam against the BJP's insistence on it and then, not asking the Prime Minister to resign, if A. Raja, the Telecom Minister, went, so should have the Coal Minister. This is clearly double standard. Yet, the BJP had been unwise and undemocratic in disrupting the parliament, in violating the dignity and discipline of the highest institution of democracy. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had warned us that we have a Constitution, and its institutions to conduct our affairs. It is not like the colonial period when we did not have one. So, to bypass these institutions is "grammar of anarchy" and sooner we avoid this tactic the better for us.

## Status of parliament

How do we perceive the parliament? Where do we position

it in our politics? How should the Members of Parliament behave, as the representatives of the people to uphold the image, the position and the status of the parliament? These questions must be attended to, lest our democracy should be in peril.

Parliament is the central institution through which the 'will' of the people is expressed, laws are passed, and government is held to account. Thus, the Members collectively represent the legislative power of the state and have the constitutional function of controlling and overseeing the government. The Members of Parliament are thus custodians of people's interest and faith in democracy, they are the role-models for citizens in politics and therefore a strong parliament consisting of solid Members is a vital sign of a healthy democracy. Along with efficiency, the ethics of Members is central to the functioning of the parliament. Let us recall what our first Prime Minister, who had high regards for the institution of parliament, had to say when a Member, Shri Mudgal, did not behave. It is well known that in 1951, the then Member of Parliament, H.G. Mudgal's conduct in promoting business interests of some firms in contravention of the discipline and decorum of the House had invited adverse comments from every quarter. Jawaharlal Nehru wrote a letter to all the Chief Ministers on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1951, emphasising the need for parliamentarians to maintain high standards of behaviour, "*parliament viewed the conduct of Mr. Mudgal with extreme disfavour. There has been a tendency in the past not only in parliament but probably in the state legislatures also, not to keep proper standards of behaviour. The Mudgal case is an example and a warning and there must be*

*no laxity shown, when any such matters arise. If once the reputation of our legislatures goes down, then democracy itself will be in peril*".

Because of serious dilution in the effectiveness of the parliament in law making, the judiciary has become more active. There are several Public Interest Litigations (PILs) on civic issues. The growing activism of judiciary is inversely proportionate to the decline of parliament. Then, questions are being asked as to what is the representative character of the judges, however impartial and wise they are. Judicial interventions in routine governance matters amount to negation of representative parliamentary democracy. But do the Members of Parliament and the parties they belong to see the discordance in governance they are causing. To be sure, the status of pre-eminence of the parliament is being compromised. In fact, there are wider issues of functioning of the parliament such as quality of debates, transparency, accountability, responsiveness, representativeness and so on. Such issues can be raised and discussed in order to improve the delivery of parliament only when the parliament functions smoothly. In monetary terms, lot of money is spent on the MPs and parliament officials which go down the drain if the parliament does not function. Workers in all sectors do not get paid if they do not work. Will the MPs forgo their daily allowances and salaries if the parliament is not sitting? Of course, it is not the case that all MPs are irresponsible, it is only a few, in this case, the BJP MPs who disrupted the parliament. Why did the speaker take no action against them as they had no constitutional right to do so?

There are many contributory factors for chaos and disorder in

the parliament. There have been meetings of presiding officers and others in order to identify the reasons. One such meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2001 found the following: (i) Members not having enough time to raise matters, (ii) non-responsive attitude of the government, (iii) non-adherence to parliamentary norms, (iv) no proper action taken against erring members. Whilst such problems exist there is no room for disruption.

### Code of Conduct

Again there have been attempts to define a 'code of conduct' by setting up Ethics Committee in order to purge indiscipline and unruly behaviour in the parliament. For instance, the Ethics Committee established by Rajya Sabha in 1997 recommended a code of conduct, which among other things, suggested that "Members are expected to maintain high standards of morality, dignity, decorum and values in public life".

The presiding officers in their meeting also passed a resolution on parliamentary ethics, which among several other guidelines, suggested that, "earnest endeavour be made by all political parties to lay down parameters with emphasis on proven standards in public life, for selection of candidates for election".

One must realize that "Code of Conduct" for that matter, rules, procedures and conventions do not in themselves guarantee ethical behaviour. Their effectiveness depends upon a range of factors, some of which are: (i) a functioning, vigilant and vibrant civil society, (ii) the existence of a cultural, political and administrative context conducive to transparency and integrity on the part of politicians and civil servants, (iii) a free media,

(iv) the code of conduct, attuned to surrounding political culture, and compatible with other national integrity regimes.

### The Way Ahead

One cannot expect all these conducive conditions to be in place for our Members to maintain standards, and uphold the dignity of the parliament. We must recover the confidence in the integrity of our parliament. The British Parliament is quoted as a model for the rest of the world. There, a slight aberration in an MP's behaviour and the British public strongly disapproves of it. A BBC research finding on parliamentary standards is instructive: "to re-launch democracy, a shot in the arm is needed to make large sections of the electorate realize the value of democracy, and appraise how a bunch of self-serving dispassionate grey suits sitting around... Therefore BBC has taken a decision to orient its approach to make politics more accessible for all", and to "fulfil the fundamental objective of re-democratising democracy to make it work, and to make it valued." Is any in the Indian media listening?

A nation-wide campaign or a movement is needed for the restoration of our parliamentary democracy. One is surprised how such a serious anti-democratic act by a single party or a group of parties or an individual, is going unnoticed. We need to remind ourselves of what Jayaprakash Narayan strongly advised us, that "the time to save the house is not when it is tottering on a single pillar, it is when people start chipping away from it." Parliament is being undermined by disruption, let us save it, or else we will render our parliament totally ineffective, and irrelevant.

## Maoists threaten constructive activists

**Pannalal Surana**

Mendha Lekha is a small village in Dhanora tehsil in Gadchiroli district of

Maharashtra. Devaji Tofa, son of the soil, is active in undertaking and implementing various village development schemes. Almost every household in the village has a latrine besides a few public ones. Improved methods of paddy cultivation are being adopted by the villagers.

When the State Government started implementation of Forests Rights Act 2006, the Gram Sabha (GS) of Mendha Lekha applied for collective patta for management of the forest in the village boundary, got it and undertook cutting of mature Bamboos, which is enlisted as minor forest produce over which the GS has control. Officers of the Forest Department (FD) grumbled a little and declared that the villagers would not be allowed to take the cut bamboos outside. However, the GS organized open auction for sale of bamboos and fetched a price of Rs 20/- per piece for which the Ballarpur Paper Mill used to pay hardly Rs.2/-. Mohan Hirabai Hiralal of Chandrapur, who has been closely associated with the villagers of Mendha Lekha for long, succeeded in persuading Jairam Ramesh, the then Minister for Environment and Forests, who prevailed upon the FD to issue Transit Pass (TP) to facilitate transportation of the cut bamboos to outside market. The Minister also visited the village and congratulated the residents for their sustained constructive work. That was in April or May 2011.

A number of nearby villages also applied for collective pattas

for forest lands in their villages or nearby. About 400 such applications were being processed, 150 were granted pattas out of which seven villages decided to undertake Bamboo cutting in March 2012. When the villagers started cutting, Ballarpur Paper Mill took objection saying that the lease granted to them was still in force. The villagers withdrew for a while. At night, some Naxalites visited some of the villages and asked the villagers to allow the Paper Mill people to cut the bamboo. So, next day, the villagers went to the FD and gave in writing that they would not cut the bamboo. Some of the organizations took up the matter with R. R. Patil, State Home Minister and Minister in charge of Gadchiroli district. In April, Secretary in FD visited district headquarters and advised the officers there to treat the lease of the Paper Mill as terminated and help the villagers to cut mature bamboo in their area. With support of veteran leader Hiranman Warkhde, the GSs of the seven villages restarted the cutting operation. They entered into an agreement with a trader who agreed to pay Rs. 1/- as wages per piece to the person who would do the cutting and Rs 20/- as royalty to the GSs. A number of young residents shouldered the responsibility of supervising the whole operation voluntarily. A wave of enthusiasm spread throughout the region. Mendha Lekha had earned about Rs. one crore. Other villages started to tread the same path.

The Naxalites got enraged. They visited Devaji Tofa and gave him a letter, signed by the Communist Party of India (Maoist) requesting

him to ask Mohan Hirabai Hiralal not to visit Mandha Lekha anymore because all their activities were dampening the revolutionary fervor of the villagers. In that letter, it was also stated that the Bhoodan movement of Vinoba Bhave in 1951 had played the same "dirty trick". Devaji told them that he could not take any decision individually but would put the letter before the villagers. Later on, at a meeting of the Gram Sabha, it was resolved not to accept the suggestion of the CPI(Maoist) and continue their twin activity of peaceful struggle and constructive work.

\* \* \*

A shocking incident had taken place in village Tamda of Etapally tehsil in district Gadchiroli on 2<sup>nd</sup> August – killing of Raju Gotha. Along with Jagdish Tirodkar and Kishor Potanwar, I visited the bereaved family on 25<sup>th</sup> August. Manju, the widow of Raju told us that around midnight, a group of persons shouted from outside: "Where is Raju Gotha? I said he is sleeping. Back came the words - get him up. I opened the door. Three-four persons rushed in though I tried to prevent them. They hit me and brushed me aside. They closed the door from inside. There came noises of harsh words and within seconds came the noise of a gunshot. Baiju, my father-in-law, who was sleeping in another room, came out. The Naxalites apprehended him, tied his hands on backside and dragged him and the injured Raju on the road. My younger brother-in-law, Sudhakar came out and tried to resist but was hurt grievously and thrown aside. After leaving the two bodies on the road, with a tag attached to the banian of Raju, they entered the village, shouted to the people to come out of homes and told them that there were two dead

*(Continued on Page 10)*

## **Condemn Brutal Police Repression on Peaceful Protestors at Koodankulam Scrap the Koodankulam Nuclear Plant! Phase out all Nuclear Plants at the earliest!!**

We, the undersigned organisations, strongly condemn the fierce police repression in Tamil Nadu on the peaceful agitation being waged by the people of Idinthikarai and other villages surrounding the Koodankulam Nuclear Plant.

Tens of thousands of people of Tirunelveli district in Southern Tamil Nadu have been participating in protest marches, boat rallies and relay hunger strikes demanding the scrapping of the Koodankulam Nuclear Power Plant, in what is one of the most powerful non-violent Gandhian people's movements in recent times. It is a more than two decade old struggle. The government turned a blind eye to their protests and went ahead with the construction of the plant. Now, with the construction completed, as the government began plans to load the fuel into the plant and start it up, the people's dam of patience has broken. On September 9, 2012, 8000 to 10,000 people marched to the plant, in an attempt to gherao the plant to prevent the fuel loading, demanding that the plant be shut down permanently. The police stopped them from reaching the plant. The protesters sat down on the sea shore and said they will continue their struggle from there.

The next morning, on September 10, at 11.30 am, the police launched their 'war' on the people. After lobbying tear gas shells, thousands of policemen brutally lathicharged the protestors. Dozens of men and women were badly beaten up and

had to be hospitalised, an unknown number have been arrested. The police also entered Idinthikarai village, breaking open doors, damaging houses, even damaging the water supply system to the village. The media persons were also attacked. Cameramen were specially targeted, they had their cameras broken and videotapes removed.

It is a sad comment on the dehumanisation of our police force that they even desecrated the church in Idinthikarai village. Idols were broken. Policemen spat and urinated inside the church.

### **Government Lies**

The government of India, its nuclear establishment and several top intellectuals are claiming that nuclear energy is a clean, safe, green and cheap solution to meet our future energy needs. They are dubbing the protestors as foreign agents, as being anti-development... In reality, it is these protestors who are the real patriots, it is our rulers who have become agents of giant foreign and Indian corporations, who are putting the entire future of our country at risk for the profits of these corporations.

### **Nuclear Energy is Deathly**

Even if nuclear reactors operate normally, their environmental costs are terrible. The process of fissioning uranium to generate heat and produce electricity in a nuclear reactor also results in the creation of more than 200 types of highly

radioactive elements. Many of these elements will continue to release radiation for thousands of years. A 1000 MW nuclear reactor contains within it radiation equivalent to that released by 1000 Hiroshima bombs!

The country's nuclear scientists—who are no longer scientists, but have become paid agents—are claiming that nuclear plants do not emit any of this radiation, and even if it leaks, radiation is safe and not harmful to humans and the environment. They are lying. Even during normal operation of a nuclear plant, small or large amounts of this radiation routinely leaks out into the atmosphere. An even more monstrous problem is the problem of radioactive waste. The two Koodankulam reactors will generate 3600 tons of waste in their life of 60 years, which will remain radioactive for more than 2 lakh years. There is no safe way of storing these deadly wastes for such a long period of time; and so the waste inevitably leaks. The impact of this radiation on the human body is deadly: it causes all kinds of cancer, infertility, premature aging, kidney problems, and several other diseases, and also mutates the reproductive genes—causing all kinds of diseases and birth deformities in future generations. Consequently, people living near nuclear plants will suffer these effects for thousands of years.

The water discharged into the ocean by the cooling systems of the nuclear plant will be carrying a terrific amount of heat. This will lead to a sharp decline in the fish catch in the coastal areas, destroying the livelihoods of tens of thousands of local fisherfolk. It has happened with coastal nuclear plants around the world, from the USA to India (Kalpakkam and Tarapur nuclear plants).

## Let us Do Some Soul-s

Just like a hapless wife brutally assaulted by her male chauvinistic and drunken husband, like an innocent little child beaten up by his abusive parent, our honest, hardworking, and pious people have been violated, their possessions vandalized, their 400-day long nonviolent movement vilified. By our own government! By our own Chief Minister who we brought back to power to rescue us from corruption, power abuse, nepotism, dynastic rule and double speak! An overwhelming majority of the Tamil voters including almost all the coastal communities voted for the Chief Minister's party.

When the biggest nuclear power plants in the country or the largest nuclear power park is being set up on our seas that will have deleterious effect on our sea and seafood, land and crops, water bodies and ground water, on our livelihood and on our progeny, we have opposed peacefully, democratically and nonviolently. Don't we have at least that much freedom in our country?

In fact, the Chief Minister sympathized with our cause in the beginning. She had objected to the Chennai visit of the nuclear-armed ship, the USS Nimitz; and she had opposed the India-US nuclear deal with so much conviction. Our team met with the Chief Minister twice and the Prime Minister once at her own personal initiative. The Chief Minister kept talking about solar power and other renewable sources of energy, kept demanding more electricity from the central pool and more finance for electricity projects in Tamil Nadu. She even said that she would be one among us in our struggle.

We took to the streets, voiced our concerns to the Central Government and asked them to stop the Koodankulam nuclear power project, change our energy policy and to save our natural resources. The District Collector, Dr. R. Selvaraj, entertained us in his office and served us tea and biscuits. The Superintendent of Police, Mr. Vijayendra Bidari, gave oral 'go-ahead' every time we sought permission over phone for our demonstrations, agitations and public meetings. But they kept on filing false cases on us all with serious charges such as sedition, waging war on the state and so forth.

The 'love scene' changed to 'hate scene' in March 2012! The script changed! The situation, the lighting, and the overall direction changed! The Chief Minister alleges that we are all in a '*maya valai*' (mystical net). Maybe she is referring to nuclear radiation that is indeed like a '*maya valai*' you cannot see, hear, smell, taste or touch.

Today we are surrounded by police, beaten up by police, harassed by police, accused of committing all kinds of crimes by police, arrested by police and above all, mentally, emotionally, spiritually assaulted by police. And the Chief Minister is the police minister!

We are all fisherfolks, shopkeepers, agricultural laborers, beedi-rolling women, and to be brief, working class people. We do not steal public

## Search and Talk Again!

money, we do not amass wealth through illegal business deals, and we do not plunder the nation's natural wealth. But we are treated like criminals; dangerous, seditious, violent, vicious and wicked lawbreakers. Our leaders, who have been invoking the names and wisdom of Thiruvalluvar, Buddha, Mahavir, Ashoka, Guru Nanak, Mahatma Gandhi, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and Mother Teresa, are treated like dreaded terrorists. Our people who worship Sage Vishwamitra, Lord Jesus Christ and Prophet Mohamed are treated with contempt and dislike. The St. Lourdes Church at Idinthakarai has been desecrated by urinating and a holy statue destroyed. Naval boats are patrolling our seas; air force planes are hovering over our villages; the police are blocking our roads; we are short of food, water and other basic essentials; and the state is waging a war on us! But we cannot do a thing!

The global nuclear mafia sees our people as their sworn enemies. The KGB, the CIA and other international intelligence agencies consider us serious threats to their respective ruling cliques. The Delhi Government is infuriated with us as they are worried about their billion dollar nuclear business deals and commissions and kickbacks. The Tamil Nadu Government also tends to treat us like dreaded terrorists and dangerous criminals.

The police have shot down an unarmed civilian Anthony John at Manappadu coastal village. Several people including a small baby are said to be missing. Some 53 nonviolent protesters, men and women, are charged with sedition and waging war on the State cases and are languishing in distant prisons in Tamil Nadu. Thousands and thousands of families are living in fear and despair.

We do not expect or want any awards or accolades for practicing democracy and protesting in a nonviolent manner. But can't we be treated with a little bit of humanness, civility and dignity? Who should we turn to? Who could we talk to? The Chief Minister may not even see this. Her arrogant upper caste advisors may say everything bad about us and our lower asstff people.

We would request the Chief Minister to stop fuelling the KKNPP, remove police from our area, provide compensation for the people who lost their boats, vehicles and household items, and release those who are arrested.

We thank all the leaders and members of various political parties, social movements, lawyer associations, fishermen associations, student groups, labor unions, village committees and other organizations in Tamil Nadu and other states for organizing various demonstrations and agitations in support of our struggle. We would solicit their continued support for our struggle and for the above-mentioned immediate demands as well.

—S. P. Udaykumar

**The Struggle Committee, People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy**

## Nuclear Plants are Accident-prone

And if there is a major accident in the nuclear plant, its consequences will be simply devastating. Here are a few facts about two such accidents that have occurred in recent times.

**Chernobyl, Ukraine, April 1986:** i) More than 100,000 square miles around Chernobyl – twice the area of Tamil Nadu – is heavily contaminated; this contamination will continue to affect the health of people living in these regions for thousands of years; ii) Nearly 10 lakh people died worldwide due to Chernobyl up to 2004; this number will continue to increase for many generations; iii) More than 5 million people who continue to live in the most dangerously contaminated areas know that they are forever contaminated, that they could get cancer anytime, and that future generations could be born with severe birth defects; iv) Children are the worst affected, less than 20 percent children are healthy in the contaminated areas, and in the heavily contaminated areas, it is difficult to find one healthy child.

