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Anand Kumar

Editor : **G. G. Parikh**

Managing Editor : **Guddi**

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

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com



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End of SAARC Summit?

Kuldip Nayar

India's foreign minister Sushma Swaraj may sound belligerent in her speech at the United Nation. But she indicates India's exasperation over Pakistan's interference in Kashmir or elsewhere. After the killing of 14 jawans at Uri, one widely supported demand is: retaliation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has promised counter action at the time and the place that the armed forces chose. What would be India's next step not yet known but the retaliation part is very much true. It is a sad option and to exercise it without action requires patience which is getting exhausted. War is not considered an option. Yet what is the way out?

Pakistan had admitted that some non-state actors could have indulged in straightening things at Uri. But now after the whole world has expressed horror over the Uri incident. Islamabad says that India had stage managed Uri and Islamabad had no hand in it. But how does it explain that its soil was used by the forces who attacked Uri. Pakistan has raised the Kashmir issue to divert attention from everything else. It expects New Delhi to participate in the talks which it would initiate.

Probably its eyes were on the SAARC summit at Islamabad. India's formal 'no' to participate has ended the meeting because both Nepal and Bangladesh have expressed their inability to attend the Summit at Islamabad. Obviously it had to be cancelled when India said no.

The question is where we go from here. War is no option but talks also have not fructified. Sushma's speech is another warning to Pakistan that India was tired of Pakistan's doings and may be driven to take some action. All eyes are on New Delhi because it has to decide what steps should be taken because it is becoming increasingly clear that talks are no solution.

India has considered the revision of Indus Water Treaty which was signed in 1960 by Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan military chief Mohammad Ayub Khan. Sartaj Aziz who represents Pakistan's foreign affairs has said

that anything done to revise the treaty without Pakistan's participation would be 'an act of war'. This has complicated the matters still further.

In view of this deadlock, no progress has been made. This should be told to the people on both sides. They have been urging their respective governments to sort out the matter through dialogue. Pakistan says again and again that some settlement over Kashmir is necessary for any peace in the subcontinent.

We come back to square one. By all means the parties concerned should sit across the table to find a solution. But India and Pakistan cannot do by themselves. The Kashmiris want to have their say. Recently, when I went to Srinagar at the invitation of students, I found that the youth wanted a country of their own sovereign and independent. They do not realize that India did not favour another Islamic state on its border when it is exasperated by the one, Pakistan, it has.

But the mood of the youth is that of anger and they would not compromise their demand for *azaadi*. They do not realize that *azaadi* is an ideal, not a feasible proposition. When the British left India in August 1947, they gave the princely states an option to stay independent if they did not want to join either India or Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh, the then Jammu and Kashmir ruler, declared that he would stay independent. The land-locked state had to have the support of both India and Pakistan for access to the outside world. He did not want to depend on one. With the Muslims in a majority in J and K, Pakistan expected its accession. When it did not take place, Pakistan sent its irregulars, backed by the regular troops. The Maharaja sought the help of India which insisted on the accession before sending its troops. He had to sign the Instrument of Accession Act.

The two parts of the states are against *azaadi*. Jammu, the Hindu majority part, would like to join India. The Buddhist majority Ladakh, the other part, want to be a union territory of India. Therefore the demand for *azaadi* is essentially that of the valley which has nearly 98 percent of Muslims.

When India is in the midst of endeavour for polarization and when the ruling political party is playing a Hindu card, it is difficult to imagine that the Congress or any other political party, including the Communists, would support the *azaadi* demand. Even otherwise, all political parties are opposed to the demand for independence, although some may go to the farthest in giving powers to the state.

After 70 years of partition, the wounds inflicted because of the division have not healed yet. How does anyone expect the people in India to reconcile to another partition, however genuine and strong are the sentiments of the Kashmiris? If partition is again on the basis of religion, the secular state may not survive as it is. True, the 25 crore Muslims in India are equal citizens and they cannot be treated as hostages. But the valley's secession may have such repercussions which are dreadful to imagine. The constitution, guaranteeing equality to all Indian citizens, may be of no avail.

India and Pakistan have fought two regular wars on Kashmir, apart from a mini misadventure in Kargil. The valley continues to remain part of the Jammu and Kashmir state. Several thousand Kashmiris have died for the cause of *azaadi*. For India, they were insurgents. They were crushed by the security forces which too lost thousands. Even now some militants from across the border attack some places but are rebuffed. For example, on the day of Zubin Mehta's concert, a post of Central Reserve Police Force in the southern Kashmir was targeted with rockets. There was a hartal at Srinagar. But this exercise has been gone over by many a time before. Sushma's warning may also go unanswered. But hers is yet only a warning because the next step can lead to war between the two countries. There seems to be some rethinking at Islamabad because they have said through their envoy Abdul Basit that the Uri was "stage managed" and Pakistan had no hand in it.

Linking Economics With Ethics

The dominant trends in economics have generally de-linked economic development from ethical considerations. However some leading thinkers have been emphasising the need to move away from such an approach to economic development.

E. F. Schumacher has written, "To think that the only way to promote economic growth in the so-called underdeveloped countries is to imitate as closely as possible the current practices of the advanced countries and to force every time-honoured institution into the service of material aims of purely Western inspiration, betrays not only an astonishing lack of imagination but also a truly ominous lack of awareness of the dehumanizing deformities of the modern west."

For Mahatma Gandhi emphasising ethical values was integral to his understanding of economics. He wrote, "That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce."

One important aspect which Mahatma Gandhi emphasised was the need to give the highest priority to the poor. Gandhi said,

"Whenever you are in doubt, or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test:

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and self melt away."

Secondly Gandhi emphasised the cooperation of people in meeting human needs, "What we seek to do is substitute false and non-human economics by true and human. Not killing competition but life giving co-operation is the law of the human being."

–Bharat Dogra

We Want Not War, But Solution to Kashmir Problem

Sandeep Pandey

After the Uri attack an atmosphere of jingoism is being built which can lead the country to war. While war may be necessary for the rulers, no war is in the interest of common citizens. A India-Pakistan war has the added danger of converting into a nuclear war. People who are talking about war should be asked if they are prepared for a number of cities on both sides turning into Hiroshimas and Nagasakis? India and Pakistan have already fought four wars. There was no solution, neither was any of them so conclusive that a next one was not needed. Hence possibility of a solution emerging from war is slim. So, why should we even consider the option of war? Talk about war is sheer madness.

The reason behind war, the Kashmir problem needs to be solved so that in future no soldier or common citizen has to die. It is government's responsibility to normalize the situation in Kashmir and talk to Pakistan so that a solution which is agreeable to all Kashmiris can be arrived at. While it is admirable that our soldiers are brave and are prepared to lay down their lives performing their duty, their lives are precious, especially for their family members. Why should we let them die unnecessarily? The government policy will determine how safe are our soldiers? The governments of India and Pakistan can instantly create friendship and in the next moment become treacherous enemies. The common citizens of the two countries meet with warm cordiality whenever they get a chance. Why should the soldiers have to pay with their lives for the whims and fancies of leaders?

It has been hardly two years for the Narendra Modi government and he has already faced two terrorist attacks. In addition to ruling the centre, Bhartiya Janata Party is also an alliance partner in Jammu & Kashmir. Situation has never been so bad in Kashmir. Why is it that with BJP coming to power situation inside the country and threat from outside becomes worse? Has it got something to do with the ideology and manner of functioning of BJP? The Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, it's ideological parent organisation, must introspect about this.

So far it was the Indian government which was trying to prevent the internationalization of Kashmir issue. But

by raising the issue of Balochistan the Indian government is now responsible for internationalizing the issue. The Indian government has every right to raise the issue of Balochistan but its priority should be Kashmir. If over 80 people are killed in J&K over two months and we've to use pellet guns against people in which children lose their lives and some people lose their eyesight then it doesn't send a very good message to the world. It is a proof that people of Kashmir are not with Indian government. India blames Pakistan for happenings in J&K. While it is true that some Kashmiri youth have received training in terrorism in Pakistan, when the children and women pick up stones against the security forces then it is a failure of our policies there. Without putting its house in order, blaming outsiders for every wrong in Kashmir doesn't build any credibility for India internationally.

India wants the international community to label Pakistan a terrorist country. Why are no questions raised on the role of United States? There was a US citizen involved in the planning for attack on Mumbai, David Coleman Headley, about whom we don't mention when we blame Pakistan for the attack. Why does the US continue to supply weapons to Pakistan in spite of the fact the Osama bin Laden, perpetrator of the 9/11 attack on twin towers and its biggest enemy in recent times, got refuge there? If our response is going to be dictated by our bias against Pakistan alone, we'll never be able to stop these attacks on India.

We also need to secure our border against repeated infringements. It will be better that instead of investing in offensive armament we gave priority to modern equipment to make our borders secure. Leaders who play with the emotion of nationalism on such occasions must be asked how is it that terrorists enter our territory so easily without our intelligence agencies getting a whiff of it? People responsible for these lapses must be held accountable.

If the BJP government is hiding its failure in economic policies behind this jingoism then it is utterly shameful. It is a fact that not much investment has come in, in spite

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The Forgotten Mahatma

Brij Khandelwal

We remember Mahatma Gandhi only on October 2 and January 30. The symbolic spinning of charkha, recital of bhajans and selling khadi at a discount are the only activities that remind us of him. For the rest of the year, Gandhi remains a forgotten Mahatma deified like one of our numerous gods and his teachings reduced to mundane rituals.

Long back Albert Einstein had said that the coming generation would scarcely believe that a man like him had ever walked the planet earth. Einstein was probably thinking of the very distant future when people might raise their eyebrows in sheer disbelief and ask ‘was there a man like Gandhi in flesh and blood?’

Seven decades after his death Gandhi who preached the gospel of truth and non-violence all his life and strove to liberate India, has become in his own country, among his own people a legend and a myth. What Gandhi said or did is mostly forgotten and we are stuck up with symbols like the charkha and khadi.

Abdul Ghaffar Khan, known as the “Frontier Gandhi” caustically remarked when he visited India in 1969 on the occasion of Gandhi’s birth centenary celebrations “I have come to remind the people of India that they have forgotten the Mahatma.”

If the people have forgotten Gandhi, it is not because there are inherent contradictions or flaws in the Gandhian philosophy. In fact, what he wrote in the Harijan, Young India or elsewhere or said at his prayer meetings has relevance not only today but until man either degenerates into a beast or is reduced to a robot.

When several varieties of Marxism and liberal socialism are current, it has become fashionable in elite circles to criticize Gandhi and blame him for all the problems confronting us. But in the midst of jibes and questionings it would be worthwhile to do a bit of soul-searching to find out if we have understood and followed Gandhi in letter and spirit.

Horace Alexander rightly asked us to bring Gandhi “down to earth again as a living man among his men, which is what he wanted to be” to strip him of

his mahatmaship and look at him, if we can, as plain Mr. Gandhi.”

Many in this country would create an orgy of violence and a carnival of bloodshed just for the thrill of it. Many would be interested in sitting at the head of political dinners and getting photographed. But few would be prepared to die for their country in obscurity, unwept and unsung.

Unlike most leaders anywhere in the world Gandhi knew how to risk his popularity. Dr Ram Manohar Lohia wrote about Gandhi “he had a calf, the child of a sacred cow injected to death in a certain situation, he had a monkey shot, he took Harijans into temples, he refused to attend weddings unless they were inter-caste, he sanctioned divorce, he had a large sum of Rs 55 crore and more given to Pakistan at a time when Hindus held that treasonable, he acted and not alone spoke against property, in brief, he hardly ever missed doing anything that brought danger and calumny to him.”

The reason why, we, as a nation are still struggling hopelessly is that we have shown more interest in aping the West and adopting western growth models. The result inevitably is that while we have created “islands of prosperity” the masses continue to exist in vast areas of darkness.

Hypocrisy has become our new religion and falsehood our way of life. We have fatal doses of these in all spheres of our life. Fat pundits stooge on gullible masses; pseudo-leftists and chauvinistic scoundrels run the circus that is our politics. Public and private monopolies sustain the “functioning anarchy” that is our economy. Gandhi had warned us of an anomie that will have overtaken us but we never bothered to create conditions in which life will have some mission and purpose. Little wonder we are overwhelmed by rank passivity and continue to wait for a messiah for our deliverance.

The relevance of Gandhi is now being realized the world over as mankind grapples with one vast problem after another. The schizophrenic despair resulting from

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Gandhism and Socialism

Rammanohar Lohia

A great man, if he is connected for half a century or more with public life, must have made contradictory statements, Mahatma Gandhi, with his rare insight, made nevertheless certain conflicting assertions on the British Empire, the caste system and capital and labour relationships.

From his belief that the caste system was a part of religion, he went on to say that it was a sin. From his belief that the sum total of the British Empire tended to act for good, he went on to say that it was satanic, and from a certain underlying belief in the sanctity of private property, he went on to demand its confiscation without compensation and termination of land ownership.

These are statements so contradictory of one another that if they had come from another man, the charge of inconsistency would be levelled against him. It will, therefore, be necessary on our part to examine Mahatma Gandhi's specific statements in order that we can apply them in their entirety, in their essence, to situations of an allied character which may arise in the future, and to discover, if it is at all possible, the continuity of his thought and action. It will be necessary also to imagine how he would conduct himself in a situation of a different kind. A mere record of his wishes with reference to his writing of an earlier period would probably contradict certain assertions that he made from time to time as he developed.

Gandhiji is more specific than Buddha or Christ, whose sayings have been liable to various interpretations according to persons and climes. At the same time, he is more general than, let us say, Karl Marx, whose writings in themselves have given us an elaborate system; more specific than the prophet, more general than the philosopher. Furthermore, the only treatise which Mahatma Gandhi wrote in order to elaborate what he thought was a system, is rarely read at any time by any considerable number of people: the *Hind Swaraj*. Mahatma Gandhi has influenced his generation in India and in the world not so much by his writings, certainly not by any systematic writing, as by his living and his action and what he said in illustration of them. There are persons with whom the written or the spoken word is what matters and their

life is but a secondary annotation to what they have said. Mahatma Gandhi also wrote and spoke voluminously, but whatever he wrote and spoke was a commentary on how he lived and how he acted.

To seek, therefore, the meaning of his life one would have to go more to his life and action, and the written or the spoken word merely as an illustration of what he did. Efforts may still be made to devise some kind of a system out of his action. Persons of that type are not wanting. "Gandhism" and "Gandhites" are still fairly attractive terms in our country. However, it would be some time before a system could come into existence, and should of course come, but none exists today. I do not know how it could emerge but its desirability is unquestionable, based as it would be on so dynamic a life as Mahatma Gandhi's.

The world today is in the grip of two systems and the third one is in the making. Capitalism and communism are almost fully elaborated systems, and the whole world is in their grip, and the result is poverty and war and fear. The third idea is also making itself felt on the world stage. It is still inadequate, and it has not been fully elaborated, but it is open. In an open system there is still some chance of truth and progress, while a closed system does violence to facts and wishes them away in order to prove their meaninglessness. Open systems live in accordance with the facts, and in any case expect such systems to revitalize themselves with obstinate or changing situation. This idea is the Socialist idea. Instead of seeking to elaborate a new doctrine of Gandhism, it would be far more desirable if the contents of Gandhiji's life and action were to operate on systems that already exist on the stage of the world. As to capitalism and communism, one may doubt if these can be influenced, considering that they are closed. But for socialism Gandhiji's action may well act as a filter through which socialist ideas flow and get rid of their dross or as the strain which may colour them generally. Nobody would be happier than I if Gandhiji's ideas were also to influence the other two systems, capitalism and communism, but one may reasonably doubt that this can be done. In what lies the specific value of Gandhiji's action?