**Fukushima, Japan, March 2011:** This accident is even bigger than Chernobyl. Its full consequences will be known in the coming years. So far, nearly 1.5 lakh people have been evacuated in areas around the damaged plant; they are never going to return to their homes. In the rest of Japan, the radiation leaking from the plant is going to contaminate the soil, groundwater, Pacific Ocean, leading to contamination of vegetables, rice, fruits, fish, milk. Independent European scientists estimate that over 10 lakh Japanese are going to develop cancers over the next 30 years due to the accident.

Because of these terrible effects, most countries around the world

have stopped building nuclear plants. The US has not ordered a new plant for nearly 40 years now, since October 1973, and Canada since 1978. A majority of countries of Western Europe have banned nuclear power plants. After Fukushima, countries which had nuclear plants, like Germany and Switzerland, have decided to close down their existing nuclear plants too.

India's establishment scientists are lying about the safety of the Koodankulam reactors. A Chernobyl or Fukushima type accident can happen again, anywhere, in any reactor in the world, and also at Koodankulam, as nuclear technology is a complex technology and is inherently prone to catastrophic accidents.

**Alternative Solutions to Energy Crisis**

Paying such enormous costs to meet our electricity needs is sheer madness, when safe and environmentally friendly solutions exist: maximizing energy efficiency and using renewable energy sources. Through measures such as increasing generation, transmission and end-use efficiency, and elimination of wasteful consumption, it is possible

to reduce electricity demand by a whopping 30-40 percent! If that is done, there would actually be no need to build new power plants for the next few years!! Our future growth needs can then be met from renewable energy sources. Even the government admits their potential to be: Wind Energy - 48,500 MW; Small Hydro Power - 15,000 MW; Biomass Energy - 21,000 MW; and at least 50,000 MW from Solar Energy. The actual potential is much more. Furthermore, while nuclear electricity costs are rising, renewable energy costs are rapidly falling: wind energy is already cheaper than conventional electricity, while solar photovoltaic energy cost is expected to become so by 2015-20.

**Support the Kuankulam Struggle**

The people of Koodankulam are fighting not just for their health and livelihoods and the lives of their future generations, they are fighting for all of us, for the people of the entire country. For, if there is a major accident at Koodankulam, it will destroy the country. Nuclear energy has the potential to destroy a nation – according to Mikhail Gorbachev, it was not perestroika but the Chernobyl disaster which destroyed the Soviet Union.

We, concerned citizens of Pune, severely condemn the repression unleashed by the government on the people of South Tamil Nadu. We call upon the Central and State governments to:

1. Honour the Right to Dissent, and end the violent repression of the non-violent struggle at Koodankulam, Jaitapur and all other places where people are protesting the setting up of nuclear plants and uranium mines.
2. Withdraw all false cases against the peaceful satyagrahis at all these places and withdraw all prohibitory orders from the area, including Section 144, so that normalcy can be restored.
3. The government must stop police repression on people protesting against nuclear plants and uranium mines and engage in an open dialogue with the peaceful protestors.

The Prime Minister must initiate a broad-based and transparent national debate on nuclear energy keeping in mind concerns related to safety, viability and the adverse social and environmental impacts of nuclear plants.

Socialist Party (India)	Lal Nishan Party (Leninist)	Lokshashan Andolan	Lokayat
Abhijit Vaidya	Medha Thatte	Justice Kolse Patil	Neeraj Jain

**(Continued from Page 7)**

bodies lying on the road and dashed away in the dark.” The villagers corroborated Manju’s story. When we visited Police Station, the officer there gave us a photocopy of the tag that was attached to Raju’s body. It was written in odd Hindi saying that the traitors of people will get similar punishment. The police were held responsible for the killing meaning thereby that they suspected Raju to be an informer of the police.

No other evidence of “anti-people activity” of the son-father duo was mentioned.

We had observed that the family was very poor. We asked the people whether the family had any feud with anybody to which the reply was in the negative. We further asked whether the Naxalites had visited the village earlier. One person said that about four years back the Naxalites had shot dead a person in the weekly Bazar who was alleged to have been

a deserter. The same night another person met the same fate. I asked: why did you not tell them that what they were doing was bad. They replied: we cannot say so to persons who have guns with them.

The police were also puzzled because Raju or Baiju, the priests of the village were not in their contact. It seems the Naxalites are a reckless lot trying to terrorize the Adivasis while extracting money from the industrialists and contractors.

# Recognition syndrome or identity crisis?

K. S. Chalam

Amartya Sen, in his famous book 'Identity and Violence: the Illusion of Destiny' (2006), observed that the false notion of solitary identity is resulting in violence in contemporary world. The recent debate on the political reservations for various caste groups in the State once again brings the issue of identity into public discourse as mainstream scholars termed it as identity politics. The notions of freedom, identity, violence, choice, etc, are generally used in debates of caste-based politics in India.

Therefore, it is necessary to examine the relevance of some of the ideas in the context of caste-based reservations. Does the present debate come under the broad framework of freedom to choose a leader or selecting someone within narrow confines like caste? Reviewing Sen's book for Guardian, John Gray has raised the point of philosophical limitations to understand the contemporary society.

He has cited the experience of Isaiah Berlin who narrated how he had witnessed a terrified man being killed by a crowd in Petrograd during Russian Revolution that remained a lifelong horror of violence, with that of Sen's experience in his childhood of how a Muslim daily wagger was killed before his eyes as examples of violence of identity. Gray argued that Berlin considered freedom only as a universal value, but not an overriding human need. Gray was critical about Sen's conceptual therapy, perhaps ingrained in the Sen's concept of freedom, to remove the deep-seated traits of man.

Perhaps, Gray missed what Sen had meant by saying that, "violence is fermented by the imposition of singular and belligerent identities on gullible people" through propaganda. The solitarist fallacy of identity in the Indian situation, if extended further, leads us to spot out the inhuman and irrational social institution called 'caste' as a marker. The philosophical discourse of Sen on identity can be applied to our social situation. There is no doubt that humans would have multiple identities as parents, children, workers, classes, rich, poor, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian and so on. But, they are all subsumed under the dominant and inherited identity called caste.

Sen has attributed the fallacy of identity to intellectual error. It is necessary to qualify what Sen intended to by referring to intellectual error: judgment or beliefs? Considering that caste, as a belief, may be a false belief, is it possible to reduce the intensity of this identity through reasoned public debate as Sen wanted us to do?

We have historical evidence of not only public debates and even caste wars to bring people around public reason, with little effect. Thus, Sen, according to his critiques, has failed to provide a reasonable solution to the problems of multiple identities. As remarked by him, violence creates identity as much as identity creates violence.

Caste is not a simple social or cultural institution, transformed

from generation to generation as a legacy, but it is a political tool to keep a select few in power and several others outside it. It has never remained the same. It has its own ups and downs passing through some historical processes. The Western or Occidental concept of class as equivalent to caste, trained us to look at it as a static phenomenon.

Some scholars are bringing narratives to show that it has undergone mutations. Yet, the dominant ideology or what Sen describes as the propaganda, seemed to have remained the same, in terms of 'they' and 'we', the ruling castes and the ruled with an experimental group of residuals or untouchables. Therefore, the social category of caste, as an identity, has always been used by people to come to power or enjoy patronage within the system or to demand a rightful share in power.

In this context, the recent debate on why backward classes should not be given their share in politics in proportion to their representation in the population appears to be legitimate. There is a related issue of recognition and self-image of individual leaders who have been championing the cause of the victims. The social reform or renaissance movements in modern India from the time of Jyothiba Phule, Ayothi Das and others have produced several leading lights like Ambedkar, EVR, Lohia, Karpoori Thakur and several others who have struggled to get recognition to the majority of the socially disadvantaged .



The solitary belief that they are inferior due to their birth has been blitzed through brainwash of religious or social bigotry in India. This may be in the framework of Sen, comes under unethical or wrong identity of humans who are supposed to have several identities. But the single most significant identity in social relations in South Asia is still caste. It is here that social tensions arise in our everyday transactions and cannot be innocuous with our simple craving.

The individual who defies established social norms and sacrifices for the sake of the larger interests of the community/caste rather than the uniqueness of self and has tangible gains should be considered as a leader. There are always self-centered and egotistic persons who get into social movements for recognition. There is no problem with them as they do contribute to the development or enhancement of the social cause.

But, the problem is with those who claim that every success of a social movement is due to his/her indulgence. They do repeat the behavior as a symptom of abnormal condition and prone to inability to treat others as humans and co-workers; land him or her in a syndrome. It is alleged by commentators that the syndrome is widely prevalent today among social activist groups (SC/OBC) or civil society organizations that fail to absorb or assimilate other similarly placed individuals and their contributions.

These tendencies are increasingly creating divisions and subdivisions and might damage the very righteous intentions. Social activists must be very careful in analyzing such

predisposition not to build up as stumbling blocks of emancipation movement, and learn from others' experiences. There are plenty of examples from the political and social history of Andhra Pradesh of how the elite of the caste forged unity and assimilated castes that are close to them to wield social power and ultimately political supremacy. One need not be carried away by the

internal bickering of the ruling castes as they are manipulative (arranged) to confuse others as everyone knows that ultimately they get united when power is about to dissipate. Are leaders of the numerous social groups and the activists willing to bury their identities and recognition syndrome to give vent to their caste agendas to gain political power?

### **Manifesto of Socialist Yuvjan Sabha for the Delhi University Students Union election A Decisive Voice Against Neo-liberal Onslaught on Education.**

“When students do not take part in politics they allow politics of the ruling government and, thus, do politics indirectly.” - Dr. Rammanohar Lohia

“They (students) should study. They must study. Simultaneously they should attain knowledge of politics and when necessary should jump in the field and dedicate their lives to that.” - Bhagat Singh

SYS demands:

The fee for the revaluation should be Rs. 100 as it was earlier.

1. The East and West campuses should be opened without delay in view of the fast expansion of Delhi and difficulties in commuting. Evening classes should be started in all colleges.
2. PG and M.Phil. classes for social science, humanity and commerce subjects should be held in the South campus also, as was held in the past.
3. All seats reserved for SC/ST/OBC students should be filled in time and transparency maintained in the process of admission.
4. Hostel facility should be provided for all students who require it.
5. Measures should be taken for the safety of girl students in the colleges and the university.
6. The university administration should ensure that no discrimination and misbehaviour is meted out to the students coming from any part of the country.
7. Under the semester system sections should be increased as per student-teacher ratio.
8. Adequate arrangements should be made for University Special buses in the colleges and North/South campuses. DTC pass should be allowed in all type of DTC buses and students should be provided concessional metro cards.
9. Proper arrangements should be done in teaching and reading material for the Hindi medium students.
10. Library facilities should be improved in the best interest of the students.
11. Presence of private security and police in the college and university campus vitiate the atmosphere of teaching and studies. Permanent chowkidars employed by Delhi University should undertake the task of security.

-**Rakesh Kumar Dubey**, Convener, Election Campaign Committee for DUSU

# Expanding Frontiers of Public Law

## B. Sudarshan Reddy

Over the past three decades or so there have been many instances of popular uprisings against existing socio-economic and political orders. The visuals in the media as those instances unfold, and the consequences thereafter, confirm the most deep rooted assumptions of constitutionalism, and of modern public law: people can, and sometimes do, turn into mobs when rule is not informed by law, and law in turn is not informed by justice. Rare though the occurrences of formation of people as a mob may be, they nevertheless reconfirm the fact that people can be an elemental force.

While the immediate, and understandable, concern of the rest of the world is about a return to “order”, the emergence, on occasion, of even more repressive orders should warn us against the banal certitude of the desire for “Le Roi est mort; vive le Roi” – “The King is Dead; Long Live the King.” We should have an equally strong concern, in the least, about the conditions, and the deep sense of loss of self-respect and dignity, that impel the people to turn into a mob. Indeed, the absence of “order” for a significant length of time would raise major concerns about whether, and when, it would return, and what kind of forces are arraigned in favour of, under-girding and benefiting from the new order, and the forces arraigned against it. The fundamental premise of any morally acceptable quest for order ought to be the self-respect and dignity of the

people, so that they need no longer be the mob. Unless the conditions of the previous order, and the loss of self-respect and dignity, which impels the people to turn into a mob, are understood, accepted and honestly sought to be changed, one could not be certain that a new order that comes into existence would also not become popularly discredited, passionately despised, and possibly again violently hounded out. The construction of legitimacy of the new order, in the form of a just law, has to necessarily precede the possibility of the political sphere. As pointed out by Julius Stone, “the essence of revolution... is a sudden breach as opposed to a gradual smooth one, however far-reaching be the effects of the latter.”<sup>1</sup> Professor Stone uses another expression to describe the gradual and smooth change of regime within a constitutional order: “social death.” The social death of a particular regime within the constraints of an accepted constitutional process, howsoever far reaching the resultant changes, is substantially different from the change wrought by violence of the people as a mob. The revolutionary moment may indeed be the ultimate political choice; nevertheless, for the revolution to stop, so that the ordinary, and hopefully the just, political process may be instantiated afresh, the normative expectations of the people have to be transcribed into a legal order.

Such events, and their consequences, and more particularly the demand for just constitutional

democracies by people, who do not have it, carry lessons for the rest of us that the broader understanding of both the necessity and the feasibility of a progressive constitutionalism is correct. It should also make us more inclined to protect, nurture and sustain those progressive constitutional projects that have already commenced. Many civil society initiatives, involving people from all walks of life and from across the globe, have issued statements which stand as testimony to that claim. The key elements are that achievement of democracy and respect for human rights is fundamental to welfare of the people, and that real and effective political reforms would imply rule of law, and institutional integrity based on separation of powers. The wish list in such calls include demands for independent judiciary, respect for human rights, both socio-economic and political, rule of law, end to political trials and repression, allowing advocacy roles for civil society organizations, freedom of expression, neutrality of state institutions to curb politics of patronage, good governance and elimination of corruption, and private sector to be concerned with political reforms and social justice.<sup>2</sup>

I am sure that anyone with even a rudimentary understanding of public law would immediately recognize the above to be amongst the core aspects of constitutionalism. Cicero was right when he said “salus populi suprema lex esto” – the welfare of the people is the highest law. I

do not believe that it is necessary to get into a lengthy debate about the validity of that proposition. While one might quibble about a particular wording, or about the putative political and ideological origins of a particular conception or relationship, one certainly cannot deny that at least at the textual level, such articulations have been the essence of public law.<sup>3</sup> The very fact that people as a mob is an infrequent occurrence in the context of reasonably well functioning constitutional democracies that achieve some measure of “*salus populi*”, lends support to the claim that civilized debates about public law, and constitutionalism, are worth pursuing. That those who do not have such an order demand it, should justify our own obsession with it, and a desire to make it more likely to realize its espoused values.

Nevertheless, it should be acknowledged that the need for public law has been a matter of some debate, particularly within the legal tradition that we as members of the Commonwealth share. So, it did not come as a surprise to me that the topics suggested to me, initially about judicial activism and the current one about “*Expanding Frontiers of Public Law*” were framed in terms of uncertainty of the status of public law. Both the topics reflect a continued unease about the status of public law as a demarcation of legal boundaries within which the political branches are to act. I believe that at least a part of the unease could be explained by an inadequate appreciation of the legitimating functions of public law, in facilitating the orderly change of wielders of political power, and the maintenance of the socio-ethical conviction, or even hope, of the people that the State and its

institutions are indeed functioning in a manner conducive to achievement of the purposes of the original compact. The continued trust of the people is *sine-qua-non* for the maintenance of constituted political power, and that in turn depends upon the degree of achievement of “*salus populi*” – welfare of the people. In that sense, the idea of public law may be exemplified not merely by the vesting of power, and of its limitations, but also the purpose to which the power is to be used for, and the consequences of its use. Purpose, in the sense of the goal of achievement of the welfare of the people, itself ought to be treated as a limitation of power.

Part of the problem lies in the deep hold of legal positivism on our modes of legal thought. The core of its conception is that law and the state are to be clearly distinguished, in order to facilitate a scientific study of law. Based on such a distinction, law could then be conceived as a system of primary and secondary rules, with the rule of recognition as the only content of public law. At the very point of inflection, when the how and why of legitimacy of a political order are to be specified, those questions are read out of the equation, as it were. However, hidden from such a perspective, is the fact that it is the very functioning of public law that enables the establishment of private law, and the plausibility of acceptance by the people that law possesses an inner coherence as well as a moral dimension that they may give their consent to. The legitimating function that public law serves of a particular political order has been grossly underappreciated.<sup>4</sup>

The continued insistence, especially in England, that public law does not exist, or that it need not

exist, or that it came into existence only very recently,<sup>5</sup> or that it need exist in specifying only a night watchman role for the state, are both surprising, and also a partial cause for the continued confusion about the status of public law. A more refined historical analysis of England’s political history points to continuing debate, battles and entrenchment of the idea of limitation of powers vested in the organs of the State, with law as the community’s response to prevent abuse of power.<sup>6</sup> The more robust entrenchment of human rights, in recent times in England, and the more self-assured claims of judicial independence and powers, maybe indicative of maturing of thought with regard to public law within the fortresses of classical legal positivism.<sup>7</sup>

If public law is to serve a legitimating function, in order to ensure the stability of the state, then it ought to specify the purposes, and the vision, that would inform the nature of power, its extent, and modalities of use. Based on a study of historical political debates, Michael Oakeshott discerned, at a conceptual level, two dichotomous positions: a politics of faith and a politics of scepticism. The first one is based on the ontology that a perfect order can be devised to achieve a clearly definable “good life”, and that all rational individuals would be able to discover the content of that single good life and hence consent to direction of state power towards that goal. The danger lies in its tyrannical impulses. On the other side would be the politics of scepticism that posits the view that because of variegated human experiences, no single conception of the good can be conceived, and attempts at achievement of some claimed “good life” valid for all would be

“to pursue perfection as the crow flies”. Politics of scepticism would require that state power only be vested for protection of individuals’ freedoms, and the realm, so that they are free to pursue an individualistic understanding of their relationship with the external, and to explore the immense opportunities that open up to them by responding to the world in accordance with only their self-interests. The danger obviously lies in complete breakdown of social ties, and pursuit of any collective purpose becomes difficult to conceive. The two political visions would translate into two political orders: one of overweening state control, and the other of *laissez faire* free markets. At the present moment we would probably have to say the neither extreme has proved to be a normatively viable category to provide the purposes of the state, and instead what we find as appropriate would be an Aristotelian mean, “not merely in the sense of compromise between the two positions, but a balance between the two tendencies”. It is of course a recorded part of history that Oakeshott himself believed that the politics of faith had begun to overly dominate, and he undertook the task of bringing back into view the virtues of politics of scepticism.<sup>8</sup>

I would suggest that an unease about expanding frontiers of public law, if animated by a sense that politics of faith, and consequently of overweening and dictatorial tendencies, are entrenching themselves, then it is understandable. However, my unease with the unease about public law, as expressed over the past twenty years or so, is that it arises out of an argument for an extreme form of capitalism, informed by Spencerian Social Darwinism, in which the power of

the state is used primarily to uphold an extremely inequitable order. If the politics of faith squelches human beings by imposing a singular *modus vivendi*, then the politics of scepticism squelches human beings by legitimizing an order that exploits the individual, but hides the fact of exploitation under the rhetoric of individuality. If the cry for liberty and political freedoms in the Casablanca Call is a human understanding that they need protection from extreme forms of politics of faith, then the cry for human rights, dignity, and protection from corruption, in the same Casablanca Call, is reflective of the other human understanding that they need protection from politics of scepticism.

In 1947, the framers of Indian constitution, convened to frame a constitution for a country that was riven by social, linguistic, geographic and religious categorizations and differences. The country itself had been devastated by partition, and most of its populace lived in abject poverty, and shackled by ignorance. Disease, pestilence and death stalked the country side. Social and economic inequalities were endemic. The relationships between the people were mediated through the pernicious categories of the caste system, and of a feudal order. It was for such a country that a remarkable group of people, representing a multitude of social backgrounds, though predominantly from the legal fraternity and trained in the common law, sat down to constitute a nation-state, and provide a framework for its trust with destiny. In choosing a political order, for such a country, they did not go with either politics of faith or politics of scepticism. They chose politics of hope. Hope as the Aristotelian mean, between the politics of faith, and politics

of scepticism. They debated for long, sought for and brought to the table the varied constitutional experiences of other countries, combined it with their individual and collective intellect and experience, and produced a detailed constitution, that incorporated: division of powers both horizontally and vertically, independent judiciary tasked with the role of constitutional interpretation and protection of constitutional values, flexibility of constitutional amendment within the context of basic unyielding constitutional values, which subsequently came to be identified as the basic structure so that no temporary majority could hijack the constitutional purpose itself. The purpose of the state was to achieve the pre-ambular aspirations for all the people, and this was to be done by protection of fundamental rights of persons and citizens, and state action being informed by directive principles of state policies. While the directive principles of state policy were specified as judicially unenforceable, they were nonetheless conceived as fundamental to governance, and a source of constitutional values.

As I read through the Casablanca Call, I was struck by the remarkable convergence of ideas, aspirations and hopes with those that the founding fathers of India grappled with, and indeed we continue to do so today. It would appear that there is indeed scope for identification of universal human aspirations, across time and geographic space. I wish to use this convergence of ideas, across a gulf of sixty years and the chasms of different cultural experiences, to offer Indian constitutionalism as proof indeed that a deliberate creation of a constitutional order can be successful, notwithstanding the insurmountable odds that may

confront the people. Let me hasten to add that I am not doing this with some jingoistic fervor, or claim to exceptionalism, but in the spirit that identification of the causes and fault lines of Indian experience, would aid better understanding of what the frontiers of public law ought to be.

It is now a confirmed verity, notwithstanding the doubting Thomases, India has survived, and indeed flourished as a democracy. Except for a brief interlude, our political processes have been peaceful, and transfer of power accomplished within the constitutional order. We have had our share of problems, and notwithstanding the vast geographic spaces, of immense populace, unimaginable cultural diversity, and the problems with which we started off, we have survived as a nation state.

Recent empirical research seems to suggest that the Indian constitution shares with the more successful ones, certain design features that may have aided in its endurance. The research reveals that, much like what Thomas Jefferson had figured out two hundred and twenty years ago, few constitutions have had a lifespan of over 19 years! While environmental factors, such as internal or external shocks to the constitutional order, have accounted for a great deal of that mortality, according to this research, with the American constitution being an outlier, most of the constitutions that have endured for 50 years or more are marked by great detail in constitutional provisions, drafted and maintained by people of diverse backgrounds, and the flexibility


to change constitutional meaning, within an overarching and a firm matrix of constitutional values.<sup>9</sup> The prolixity of the Indian constitution, derided often, may have indeed been a blessing; and the inclusiveness of people from different backgrounds into the constituent assembly, I believe, has indeed given the constitutional text the language around which people of different backgrounds have been able to articulate their political aspirations, and participate in the political processes. The ability to amend the constitution would appear to be commendable in the Indian context; fortunately, the Indian supreme court by discerning the basic structure doctrine, has been able to protect the underlying core constitutional values from reckless abandonment, and change, by transient majorities, thereby protecting the possibilities of democratic participation itself.

However, other factors that are not so easily amenable to statistical and empirical research would also need to be pointed out. India's stability was on account of both the wise men who framed the Constitution, and also the wise and moral leadership that was provided in its formative years. One cannot underestimate those blessings. Indeed, as Dr. Ambedkar, pointed out, whether India would progress or tear itself apart would depend upon the moral fibre. We were indeed fortunate that in our early years, we were blessed with statesmen of great integrity, who believed in the constitutional vision, and sought to institutionalize the politics of hope. They did not choose to go the route of a communist model or a pure capitalist model of the economy; instead they

chose a mixed economy model, because the communist model could have unleashed violence of a massive order, and a pure capitalist order would have prevented the attainment of goals of social justice, and continued unconscionable inequalities, sans even the rhetorical hope that the state might provide a helping hand.<sup>10</sup>

*(To be concluded)*

**Acharya Javadekar  
A Satyagrahi Socialist**



G. P. Pradhan

**Price: Rs. 20/-**  
**Janata Trust**  
*D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir  
Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.*

**Janata  
Subscription**  
Annual Rs. : 260/-  
Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque  
on Mumbai Bank  
in favour of  
**JANATA TRUST**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai 400 007

Established 1946

Price : Rupees Five

# janata

**Vol. 67 No. 35**  
**September 23, 2012**

## UPA on the precipice

**S. Viswam**

**A government in flux**  
Kuldip Nayar

**Anti-Islam Film**  
**Reactions in the Muslim World**  
Asghar Ali Engineer

**A Paean for Pai –**  
**Pearl in Parliament**  
Bapu Heddurshetti

**Expanding Frontiers**  
**of Public Law - II**  
B. Sudarshan Reddy

**Koodankulam:**  
**Way Out Of The Nuclear Mess**  
M. G. Devasahayam

Editor :  
**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

The last word is yet to be said on the political turbulence in the national capital, triggered by the exit of the Trinamool Congress from the UPA government and coalition. At the time of writing this, which is mid-week, only one part of the sad, long story had unfolded. The more interesting parts that impinge on the survival or collapse of the UPA II, are yet to be enacted. What is clear during the intermission is that the entire drama was enacted under the shadow of that forbidden word and thought—a mid-term poll for the Lok Sabha. The word has been uttered first, of all people by Mamata Banerjee, and if the UPA leadership were to be let down by all those supporting it from the outside, the threat of a snap poll is not all that far. If the two majors among the supporters stay faithful, the threat to the government will fade. For the government to fall, it will take the withdrawal of support by the SP and the BSP as well, apart from that of the TMC. Minus the Trinamool, the UPA is 254 members strong in a House of 540, its survival bolstered by a total of 50 members belonging to SP, BSP, RJD and JD(S). So long as these 50 stay loyal, the UPA can sail on merrily. If these 50 get fragmented or broken, trouble will begin and the

UPA will come under such pressure that a mid-term poll will be a relief. Therefore things are in a flux and may well remain so till you read this. Or they may change dramatically for the worse, in the sense that the political deadlock that finds the vulnerability of the UPA rising precipitously may end in a bang, namely in a mid-term poll. Or the status quo will remain and the UPA would have paid a heavy price for it.

After prolonged dithering, the UPA dramatically plunged into the reform mode and announced a series of measures which it claimed were irrevocable. No rollback, was the answer to all appeals to reconsider. The diesel price was raised by Rs.5 a litre, gas cylinders were rationed and the government decided to open the way for FDI in multi-brand retail. The reforms polarized the country vertically, equally strong voices rising in praise of the reforms and against what was described by the anti-reform lobby, as political suicide by the UPA. Mamata was the first to revolt and serve a 72- hour ultimatum for a rollback. When the UPA remained firm, she quit the government, and announced she was even in favour of a mid-term poll. While BJP sat on

the fence, the SP was seen flexing its muscles and threatening to act if the rollback was denied. The Akalis who hang by the BJP's apron strings demanded a parliamentary session to discuss the crisis. The DMK said it may do the unexpected thing by quitting the UPA itself. Thus, scene after scene, was being unfolded, promising the viewers a rich fare of politics in the raw.

The corporates representing the Big Business and Industry and Commerce were not only pleased. They were euphoric. If and when the rollback takes place, they will be quite upset, not so much on the rollback itself as on the lack of spine on the government's part. The Big Business will lose confidence in a government which they think has regained credibility at last, while all the political parties, except the Congress and the NCP, think the government can still retain credibility by rolling back the reforms and shutting India's doors on the FDI in retail.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to apportion blame on the likes of Mamata Banerjee for precipitating a first class political crisis by sticking steadfast for the aam aadmi. At the same time, objectivity demands that we acknowledge and concede the fact that the government was under tremendous pressure to act and provide leadership at the hour of crisis. A socialist government committed to the welfare of the masses and the working class would not have pushed itself into a corner like the UPA II has done. But that is neither here nor there. The issue now is whether we are going in for a snap poll or are we going to suffer a year and a half more of this unpopular government?

### *Between the lines*

## A government in flux

**Kuldip Nayar**

I realize that I am not the person whom the Congress will listen to. Were it to do so, I would advise the party to go down fighting. At present, even if it survives, it will be sticking to the chair and not governing.

The crisis the party is facing is nothing new. It has been discussing and debating for the last three-four years whether to adopt reforms or not. The fear of losing power held the party back from doing anything different. So much so, the prestige of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh came down tumbling and he was seen as a pathetic figure.

True, the party does not have the numbers. With the withdrawal of 19 Lok Sabha members of Trinamool Congress, the coalition commands only 254 in a 536-member house. There is the temptation to bring either the Samajwadi Party's Mulayam Singh Yadav with 22 members or Bahujan Samaj Party's leader Mayawati with 21 members to muster the majority.

Yet the Congress knows the price it will have to pay to get one of the two or both on its side. The government-controlled Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will use all weapons in its arsenal to do so. Both leaders are involved in too many cases of corruption and disproportionate wealth. Although Mayawati has been comparatively quiet, Mulayam Singh Yadav has observed that the Congress means

corruption as if he has any face to say so. The Dravid Munnetra Kazham (DMK) with 18 members is sniping at the Congress, probably to go on record, but the party is otherwise loyal to the Congress.

The real problem is of the leaders, Mulayam Singh Yadav and Mayawati from UP. Even if the Congress were to win either of the two or both, what image the already tainted Congress would have? It is not an easy choice between compromise and power. But if the Congress wants to stave off the danger to its reputation even a bit, it cannot go back to the situation of voting on the nuclear deal with the US, when Mulayam Singh was brought around with a blank cheque.

The question that confronts the government is the increase in the diesel price which even after the raise will be subsidized by the government. The second moot point, more important, is allowing FDI in multi-brand retail.

Maybe, opening the retail in trade to foreigners will help people to confront the capricious shopkeepers, especially those dealing in food products, raising the price as and when the demand increases. True, all the 500 million retailers, their estimated number, do not behave the same way. Many are conscious of their responsibility. But presuming all of them are alike, the case for the economic steps the Prime Minister has taken will lead us to an uncharted territory without building

the political consensus. However, I do not understand why the word, reform, is used when such steps are retrograde? Does it mean that all who oppose them are anti-reform? In a polarized country, it is better to avoid the terminology that divides and heightens tension.

That all those reforms, if this is the buzzword which the government throws at the people, have been before them for three, four years. Why has the Manmohan Singh government considered September 2012 as the most opportune time and not 2008 or 2004 when it had come to power and why now when it is on the last lapse of its second term? Elections for parliament are due in early 2014, less than one and a half years from now? This does not give enough period to undo its acts of omission and commission of the entire term.

Could it be that the government wanted to deflect attention from a series of scams, the latest being the coal block allotments? I would like more transparency in governance than high-flaunting reforms. There is little doubt that the government will survive the test of a majority in the Lok Sabha if it comes to that (273 in a 536-member house). There are bits and pieces parties which can be cajoled and bought over to side with the ruling coalition.

Yet the numbers will have no meaning if there is no accountability. I have not seen many heads rolling, except for a couple of them, when it is an open secret that practically all the ministers are in league with bureaucrats in making money on the quiet. Many scams are yet to see the light of the day. Thanks to the media that some have been exposed.

*(Continued on Page 9)*

## Anti-Islam Film and Reactions in the Muslim World

Asghar Ali Engineer

A Coptic American, extreme right winger and Islam hater made an anti-Islam film and put it on internet. Its reaction was very violent in the Muslim world beginning with Libya wherein an American ambassador Christopher Steve along with four other consulate staff was killed in violent demonstration. It was followed by violent demonstrations in Egypt, Yemen, and other places. Saudi Arabia which normally remains officially silent also had to strongly protest on Government level.

Of course some countries like Indonesia, Malaysia and others remained comparatively peaceful though signs of unrest are there in these countries too. In other words the countries covered by Arab Spring were mostly affected. And on this occasion a private agency in Iran once again renewed the prize offer (with increased amount of 3.3 million dollar) on Rushdie's head.

Rushdie of course reacted characteristically by saying that blasphemy should be one's right. It is difficult to say what shape this renewed offer on Rushdie's head will take. It may remain only a formal announcement. It seems difficult that it would become a raging controversy as it did when Ayatollah Khomeini had declared price on Rushdie's head. Politically it was very different context.

Ayatollah Khomeini then was a great hero for the Muslim youth as he had declared America a great

Satan (*Shaytan-e-buzurg*) and America all over the Muslim world then was seen as an evil incarnate who had tried to stop an Islamic revolution and Rushdie was seen as a western agent who had, in the name of human rights, insulted the Prophet of Islam thus trying to weaken Islamic revolution. One cannot expect that kind of reaction from the Muslim youth anymore.

But as for the anti-Islamic film *Innocent Muslims* there is a different political context (i.e. the Arab Spring), no less significant than Islamic revolution of Iran. The only difference is that Iranian revolution was actively opposed by America whereas Arab Spring was seen as favourable by American rulers under the pretext of bringing in democracy to the Arab world.

In Libya America and NATO forces had played an active role in overthrowing Gaddafi who had played an anti-American role throughout his life except perhaps during the last phase when he had tried to reconcile with Western powers. In Syria too America, like in Libya, is interested in what it chooses to call 'regime change'. Needless to say both in Libya and Syria America had not played so innocent a role as it would like the world to believe.

Today both in Libya and Syria Al-Qaeda has become hyper-active but even at the cost of making al-Qaeda quite active, America's priority is to destroy Gaddafi and



Bashar al-Assad, the old enemies of America and the only obstacles in total domination of Middle East by America. Both of them have been anti-Israel too and with their elimination, America will be free to promote its interest in the area.

For al-Qaeda too it suits well as both Bashar al-Assad and Gaddafi have been enemies being revolutionaries and seen as anti-Islamic forces by them (i.e. al-Qaeda). Thus both the regimes, ironically, are seen as enemies both by America and al-Qaeda. Thus the violent demonstrations against the film are result of a number of factors. What is to be understood is that these demonstrations are less Islamic and more for down to earth factors – political, economic and sociological.

The media, especially western media, is portraying these demonstrations as purely a violent religious act, act of fanaticism particularly because it is Islamic. It is not so simple as the media is portraying it. First of all we must reckon with the oil factor. America's sole interest in this region is neither Islam, nor democracy, nor dictatorship, for that matter. It is oil, pure and simple.

There is as yet no alternative to oil and most of the oil resources of the world are in this region. America wants to maintain its grip on this region at any cost. The first danger it smelt in the region was the Islamic revolution of Iran. U.S. was exceptionally hostile to Iranian revolution. Not because it was Islamic revolution; it was because Iran was emerging as challenge to American leadership in the region. It was equally hostile to Fatimi's democratic revolution

in early fifties of the last century and to undo that revolution it had used Ayatollahs against the Fatimi's secular democratic revolution.

After the then Iranian revolution of 1950s many left-oriented regimes emerged in the Middle East i.e. Iraqi and Syrian (Baath Party-led revolution) and Libyan Revolution in 1969, apart from Jamal Abd al-Nassir's Young Officers' coup in Egypt in mid-fifties. Nasser's revolution was no less dangerous than that of Iranian revolution in 1979. It nationalized Suez Canal and France, Britain and Israel invaded Egypt, morally supported by USA. It was Soviet Union which threatened these powers and made them retreat.

The Arab Spring, was also seen similarly an opportunity by America to intervene and do away with 'enemies' like Gaddafi and Bashar al-Assad. But like before, it is not as simple as America thinks. The demonstrations are aimed politically against American interests in the region. Of course it is utterly foolish to make such film which has been described as 'idiotic' or utterly simplistic.

It is true the American regime, much less the people, had anything to do with making of the film and so one wonders why kill its ambassador and consular staff or why demonstrate against America. These demonstrations do not mean that people put responsibility of the film on America. It clearly means that they have utterly hostile feelings towards American domination and repeated interference in the region. They want America to get out of the region.

Unfortunately America does not want to learn lessons. After Libya it

rushed to the aid of rebel not for its love of democracy in Syria but for its hatred of the enemy i.e. Bashar al-Assad. America is fully aware of the fact that al-Qaeda is trying to capture the rebel forces. But it thinks Bashar al-Assad is much greater enemy and it can take care of al-Qaeda later. Let not America think that the rebels in Syria would feel grateful to America after success of rebellion. These rebels too carry anti-American feelings hidden in their hearts and when time comes they will manifest it as it happened in Libya.

Many moderate Muslim intellectuals are saying that moderates should speak out against violent demonstrations. I fully agree with this viewpoint. We must oppose violence anywhere and in whatever form. Moreover it is not people of America who are to be blamed for events like anti-Islamic film. It is after all small number of right wingers who are compulsive haters of Islam.