Everybody knows that tens of millions throughout the world saw in him their spokesman, the solace and the remedy for their sufferings and their distress. No matter to what part of the world one might go, one would find numberless people who look upon Gandhiji as the world's greatest symbol for resistance to oppression and injustice and even solace in suffering, suffering that may have nothing to do with government and laws, suffering that may result out of the very fact of living.

It is not as if our world has not abounded in persons who have resisted oppression. If our century has known barbaric cruelty, it has also known heroic resistance to oppression. Why then should this name be singled out by the peoples of the world to act as their solace? The explanation is obvious. In the modern world, organization has become so embracing and powerful that the individual is completely subservient to it. No matter where the origins of modern civilization lay, it is today the civilization of the collective, where the individual is only a number in the mass and his effectiveness exists in so far as he is a part of the mass. Europe too resists injustice but only when there is an organization. Europeans have been known to carry out epic acts of resistance but only when they are assisted by an organization and, I would like to add, weapons. An individual in Europe feels helpless; he cannot act unless he is supported. He is very often an isolated item surrounded by a hostile world and, when a suitable organization is lacking, he is reduced to the status of the rats.

When Herr Hitler came to power in Germany, it was easy enough to notice how those brave and valiant and thinking Europeans belonging to the Socialist and Communist parties had lost all their manhood and, although I regret to have to say this word they behaved more or less like rats, scurrying to and fro for shelter from Hitler. Individuals unsupported by organization and weapons are negligible in the context of modern civilization. And in the context of this modern civilization Mahatma Gandhi came along and said that even if you do not have an organization to support you, even if you do not have arms to wield, you have got something inside you which enables you to resist oppression and injustice and also to bear suffering manfully. It was this strange and powerful quality of Gandhiji's actions in his last thirty years that fascinated the attention of modern man and made him believe that the future might still contain the ingredients of a new world.

Gandhiji also had other qualities, which I will not

elaborate yet, which made a woman who had lost her son or a man who had lost his sweetheart find a little solace in him. It is a most peculiar phenomenon, but there it is. All those who were distressed and suffering found some kind of a solace in that man, and when he died the volume of personal and poignant grief that tens of millions shivered with throughout the world has perhaps never been equalled. Their little stories from Paris or New York or Berlin, and I imagine also from Moscow, although they are not known to us, would convey to you how the taxi man or the porter or the labourer or the farmer or the school teacher felt his absence from this world.

This enabling the individual to resist oppression by himself and without any support is, to my mind, the greatest quality of Mahatma Gandhi's action and life.

Some persons at this stage may be inclined to think of means and ends. The doctrine of means and ends has naturally much to do with the quality of Gandhiji's action. Means and ends, according to the philosopher John Dewey, are more or less convertible. Means are ends in the short run and ends are means in the long run. Whatever method one employs in order to achieve one's desired aim tends to become the end in the long run and whatever aim one desires to achieve, if one goes about the process intelligently, the means are piecemeal achievements of the end. It is not possible to achieve the victory of truth through falsehood, of health through murder, of one world through the sacrifice of national freedom, of democracy through dictatorship. These are pretty obvious propositions, for the means employed are ends in the short run, and if a system believes or acts so that dictatorship or sacrifice of national freedom or falsehood is expected to achieve the victory of its opposite, it is going against a very simple, easily understood, and perfectly obvious proposition that whatever one does in the immediate goes into the total of what one achieves in the future. No special logic is necessary to prove that. Ends and means may not be wholly convertible but they are so interrelated that opposites stay opposites and cannot be reconciled. That is why Gandhiji was often inclined to say "one step enough for me". This doctrine of "one step enough for me" ties up with the doctrine of ends and means and is perhaps even bigger than the latter.

The world today is inclined to think so much of the future and whatever aims are laid in the future that the present is sacrificed. One does not pay enough attention to the immediate steps that one undertakes, with the result

that a certain mysticism has begun to operate in collective life. When asked as to how an immediate and a particular act is related to the end in view, one is told “wait for the next act,” and when one has waited for the next act and is still waiting to get an answer, one is again told, “wait yet for the next act”. The chain of acts goes on lengthening and no single act is a justification in itself. Its justification is continually sought in the succeeding act that never occurs, and the chain goes on lengthening, and in the name of truth and world peace, wickedness abounds. The extent to which the world of today has forgotten this lesson “one step enough for me”—to that extent has it surrendered itself to the dark forces of—I do not like to use the word “mysticism,” “mystic” is a good word—to the dark underground forces of illogic or whatever you call them. Such systems, incidentally, pride themselves on their science and their logic. That is not, however, to say, that those who subscribe to the doctrine of immediacy should be unaware of the end that they have in view. The immediate step is, of course, related to the distant aim in view, but it should not be considered to be a passing and transitory stage to which one need not pay attention.

There is a danger that those who adopt the doctrine of immediacy may lose the end from view. That again would be as disastrous as the fallacy of not paying any attention whatever to immediacy. At times, when I have tried to think of Gandhiji, he has come to me in the shape of an image; a series of steps mounting upwards, all set in a specific direction, but the top of it never yet completely formed, and ever continuing to go up, a man who goes along with cautious but firm steps and leads with him millions of his countrymen; “one step enough for me.”

There are other parties and creeds which have a fully formed idea of the ultimate destination, and they are probably in a far better position to relate their immediate steps to their destination. They sometimes hasten towards their destination so quickly that millions of their followers are unable to follow them. But here is a doctrine in which one step goes on leading to the next step in such a fashion that not alone a great man but millions alongside of him mount up the unending ladder going into a specific direction. This is the image that has sometimes formed itself in my mind when I have thought of Mahatma Gandhi. But, as all images go, one should not take it as a completely adequate one, for it may well be that there were occasions when Gandhiji should have acted differently from what he actually did. When one

thinks of individuals like Mahatma Gandhi one is prone to the fallacy of thinking of the ideal in terms of the actual, and I confess to you that at times I have thought like a Communist or a Catholic with regard to Mahatma Gandhi. A Communist is one who allows his ideal to be embodied in a particular individual or a country or a particular age so that his critical faculties are destroyed and he is unable to see the mistake of his embodied ideal. I have tried to get into the communist mind at times and have finally succeeded only when I got into my own mind with regard to Mahatma Gandhi. I do not think I have liberated myself completely from it because certain elements of unthinking loyalty must still obtain, for no devotion can be freed of them entirely. Nevertheless, I warn you against this danger. Luckily, however, there were only two or three occasions when I made mistakes because of assimilating the ideal with the actual.

This doctrine of ends and means, together with the doctrine of immediacy, has given to modern man a weapon of unexampled strength. This weapon is being used in increasing fashion by the world. The freedom forces of Tunisia are using it, the dark races of South Africa are using it, and, if for the time being a momentary eclipse seems to have come over it in our own country, do not forget that a great man’s ideas and teachings are not to be judged by what has happened three or four years immediately after his death but what may happen in the rest of the century and after. Before this weapon came into frequent use in our political or collective life, the world had known alone of two other modes of operation, the parliamentary and the insurrectionary. There was either the parliament to remove wrongs or if the parliament proved faulty the masses could mount the barricades and try to defeat authority. Friedrich Engels of the earlier period said that history was made by the people and that parliaments could not achieve anything worth much. Ultimately the mass of the people so thought Engels, would have to rush to the barricades in order to defeat authority. After the experience of the German parliament and the victories achieved by Lassalle’s social democratic party, Engels revised his opinion and thought that parliamentary means could be sufficient and that revolutionaries would do well to look upon parliament as an agency of change. In this statement of Engels, the contrast is between parliament and insurrection, between democratic constitutional life on the one hand and barricades on the other. The European mind was unable to go beyond these two alternatives until Gandhiji came on the scene and showed that there was a third course of action.