Also, people of America like any other people of the world, are manipulated by the powerful media to think that American foreign policy is right in the Middle Eastern region. For them the principles, and not the interests, play role in framing these policies. Also, hatred is not the right answer for hatred. As a Muslim and as a Gandhian I think love and understanding is the right answer.

To prevent such violent demonstrations the Imams should play creative role in Friday sermons. They should explain to Muslims what are Islamic values and why they should desist from such demonstrations. Also, as a value

*(Continued on Page 15)*

## A Paean for Pai – Pearl in Parliament

**Bapu Heddurshetti**

Remembering Nath Pai is remembering what can be soft, gentle and suave in politics. He would have been 90 years ‘young’ this 25<sup>th</sup> September were he alive. My ‘encounter’ with Nath Pai was just a touch and go affair. When he was in Bangalore in connection with a parliamentary committee meeting and was staying in the MLAs hostel, S. Sivappa, the leader of the opposition in the Karnataka Assembly and the Chairman of the Karnataka Praja Socialist Party and A. H. Shivanandaswamy, MLC and the Provincial Secretary of the Karnataka PSP, had so affectionately taken me, a college student who was active in the Samajavadi Yuvak Sabha, along with them to meet Nath Pai. The few moments that I spent with him travelling in a car to one of his friend’s house in Bangalore are still etched clearly on my mind. Nath spoke to me in the car. He had read my article in *Janata* defending his Constitution Amendment Bill for restoring to the Parliament its power to amend the fundamental rights also. Imagine my elation that ‘Nath Pai’ had read ‘my’ article! He said that he would like to give me more information about it. But then he being, a very busy person, that was not to be. That was my first and last meeting with Nath Pai.

Nath Pai was born on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1922 in Vengurla of Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra as the youngest son of a Post Master. After completing his primary education at Vengurla, he had come to Belgaum, my native place, for higher education. I have heard from

his contemporaries that during the Quit India movement, he along with his friends raided a police station in Belgaum and escaped only to be caught later, beaten up and imprisoned. This disrupted his education. He completed his matriculation in 1940, did his intermediate in college in 1945 and got his degree in 1947. He then went to London at the age of 25 to become a Barrister-at-Law.

In England he came in contact with leading social democrats of England of the time, Clement Atlee, Brailsford, Fenner Brockway and Sorenson. He became the President of the Indian Majlis, the Vice-President of League Against Imperialism. When in 1951, a ‘British Asian Socialist Fellowship’ was organised in London, Clement Atlee became its President and Nath Pai, the Vice-President.

The first time I had heard of Nath Pai was from my father. If Quit India movement had disrupted Nath’s studies in India, the first general elections in independent India disrupted his stay and studies in England. He was called back to India to contest elections to the then Bombay Legislative Assembly from Belgaum Urban constituency as a candidate of the then Socialist Party. My father was then in Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party and the KMPP had fielded a candidate for the Lok Sabha from Belgaum parliamentary constituency. My father and Nath Pai had campaigned together for the KMPP candidate for the Lok Sabha and Nath Pai for the Assembly. Nath

Pai’s oratory would draw crowds in thousands. Nath was exultant of his victory. But then my father was sceptical that the attendance at his meetings may not get converted into votes. The same happened and both lost. Even the Congress lost the assembly seat which went to an independent.

Thereafter Nath went back to London to complete his studies and became a barrister-at-law. In 1954 the Copenhagen conference of the International Union of Socialist Youth, a front organisation of the Socialist International, elected him as the President and Nath continued to be the President for four consecutive years. Trying to garner funds for a Sane Guruji memorial, Nath visited Vienna, Austria. There he even thought of doing his Ph.D., on “Impact of Upanishads on German Philosophy”. However that could not be. It is here that he met his match, Crystle, a young socialist from Austria, and married her. Nath Pai had mastered German and French languages too. Was it Crystle who taught him German or was it because of her that he learnt German?

In 1952 elections to the Parliament, another son of Ratnagiri, N. G. Goray, popularly known as Nanasahab Goray, a mentor of Nath Pai, had contested from Ratnagiri South constituency as a Socialist Party candidate and had lost to Moreswar Joshi of the Congress by 19,257 votes. In the 1957 elections while Goray got elected from Pune, Nath Pai, with a vengeance, wrested the Ratnagiri seat from the very

Moreshwar Joshi by 1,03,103 votes. Nath had polled 1,24,593 votes i.e., 80.65 percent of the votes polled and had relegated Joshi to just 13.91 percent votes. Nath Pai's charm had worked. His impact on the constituency was so much that the constituency, which was later named 'Rajapur', not only returned him to the Lok Sabha three times but even after his death, returned his protégé, Madhu Dandavate, five times. Some times I wonder if Madhu Dandavate got his 'soft, gentle and suave' nature from Nath. Rajapur even withstood the 1971 Indira Gandhi deluge and returned Madhu Dandavate. It took the assassination of Rajiv Gandhi to unseat a socialist from Rajapur.

Nath Pai made a name in Parliament. He was made the Deputy Leader of the PSP in Lok Sabha. Journalist H. K. Dua says that Nath Pai 'could hold the House spell-bound commenting on foreign policy'. While some compared his speeches in parliament to 'ikebana', writing in *The Hindu* of 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012, Gopalakrishna Gandhi uses the adjective 'excoriating' for Nath Pai's speeches in Parliament. Another journalist called him 'Nehru's Nemesis'. But this Nemesis was not acerbic but gentle and was without rancour. Writing an editorial on the deterioration of parliamentary standards, *The Hindu* wrote on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2004 "Parliament-watchers are wont to recall the dignity and style of legislative conduct in the faraway days when such greats as Jawaharlal Nehru and Nath Pai gently sparred on the floor of the House". Nehru himself called Nath Pai a 'gentleman politician'.

Of Nath Pai's speeches in Parliament, D. B. Karnik, a journalist who covered the Lok Sabha proceedings, writes "Once

he had the floor to himself, he would not miss a single opportunity to put his opponents, particularly the ruling party, in the wrong box. Then quotations would flow, in English, Marathi and Sanskrit. There would be stories and anecdotes. There would be legal arguments and a flourish of emotional outbursts. Above all there would be the beauty of the language coming out with such superb power of expression". Nath was at times almost poetic and at times literally clinical. During the debate on Chinese aggression he said "There was a thrombosis of the will on the part of some of our leaders. There was a thickening of the emotional arteries and that was the cause of all the mischief, all the misfortune and all the tragedy that befell our nation".

Nath Pai introduced several private members' bills in parliament. He tabled a bill for setting up a permanent commission for redressing grievances in connection with the linguistic reorganisation of states. He tabled a bill to set guidelines for appointment of Governors. On 28<sup>th</sup> August 1970 he introduced a bill to include the 'right to work' in the chapter on Fundamental Rights in the Constitution. Foreseeing the abuse of power during a possible 'emergency', he tabled a bill to preserve fundamental rights even during the declaration of emergency.

Though foreign relations were Nath Pai's forte, he is more known for his Constitution Amendment Bill. Any student of law would be familiar with the feud between the Parliament and the Supreme Court regarding the property rights. The family of Henry and William Golak Nath held over 500 acres of farm land and under the Punjab Security and Land Tenures Act of 1953 the

family was allowed to keep only 30 acres for each member and the rest was taken away by the State. The Golak Nath's challenged the law on the ground that the Punjab law took away their constitutional right to acquire and hold property and on 27<sup>th</sup> February 1967 the Supreme Court declared that the Parliament had no power to amend the Fundamental Rights and thereby protected the right to property.

Thereupon Nath Pai introduced a Constitution Amendment Bill in Parliament on 7<sup>th</sup> April 1967 to annul the judgement and restore to parliament its power to amend the fundamental rights also, though the Supreme Court had said that such 'restoration' was possible only if and when the court itself reversed its present judgment or by a new Constituent Assembly, the latter suggestion, according to P. Kodanda Rao, "raises several constitutional conundrums, which are not only of academic interest but are fraught with serious practical consequences".

The Bill was debated on the floor of the House and also in the Select Committee. The debate brought out Nath Pai's erudition. In his speech defending his Bill Nath Pai extensively quoted from Justices Holmes and Philips Frankfurter of the US Supreme Court, Thomas Jefferson, the President of the United States, Sir Francis Bacon, British Jurist A.V.Dicey, Dr.B.R.Ambedkar, Thomas Paine, Prof. Laski and many others.

When some critics said that the passage of the Bill would open the flood gates for a totalitarian regime, Nath Pai had replied "A totalitarian regime is not prevented from coming here because there is a Supreme

Court; but because my countrymen are committed to democracy. We remain a democracy, not because of the charity or interpretation of a court.” How true, was Nath Pai’s political fore sight. The later events proved that it was the Supreme Court which ‘crawled’ before a dictator and it is the people who threw the dictator into the dustbin.

There was another, more political angle to it. Justice Wanchoo, who was part of the Supreme Court Bench which heard the matter and who later became the Chief Justice of India, had said “But having regard to the past history of our country, it (Supreme Court) could not implicitly believe.. ..the representatives of the people, for uncontrolled and unrestricted power might lead to an authoritarian State”. Some of Nath Pai’s even socialist colleagues, by opposing his bill, tacitly agreed with this formulation of Justice Wanchoo. But Nath Pai retorted in Parliament saying “I have got my right, with all my respect for the judiciary, to express my greater faith in the wisdom of my people; I respect the judiciary, but I respect my people more. They are dumb and they are illiterate, I know, but through their dumbness came the freedom of this country and not through the scholarship of a bunch of individuals and scholars”.

But the Congress government would not listen to Nath Pai. It needed the striking down by the Supreme Court of the two measures of nationalisation of banks and the abolition of the privy purses and the electoral victory of the Congress party in the 1971 elections in which the constitution became an issue for the first time, for the Congress to agree with Nath Pai’s stand. While the Congress government got the

Constitution 24<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which was on lines with Nath Pai’s Bill passed in Parliament, the Supreme Court did not have the courage to strike down the amendment but found an escape route by saying that though the Parliament has the power to amend even the fundamental rights, it cannot alter the ‘basic structure’ of the constitution, whatever that may mean.

Nath Pai was not only a democrat, he was also a socialist. He was the leader of the Postal Employees Union and the Northern Railwaymen’s Union. He also led the strike of Central Government Employees in 1960. He played an important role in the liberation of Goa from Portuguese rule. It was Nath Pai who had dreamt of the ‘Konkan Railway’ as part of his plan for the overall development of the Konkan region and as a member of parliament had insisted for it. His efforts bore fruit when in March 1970 he received a letter from the then Railway Minister, Govinda Menon, that a detailed survey of ‘Apta-Mangalore’ line was being taken up and would be completed speedily. Later it was Nath Pai’s political heir Madhu Dandavate, as the Railway Minister in the Janata Government in 1977, who realised Nath Pai’s dream of Konkan Railway.

When in the scheme of linguistic reorganisation of states, Belgaum was made part of Karnataka and not Maharashtra as the Marathi speaking people of Belgaum had demanded, Nath Pai took up their cause and agitated for inclusion of Belgaum in Maharashtra. Some Marathi speaking people had died during a police firing in Belgaum during the agitation. On 17<sup>th</sup> January 1971, on an anniversary of the martyr’s day, Nath Pai spoke at a public meeting

in Belgaum for one hour in spite of his ill health and against doctor’s advice. Reminding them that he had fought for them inside and outside the Parliament and saying that he had at last repaid the debt of love and affection showered on him by the Marathi speaking people, he collapsed on the stage. Nath Pai had a good heart, emotionally, but alas, not biologically.

Nath Pai was very dear to the people around him. Many educational institutions have been started in his name: Barrister Nath Pai Vidyalyaya and Junior College, Bhandup, Br. Nath Pai College of Nursing, Sindhudurg, Nath Pai Shikshan Samstha, Sindhudurg, Br. Nath Pai College of Education, Kudal, Br. Nath Pai Juinor College Of Science, Lanja, Harche, Br. Nath Pai Sakhar High School, Rajapur, Nath Pai Memorial Education Dr. Ambedkar Higher Secondary School in Goa and many more. Barrister Nath Pai Sevangan in Malvan region of Maharashtra is rendering yeomen social service to the people of the region.

I admire Nath Pai for what he was. My singing of a paeon for him has another very personal and ‘nominal’ angle. His father’s name was also Bapu. That was Barrister Nath Bapu Pai.

**Madhu Dandavate**  
By

**B. Vivekanandan**

Price: Rs. 20/-

**Janata Trust**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W),  
Mumbai 400 007.

## Third front on the basis of socialist ideology

The meeting of the national executive committee of Socialist Party (India) concluded in Delhi on 16th September, 2012. The meeting was inaugurated by party's national president Bhai Vaidya. In his address to the delegates he said that third front should be formed on the basis of the socialist ideology and not on the basis of any neo-liberal common minimum programme. He emphasised that only socialism can provide relief to the vast population facing hunger, fear and violence in India.. He further suggested that

third front should be formed well before the general elections with due deliberations and understanding with genuine democratic, progressive and secular forces. If that happens, the Socialist Party will extend its support to the front. The party's general secretary, Dr. Prem Singh expressed the hope that in the coming days Socialist Party and its ideology would prevail over the mainstream neo-liberal politics. It is the only party which completely opposes the plundering and carnivorous capitalist imperialism.

The national executive nominated Ekai Achumi, veteran socialist leader from Nagaland, as vice president of the party. He will be in charge of the North-Eastern States. The national executive decided to support, and participate in, the bandh organised by various organisations and political parties on 20th September to oppose UPA government's decision of 51 percent FDI in retail trade. Following political and economic resolutions were passed in the meeting :

## Stop hate politics, give peace a chance, pass reservation bills

It is a matter of utmost concern for the Socialist Party that politics of hate, violence, conspiracy, rumour and servility is prevailing over the politics that is value based. Most of the mainstream political parties and leaders indulge in communalism, casteism, parochialism, money-power, muscle-power and family lineage tactics. They despise and suppress Indian masses but happily and readily bow to the dictates of the US-controlled neo-imperialist regime. The Socialist Party opposes this anti-Constitutional and anti-people character of mainstream Indian politics and aspires to create an alternative political culture based on the socialist philosophy and fundamental Constitutional values.

The Party expresses its deep concern over the unabated violence in Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. The same imperialist forces, that are responsible for the havoc in these countries, are playing with emotions of the Muslims by circulating

objectionable materials in various forms. It is a considered view of the Socialist Party that terrorist reaction against the imperialist forces only strengthens them. These forces, in their lust for profit, are not ready to allow peace and harmony a chance to prevail in the world. The Socialist Party stands for non-violence based on the ideals of Gandhi, JP, Acharya Narendra Dev, Dr. Lohia, S.M. Joshi and Dr. Ambedkar. Socialist Party appeals to all democratic, forward looking and secular forces to adhere to the path of non-violence.

The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party demands that the two bills moved in the Rajya Sabha, viz Women's Reservation and Reservation in promotions for SC/ST be passed as early as possible. The OBCs, particularly most backward castes, also be included as per the concept of social justice. No citizen of India should be harassed on grounds of region or religion. While urging the

central government to safeguard our borders and restrict entry into the country without legal documents, the Party condemns threats and torturous messages sent out by some forces targeting the students and working people of the North-eastern states or persons belonging to other states. Socialist Party condemns the violence by miscreants at Mumbai, Lucknow and Allahabad. The Party appeals to the people, youth and students in particular, not to be swayed by narrow interests and treat all the citizens as our valued brothers and sisters.

The Party directs its state units to conduct mass awareness campaign for the above mentioned demands and offer dharana on any one day from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> October 2012. The state units of the Party should mobilize citizens for Right to Education Satyagraha on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2012 i.e. Mahatma Phule Remembrance Day.

## Scrape FDI in retail, curtail imports, cut salaries, strengthen PDF

The Socialist Party strongly opposes the declaration of the UPA government to implement the pending decision of allowing 51 percent FDI in retail sector. The UPA government, adhering to its neo-liberal policies, had been bent upon implementing this decision in favour and benefit of foreign multinational retail chain companies at the cost of retailers and farmers of the country. It would be disastrous not only for the retailers and farmers of the country but also for the cultural ethos of the Indian society. It will further endanger our Constitutional sovereignty.

Some rating agencies as also a few journals in the USA are trying to pressurise the rulers at Delhi to throw open its retail trade, civil aviation, insurance, defence and other vital sectors of economy to FDI. We need not be cowed down by such tactics. The economic situation in the country is worrisome mainly because deficit in foreign trade is accumulating year after year. To arrest that dangerous trend, we

should take a bold step to curtail imports, particularly of oil and gold which form almost half of our imports these days. Curtailing import of gold would not affect our main economic activities like agriculture, manufacturing, etc. Not only import but also consumption of petrol and diesel need to be reduced so as to curb global warming and lessen daily traffic jams which, besides heavy air pollution, are causing loss of crores of working hours of commuters in big urban conglomerates.

Some spokesmen of the ruling class are suggesting discontinuance of subsidies as a measure to restrict revenue deficit of the Governments. That would be most retrograde step, because discontinuing subsidy on food grains, kerosene, gas, fertilizers etc. would make lives of common people more miserable. The axe must fall, not on vulnerable sections but the rich ones. The mad race of urbanisation and consumerism must be stopped.

The National Executive Committee of the Socialist Party (India) demands: the decision of allowing 51 percent FDI in retail sector must be scrapped forever; roll back the increased prices of diesel, gas and kerosene; imports of oil and gold be curtailed by 25 percent for two years; all cars used by the administrative staff and the ministers etc. must be locked in the garage once a week; the Governments, both Central and State, should stop purchase of new cars for two years; a strict discipline should be applied on air travels by leaders and bureaucrats from the public exchequer; and a ten per cent cut in the salaries and allowances of higher officials, right from the President of the Republic down to class two officers, should be brought into effect.

The Party is of the view that all talk of replacing PDS by cash vouchers must be stopped. PDS must be fortified by plugging pilferage and farmers must be assured remunerative prices for their produce.

**- DPS**

### *(Continued from Page 3)*

Whenever there is a talk about a scam, the government always begins with the phrase of "no loss to the exchequer." Then it is discovered—the Supreme Court helped in the 2G spectrum—that there was something hanky-panky. Hurriedly steps are taken to close the door but they are late because by that time horse has bolted.

The problem with the Manmohan Singh government or, for that matter, even with the Jawaharlal Nehru government is that decisiveness has been lacking. Then it was said that

India was going for soft options. Now it is said that there is a policy paralysis. The fact is that the doubt about ourselves substitutes the firm resolve to take policy decisions.

Gunnar Myrdal who studied South Asia and wrote a book, *Asian Drama*, has said that India is a "soft state" because it cannot impose any obligation and seeks political compromises. This is as much true today as it was when we ushered in the First Five Year Plan in 1955.

Manmohan Singh's reforms, which began in 1990, have shown

that a mixed economy or socialistic pattern does not work because of many reasons like traditional rigidities, religious narrowness and need for drastic steps for an egalitarian society. I wish he could have proved his slogan, inclusive development, good. Yet corruption on the one hand and the lack of decisiveness on the other has made open economy a serious option. I may stick to my left-of-centre belief but pragmatism is what counts in India. We may not like the foreign grafted economic measures. But they seem to work.

## Expanding Frontiers of Public Law - II

### B. Sudarshan Reddy

Notwithstanding the above, given the “measurable underachievement”, on the socio-economic front, as characterized by Amartya Sen, we have to acknowledge that the greatest blessing of India has been its people. The forbearance of the people, notwithstanding the abysmal lot of a majority of them, and their continued vesting of trust in the state, which is at least evidenced by the fact that it is the poor and the deprived who continue to vote in overwhelming numbers, and also vote to change governments, has been the greatest blessing for India. Let there be no doubt amongst anyone, and as we witness the turmoil in other nations, as indeed we have repeatedly done so in the past, that in the absence of such forbearance, we probably would not have an India today. The poor, the deprived, the unlettered, the malnourished and the disdained people of my country are the ones who have held this country together. I would suggest that the forbearance was on account of a trust that the constitutional values were able to promote, nurture, and sustain. Whether it be the specific constitutional mandate for affirmative action, to provide the historically socially deprived with an unequal opportunity for some measure of social success, or the detailed provisions with regard to operation of the state’s institutions, constitutional text provided the normative categories for articulation in the political, economic and social spaces. Given the extreme inequalities, and inequities, that most of my countrymen suffered from, when this country emerged for its tryst with destiny, and indeed continue

to suffer from, the constitution itself recognized the need for mini revolts on a continuous basis, against the established socio-economic order, so that the revolution on the street is prevented. By incorporating the concept of social revolution as a part of itself, and placing an affirmative obligation on the state to forever be mindful of the deprived, the Constitution provided the articulation for far reaching changes within the constitutional order itself. Notwithstanding the “measurable under-achievement” on this front, the articulation of the ideas of social revolution were vital to keep this vast, and diverse nation together, and the nation-state intact.

Unfortunately, and I believe in contravention of broader social values, and recognized social realities, that inform the normative foundations of Indian constitution, for the past two decades, an incessant drum beat of demands for “laissez faire free markets” has dominated the discourse in India, as indeed it has in most of the world. As Joseph Stiglitz points out, the consequences of the relentless march towards increasing privatization, and unregulated markets, has increasingly eviscerated the State of stature and power, bringing vast benefits to the few, modest benefits for some, while leaving everybody else, the majority, behind. Such “global imbalances are morally unacceptable and politically unsustainable.”<sup>1</sup>

The neo-liberal ideology that has informed the political and public law discourse has two analytically separable, but related set of implications for stability of the

state. Both of them are located in the two hidden sets of assumptions that relate to the relationship between the state, law and the economy.

The first set of assumptions is that “laissez faire free markets” can exist without the undergirding of the law, and the coercive power of the state; that the capacity of the market to process information and arrive at efficient solutions is far superior to that of governmental organizations; and that efficient markets have self-healing capacity, hence the state ought not to be regulating the markets. The first one is an obvious myth that any common law lawyer should clearly recognize. An entire edifice of laws exists that support the functioning of the markets. There never were and never will be “laissez faire free markets,” there will always be more or less regulated markets that have more or less impact on various groups. Moreover, the recent global financial crisis has categorically demonstrated, again, the much vaunted self-healing powers of the efficient markets to also be very limited. History of modern economies has repeatedly demonstrated that unregulated markets, coupled with the greed of a rational individual in the market, can and often does lead to disaster. It is a moral failure of power wielders as they blindly allowed such unregulated markets to function, knowing fully that a crisis could wreck the lives of hundreds of millions, because it blindly allowed ideology to over-ride knowledge – that without regulation markets can be expected to collapse, and could cause grave damage to the people, because they have collapsed

previously, and have caused great damage to the welfare of the people.

Worse still, the same neo-liberal ideology of unregulated markets and private enterprise, has in many places given rise to predatory forms of capitalism. The agents of the state become willing co-partners in the private enterprise, to allow the plunder of natural resources, and devastation of the environment. Dissent by the people is suppressed, even by use of great force and by suspension of civil liberties, thereby undermining the moral stature of the state, and the trust in public law amongst the people even more. Eruption of scams about vast corruption further reinforces in the minds of the people that the state is inimical to them.

The second set of assumptions is that nature is unlimited and ever increasing exploitation by private enterprise would enlarge the pie so much, that everyone will get a share in it. The potential environmental crisis, global in scale and likely to have the greatest impact on those with little, implies that such propositions are scarcely believable. If global environmental crisis is likely, and many or even most reasonable experts believe it to be so, then the fundamental premise of how we order our economic sphere is patently unsustainable. Most people are recognizing it to be so, and most are recognizing that the underlying economic philosophy is but a thin cover for Spencerian Social Darwinism. It strikes at the very root of modern constitutionalism – that the state has an obligation to protect the people. Law would need to address how the economy would be organized, and how the nature is exploited and to what extent. If production levels are not allowed to rise, then the only prospects for a

modicum of human dignity for the malnourished, poor and suffering masses, would be redistribution. Indeed as Karl Polanyi wrote many years ago, when the economic sphere far outstrips the social norms, the social sphere would engage in a counter movement to bring the economy back within its fold. The question I suppose would be whether we can conceive public law in a manner that allows the pull to be peaceful and not violent.

I have highlighted two potential challenges, amongst the many that one could conceive, to the stability of state, and hence raising questions about feasibility of public law, and its contents. The issue, I submit ought not to be conceived of in terms of expanding or contracting frontiers of public law. The frontiers of public law have been expanding in as much as the conception of what constitutes “salus populi” has been an expanding domain. Obviously one could conceive of zones in which it could be argued that public law has expanded, thereby suggesting that in certain zones it has come to represent an extreme form of politics of faith. And equally obviously one could conceive of zones in which the public law has contracted, and has begun to look like an extreme form of politics of scepticism. Probably what are needed are more detailed, fact sensitive investigations into the nature of public law. Maybe Martin Loughlin is right when he says that describing what public law does ought to be the method to figuring out how it does.<sup>2</sup> I wonder if even a search for an Aristotelian mean, between the two tendencies, discredited at least in their extreme form, – of overweening statism, on one side, and uncontrolled markets on the other, – as some over-arching compromise would suffice. The devil it would seem lies in the

details, and in which zones public law has expanded and in which zones it has contracted. Of course, the consequences of such variegated responses of the state, and who benefit from those consequences and who bears the burdens are all legitimate questions when it is the matter of stability of the state.

Over the past three decades or so we have heard an increasing chatter about the self-evident decline of the importance of the nation state. The rapid march of the neo-liberal variant of the globalisation project, emergence of new technologies and collapse of the Soviet Union, were claimed to signify the end of history of political struggles over form and content of our collective organizations. Triumph of the rational man and of markets based on pure self-interest was to dissolve all debate about form and content of justice. Law was to exist only to smooth out inefficient outcomes on account of information asymmetries. On the other side we saw the emergence of nationalist, sub-nationalist and local movements of protest, sometimes violent, seeking greater autonomy from centralized bureaucracies, of the state and of corporatized forms of economy, and a global concern for human rights, equity, and roles for the poor and disempowered to make their own choices at the local level. Law was to play a minimalist role, even in this second movement, because of claimed ability to better tailor policies to the smaller collective aspirations. However, given the pre-existing power and ideational imbalances that posited disabilities for various social groups, such as caste, gender, language, class and culture, the normative arguments for purely local forms of law have not really succeeded on account of their inherent antipathies for universal



categories and conception of justice.

In neither of the two visions could there be clarity as to the role, if any, of public law. The global financial crisis, and national level policy interventions into freshly posited semi-efficient markets without strong healing powers, implying greater variety of regulatory structures with national level accountabilities, may indicate a tempering of impersonal and one shoe fits all modes of conception. To what extent the elite power structures within nations allow the local, sub-national levels to exercise control over decision making, would determine the nature and intensity of democratic experience by the people. The extent that the elite power structures demonstrate credible fealty to welfare of the all the people, including the poor and the disempowered, would determine whether we have more or less revolutionary moments, and also for our ability to instantiate justice informed by universal human values and concerns. The degree to which there is stability in the acceptance of such multiple layers of decision making would have a bearing on the specificity with which public law can maintain boundaries of decision making. The conception that we approach public law with, as to its content and role, would determine whether law can interdict the debate and conflict about where those boundaries are to be. Whether we like it or not, the battle lines are being drawn on various conceptions of justice and public law. Any which way we look at, I would suppose we can only envision expanding frontiers of public law. The question is: are we prepared to face those challenges?

What about judicial review one might ask? Having taken up so much

of your time, I do not want to tax you any further. Nevertheless, I would leave you with a question. Invariably, in India, issues unresolved in the political sphere, arise before the judiciary as legal questions, and even constitutional questions. Many of them involve unimaginable human tragedies, where the positing of constitutional silence would implicate questions about the judge's own humanity. With a constitutional obligation to guard the Constitution, and that Constitution entrenching the necessity of politics of hope, could a judge morally remain silent? If having remained silent, how would we allow public law to serve its function of legitimating a stable political order? And with lowered notions of one's own humanity, how would that judge continue to be a guardian of the Constitution, and of politics of hope?

#### References :

1. Julius Stone: "The Province and Function of Law – Law as Logic, Justice and Social Control – A Study in Jurisprudence", (Universal Law Publishing Co., Delhi, Indian Economy Reprint 2000), p. 735.
2. See for instance the Casablanca Call, <https://www.csidonline.org/component/content/article/591-casablanca-call-for-democracy>.
3. For instance see Cass Sunstein, *Designing Democracy*; and also
4. Martin Loughlin, "The Idea of Public Law" (OUP, 2003).
5. See for instance Tom R. Hickman "In Defence of the Legal Constitution" (2005), 55 *University of Toronto Law Journal*, p.982.
6. Colin Munro, "Studies in Constitutional Law"
7. Eric Barendt, "Constitutional Fundamentals" in *English Public Law*, ed. David Feldman (OUP 2004); also see Tom Ginsburg, "Judicial Review in New Democracies: Constitutional Courts in Asian Cases" (Cambridge University Press, 2003).
8. M. Oakeshott, "Politics of Faith

and Politics of Scepticism (Selected Writings of Michael Oakeshott)", ed. Timothy Fuller (Yale University Press, 1996).

9. Zachary Elkins, Tom Ginsburg and James Melton, "The Endurance of National Constitutions." (Cambridge University Press, 2009). Also see Sudhir Krishnaswamy "Constitutional Durability" in "WE THE PEOPLE: a symposium on the Constitution of India after 60 years, 1950-2010" Seminar 615, November 2010.
10. Francine Frankel, "India's Political Economy, 1947-2004: The Gradual Revolution", 2nd ed. (OUP, 2009); Granville Austin, "India's Constitution: The Cornerstone of a Nation" (Oxford India Paperbacks, 1999), and "The Working of a Democratic Constitution: A History of the Indian Experience", (OUP, 2003).
11. Quote from Joseph Stiglitz, "Making Globalization Work: The Next Steps to Global Justice", p. 8, (Allen Lane, 2006).
12. Supra note 5

Acharya Javadekar  
A Satyagrahi Socialist



**Price: Rs. 20/-**  
**Janata Trust**

*D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir  
Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.*

# Koodankulam: Way Out Of The Nuclear Mess

**M. G. Devasahayam**

The mess that Kudankulam now is entirely the creation of Government of India and Government of Tamil Nadu due to their arrogant, arbitrary and autocratic methods giving scant respect and regard to the voices of the very people who voted them to power. Instead of entering into dialogue with the protesting public to “ally their fears” as promised, these governments sent ‘Sarkari Scientists’ who only printed reams of paper and gave it as expert opinion. When people asked for their voice to be heard it was responded with hundreds of criminal cases of sedition and ‘waging war against the state’. When people still persisted police brutality was let loose on women and children sitting on beach sands, peacefully protesting against ‘fuel loading’ in the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP).

Actually the three officers in charge of the situation – the DIG, the SP and the District Collector – showed restraint. It was IG Police Rajesh Das who landed up out of nowhere, gave the protesters 10 minutes to disperse and when they refused, ordered lathi charge and tear gas shelling. The men jumped into the sea; but women and children could not and were beaten up. This IG is the same man responsible for the firing on innocent Dalits at Paramakudi last year. He is stated to be incapable of handling sensitive situations. Yet he has been unleashing terror among the harmless villagers and hunting down SP Udayakumar, the PMANE coordinator, as if he is an international terrorist. One wonders

as to whether Rajesh Das is taking orders from the autocratic Russian masters or the democratically elected Government of Tamil Nadu.

Police is using the High Court order as a cover for indulging in brutality. The fact is that there have been several bizarre, irregular and illegal happenings connected with KKNPP from the very beginning. What baffles me is the clearance given for fuel loading and the nuclear establishment going ahead with this ‘commissioning process’ despite the scathing report of Comptroller & Auditor General of India about ‘lapses in safety measures’ by the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) posing “grave threats.” CAG, the highly regarded constitutional watchdog has highlighted several lapses by AERB: Non-preparation of a nuclear and radiation policy; No safety documents as recommended by two expert committees; No decommissioning plan which is extremely critical for public safety; Non-adoption of international safety standards and practices. The Nuclear Power Corporation of India themselves have said that they are yet to implement the 17 safety measures recommended by the post-Fukushima taskforce. The environment clearance was given way back in 1988. There’s no fresh water near the site. Yet High Court has passed the order ignoring all these critical issues. The case is now in the Supreme Court

Fact of the matter is that Nuclear power is neither the cleanest nor

the safest. The human cost is too high. There’s been no new plant commissioned in the US for the last 20 years not only because of environmental concerns, but also because no bank is willing to fund it. No one is willing to insure a nuclear plant because of the risks involved. There are many hidden costs, among them the cost of decommissioning it after 40 years and storage of spent fuel for several centuries!

We don’t need nuclear power. There are better alternatives available. We have no uranium, but the Government of India is sabotaging the development of new coal and thorium-based technology. The PM talks of energy security, but how can there be any security if we have to import the reactors and fuel from abroad? The pressure from the superpowers has led to major efforts to sabotage all alternatives. Australia doesn’t have a single nuclear plant and wants to sell us uranium! The policy is driven by foreign interests. And where’s the land to establish new nuclear plants of 2,50,000 MW capacity by 2050?

In 1969, it was announced that by 2000, the country would have 43,500 mega watts of nuclear power. Today, we have just 4860 mega watts of nuclear power installed, of which barely 50 % is generated. It’s been a colossal failure. We have such fine IITs, they could have done R & D in solar and wind energy to reduce cost and improve efficiency. But such R & D was deliberately killed. Our Minister for New and

Renewable Energy says India can't survive without nuclear power!

Regarding the allegation of foreign funds and NGOs, all I would say is that a jaundiced eye sees everything yellow. Protestors, mostly fishermen are Christians. The Church does get foreign funds, for welfare projects but that's through legal channels. I don't think any of that money has gone into this protest movement. Fundamentalist elements branded Muslims as terrorists; now Christians are being condemned as traitors? What kind of 'secularism' is this?

The struggle in Kudankulam is indeed very unique. It is a community movement led by the people, not any particular leader. The 100-year-old St Lourdes church in Idinthkarai village provides space to the protesters, a majority of whom are fishermen and Christians. A few Hindu families residing in the village present a united front against the 2000 MW nuclear power plant. A majority of these fishermen know a lot about the harmful effects that a nuclear power plant might have on their environment and their livelihoods and about the Fukushima disaster.

The protest against KKNPP has been going on ever since May 1989 when the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signed an agreement with the Russians to build the nuclear plant in Kudankulam. Since then the locals have been raising their voices against the power plant, but nobody bothers to listen to them. Apart from Idinthkarai, 30 other villages around Kudankulam are fighting for the same cause. KKNPP would destroy the livelihood of most of these villagers who depend on fishing on the seas.

It is audacious to say that KKNPP is perfectly safe and nuclear power should be pushed at any cost. Let us hear from Mikhail Gorbachev, former president of USSR who signed the 1989 Indo-Russian Nuclear Agreement that brought the KKNPP: "Today we know that about 77,000 square miles of territory in Europe and the former Soviet Union has been contaminated with radioactive fallout, leaving long-term challenges for flora, fauna, water, the environment, and human health. Tens of billions of dollars have already been spent in trying to contain and remediate the disaster, with a new containment shell now being constructed over the 1986 sarcophagus and what's left of the reactor. The material damage inflicted by Chernobyl, although enormous, pales in significance when compared to the ongoing human costs. The true scope of the tragedy still remains beyond comprehension and is a shocking reminder of the reality of the nuclear threat. The closed nature and secrecy of the nuclear power industry, which had already experienced some 150 significant radiation leaks at nuclear power stations throughout the world before the Chernobyl fire, greatly contributed to the accident and response difficulties. As the global population continues to expand, and the demand for energy production grows, we must invest in alternative and more sustainable sources of energy—wind, solar, geothermal, hydro—and widespread conservation and energy efficiency initiatives as safer, more efficient, and more affordable avenues for meeting both energy demands and conserving our fragile planet."

Former Japanese Prime Minister Naoto Kan, nearly a year after he oversaw his government's widely

criticized handling of the Fukushima Daiichi accident in a recent interview with The Wall Street Journal has said: "I would like to tell the world that we should aim for a society that can function without nuclear energy." Accordingly Japan cabinet has decided to phase out nuclear power in three stages and join Germany in being a totally nuclear free country. France, that has a dependency of 74% on nuclear energy is scaling it down to 50% and may further reduce it. Many other countries are following suit. India's dependency on this source is a paltry 2.5% and this is the time to cry a halt starting with KKNPP.

What is the way out, many people ask. The answer is that Government can still reverse their decision. PMANE Expert Team has suggested fuel-switching and make KKNPP a liquefied gas-based power plant. This can be supplemented with wind, solar and tidal power for which there is huge potential in Kudankulam and adjoining areas. India's leadership should plan country's energy security taking into account these natural resources and not by imitating other countries which lack the natural resources India has.