I believe that parliament may not always prove to be a satisfactory agency of change, and I am not prepared to subscribe to the reactionary view of Engels that parliament is capable of achieving the revolution, particularly in the modern world where two-thirds of the world is so steeped in misery and poverty that parliamentary means will often be found to be inadequate. In India and, of course, other similarly situated countries, the extent of under-employment, dismissals, starvation, and even deaths due to famine would indicate that to depend upon parliamentary means alone would be in the ultimate instance to defeat parliament. If the mass of the people began to believe that the country's sane politics depended on parliament alone, they would rush to insane political parties that showed them another way out. If it were suggested that legislation in assemblies and parliament alone would afford redress to all kinds of grievances, whether increasing prices or increasing starvation, and the sole remedy offered were an election once in five years, the mass of the people would perhaps lose their patience and distress would pile upon distress and their minds would lose all balance, so that when a party or creed came along and said, now rush to the barricades, if not to the barricades, to the dagger and the acid bulb — yes, that is the latest fashion — and the pistol and the revolver, the mass of the people would perhaps resort to or at least welcome those methods.

I do not have to tell you how robbers and dacoits can win the applause and affection of the people. I mean ordinary dacoits and robbers like Bhupat and Mansingh. They are simple dacoits and murderers and robbers, and yet when they loot certain property in certain areas they distribute about 20 or 25 per cent of it to the poor and also enable needy fathers to marry off their daughters, particularly when there is the system of dowry, and so on and so forth. If parliament and constitutional methods were the only way to achieve salvation, I have no doubt in my mind that two-thirds of the world, particularly Asia, will rush to systems and creeds that believe in insurrection or violence of the dagger and the acid bulb. It is here that the third course of action suggested by Mahatma Gandhi comes to be singularly effective. It is not necessary for a people suffering from starvation or large-scale dismissals to depend on parliament or to wait expectantly for another general election. They have this priceless, matchless weapon of civil disobedience in their hands when injustice and oppression go beyond bearable bounds. When constitutional methods have proved incapable of achieving redress, it should be open for the people to violate unjust laws and wrongs and injustices

that are inflicted upon them.

To violate laws, to court imprisonment, to invite punishment by authority, even to the extent of death, although that is not a very happy thing, is the only satisfactory way of effecting change. I believe that any creed or party wanting to achieve something worthwhile in the world must be ready for death, not in speech but death as a matter of course like life. At the very moment when one has to die, one does feel rotten about it, but the worth of a party consists in making a person feel rotten if he were not ready to die when he should. In any case this is the specific contribution to political action which Gandhiji made.

The way has been opened to the mass of the people, to the individual, to groups of people to violate laws. I will not go into that rather elementary discussion as to whether satyagraha is permissible in a state of freedom, whether it was permissible only when British rule prevailed, and all that kind of rather childish prattle. Satyagraha as a weapon will prevail as long as injustice and oppression prevail, and it should prevail, because if it does not, the gun or the bullet will. That is the specific alternative which India in the last thirty years has placed before the world: Civil Disobedience or the Bullet? The alternative is not between parliament and insurrection, between the bullet and the ballot, which poisonous doctrine learned men are trying to place before the world. The alternative is between satyagraha and the bullet. The ballot has its own place. It is supreme in its own sphere. The people exercise their vote, they express their will, and this expression prevails for five years. In that sphere there is no challenge to the ballot. But with regard to injustices and oppression, when they have assumed unbearable proportions, the alternative is between the bullet and civil disobedience. Should our century, before it dies out, learn this lesson all the world over, that the individual as well as the mass have had placed in their hands this unique weapon of civil disobedience to defeat their tyrants, we may be ushering a new civilization.

It is true that civil disobedience or satyagraha must register many more victories before they are recognized as effective and universal weapons like the bullet. When I cite to you the example of South Africa and Tunisia or the Negroes of the U.S.A., where whites and Negroes are trying to violate unjust laws, I do not deny that much of that may be due to expediency. Let no one imagine that the Tunisian or the South African has grasped the effectiveness of civil disobedience also with regard to

building up a good and worthwhile civilization. They are probably using it because they have no other weapon in their hands.

Even that is enough. "One step enough for me." They have come to it after a long exercise; they will probably begin to see its usefulness for building up the future world.

This principle of immediacy must not, however, be restricted to the weapon of civil disobedience. It spreads further; it goes into economics and politics, and has, so far Gandhiji is concerned, given us two concepts, one of the self-sufficient village and the other of the village republic or village government. These two concepts are based on decentralization. The self-sufficient village is to run on the basis of an economy more or less fulfilling its own needs and depending upon machines or tools like the spinning wheel. The idea of village government is also an experiment in achieving democracy of the first grade, for democracy in the modern world is of the second grade. A student of Greek politics may well think of the Athenian and other republics where democracy of the first grade prevailed, at least in so far as citizens went. I wish there were similar descriptions of democracy prevailing in our country or elsewhere, of remote antiquity, but the only illustrations that are common are those from Greece and it was first-grade democracy, where the mass of the people operated on the political scene and governed itself without the mediation of representatives. Representatives of course are not always undesirable. Some of them may be eminently good persons. But, in any event, if you have to govern yourself through the medium of a person whom you have elected, it is no longer direct democracy, it is indirect democracy. And if direct democracy were possible even in limited areas for limited subjects, that would be a great achievement. Gandhiji put forward the idea of the self-sufficient village and the autonomous village republic in order that the mass of the people might be able to decide their fate, govern themselves, order their own interference. I have overgeneralized. Naturally, with a proposition such as this, it would be utterly possible to discover quotations from Gandhiji which would deny it. For instance, Gandhiji had subscribed to rather complicated machines. He subscribed to the aeroplane, to the locomotive, to the railway industry, and so forth. It would be possible to find quotations from him which would deny the complete validity of what I have said, but, as I have said, it is the general direction of his thought and action which matters and not the specific assertions which he may have sometimes made on the subject of machines or on the

subject of representative government.

The general direction of his mind leaves no doubt that it tended to go towards the self-sufficient village and the village republic. How can this be related to a creed or a system which would usher the new world? A great difficulty arises, for I do not believe that the modern world with all its faults will let us create a new world which dispenses with its tools altogether. There has been a surfeit of tools. Man has become a slave of tools. That fact has to be recognized. Modern man in Europe and in the U.S.A. lives very often and in a large part of his life as to possess the things that he does. Radios, cars, television, vacuum cleaners, are not slaves to the modern man or to the housewife, who indeed are slaves of the things they own. This may appear to be a fanciful proposition because we of India do not own those things, and people and persons who do not own the good things of life cannot believe that those who own them in surfeit may have become utterly dissatisfied with them. I do not for moment assert that the people of India or similarly situated countries should not go in for things. They have to, if they want to achieve a decent standard of living, but those people who for the past three hundred years have been thinking in terms of a continually increasing standard of living have now come to a debacle, where they are no longer master of things they possess but the things have begun to possess them. In a public meeting in the U.S.A. certain Americans tried to twit me over this subject and I thought that I would have a hostile audience before me, but when I tried to talk about housewives and how they were related to various objects in their home, I found that there was applause of rather massive proportions.