Central Government and State Government of Tamilnadu should stop immediately the oppressive methods unleashed on the people agitating against KKNPP. An informed public debate and also a meaningful and an in-depth debate in Indian Parliament on the need for nuclear power will be in the interest of India's future.

KKNPP should not be commissioned till a full and proper independent examination of the safety aspects of all the

existing nuclear installations and nuclear power plants is carried out including the damage caused to the environment around them which includes water, soil and life forms of all types. Indian people have a constitutional right to know all the things that have been pushed under the carpet by Department of Atomic Energy by misusing the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act, 1962. This should be complied with, lest the NUCLEARGATE, possibly the most massive of all scams could unfold very soon as predicted by Dr. A.Gopalakrishnan, eminent nuclear scientist and former Chairman of Atomic Energy Regulatory Board!

*(Continued from Page 4)*

we oppose US policies, not America or American people. American principles are as great as any other principles. Among those principles are freedom of expression and freedom to follow one's dictates of conscience. There can be no compromise on that.

But this is possible only when our Imams are highly educated and capable of analyzing facts as they are. The kinds of Imams we have are illiterate in matters other than Islamic Shari'ah and Islamic theology. Imams play very significant role in the lives of Muslims, especially in Asian and African countries. Muslim intellectuals and moderate Muslims should see to it that Imams should not only be Islamically educated but also in other matters as they influence the Muslim thinking on socio-political matters through their sermons on Friday.

The Muslim media also has to play highly responsible role in such matters. We see that Muslim media

also, like Imams of the mosques, play to the gallery. Today we are living in the age of democracy and in democracy media plays very important role. We know western media too does not play responsible role. On one hand it displays deeply rooted prejudices and on the other, it guards the interests of multi-national corporations.

But if we believe in Islamic values of justice and peace we have to suppress our anger and display more patience failing which "Islam stands for peace" will become mere rhetoric and such display of violence on all such occasions does show it is mere rhetoric. As good Muslims we should go beyond mere rhetoric and show in action that we stand for justice and peace.



## PRESENTING THE NATION WITH A REPLICABLE MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT



**ADIVASI GIRLS HOSTEL AT TARA, PANVEL**



**WEEKLY EYE CAMPS AT THE YMC HOSPITAL, TARA, PANVEL**



**RUNS THREE HIGH SCHOOLS**

### YUSUF MEHERALLY CENTRE AND YOU

There are ways in which you can join the YMC movement in bringing education, healthcare, women empowerment, employment generation, relief and growth to our rural villages. Visit our Centre, volunteer your help, buy our products, become a Life Member. You could also support the cause by donating to our various initiatives.

#### SPONSOR AN ADIVASI GIRL'S HOSTEL STAY

It takes Rs.15,000 per year to meet the expenses for supporting a girl child's stay at the hostel in Tara, Panvel Taluka.



Yusuf Meherally Centre  
D-15, Ganesh Prasad, 1st Floor,  
Naushir Barucha Marg,  
Grant Road (West),  
Mumbai 400 007

### FINANCE A CATARACT SURGERY

10 to 15 eye operations are performed at the weekly eye camp held at the Maharashtra State Government funded hospital building. Sponsor a cataract operation for Rs. 15,000/-.

#### CONTRIBUTE TO THE SCHOOL CORPUS

YMC runs 3 high schools - 2 Marathi, 1 Urdu medium. With only 2 of these on government aid, the Centre needs Rs.1 crore as corpus to run the 3rd and maintain, conduct extra-curricular activities in all 3 and finance its building expansion plans. Give generously.

Visit [www.yusufmeherally.org](http://www.yusufmeherally.org),  
Call: (022)-2387 0097,  
Fax: (022)-2388 9738 or  
E-mail : [yusufmeherally@gmail.com](mailto:yusufmeherally@gmail.com)

**Space donated**



## **GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.**

**(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)**

**REGISTERED OFFICE**

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,  
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

**TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232**

**Website: [gannondunkerley.com](http://gannondunkerley.com)**

**E-mail: [gdho1@mtnl.net.in](mailto:gdho1@mtnl.net.in)**

**GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.**

**GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.**

**OFFICES AT:**

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD  
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**

Teesta Setalvad,  
**Secretary & Trustee, Citizens for Justice & Peace**







# janata

Vol. 67 No. 36  
September 30, 2012

## Congress gets a breather

S. Viswam

### Caste in Capitalist Development

K. S. Chalam

### Political Scene of Andhra Pradesh

Y.V. Reddy

### Pulling Assam back from the abyss

### Ministry of Rural Development Further Dilutes the Provisions of the Land Bill

### March Against FDI in Retail

**Banwarilal Sharma**

Editor :

**G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : Guddi

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : [janataweekly@gmail.com](mailto:janataweekly@gmail.com)

One of the questions raised in these columns last week related to the imminence or otherwise of a mid-term poll. Last week, such a question was relevant since the political circumstances were so conspiring as to compel politicians to rush to the hustings ahead of the normal schedule. This week, those circumstances have changed, and dramatically so. The question for this week perhaps is whether the UPA II will make good use of the refreshing breather it has secured and turn the latest turn in national politics created by the exit of the Trinamool Congress from the government to its advantage, and even score some major political gains that would help it ride over the coming NDA challenge. However, before facing that challenge its mettle will be tested next year itself when as many as seven states are to elect their state assemblies. Will the Congress regain the initiative in national politics now that it has been “liberated” from the stranglehold of Mamata Banerjee? Even more important, will it be able to push through its reforms agenda relying solely on the fickle support of Mulayam Singh and Mayawati, who have yet to bare their fangs?

Though Mamata Banerjee has cut off her and her party’s ties with the UPA, her role as a trenchant critic of the Congress is to continue. In

other words, the nuisance value of her obstructionist tactics will remain. This is not altogether bad for the Congress and the country. After all, Mamata is fighting for safeguarding the aam aadmi’s interests an ideal that the UPA claims to share with her. If Mamata chooses to act as the conscience of the Congress and keeps reminding it that it is derailing the aam aadmi’s interests, the government ought to welcome it. It is best to remain on one’s toes when vigilantes like Mamata are around. There is no need to doubt whether Mamata will get opportunities to establish her “do gooding” roles. The government, after all, is now determined to unleash reform after reform on the country with a view to making up for lost time. The more the number of reforms, greater will be the opportunities to debunk them since none of the proposed reforms are planned to make the aam aadmi the immediate and direct target. The reforms are meant to foster the rate of growth, but as we have seen, even the highest rate of growth touched so far, at 9.5 per cent did not immediately benefit the common people. There is a gestation period for all the reforms announced so far and for those on the anvil. Their benefits, if any, will flow much later. But this fact always works to the advantage of the opposition.

It is interesting that the government has woken up to the realities around it after a prolonged stretch of non-activity described by the corporates as policy paralysis, and has overnight become hyper-active. Announcements of intentions and initiatives are crowding the front pages. The "Coalgate" affair has been pushed into the background. The focus is on the reforms that the prime minister wants to unleash one after then other. While all this is no doubt a morale booster for the people and the government, one wonders why the prime minister, Congress President Sonia Gandhi, the Congress leadership and the "supporters from outside" had to wait so long to demonstrate their inherent capacity to take the economy out of the rut? Where was the "animal spirits" hiding? Why did all the people in the UPA act and appear so docile? Does it mean that Mamata Banerjee single-handedly could halt a mighty government in its tracks and continue to blackmail it according to her whims and fancies? What the government is now attempting to do with such inordinate haste could have been done when Pranab Mookerjee was the finance minister. After all, the prime minister has been the prime minister all these days and on his own admission under no pressure to act or not act. Why did he fail to act till now and why he is over-active after the exit of the Trinamool Congress from the coalition? We are raising this question since the dominant partner in the UPA, namely the Congress, dismally failed to counter the opposition criticism about the non-performance of the government all these months. Now, when things are hunky-dory, Congress stalwarts raised pertinent questions in the Congress Working Committee on the timing, content, thrust, preparation, and popular awareness etc. in respect of Manmohan Singh's reform agenda! The questions raised showed the

extraordinary communications gap between the Congress government and the party. The right hand clearly did not know what the left hand was doing!

Even more intriguing is that the designated successor of the prime minister and the rising hope of the Congress and indeed of the nation, namely, Shri Rahul Gandhi, who Congressmen proclaim is the answer to all of India's problem, was a "no show" at the suspense-laden political drama staged in New Delhi during the last few months. When Congressmen groped in the dark as to how to react to the opposition

bombardment, our leader of India's future was nowhere to be found. He made an appearance at the Congress Working Committee meeting but was a silent spectator, with no original thoughts to contribute or sage advice to offer. He came to life when the murders of sarpanches in J & K were mentioned but returned to the silent mode immediately. Something far more serious than a government in crisis needs to happen before our leader of India's future can either share his thoughts with us or provide the kind of leadership everyone in the party says he is abundantly blessed with.

*With Best Compliments*

*From*



**APNA BAZAR CO-OP**

**MUMBAI KAMGAR MADHYAWARTI GRAHAK SAHAKARI SANSTHA MARYADIT**  
(Multi-State Consumer Co-operative Society)  
Govindji Keni Road, Naigaon, Dadar (East), Mumbai-400 014.

**MAIN CHARACTERISTIC**

- 60 YEARS SERVICE IN CONSUMER SECTOR
- ONLY ONE MULTI-STATE CONSUMER CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY IN INDIA
- MORE THAN 40 RETAIL OUTLETS
- ANNUAL TURNOVER IS 100 CRORES
- 15 LACS LOYAL CUSTOMERS
- AWARD WINNER OF JAMNALAL BAJAJ UCHIT VYAVHAR [1989 & 2001]

➤ **HEALTH SERVICES**

- ★ DADA SARFARE AROGYA KENDRA - NAIGAON
- ★ H. N. PATIL AROGYA KENDRA - VASHI
- ★ FREE HEALTH CAMPS
- ★ MARKETING THE PRODUCTS OF SMALL PRODUCERS

**APNA BAZAR FOR ALL**

# Caste in Capitalist Development

K. S. Chalam

The enthusiasm for research among young social scientists in India appears to be waning and those who are active are confined to the areas of received theory. Therefore, it is difficult to envisage innovative theories to capture emerging phenomena in our socio-economic life. After reading a recent editorial article of a reputed daily written by an equally popular columnist known for developing new concepts under the garb of pseudo antagonism to caste/class, the idea of Grabbonomics came to my mind. Grabbonomics stands for theories that substantiate accumulation and grabbing of resources by a few (including crony capitalists) with little regard for others. In this context, we may acknowledge the work of a small group of young scholars like Damodaran, Zacharias, Mullainathan, Vakulabharanam, Ajit, Ravi and a few others who are trying to understand the role of caste in the new economy of India particularly with reference to the accumulation of capital by select few. When Damodaran published his 'India's New Capitalists: Caste, Business and Industry in a Modern Nation' in 2008, there was little reaction from academics and no discussion as to how caste plays an important role in the economic (capitalist) development. The rising New India is a nation that cares less for human values and is overwhelmed more by western ideals particularly the business ethics. Yet, interestingly, it is still Bharat as it sincerely adopts the traditional values of caste and the related 'dharma'.

The economic development in India measured by GDP is now

entering in to a new phase. Yet, some waver to call it capitalist development. What is the problem in calling it capitalist development when the whole edifice of it is relied on foreign capital and the internal and primitive accumulation? There are theories from the time of Adam Smith that capital is crucial in raising the productivity of labour through the expansion of division of labour that fetches the 'Wealth of Nations'. Marx learnt classical economics from the English tradition including Adam Smith, Ricardo and others to elucidate his 'Capital'. The Marxian model of capitalist development taught to students of Economics is based on his theory of surplus value. It is supported on the assumption that there is what we call in Economics, infinite elastic supply of labour at the subsistence wage rate that helps accumulate capital. Marx was attacked by his critiques for his forecast of low wages and the existence of reserve army, nonappearance of communism in advanced capitalist countries etc. We do not want to get in to the controversy of interpretations here. Our concern is how our theoreticians and activists have failed to see the Indian realities which our young scholars without any ideological bogey are able to discover. The young scholars have produced enough empirical evidence that caste and not necessarily class has played an important role in India's development. The issue is how to measure it and recognize it now?

Caste discrimination as an imperfect market condition was studied by scholars including Nobel laureates like Arrow, Becker, Akerlof

and others. But, they have considered caste as race or class similar to some of our Indian analysts. They understood that discrimination based on caste or race would lead to increase in cost of production with the given productivity in a competitive system and is harmful to the entrepreneur. But, they have not provided micro data to support their arguments. In a different context scholars like Bowles, Shapiro and Stiglitz have hypothesized for the existence of 'efficiency wage' as an incentive for worker not to cheat employer and remain loyal. This formulation has explained the phenomenon of high wages despite the existence of reserve army of unemployed (justified Marx). What is significant in the Indian situation is that we have a segmented labour market and is distinctly different from what Marx had assumed as a uniform universal labour force. The segmented markets are typically based on traditional castes and have never allowed the Indian laborers to emerge as a universal category. The attempt to understand this phenomenon has created some controversies, ideological splits, conspiracies and so on in the labour and left movements in India. The neo-Marxist explanations given by Amin, Gunter Frank and other Latin American scholars have not been taken kindly in India saying that the fundamental problem is surplus value and not how exchange and markets function (as theorized by them). Interestingly, economic development has failed to destroy caste in India and caste like Burkamins (about a million) in capitalist Japan. Now some empirical results are available to

reexamine the above formulations.

It is alleged that some of the activist scholars do not agree to accept the paradigm that the few upper castes constitute a group of exploiters. They do also refuse to admit the formulation that all the dalits, adivasis and some OBCs are the real proletariat by citing isolated cases of dalit civil servants (0.001 percent) who entered the few steps of class ladder. We fail to understand why do they not collect data on a hundred families from each caste in a unit to identify how many of them are exploited and have remained poor and how many are exploiting? This has also been complicated with some enthusiasts calling themselves as dalit entrepreneurs and is magnified by corporate media. Further, the own account entrepreneurs in the above may include hair cutting saloons, laundry, fish stalls, vegetable vendors, etc. Now we have data from field studies to negate the thesis of presence of dalit/OBC capitalists in the emerging capitalist economy.

An attempt has been made by a corporate consultancy firm to study the status of representation of SC/ST/OBC employees in the private sector as part of CSR. The results are not available for public comment, but are known through informal sources that 63 percent of the topmost listed companies have refused to give information and those who have signed an MOU for diversity (like USA) have performed very poorly in the implementation of what is called Affirmative Action. This is further corroborated by a study of three young scholars from Canada, that the corporate boards in India are blocked by caste. They have done an admirable work and published some of their results in EPW. They have

*(Continued on Page 7)*

## **Banwarilal Sharma**

In morning of 26<sup>th</sup> September, many of us received the shocking news that Prof. Banwari Lal Sharma, National Convenor, Azadi Bachao Andolan and former Professor of Mathematics, University of Allahabad breathed his last at Chandigarh after hospitalization at PGI for several hours. He had gone to Chandigarh on his way to Himachal Pradesh with regard to his efforts to mobilize people for the Annual Conference of Azadi Bachao Andolan scheduled to be held in the first week of November 2012 at Indore, M. P. Prof. Sharma was not in good health for several days and was advised rest but his indomitable spirit did not allow him this luxury.

Banwarilal ji, which is how most of his co-workers and friends called him lovingly, will always be remembered for his unparalleled contribution over the last two decades to building an all-India movement against the onslaught of the multi-national corporate houses and imperialist forces on the natural resources, livelihood, education and health of our people and our languages, culture and values as well. As a Gandhian, he used ahimsa as a political strategy and took an uncompromising stand against corporate houses and their deeply entrenched structures of loot. He enriched this movement by combining *sangharsh* (struggle) with *nirman* (reconstruction). Thus in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand, he helped form a co-operative coal-based power plant, declaring that the coal below the ground belongs to the people who live over the ground, rather than to multi-nationals.

In recent years Banwarilal ji travelled ceaselessly around the country, often in sleeper class, to co-ordinate the people's struggle against the nuclear power plants viz.

Kudankulam (Tamilnadu), Jaitapur (Maharashtra), Fatehabad (Haryana), Chutka (Madhya Pradesh) and others. Those of us who watched him doing this could not but admire his fearlessness, inexhaustible energy (at the age of 78 years) and almost child-like faith in ultimate victory of the people.

Banwarilal ji was a Member of the Board of Advisers of All India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE). He proactively supported our movement and viewed our work with great interest. Only about ten days ago, he had called me to invite AIFRTE to take charge of the session on education at the forthcoming Indore Conference in November. During the discussion, I told him about the decision of the Mumbai Mahanagar Palika to handover its schools to private hands (NGOs and Corporate houses). This made him furious and appealed to AIFRTE to make the battle of saving Mumbai Mahanagar Palika schools its priority agenda and turn Mumbai into a battlefield that we can ill afford to lose. Banwarilal ji went on to add, "We know that abolishing privatization is no guarantee that we would have a good education system but we also know that without doing this we will never be able to achieve equitable education either!"

The younger colleagues of Azadi Bachao Andolan least expected to lose Banwarilal ji at this crucial stage of the movement. Their anxiety is but natural. I feel it is a collective and moral responsibility of all of us to extend unstinted support to the Andolan and ensure that the Andolan will keep on moving ahead. This, indeed, will be the highest form of tribute that we can offer to Banwarilal ji.

—Anil Sadgopal

# Political Scene of Andhra Pradesh

Y.V. Reddy

The fledgling YSR Congress Party has scored successive wins in the state. The 130-year old Congress and the 30-year old TDP were made to bite the dust. Jagan, who represented Kadapa as a Congress MP, resigned, and won the seat in the by-poll with half-a-million margin in May 2011. The Congress candidate in the by-poll was the Health Minister D.L. Ravindra Reddy and he is now called "Deposit Lost" Ravindra Reddy as he had forfeited his deposit, having made the maximum noise, while the TDP candidate Mysoora Reddy who managed to save his deposit has recently joined Jagan, following his arrest. His mother, Vijayamma won the Pulivendula Assembly seat in place of YSR, who died in the plane crash, without any difficulty over his brother Vivekananda Reddy who too left the Congress recently, and joined Jagan, livid that YSR was being betrayed and his son harassed by the Congress.

Next, it was from Kovoor in Nellore district where the TDP Assembly member, Prasanna Kumar Reddy, crossed over to the YSR CP and resigned his seat. In the by-election that resulted, he won with a majority of over 25000 votes, as against some 9000 previously on TDP ticket in 2009.