Tools have multiplied, but to dispense with them altogether is bound to lead to a situation in which the spinning wheel, however much it may come in for ceremonial attention on a specific day, let us say Independence Day, when the President of the Republic spins in a public park and hundreds or thousands spin along with him, is dead or dying out. It would, therefore, be neither logical nor worthwhile to go on singing praises of the self-sufficient village and the spinning wheel and simultaneously enabling the erection of huge factories for the production of cloth or cement or something, and that is precisely the situation which the people of India have to face today. The village republic may also be heading towards a similar disaster, for when the Constituent Assembly of Gandhi-India met to frame the Constitution for India, it had over three hundred articles

for division of power between Delhi and Hyderabad, between the President of the Republic and the Governor, between parliament and the state assemblies and similar matters, but it had no time to consider the concept of village government and village republic, until someone at the very end thought that the foundation of Gandhism had been missed and suggested the inclusion of an article about village government. Any student can go through the Constitution of India, and will find that out of 392 articles just one article enunciates how extremely desirable village government is. What is it? How is it to be worked out? What powers are to be distributed? All that is awarded to village government is ceremonial attention and that too as an afterthought. Here then is a situation where the mind must exercise itself and cannot be content with any specific solutions which Gandhiji himself may have offered. It is the direction alone that matters, and the direction is one of decentralization, a decentralized economy and decentralized political system.

What would be a socialist's application of this principle? Such an application will have to make use of tools, not necessarily those already in use but tools that may have yet to be invented and manufactured. As to the decentralization of political power, the principle may be laid down straightaway as one of the maximum divisible powers to the village or the city consistent with the integrity and unity of the country. The principle may not be worked out in elaborate detail at a shot. It may in fact take the rest of the century to work it out. If it is acknowledged that the individual residing in his village where he can practice democracy of the first grade will be given abundant powers so as to decide his own destiny, that principle is accomplished.

Any socialist ideology would have to consider immediacy with regard to economy as well as political administration, not necessarily in terms of the spinning wheel or those of the village republic but perhaps in those of the small-unit tool, which would not require enormous blocks of capital, and also those of autonomous village government. I have deliberately used the word "autonomous" rather than "independent." The concept of self-sufficiency had better be eliminated. The village must stay in close relationship with numerous other villages and also the world at large. At the same time the concept of divisible political power would have to be treated so elastically that it becomes capable of continual stretching consistent with the integrity of the country.

I do not have to tell you that the modern tool has

become so complicated that it violates the principles of democracy, that the kind of civilization it has built up is dependent on certain driving forces, for instance, on the concept of an increasing standard of living, or ever-increasing output. Modern civilization of the last 300 years can be distinguished from all those that went before it with regard to certain points. One is that every modern individual wants a house, clothes, and furniture that are increasingly expensive. Such a demand exists that the total output keeps on increasing, and so the ever-increasing produce of a nation is invested in other tools which further increase output. All this is dependent on a sound application of science and technology and inventions of all kinds. It is a patent fact that these driving forces are no longer applicable to the world as a whole. Two-thirds of the world has no use for them, and where these have been forced upon the people, the result has been a stunting in the material and moral growth of a nation.

Going, therefore, into further detail will serve no useful purpose, and I would assert that the India that we must try to build should be of a truly different character. In place of an ever-increasing output, we should aim at a decent standard of living; in place of the desire of modern man to increase the comforts of life within the frontiers of his own nation, the wish of the new man to achieve the desired comforts for the world as a whole. This is where Gandhiji's life and action can prove to be of great benefit to us all, provided his action is fully understood. It must be an independent course of action and point in the direction that he wanted. I would not worry too much whether this particular direction can be proved in detail from Mahatma Gandhi's writings. That should not be of vital consideration, so long as it is understood that the modern world is without principles, so long as it is understood that the Russian and the American of today, no matter if they belong to very divergent systems, are both motivated with the same animal drives and fight to increase their comforts within the frontiers of their own nations, the American within the frontiers of the United States, and the Russian within the frontiers of Russia. In place of that, the Socialist should place before the world three programmes for a decent standard of living for the world as a whole.

Socialism is an open doctrine, while the two systems of capitalism and communism are closed. The new world must get ready to strive for a decent standard of living for all humanity. I believe that decent living rather than prosperity is the keynote of the day.

I will now go on to certain other aspects of Gandhiji, but only briefly. So soon after his death there has been an eclipse; I believe that it is a temporary eclipse. There is a great deal of ceremonial mention of his name and erection of monuments, but so far as the great effect of his teaching is concerned, it has been absent or comparatively absent after his death. What is

that due to? Is something lacking in what Gandhiji did and said and wrote? Perhaps so, and if this is true, there is no use blaming alone the men of today for their doings.

I believe that Gandhiji did not pay sufficient attention to the physical basis of life, physical and economic. I am using these words as in their scientific connotation. He did suffer from some fear which resulted from a heightened awareness of the body. There is no doubt about it that to keep the body clean was his first care and anybody who wishes to follow him would do well to study those precedents. There are also many quaint things Gandhiji said or did about food, clothes, the relationship between man and woman, and the like. Besides, Gandhiji tried to change the habits of his fellow men and undoubtedly was able to influence a large number of his countrymen and was always thinking as to how the people of India could have healthy bodies. He also said that he would rather have just a few followers who put his teachings loyally into practice than have the multitude follow his words with indifference. Together with his excessive concern for the physical and the best ways to purify it, there is a pronounced tendency in him to deny it or at least to reduce it. Apparently the purification and the reduction of the physical and the economic are up to a point interchangeable terms.

Ever since the Kathopanishad raised the dichotomy of the lovely and the good, the desirable and the necessary, the pleasing and the ennobling, perhaps for the first time in thought, Indians have been at the problem, and the greatest of them have tended in the general direction of the first answer. The lovely and the pleasing have been sacrificed for the good and the ennobling. Gandhiji also did that, by and large. It is possible to argue for the ascetic austerity, in patches, barrenness of his life also on social grounds. Complete identification between the leader and his people in a poor country like India can perhaps be effected alone on levels of austerity. Under conditions of more relaxed prosperity, the level might have been different.

Nevertheless, it would be futile to deny the element

of ultimate philosophy in Gandhiji's austerity. He did not really come to terms with the devil of gold or music or loveliness or what one may call rising economic standards. Like his great predecessors, he denied or overwhelmingly reduced the material. It may be doubted whether the material and the spiritual, the lovely and the good, in fact, the beautiful and the true can ever come to terms except by a trick of definition in which the one is absorbed by the other. Furthermore, the possibility of a continuing equilibrium in view of the dynamism and the demonism of the material may also be denied. As an American undergraduate once asked me, once we have the materialist bull by the horns, how do we ever let him go? How could we ever live a relaxed existence if the material needed to be controlled permanently? The question stumped me then, as it stumps me now. I have no answer to it except the wills of life and experimentation.

The mainstream of life as outlined by, let us say, Adam Smith and Truman or Karl Marx and Stalin gives them a certain power over men's minds and bodies. When persons like Gandhiji tend to go too far away from prevalent attitudes and objects and offer solutions which are no longer acceptable to mankind, then they reduce themselves to the status of ceremonial remembrance, once a year entertainment or that of half an hour in the course of a day of 24 hours. Gandhiji's name is now reduced to that status of ceremonial remembrance, of presence in reference libraries or a great mention in college rooms and public lectures. But the main stream of life runs without any heed to Mahatma Gandhi, his action and his teachings. The bulk of his followers have become moderate and have settled down to enjoyment of the fruits of this labour towards change of heart. They have no need to change the hearts of the oppressed and to put courage into them. They find it easiest to take to the cosy activity of changing the heart of the oppressor and the exploiter. Their way of life ties up without much difficulty with any of the prevalent world attitude of capitalism, liberalism, mixed economy, or the orthodox varieties of reformist socialism.

The more extremist of his followers have gone on to embrace the ideas of Karl Marx. They too have abandoned the genuinely revolutionary in Gandhiji, that which made him take to the path of civil disobedience, village government, and controllable tools. They have tried barely to keep alive Gandhiji's passion for identification between the mass and the leaders, and while their ways of conflict are unhemmed, they have acquired

the communist's devotion to the current civilization, with its urges and its technology, which is incidentally also the capitalist's devotion.

As a result we have the Gandhian by-products with some saintly variants more particularly of the former, the capitalist and the communist. India, which has been stagnant all these ages, must try to achieve a system of economy and administration in which the basic postulates of Mahatma Gandhi prove workable. Otherwise, Gandhism will be reduced to the ceremonial status of the spinning wheel and village republics will not come into existence.

Larger and yet larger factories will be erected and the mass of the people will think in terms of increasing standards. India will become a weak imitation of the U.S.A. or the U.S.S.R. Existing civilization will have another stage to play on. But if an effort is made to build Gandhiji's postulates into economic and administrative systems and work them out, it would be possible for India to help in the creation of a new civilization. This is the specific job of socialism all over the world and especially of socialism in India.

Systems that have been so far elaborated, socialism being no exception, would make it necessary for the individual to be good. The transitional individual would just need time in which to make necessary adjustments. Our task now is to elaborate a system in which it would be possible for the individual to be good but also necessary for him to be so. Capitalism and communism have both tried to put before the world certain systems of thought and action where all will be automatically good. It will not be necessary for one to be good. That has been the specific quality of sages all over the world. To deal with systems and to elaborate them on paper and to change society in accordance with them has sufficed for these sages, but they have invariably failed. What should be done, however, is to take advantage of certain essential virtues of the individual and then to weave them into systems where it would be possible to be good but where the individual will always find it necessary to strive to be good. Socialism has hitherto generally been the system where such necessity did not arise, where the environment alone mattered, where changes in law and in government and administration were sufficient to make the individual good. This is a vice which socialism has hitherto shared with communism and capitalism. I deliberately call it a vice, the vice of environmentalism, where the environment alone is of importance and where

with improvement in it the individual is believed to change automatically.

It may well be that Mahatma Gandhi tended to overemphasize the individual and under-emphasize the environment. Let it also be realized that socialism has tended to over-emphasize the environment and under-emphasize the individual. If a logical system of thought were to be devised, equal emphasis would have to be laid on both, for man is both end and means, and while he may enact virtues which do not change, he has also got to be an instrument of better future. Let me close with the remark that the need today is to combine the sage and the saint.

Socialism has dealt too much with the sage studying environment with discovery of principles of good organization. The saint has emphasized qualities of living and denial of the flesh. Each one of us has latent in him the virtues of the sage and the saint. But the virtue of the sage has tended to degenerate into the vice of cruelty just as the virtue of the saint has tended to degenerate into the vice of narrowness. Sage and saint have both become narrow and cruel. The sage becomes cruel, because he begins to hate all those who are unable or do not wish to think like him. The saint becomes narrow, because there is no effort like the effort to be good or pure. The distance between cruelty and narrowness is very small. If there is any lesson to be learned from Mahatma Gandhi's life and action, every one of us should strive to bring out the latent qualities of satyagraha and sagehood as well as sainthood. Let us not be frightened of sainthood. Not to wish to deny the flesh is almost always to deny the saint altogether, and that is bad. Knowledge and good conduct, change of environment and change in the individual, revolution and religion, social reconstruction and moral uplift, education of the mind and training of habits have hitherto appeared as antipoles because of man's incurable inclination to monastic solace. Whether or not Mahatma Gandhi was able to combine well the sage and the saint in his own person without being predominantly the one or the other is a speculation of little interest. Among leaders of men, he was the first in world history to be a revolutionary of political and social structures together with being a revolutionary of the inner world and ways of conduct. Frequent mental gymnastics are conducted by persons so as to make some ropes of theory take a strand from Marx and a strand from Gandhi and weave them together. That is a pursuit which to my mind is utterly hopeless and produces no results. But if

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Anthropocene Age

Samar Bagchi

The geologic age in which we are living now is known as Holocene Age. This age started after the last ice age ended about 12000 years ago. The human civilization developed in different regions of the earth from about 10000 years. Industrial Revolution arrived between the middle of 18th and 19th centuries. Two great changes took place in human society after the Industrial Revolution. In 1830, when Industrial Revolution was ending the human population was only 1000 million. In 2000 it crossed 6000 million. Humans like us, Cro-Magnon man, arrived on Earth about 40 to 50 thousand years back. Through evolution it took so many years to bring the world population to 1000 million. But Industrial Revolution brought in so much productive forces in the hands of humans that earth added 5000 million more people in 170 years only. The demands from nature for timber, water, minerals, etc. went on increasing at a galloping speed, specially after 1950s.

That humans are the masters of the earth is a Judeo-Christian world view. In the Book of Genesis Bible says, "God said unto them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it and have command over the fish of the sea and fowl of the air, and over everything that moveth the earth." During the Scientific Revolution between 16th and 18th Centuries the philosophy of science was given by Francis Bacon and the mathematician-philosopher Rene Descartes. They talked about becoming masters of nature. Descartes in, "Discourse on Method" writes, "We can have useful knowledge by which, cognizant of the force and actions of fire, water, air, the stars, the heavens and all other bodies which surround us – knowing them as distinctly as we know the various crafts of the artisans – we may be able to apply them in the same fashion to every use to which they are suited and thus make ourselves masters and possessors of nature." Humans are not the masters of nature. It is just 'a link in the immense web of nature' as Blaise Pascal has said.

The second major change that took place was in the explosion of gluttonous consumerism among the rich and middle class of the world. The change can be understood from the example given below. In the middle of the Industrial Revolution when an American used to go to

the market one had a choice of a maximum of 300 items in a market space of about 150 sq. meter. But, in 2000 when an American, living in a city having a population of one million, goes to the market one has a choice of one million items in a market space of 1.5 million sq.mt. This is the reason Mark Twain writes, "Civilization is a limitless multiplication of unnecessary necessities." When we look at the burgeoning growth of glittering shopping malls in the big cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata we can understand the situation. If you go to such shopping malls you will not find a Rama Kaibartya (low caste), a Hansda or Tudu (tribal). Because of such proliferating production for making profit by the corporate and satisfying the gluttonous consumerism of the rich few of the world the earth is very fast losing its forests, biodiversity, water, soil with melting of glaciers and ice in the arctics and advancing deserts. To produce such consumables you need energy and major part of it comes from fossil fuels. Every year the need for energy in the world is increasing at the rate of 2%. Millions of tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) is liberated that is causing global warming and climate change. If the average temperature of earth increases by only 2 degree Celsius then there will be a catastrophe in earth. Scientists predict that if humans do not make a drastic change in their lifestyle global temperature may rise up to 6 degree Celsius by the end of 21st. Century. Scientists from Stanford, Princeton and Berkley have recently informed that sixth mass extinction is coming when the first species that will go out of the earth is Homo sapiens. Fifth mass extinction came 65 million years back when with other species Dinosaurs became extinct.

Because of this great change that has taken place on earth some scientists are proposing that we have entered the Anthropocene Age crossing Holocene. The word Anthropocene has not yet come in the dictionaries. In 2009, a Working Group on the Anthropocene was formed at the Leicester University under the leadership of Professor of Geology, Jan zalasiewicz. Zala Siewicz informs. "The significance of Anthropocene is that it sets a different trajectory of the earth system, of which we of course are part. " He goes on, "We have lived most of our lives in something called the Anthropocene and just realizing the scale and permanence of the change. "

When with chemical agriculture, use of nitrogen and phosphorus were started being used more and more and from then on the footsteps of Anthropocene Age started. The climate scientist of University of London Prof. Chris Replax, who was also the Director of London Science Museum, informs, "Anthropocene makes a new period in which our collective activities dominate the planetary machinery." He further says, "We are playing with fire, a potentially reckless mode of behavior which we are likely to come to regret unless we get a grip on the situation."