And now, in the by-elections for 18 Assembly seats and one Lok Sabha seat of Nellore [1], YSR party made history by almost sweeping the board with huge majorities in 15 Assembly constituencies. It had lost Parkal in Telangana area to the TRS [2] by a whisker of some 1500 votes. The two Assembly seats the

Congress secured was with the help of the TDP[3] the main Opposition, which resorted to "match-fixing" with the Congress in the last minute. The YSR Congress won the Nellore Lok Sabha seat by a huge majority.

## Gimmicks

From the latest bout of by-elections that were held on 12th June for the 18 Assembly seats and one Lok Sabha seat, a few observations are in place: One, by-elections though, they were treated as a test-case for the looming 2014 general election. So, the Congress high command pulled out all the stops for fighting those seats. Huge sums of money were spent. It is heard that voters were paid up to Rs.2000/- per vote in critical places like Tirupathi where Chiranjeevi [4] resigned to go to Rajya Sabha.

Payments of Rs.500/- and Rs.1000/- were quite common. All the three parties did make payments, more or less, including the YSR Congress, at least to some voters. It turned out, however, that the voters were smart enough to take money from all parties but vote only to the party of their choice. In Nellore Lok Sabha constituency, for example, the extremely affluent Subbarami Reddy, the Congress big-wig is supposed to have forked out a fifty crore rupees; but, he lost by a very wide margin of nearly three lakhs votes to Raja Mohan Reddy, the sitting MP who had resigned from Congress in protest against including YSR's name in the CBI charge sheet. He too spent, but only a fraction of what his Congress counterpart did.

Two, quite a few who-is-who of the Congress high command - Ghulam Nabi Azad, Vayalar Ravi, Oscar Fernandez etc. came down, toured places and did their bit to boost the sagging morale of their party Contingents of MPs, Ministers and MLAs were deployed in specially marked places. Oscar Fernandez literally walked on foot, in the rural parts of Guntur that formed part of Prathipadu constituency, along with nine MPs, in scorching heat with a towel thrown on his head - probably in imitation of the late YSR's game-changing 'Padayatra' in 2004 which snatched victory from the jaws of defeat, and of his son, Jagan's 'Odarpuayatra' after he left Congress recently, which turned him into the darling of the rural folk. In Prathipadu constituency, where Fernandez began his experiment in Padayatra with nine MPs, the Congress lost its deposit. The gimmick concocted to gain votes in the last minute did not pay off. Ordinary folks can be counted to see through the veil. It seemed as though the Congress leaders were chasing their own tails, judging from the results that followed.

TDP supremo, Naidu and other leaders had also sweated it out, the former moving relentlessly on the stump, breathing out fire and brimstone on the young leader and his dead father. But, as ill-luck would have it, the party did not even open its account. It drew blank.

Finally, the crunch came when the crusading young man, in the midst of a hectic campaign was summoned to

the CBI and arrested. He was served summons on May 24th night, to appear on 25th at 10AM, before the CBI in Hyderabad, while resting in a village in a supporter's house in Macharla constituency. After grilling him for 30 hours, for three days, the CBI took him into custody on the evening of 27th, when he had to appear, anyway, before the CBI Court, the next day, on 28th at 10—30AM. And the elections were due on June 12. It was widely resented, with the exception of the Congress leadership and the TDP supremo, both of whom had gone out on a limb at their bete noire in jail and his father who was no more. The national press too reacted, as expected. "Jagan's arrest will be seen as another attempt by a desperate Congress to hit at a growing political rival... The events have left the Congress looking like a petty schemer and a big bully" wrote *The Hindu* in its editorial. "India Today" blazoned across its cover page "Price of Vendetta" with a well-informed article in it.

Big money, big persons, and "big bullying" did not help the Congress, while the TDP too found itself at its wits' end. Large amounts of money were spent, but the results proved the opposite. Congress, as the ruling party, was obviously leading in the race of greasing the palms of voters who readily grabbed what was offered but kept close to their chest the way they were voting. Then, the persona of the leaders from Delhi failed to impress the public and their voting behaviour. The Contingents of central leaders and MPs were not even noticed by the common folk. And finally, the efforts of the Congress high command, acting through the proxy of the CBI, to erase the memory of the YSR mystique seemed to have followed the law of reversed effect

The more the CBI tried to expose YSR's infractions and his son's asset-building propensities, the more the sympathy swelled towards him. As a result, Jagan's party swept the polls and the two major parties tasted the bitterest defeat of their careers.

### Humiliating Results

The YSR Congress secured more votes than the Congress and the TDP put together in nine of the 18 constituencies. Its overall vote in the 18 assembly constituencies exceeded the combined vote of the two major parties. YSR Congress won 15 out of 18 Assembly seats; of them, it won seven by margins of over 30,000 votes, three by over 20,000, and another three by over 15,000. The party won the lone Nellore Lok Sabha seat by a huge margin of over 2,91,000 votes, while the same candidate Raja Mohan Reddy had won the seat by only 55,000 votes in 2009 as the Congress candidate. The YSR party also won the Tirupathi Assembly seat with a thumping majority of over 18,000 votes, which is significant because the seat was vacated by the film star-turned-politician Chiranjeevi. The results were humiliating to the Congress which came second in six seats, third in nine, fifth in one and forfeited deposits in four seats. In Parkal (Telangana), where the Congress came fifth, it had won the seat in 2009, while the YSR candidate missed it by a little over 1500 votes, in spite of the regional sentiment for Telangana. The TRS [5] squeaked through somehow in Parkal [6]. It was a saving grace that Congress formally won two seats out of 18, but with the help of the TDP as part of its strategy to avoid being steamrollered by the new party [7]. The TDP did not mind a humiliating defeat for its candidates, if only the YSR party did not win, in

Narsapur and Ramachandrapuram. The TDP was equally in bad shape, having come second in nine seats, third in the remaining nine, as also in Nellore lok Sabha seat. It was a double whammy, this time, for the Congress, because it contested the by-elections after Chiranjeevi's Praja Rajyam Party, with over 15 percent vote in 2009, had merged into the Congress. It is estimated that the Congress-PRP merger lost 62 percent of its 2009 combined vote in 2012.

### To What Effect?

From the series of landslides that the newly started party scored, certain conclusions, provisional though, could be drawn:

One, the YSR Congress Party has come to stay and is likely to play a big role in the politics of the state. One more is added to the list of regional parties and the galaxy of regional leaders, with what effect on national politics, we are going to witness, following the decimation of national parties—Congress as well as the BJP. The impact of regional satraps on national unity and governmental stability will be watched with trepidation.

Two, the Congress party, after the death of YSR and the exit of his son, has been decimating itself so fast that it could end up a poor third in the state. No wonder if Andhra Pradesh in 2014 will turn into another Bihar, in electoral terms, for Congress. In Bihar, the Congress won just four assembly seats in 2010 and two Lok Sabha seats the year before. Unless the Congress does something radical to redeem itself from the egregious blunders it committed after YSR's demise, it can forget the good old days it enjoyed in the state.

Third, the main Opposition in the state namely the TDP, judged from the outcome of the by-elections, has been bleeding itself, concentrating its fire more on the young Jagan and his deceased father than on the ongoing problems of the Congress misrule in the state. Both the young and the tired cadres in the party may crave for change of leadership and for bringing in of fresh faces of the Stanford-educated Lokesh, who is Naidu's son and the chip-off-the-old-block and the feisty Junior NTR, who is the son of the legendary NTR son, Harikrishna, with the wily and ingenious Naidu pulling strings from behind.

Through all these changes, it is certain that the YSR legacy will run its time out only after Jagan had his tryst with the destiny of the state for, at least, one term during which time he would either have proved himself, or passed into oblivion, after causing much sound and fury on the political scenario of the state.

#### Notes

1. These seats fell vacant because 17 of the Congress MLAs voted against the Congress government in the no-confidence motion moved by the TDP Opposition, and hence they were disqualified by the Speaker. The 18th fell vacant because the PRP leader Chiranjeevi who represented Tirupathi resigned the seat, after he merged his party in the Congress, for getting into the Rajya Sabha. As for Nellore Lok Sabha seat, Congress MP Rajmohan Reddy resigned and joined the YSR Congress.
2. Telengana Rashtra Samithi, a regional outfit which has been successfully whipping up separatist sentiment for

carving out a separate state for themselves, and sweeping the polls in the region


3. Needless to say, the TDP is the Telugu Desam Party founded by the legendary film star N.T Rama Rao, known as NTR. The party, for the first time ruled the state for over 15 years. It is now led by his son-in-law Chandra Babu Naidu.
4. Chiranjeevi is a famous film star, who turned a politician before the 2009 general election and floated a political party called Praja Rajyam Party (PRP) which he merged in the Congress with its 18 MLAs. He was promised a position at the Centre and hence his resignation from Assembly.
5. See Note 2.
6. YSR Party's candidate in Parkal (Telengana) is Konda Surekha who was Congress MLA from Parkal and also a Minister. Being a staunch YSR loyalist, she resigned as Minister in the wake of his death, and later got axed as an MLA when she voted for the no-trust motion along with some others of the new party. She gave a good fight and lost by a small margin.
7. The two seats the Congress won are Narsapur and Ramachandrapuram in West and East Godavari districts respectively. In Ramachandrapuram, the YSRCP candidate was an ex-minister who had resigned after YSR's death and also one of the founders of the party, S. C Bose. These two constituencies were ordinarily TDP turfs. Except in 2009, TDP was winning there successively.

It is a wonder, in this election, the TDP candidates in both places lost deposits. The talk is that "match-fixing" between the Congress and the Opposition have seen through the Congress candidates.

#### *(Continued from Page 4)*

proved that the corporate boards of the top 1000 private companies are still dominated by two dvija castes. They have given the data that out of 9052 board members, 4167 or 46 percent are from Vaishyas and 4037 or 44.6 per cent are from Brahmins. OBCs constitute 3.8 per cent and SC/STs constitute 3.5 per cent. The study has concluded that "caste is an important factor in networking. The small world of corporate India has interaction only within their caste kinship". What else do we need to confirm that caste is playing a dominant role in the capitalist development of 21st century India?

**Acharya Javadekar  
A Satyagrahi Socialist**



G. P. Pradhan

**Price: Rs. 20/-**  
**Janata Trust**  
*D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir  
 Bharucha Marg,  
 Grant Road (W), Mumbai 400 007.*

## Pulling Assam back from the abyss

The riots and violence in Assam have moved away from the headlines of the metro media. But the State — and indeed other parts of the North-east as seen in a recent explosive confrontation in Nagaland over as minor an issue as an alleged theft — appears to be living on a knife-edge. It seems to be an unending cycle in a challenging humscape. The news of the region, for all these reasons, has acquired an international resonance.

Angry rhetoric and mobilisation of groups along ethnic, community and linguistic lines have not helped; indeed an already complex situation seems to be in a state of drift with neither the Central or State governments able to assert a sense of decisiveness or win back the confidence of all groups.

As in the past across the country, in such situations, the worst sufferers in the recent riots and violence have been the poor and vulnerable, especially women and children. Rural schools have been converted into relief camps — while giving temporary succour to a large number of people who have fled fear and bloodshed, such a situation also blights the lives of those children who study at these schools.

The situation in the Bodo Territorial Administered Districts remains tense. Lakhs are homeless and fearful of returning. Trauma is writ large on their faces.

In addition, hate speech and abuse of new media has created a situation where tens of thousands fled their places of work and residence, in places like Bangalore and Pune, and

returned to the North-eastern region (NER).

Thankfully, that flow has begun to be reversed. However, instead of merely curbing hate speech, governments need to firmly handle acts of hatred and racial discrimination.

As has been seen, the issue of illegal migration from Bangladesh remains an explosive and unresolved issue 27 years after the signing of the Assam Accord. This surely represents as much a failure of all sides in this process as of the Centre and State governments.

The signatories have met at a discussion on the current situation at Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) on September 3, 2012, convened by the Centre for NE Studies at JMI and issuing this statement after further discussions.

It is our view that the Centre and State governments must assert in no uncertain terms that those migrants who have illegally slipped across the Indo-Bangladesh border to any part of the country since March 25, 1971 — the agreed cut-off date — will be tackled under due process or even through a system of special courts to speed up the process. This is a problem facing all of India. This primarily represents a labour flow from Bangladesh, and needs to be raised with Dhaka.

Tragically, however, passions are whipped up by the use of unverified figures on either side, leading to greater anger, suspicions and fear.

There are no easy solutions to this situation in Assam although some

### Appeal for

Over two lakh persons are still housed in relief camps in Dhubri, Chirang and Kokrajhar districts of Lower Assam, in the wake of a series of violent clashes. This is down to about half the peak of nearly five lakh people in camps, making it one of the largest humanitarian emergencies in independent India. All these internally displaced persons fled from their villages in fear of violence, and many because their homes were torched and belongings looted. There is little hope that everyone will be able to return home in the immediate future.

The camps are lodged mostly in schools and college buildings; sometimes a few classrooms and a courtyard house a few thousand people. The Assam state government assumed full responsibility for the camps, and its officials coped with the sudden explosion of the refugees. The state supplied food, some money for utensils and clothes, and ensured primary health protection.

So far the camp residents are only surviving on bare rice and dal everyday. They need at least a plastic sheet to sleep on and mosquito nets. The camps desperately require many more toilets and clean drinking water, the lack of which threatens epidemic outbreaks of cholera, gastro-enteritis and malaria.

Children suffer in many ways. There are no arrangements to study in the camps, and most students lost their books to the fires that consumed their homes. Since most camps are housed in schools and colleges, local students also cannot study.

The state and humanitarian agencies — the latter regrettably substantially absent so far — must help people return and rebuild their homes, schools and livelihoods. Children and young people must be assisted to resume their studies and normal life, without



## Contributions for Relief Camps in Assam

fear and dislocation.

The major duty for relief and rehabilitation lies with the central and state governments. But in a humanitarian emergency of this magnitude, it is important for people of goodwill everywhere to reach out to help and heal, to assist in relieving immediate suffering, but also as a gesture of solidarity and caring with the suffering people of both affected communities, the Bodos and Bengali Muslims.

In a very small initiative, humanist young people have decided to work together for relief and reconciliation. This initiative would be in collaboration with TISS Guwahati. Initially joint teams of young Bodo and Bengali Muslims will supply relief materials and services in the camps *together*. The initial focus is to support children and youth in these camps with textbooks, play things, clothes, etc, and women with clothes, sanitary napkins etc; and also utensils, treated mosquito nets etc.

We reiterate that this is a very small modest effort, and is not suggesting that this is contributing to any solution of a very complex and old problem. It is just intended as a very small gesture of collective caring. We have set a target to raise at least around 20 lakh rupees initially, to make a small tangible contribution.

We appeal to people of goodwill everywhere to contribute to this small effort. The entire money would be transferred to the joint youth group in Assam, to use entirely for purchase and distribution of relief material in both the Bodo and Bengali Muslim camps. The accounts will be managed by the Centre for Equity Studies, which will get these independently audited, and the audited accounts will be placed in the public domain.

We would also like to request you to widely circulate this appeal amongst your friends and family.

- Amita Joseph, Amitav Ghosh, Anu Aga, Aruna Roy, Avi Singh, Bela Bhatia, Biraj Patnaik, Dipa Sinha, Harsh Mander, Jean Drèze, Karuna Nundy, Kavita Srivastava, Mathew Cherian, Nandita Das, Nikhil Dey, Pervin Varma, Rahul Bose, Ram Punyani, Reeta Dev Barman, Ritu Priya, Sajjad Hassan, Sejal Dand, Sharmila Tagore, Vandana Prasad, Vijay Pratap and Warisha Farasat

### For Aman Biradari

#### For further details, please contact

**Jeevika Shiv** (9899572770 begin\_of\_the\_skype\_highlighting FREE 9899572770 end\_of\_the\_skype\_highlighting, jeevikas@gmail.com) or **Ankita Aggarwal** (9818603009 begin\_of\_the\_skype\_highlighting FREE 9818603009 end\_of\_the\_skype\_highlighting, aggarwal.ankita87@gmail.com)

#### Details for donations

Please mention the purpose of the donation while making the contribution and e mail your PAN card number and postal address at [anoop\\_wdk@yahoo.com](mailto:anoop_wdk@yahoo.com)

Name of A/c: Aman Biradari Trust

Bank Name: IDBI Bank Limited

Branch: 1/6, Siri Fort Institution Area, Khel Gaon Marg, New Delhi 110049, India

A/c No: 010104000156950, IFSC Code: IBKL0000010, BSR Code: 110259002

of them are known, have been in the realm of discussion and policy framing.

First of all, the Assam government's decision to update the 1952 National Register of Citizens (NRC) is welcome — but there are disturbing reports, which say that in all least 10 districts the records are incomplete or unavailable. This has to be fixed by looking at the available data in the Registrar-General's Office in New Delhi.

To complete such a process is in the interests of all groups, including the student unions at the forefront of agitations and counter-agitations.

In addition, we strongly believe that:

People in relief camps must be assisted to return home, in conditions of dignity and safety

Border patrolling needs to be more robust especially in the riverine areas

Tackle the sense of impunity and immunity that armed groups have enjoyed

A deadline must be set for the handing in of illegal weapons and these must be registered and decommissioned (i.e. destroyed)

Economic cooperation on joint projects on the Bangladesh side of the border could help reduce the flow and make remaining at home more attractive.

Work permits, as have been discussed extensively, could be issued to people to come and work in

India for short periods but only after the NRC process is completed and ID cards issued to all Indian citizens of the North-east

All sides must abide by the Constitution and the law

The word “Bangladeshi” must be used to define those who have come post-1971 (the creation of Bangladesh) and should not be used casually to refer to people who are Bengali-speaking or of Bengali origin, whatever their religious persuasion, who have settled in Assam before 1971

Intimidation and hate speech must be shunned and any group or groups involved in hate acts and incitement to violence must bear the full force of the law

State governments need to appoint task forces manned by respected scholars and researchers as well as senior officials to review and verify land records and the ownership of land so that the rights of all who are protected by law remain inalienable. Till date, this has been observed more in the breach: a large number of political conflicts in the region are rooted in disputes over land, territory and natural resources. Yet, in this complex situation, the rights of any one group cannot be protected at the expense of the rights of others.

Land and natural resources are finite; matters are not helped by ratcheting up the political rhetoric.

In closing, we call on all political and other groups at this time to reduce the rhetoric, to help Assam and the region — and other parts of the country as we have seen — pull back from an abyss. The violence of past decades is unacceptable. Today, all sides have the capacity to inflict harm on others. It is time to spread

goodwill and end ill will. Otherwise, as we have seen, all of Assam and

the NER as well as in a larger sense, India, will suffer irreparable harm.

–Najeeb Jung, IAS, Vice-Chancellor, Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI); Sanjoy Hazarika, Director, Centre for North East Studies, JMI, New Delhi; Prof Binod Khadria, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU); Dr. Abdul Malik, Deputy Registrar, JMI; Prof. Udayon Misra; Prof. Anil Boro, Gauhati University; Dr. Monisha Behal, Chairperson, North East Network; Dr. Bulbul Dhar, Department of Political Science, JMI; Dr. Monica Banerjee, Director, National Foundation of India; Mr. Kishalay Bhattacharjee, NDTV, NE Editor; Dr. Roshmi Goswami, activist on women’s issues; Mr. Suhas Chakma, Asian Centre for Human Rights; Mr. Jamal Kidwai, Director, Aman Trust; Mr. Harsh Mander, Centre for Equity Studies; Dr. Rajesh Dev, Dept. of Political Science, Delhi University; Dr. Mujibur Rehman, Asst. Professor, JMI; Mr. Helal Choudhury, Advocate, Supreme Court; Mr. Mirza Rahman, Indian Institute of Technology, Guwahati; Mr. Mehruz Islam Bora, C-NES, New Delhi; Mr. Kaisii Kokho, Asst. Prof., JMI; Mr. Kaustubh Deka, School of Social Sciences, JNU.

## हार्दिक शुभेच्छा !

शतकाकडे वाटचाल करणारी व कामगारांचा आवाज बुलंद करणारी  
मुंबई बंदरातील पहिली कामगार संघटना

**मुंबई पोर्ट ट्रस्ट, डॉक अँड  
जनरल एम्प्लॉईज युनियन**

स्थापना : ३ मे १९२०

संलग्न : हिन्द मजदूर सभा

**कर भला सो हो भला**

“भार्यात जास्त आनंद

कोणत्या गोष्टीत झालेल तब

तो दुःखान्यांना आनंद देण्यात”

-कवी वर्डस्वर्थ

**डॉ. शान्ति पटेल**  
अध्यक्ष

**एस्. के. शेटये**  
सरचिटणीस

पोर्ट ट्रस्ट कामगार सदन, नवाब टँक रोड, माझगांव, मुंबई ४०० ०१०.

दूरध्वनी : २३७७६३२०, २३७७२३६९, ६६५६६४८७

फॅक्स : २३७५४७९४ इ-मेल : mbptdgeo@vsnl.net

## Ministry of Rural Development Further Dilutes the Provisions of the Land Bill

It is extremely unfortunate to note that the draft Land Acquisition, Resettlement and Rehabilitation Bill (retitled as Right To Fair Compensation And Transparency In Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Bill, 2012) brought by Ministry of Rural Development, which was already seeking to legitimise forcible acquisition by the government for private and PPP projects has further diluted it to placate the investors and their representatives in the Ministry of Trade & Commerce, Finance, Urban Development, Planning Commission and other Ministries.

It is no wonder and seems to be only expected from a government which is being run on the life support given by the private corporations and on their money, especially after completely anti-people decisions in the form of allowing FDI in retail and aviation, hike in diesel prices and electricity tariff, disinvestment of public sector units and other related measures.

We would like to reiterate our opposition to any such move by the UPA government to enact a legislation which is going to deprive the natural resource based communities of their livelihood and fails to accommodate key recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee comprising of members from different political parties. PSC very clearly has said that no acquisition should be allowed for the private and PPP projects, since they are nothing but a loot of natural resources. The unfolding corruption cases involving auction of coal blocks and spectrum, irrigation scam and others, all testify

to greed and illegality in private and PPP projects. It is time for shunning the eminent domain framework of the state rather than expanding it to be a tool in service of private capital. It will be a move for the worse and fundamentally damage the socialist and egalitarian fabric of the constitution, as propounded in the directive principles of state policy or mandated in the Article 243.

NAPM along with many other movement groups under the banner of Sangharsh have been demanding free prior informed consent of the Gram / Basti Sabha for deciding nature of public purpose, to approval of the project and their participation in R&R and various steps of project implementation. Unfortunately under the pressure from industry and their lobbyists even a 80 percent consent clause of the project affected people is now being reduced to the two third of the land losers alone. Similarly, small benefits like a house plot to those displaced are being taken away by increasing the time of residence from three years to five years prior to displacement. In spite of numerous deliberations with the Ministry, displacement in urban centres seems to be nowhere on radar, a separate legislation on the urban evictions and displacement is the only way out now.

Ministry of Rural Development in its bid to placate Ministers opposed to its proposal says that the "Bill shall apply prospectively only, i.e., for new acquisitions only, and not retrospectively. Earlier the Bill was to apply retrospectively, i.e., to ongoing land acquisitions where Award had not been made

or possession not taken". This is nothing but further dilution, since we have been saying that nearly 10 Crore people have been affected by various 'development' projects since independence with a very low rate of R&R, nearly 17-20 percent. A new legislation should move forward in addressing the historical injustice committed on the scheduled caste and scheduled tribe who constitute the majority of PFAs by setting up a National Resettlement and Rehabilitation Commission to address their claims of R&R rather than feeling proud in denying their share in development of the nation. It is shameful and nothing else!

A concerted effort is being made by the UPA to say that they are trying to protect the interests of the farmers and communities dependent on the land but unfortunately none of the actions by the government seem to demonstrate that. No wonder if approval to such a Bill by the group of Ministers will only add to discrediting the government, since it seems to be ruling for the interests of the private and multinational corporations alone and not for the people who voted it to power.

The Bill if accepted in current form will not only increase the conflicts surrounding the land across the country as being witnessed around the various infrastructure projects but will prove fatal for it in the next general elections. Group of Ministers must heed to the voices of the people, real investors' and not to the investors holding fictitious wealth. People and communities are real investors, who hold control of land, water, forest, minerals and

most important their labour. Lastly, Ministry of Rural Development must not bow to the pressure of the

industry lobby and rather pay heed to the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Tribal Affairs and

Urban Housing who are mandated to look after the interests of the marginal communities.

—Medha Patkar, Dr. Sunilam, Prafulla Samantara, Roma, Gautam Bandopadhyay, Vimal Bhai, Suniti S R, Bhupinder Singh Rawat, Dr. Rupesh Verma, Advocate Aradhana Bhargava, Rajendra Ravi, Shrikanth, Madhuresh Kumar

## March Against FDI in Retail

Socialist Party members took out a march in East Delhi on September 20 to oppose the decision of allowing 51 percent FDI in the retail trade and the price hike of Gas and diesel. The march was flagged off by Indradev, member of Parliamentary Board, from the party office at Patpad Ganj. They reached Lakshmi Nagar-Shakar Pur via Mayur Vihar phase 1, Trilok Puri, Pandav Nagar, Ganesh Nagar, Mother Dairy, Madhuban Chowk, Nirman Vihar distributing pamphlets and announcing slogans against the UPA government and its leaders,

A public meeting was held at the culmination point at Nirman Vihar crossing. Dr. Prem Singh stated that the decision of allowing FDI in retail will have disastrous impact on the small traders, shopkeepers, vendors and farmers of the country. All pro-people and pro-Constitution citizens must oppose this neo-liberal onslaught on our economy and Constitutional sovereignty. He declared that Socialist Party will continue its struggle against this decision in particular and neo-liberal policies in general.

Renu Gambhir, the president of Delhi State unit, in her address appealed the citizens to co-operate with Socialist Party in its struggle by becoming members, sympathizers and supporters. Senior socialist

Shyam Gambhir, environmentalist Prof. Dwijendra Kalia and Rajesh Dhokwal, social activist Rakhi Gupta took part in the march. Socialist Yuvjan Sabha (SYS) also participated in the march in a big number.

### Hunger strike

The Socialist Party had also organized indefinite relay hunger strike at Jantar Mantar from September 22 against the UPA government's decision. It was planned that every day five members of the party would observe fast for 24 hours. However, in view of the appeal made by Justice Rajindar Sachar, Renu Gambhir announced in the evening of 25th September the end of the hunger strike. Justice Sachar in his appeal said: "Socialist Party (India) under the leadership of professor Prem Singh, General Secretary of the party has been observing relay hunger strike at **Janter Manter** against the government decision to permit Wal-Mart to open operations in India. They have rightly emphasized that this step is harmful to the economy of India and drive to loss of occupation of at least over four crore of families. I would hope that other political parties would appreciate this step and lend their support to the movement. Now that a message has gone out, and the fight is long I would urge my friends to give up their programme of hunger strike

immediately, as the fight is now to be fought on a bigger plane."

Socialist Party has decided to continue its fight against the decision. The party will contact and co-operate political parties, retail trade associations, trade unions, farmers' unions, students' unions to take a decisive stand against this anti-people and pro-multinational decision of the UPA government. Socialist Party will participate in the protest to be held by Trinmool Congress on 1st October in Delhi.

—Niraj Singh

**Madhu Dandavate**

By  
**B. Vivekanandan**

Price: Rs. 20/-

**Janata Trust**  
D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Grant Road (W),  
Mumbai 400 007.

# Not by violence

**Shahid Siddiqui**

After the film, we now have the nude cartoons of the prophet. There is no end to the provocation. It seems that the easiest route to world fame is to condemn Islam, the Quran and the prophet of Islam. Charlie Hebdo, a satirical French magazine, which was fast losing circulation, found a cheap and simple method of overcoming its financial problems by lampooning Islam and all that it believes to be sacred. The film Innocence of Muslims, which could not attract even five people to its premiere, today has many hits on the Net, thanks to the reaction of a handful of violent and irresponsible Muslims in Libya.

It is time that Muslims understood that reacting violently to any insult to Islam is not the right response to all those suffering from Islamophobia or those who take Muslim-hating to be an easy path to financial and professional success. If there was no fatwa on Salman Rushdie, he would have been regarded a mediocre writer, long forgotten. Muslims should learn to ignore the insults to the prophet and the Quran. The objective of Islam haters is to provoke a violent reaction from the Muslims and by reacting predictably, they play into the hands of their opponents. Critics of Islam say that it is an intolerant and violent religion that has no place in a civilised society. By reacting the way some Muslims have, they have proved their critics right.

This is not the way the Quran or the prophet expects Muslims to behave. The Quran asks its followers

to behave in a peaceful and civilised manner when faced with insults and mockery of their faith.

“When you hear God’s revelations disbelieved in and mocked at, do not sit with them until they enter into some other discourse; surely then you would be like them” (4:140).

The Quran is clear about not getting into arguments with those who mock your religion, but it also makes it clear that once the discourse changes you may remain in talks and other social interactions with those who are insulting you. So the Quran is asking Muslims to ignore and move away from those who insult and provoke. There are innumerable examples in the prophet’s life (Hadis), when he won over his worst enemies, critics and opponents by his love and affection in response to their insults.

Our anger about this blasphemy and mocking of the sacred symbols of Islam should be positive and constructive. In this age of Facebook and Twitter you cannot stop some mad or ill-informed people from insulting your prophet, but you could very well use the same medium to spread positive and correct messages about Islam. Every Muslim on Facebook or Twitter should write one Hadis of the prophet every day. Show your anger by publishing small booklets in all languages and distribute them free of cost to as many non-Muslims as possible. If today there is propaganda and misleading information about Islam, Muslims are equally responsible for

it by not countering this propaganda. They show their love of Islam and the prophet by reacting violently to any insult, but not by taking the teachings of their religion to others.

Muslim ulemas, intellectuals and leaders should boldly stand up to all those who propagate violence and intolerance in the name of Islam. They are doing more damage to the fair name of this great religion of peace by their actions than the enemies of Islam or those suffering from Islamophobia. They should tell common Muslims that this is a deliberate act to bring anarchy into Muslim societies and to present Islam and Muslims in a bad light before the people of the world. Muslims should not fall into this trap. They should concentrate their energies in building a better world both for themselves and for humanity. The Western world’s right to blaspheme can be countered by the right to positive and correct information about Islam and other great religions of the world.

–*The Indian Express*

## **Janata Subscription**

Annual Rs. : 260/-  
Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on  
Mumbai Bank  
in favour of  
**JANATA TRUST**

D-15, Ganesh Prasad,  
Naushir Bharucha Marg,  
Mumbai 400 007

# Deep waters won't run still

**Bharat Dogra**

On September 10 the Madhya Pradesh government belatedly accepted the demand of the *jal satyagrahis* at the Omkareshwar dam in Khandwa district. Villagers had immersed themselves in the water to demand the implementation of nothing other than the government's own promises to the Narmada dam project oustees, which the Supreme Court ordered it to fulfil. They stood in water for two weeks; by the time the government accepted their demands, their skin had started to peel.

But the State government has refused to accept the demands of the Narmada dam oustees at another site, the Indra Sagar dam in Harda district. Here the *jal satyagrahis* were pulled out of the water and arrested.

What were their demands? That the water level must not be raised till the time all the villagers whose lands would be submerged were compensated satisfactorily. What needs to re-emphasised is that these oustees of the Omkareshwar and Indira Sagar dams were asking for nothing more than the implementation of the rehabilitation plan.

The Narmada Tribunal Award had clearly established the principle that alternative land should be provided to oustees, and that submergence of land would be permitted only months after rehabilitation has been completed.

## Supreme Court Stipulation

Confirming this in the context of these two dam projects, the Supreme Court had clearly stipulated that raising the level of water beyond a certain height would not be allowed unless satisfactory rehabilitation has been completed so that premature, disruptive and illegal submergence can be avoided.

In view of the obvious fact that alternative cultivable land had not been provided to most oustees, the submergence was illegal. Legally, the submergence could only have taken place six months after land-allotment and rehabilitation had been completed.

At Omkareshwar, the water level was being stepped up from 189 mts to 193 mts. The government has now agreed to bring it down again. At Indra Sagar, the government has decided to raise the level from 260 mts to 262 mts; there is no change in this decision yet.

The most rational thing would have been to simultaneously reach an agreement with both struggles at the time of the September 10 agreement. Inexplicably, the government has accepted the demand at one place but not at the other.

The Narmada Tribunal Award was a completely official exercise. The oustees hardly had any say in it. How can a democratic government go back on legal commitments, that too after creating structures that are

displacing lakhs of people and have disrupted the entire ecology of a vast region?

All available indications therefore point to the fact that the most anti-democratic, and arbitrary tactics of dam-builders are about to be repeated once again: the world over, the tactic is to simply submerge the land arbitrarily so that once the land is submerged, the affected people will have no option but to leave.

Unfortunately for the dam authorities and the State government, a democracy is in place in India, and so is a people's movement to fight for the rights of the oustees.

The situation now is that the people of Harda are planning to take the State government to court for contempt. The oustees of both projects are preparing to make their presentations before the Ministers' Committee constituted by the Madhya Pradesh government for satisfactory rehabilitation.

It is still not too late to undo the great injustice done to these oustees of the Narmada projects, if the commitment of land for land based on the policy adopted by the Narmada Awards Tribunal is fully implemented, a policy that been reiterated by the High Court and the Supreme Court, and most recently by the Grievance Redressal Authority of Madhya Pradesh.

—The Hindu

# मुंबई शहरातील एक अग्रगण्य सहकारी मुद्रणालयाची ५०व्या वर्षाकडे यशस्वी वाटचाल



## लोकमित्र सहकारी मुद्रण प्रकाशन संस्था मर्यादित

ए-१८, श्रीराम उद्योग भवन, १३, जी.डी. आंबेडकर मार्ग, वडाळा, मुंबई - ४०० ०३१, दूरध्वनी : २४१४७०८२

श्री. अशोक पंढरीनाथ सरफरे

अध्यक्ष

श्री. ज. भा. जाधव

सचिव

अॅड. मधूकर साळूंखे

कार्याध्यक्ष

श्री. नरेंद्र भुर्के

सहसचिव

श्री. आनंद माईणकर

उपकार्याध्यक्ष

श्री. केशव उतेकर

खजिनदार

संचालक

श्री. सुहास नलावडे

श्री. वसंत एस. भोसले

रेवती पोंडकर

श्री. विजयकुमार शेलार

श्री. भास्कर सावंत

### वैशिष्ट्य

- ◆ मल्टीकलर ऑफसेटची सर्व प्रकारची दर्जेदार छपाई
- ◆ दर्जेदार व सुबक पुस्तक बांधणी
- ◆ संगणकद्वारे अचूक अक्षर जुळवणी व डिझाईनिंग
- ◆ छापलेली स्टेशनरी अपेक्षित ठिकाणी पोहचविण्याची व्यवस्था
- ◆ टेलिफोनवरील संपर्काप्रमाणे प्रतिनिधी पाठविण्याची व्यवस्था
- ◆ आमच्या उत्तम आणि दर्जेदार सेवेचा अनुभव घ्या

आमच्या येथे करण्यात येणारी छपाईची कामे  
वार्षिक अहवाल, दिनदर्शिका, मुखपत्रे, नियत  
कालिके, पुस्तके, रोजनिशी माहिती पत्रके, जाहिरात  
पत्र, पोस्टर, मेलर, फोल्डर, हेड आउट, कॅटलॉग, कार्यालयीन कागदपत्रे, रजिस्टर, दिवाळी अंक



## **GANNON DUNKERLEY & CO., LTD.**

**(An ISO 9001 – 2000 Company)**

**REGISTERED OFFICE**

**NEW EXCELSIOR BUILDING, 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR, A.K. NAYAK MARG,  
FORT, MUMBAI – 400 001**

**TEL: 91-22-22051231, FAX: 91-22-22051232**

**Website: [gannondunkerley.com](http://gannondunkerley.com)**

**E-mail: [gdho1@mtnl.net.in](mailto:gdho1@mtnl.net.in)**

**GANNONS ARE SPECIALISTS IN INDUSTRIAL STRUCTURES, ROADS, BRIDGES (RCC AND PRESTRESSED CONCRETE), RAILWAY TRACKS, THERMAL POWER, FERTILIZER, CHEMICAL, PAPER AND CEMENT PLANTS, WATER & WASTE WATER TREATMENT PLANTS, PILING FOUNDATION & FOUNDATION ENGINEERING.**

**GANNONS ARE ALSO PIONEERS IN MATERIAL HANDLING WORKS, MANUFACTURE OF PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SLEEPERS, ERECTION OF MECHANICAL EQUIPMENTS & PIPING AND SUPPLY OF TEXTILE MACHINERY AND LIGHT ENGINEERING ITEMS.**

**OFFICES AT:**

**AHMEDABAD - CHENNAI - COIMBATORE - HYDERABAD  
KOLKATA - MUMBAI - NEW DELHI**