In 1970 started the observation of Earth Day in USA. It is observed every year. In 1962 Rachel Carson wrote 'Silent Spring' and made the world aware of the great environmental crisis. In 1972 we had Stockholm Conference in which late Indira Gandhi said, "Poverty is the greatest polluter". In 1992 we had the Earth Assembly at Rio. President of USA senior George Bush was not coming. When Reilly, the head of American delegation, informed Bush that if he does not come America will be isolated. Then Bush came. But, before coming he gave a statement that, 'I shall not change the lifestyle of Americans'. What is that lifestyle? America has only 5.6% of world population. But it consumes 40% of the natural resources of the world. Information about the consumerism has been given earlier. In 2002, Sustainable Development Conference was held in Johannesburg. As per the decision of Rio Meet 21st. Conference of Parties (COP21) was held in Paris in last November-December. But after all these conferences and meets the need for power is increasing at the rate of about 2% every year. The power comes mostly from fossil fuels. So, CO₂ in air is increasing by millions of tons every year. The devastation of nature goes on unabated. It is projected that all ice of Arctic will melt within the next few decades. If all ice melts then calthrage (methane), that is lying under ground for millions of years, will be released which is many times more Green House Gas ((GHG) than CO₂. Thereby, the global warming and climate change will be faster.

Humans are the most intelligent of all animals. But, it is digging its own grave. Philosophers and poets gave warnings long back. 17th Century philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal (born 1621), whose law on hydrostatics have to be studied by every student, wrote, "Humankind is a very small link in the immense web of nature, but it is the only one that through thought understands nature; it is the only species on earth to be responsible for the earth and will be able to transform it

for the better or for worse." Are the humans taking the earth towards a better or towards a dark future taking away the right of life of the future generation?

The year Tagore died in 1941, in his famous essay "Crisis in civilization, he wrote, "At an early age I had believed with all feeling the gift of European civilization. But today, at the time of my departure that belief has become completely bereft." In 1940, in a letter to poet Amiya Chakrabarty, then teaching in USA, wrote, "Using Brahmin's brain, Kshatriya's services and shudra's services today's commercially-minded Europe has become irresistible. But, I can see their feet on a downward slope towards extinction." English poet W.B. Yeats (1865-1919) wrote, "Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold; Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, / The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere/ The ceremony of innocence is drowned;/ The best lack all conviction, while the worst/ Are full of passionate intensity." When we take a look at the media we feel how true is the vision of the poets. What violence has gripped over nature and society?

Tagore and Gandhiji understood that city-based industrial civilization will collapse. Rabindranath establishes Santiniketan and Sriniketan to start a new kind of education and rejuvenation of villages. Sriniketan was working in 50 villages and more than 10 tribal villages. In 1904 Tagore wrote, "Swadeshi Samaj", in 1905, "Bilasher phans" (noose of luxury), in 1922, breaks away dam in the drama, "Muktadhara" (Freed stream). The words that the farmers of Sibtarai village downstream the dam speaks is as if Medha Patkar of Narmada Banchao Andolan is speaking. In 1924 Tagore writes, "Raktakarabi", a severe critic of the dehumanized modern civilization. In the same year in 1924, in a lecture in China, Tagore says, "We have for over a century been dragged by the prosperous West behind its chariot, choked by the dust, deafened by the noise, humbled by our own helplessness and overwhelmed by the speed. We agreed to acknowledge that this chariot drive is progress and that progress was civilization. If we ever ventured to ask "progress towards what, and progress for whom"- it was considered to be peculiarly and ridiculously oriental to entertain such doubts about the absoluteness of progress. Of late, a voice has come bidding us to take count of not only the scientific perfection of the chariot but of the depth of ditches lying on its path."

Tagore is raising question about civilization and

progress. What will we call civilization, progress and development? If we take a look at the old civilizations we value Greek civilization, which we now call Mediterranean civilization, we value Gupta period of India when we had a flourishing of arts and sciences. We value the Islamic renaissance of Bagdad Caliphate when there were great outpourings in science, mathematics, astronomy, medicine etc. We value European renaissance from 15th to 17th Centuries and of the Bengal renaissance of 19th and early 20th Century. There was no internet, computer or mobile then. Did it deter the creativity of mind? The aspect in which humans are unique is in its immense creativity of producing literature, arts, architecture and sciences. No other species can do that though they have the need to procreate, they need shelter and need food for survival. A society that fosters the creativity of human is more civilized, more developed.

Gandhiji writes, “God forbid India should ever take to industrialization in the manner of the West. A tiny island kingdom is today keeping the whole world in chains. If an entire nation of 300 million took to similar kind of economic exploitation the whole world will be bare like locust.” We can now understand the meaning of these words of Gandhiji and the words of Tagore like ‘ditches’ through the ecological sciences. Ecological Footprint (EFP) is a new concept that has come in ecological science. When we stay in a house, eat vegetables, eat fish, eat meat we need some land or water space. When we breathe out CO₂ we need space for trees to absorb it. The carrying capacity of earth is 1.9 hectares (ha) per person. But in the 1980s already average EFP per person was 2.3ha which is 20% more than the carrying capacity of the earth. If we look at the burgeoning glittering shopping malls of the big cities of India during the last three decades or so it is sure that EFP has increased greatly. But in 1980s the EFP of USA was 10ha per person, Australia 8ha, Europe 5ha while Asia and Africa 1.4 to 1.5 ha per person. Hence, it is not the poor people of the third world that is responsible for the catastrophe that the earth faces. It is the rich few of the world including that of India that is responsible for the environmental degradation

Rabindranath and Gandhiji did not want urbanization. In 1928 in the article, ‘Samabay Niti’ (Rules of cooperative) Tagore writes, “Socialization is the heart of the village. This socialization can never be achieved in a town. One reason for this is that, as town is large social relations become loose. Another reason is that because of business and other special needs and

opportunities population becomes large. There humans primarily want to satisfy its own essential needs, not each other. Due to this even when people living in the same locality they don’t feel ashamed if they don’t know each other. With the complication of our life this alienation is gradually growing.” Tagore more specifically speaks about alienation in a talk before the villagers during the yearly festival in 1930 thus, “You don’t have to go far-Kolkata, where we live, know there is no relationship between neighbors in their joy, sorrows and during some troubles. English poet T. S. Eliot (b.1888) writes about alienation in the Western society thus, “The desert is not only in the southern tropics/ The desert is around the corner/ The desert is squeezed in the tube train/ And the desert is in the heart of your neighbor.”

In this human-centric Anthropocene Age both nature and society are crumbling. The difference between rich and poor, violence and untruth are gallopingly increasing. What kind of India Gandhiji dreamt? On 5th of October, Gandhiji wrote a letter to Pt. Nehru, “The first thing that I want to write about is the difference in outlook between us. If the difference is fundamental then I feel the public should also be made aware of it”. Then Gandhiji expressed his dream of future India and the world in the letter thus, “I am convinced if India is to attain true freedom and through India the world also then sooner or later the fact must be recognized that people have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts, not in palaces. Crores of people will never be able to live at peace with each other in towns and palaces. They will then have no recourse but to resort to violence and untruth ...while I admire modern science (he did not say this in Hind Swaraj) ...which should be re clothed and refashioned aright... the village of my dream is still in my mind... My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women will be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world.”

Pt. Nehru replied thus on 9th October. “It is 38 years since Hind Swaraj was written. The world has completely changed since then, probably in a wrong direction... You are right in saying that the world or a large part of it appeared to be bent on committing suicide. That may be an inevitable development of an evil seed planted in civilization that has grown.” Knowing that the Western paradigm of development is in a ‘wrong direction’, ‘committing suicide’ and an ‘evil seed’ we drank that poison of Western paradigm of development and we have an India now where the hungriest people live, every 3

seconds a child dies out of malnutrition, about 1 million farmers commit suicide in 10 years' time. The West could develop the way it did because the world was divided between the 'core' and 'periphery' after colonization in the 18th and 19th centuries. By plunder, extermination, deindustrialising and deeducating the peripheries the West could develop the way it had. Dadabhai Nauroji, Ramesh Chandra Datta, Ganesh Deuskar have described this in their books. Charles Darwin writes, "Wherever the Europeans have trod death seems to follow". Daniel Defoe of Robinson Crusoe chastises the Spaniards for their barbarities in America thus, "Where they destroyed millions of these people... a mere butchery, a bloody and unnatural piece of cruelty, unjustifiable either to God or men; as for which the very name of Spaniard is reckoned to be frightful and terrible to all people of humanity or of Christian compassion". Where is our 'periphery'? So, we are attacking Singur, Nandigram, Niamgiri, Jagatsingpur etc and ousting millions of adivasis, dalits, farmers from their hearth and home and destroying the ecology of our beautiful and rich country with its natural resources. The looting and exploitation of our natural resources is still going on with globalization.

Rabindranath and Gandhiji had given a new vision of India which will have equity and village-centered development shunning urbanization. In 1922, Tagore in "Cooperative" gives plan for development of villages thus, "We have to reconstruct all our villages to satisfy all our needs. It is necessary to form a zone. If the heads of zones can organize all works and redress the deficiencies by themselves only then the cultivation of self-rule will become true all over the country. It is necessary to help and inspire the villagers to start their own school, cooperative and bank. By this way if the villages become self-reliant and united then only we will be saved. Our greatest problem is how to reconstruct our village society."

We all hoped that socialism will show a new way. But, after 70 years of existence Soviet Union collapsed. China has adopted large scale industrialization with freedom of capital. Marx and Engels said when communism will be established the productive forces will increase to an "infinite extent". In 'Communist Manifesto' Marx-Engels write that communist society will, "increase

the total of productive forces as rapidly as possible".

Engels more clearly in "Principles of Communism", which is published as an appendix of Communist Manifesto, writes, "It is obvious that hitherto the productive forces had not yet been so far developed that enough could be produced for all... Now, however, when the development of large scale industry has created, firstly, capital and productive forces on a scale hitherto unheard of and the means are available to increase these productive forces in a short time to an infinite extent". USSR tried to beat America in per capita production and collapsed. In 2005, late Harry Magdoff, editor of the famous Marxist journal of USA "Monthly Review", in a letter to Michael Lobowitz writes, "When I worked at the War Production Board I met with members of the Russian purchasing Mission and was astonished among other things, by their worship of the big and the focus on catching up and overtaking the United States."

Lot of research is going on today by the Marxist scholars about the ecological vision of Marx. Marx dreamt that, "Communist society... makes it possible for me to do one thing today and another tomorrow, to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner" (German Ideology). Rabindranath and Gandhiji dreamt and worked for such a society with equity, without violence, simple living but rich in culture. Gandhiji says, "Exploitation is the greatest of violence". Tagore writes, "No, no you will not achieve heaven as much as you crave for pleasure". As long as humans do not come out from the "Noose of Luxury" it will be impossible to stop the collapse that the world is facing today.

We listen to the footsteps of change when we hear about – Give us Right over Water, Forest and Land, Occupy Wall Street, Another World is Possible or Arab Spring. To change this decaying consumerist industrial society for a new kind of society envisaged by Rabindranath and Gandhiji we have to take part in an united "struggle and

Construction', a slogan that was coined by Sankar Guha Neogi. Tagore said, "To lose faith in man is a sin."

Sometime in the middle decades of the twenty-first century, Galbraith's great unanswered question "How Much Should a Country Consume?" - with its Gandhian corollary, "How Much Should a Person Consume?" – will come finally to dominate the intellectual and political debates of the time.

–Ramachandra Guha

Gandhian Economics in the 21st Century

Smitha Khadri V.

“India’s way is not Europe’s: India is not Calcutta and Bombay. India lives in seven hundred thousand villages.” – M. K. Gandhi

65 years since adopting the constitution of India with a force of diversified, eager 1.311 billion Indians (second only to Cina by a margin of 0.07 billion numbers!) want to cross the threshold of economic thirst to join the economically developed side of the globe. It is easily said than happening with the 0.27 billion Indians not having the economic and so the nutritive stamina to even reach the finishing line. This is going to be pipedream with the prediction of the population to cross 1.6 billion by 2050, which could mean more disparity, inequality economically and further away from the dreams weaved by Gandhi for his India.

The successive governments have been doing their entire bit, opening the markets to foreign investments in critical areas of Defence, Railways, Insurance to Unified National tax to ‘Make in India’ initiative with the growth staggering at 7.1 % and inflation glaring at 5.9%. With these daily inflation and counter inflation headlines tango, a series of lecture announcement by the American Economics Professor, Mark Lindely specializing in Gandhian Economics in Bengaluru was intriguing. I chose the Sunday retreat in Gandhi Bhavan with a curiosity: if Gandhi did hold any solution to the current conundrum.

Prof. Mark Lindely, was as agile as Gandhi would have been at that age of 79 years enthraling the majority student audience and a few Gandhians at heart like me with the relevance of Gandhian economics today. Gandhi was not an economist, but for him everything was measured in truth and non-violence. An economist whose convictions matched his economical theories was J.C. Kumarappa, known as Gandhi’s Economist. Gandhi once replied to a compliment for having groomed Kumarappa to his convictions that Kumarappa came readymade. Educated in London and Columbia University on Public Finance, Kumarappa started his career with a strong conviction that man is not merely a wealth producing agent but essentially a member of the society with political, social and spiritual responsibility. This resulted in Kumarappa losing interest in money making and wrote

articles catching the attention of Gandhi. Together they forged the way to Gandhian Economics of Truth and Non-violence, Moral Economics.

Gandhi, a man known for perfection and ground reality, requested Kumarappa to take up the house to house economic survey of 50 villages in Gujarat assisted by Gujarat Vidyapeeth students. The data collected was first of its kind highlighting the ground economic status of Indian villages. Gandhi published the data in five languages. This was followed by 600 village survey in Central and North-West Province. These data were very useful in the negotiations in the round-table conferences and help Gandhi strengthen his concept of making every village independent democratic unit. In 1934, under the stewardship of Gandhi and Kumarappa as secretary, the All India Village Industries Association was founded paving way for welfare economics.

The partnership of Gandhi and Kumarappa gave two gifts to build a just and happy nation – Fair trade and Sustainability, the very mantra the United Nations Development Programmes are based on. Prof. Lindely used a tagline for every transaction we carry out for everyone of us, “Sweeten your Life” by buying fair trade goods, where a good part of the money is going directly to the poorest people in the process of producing the goods. Transferring the purchase power is the essence of economics. This transferring power should also include moral and humane transaction with an element of ‘free will’ as advocated by Gandhi. That is, bringing in moral exchange between buyers and sellers, in simple words ‘bargaining’. With a little exchange, you are bringing the moral option in the transaction.

During the Second World War, J.C. Kumarappa was jailed as were most of the Congress leaders. This period brought out a beautiful book, “The Economy of Permanence” which was way beyond the days’ need. Kumarappa was the first economist to talk on sustainability, the future economics, 60 years ago. By taking up material reckoning as way of valuation,

Kumarappa was a pioneer as an Ecological Economist. He valued a tree in terms of fruits, shade, amount of oxygen supplied, so on and so forth. The Economics of Permanence theory raised a question on the concept of 'free-will'. Free will is a choice which is bestowed on us humans only. Along with Gandhi's love, Kumarappa added fear, fear of nature. How nature would punish if we did not tread the path of co-ordination and co-operation with it while exercising our gift of freewill. The current climate change and global warming is the result of the unchecked, unethical freewill exercising.

A beautiful word, 'Satisficing' was coined by American economist, Herbert Simon 50 years ago with the combination of two words, 'Satisfy' and 'Suffice'. This is the single mantra for sustainability. This brings to mind the RBI Governor, Raghuram Rajan's opinion, 'Make for India' better approach than 'Make in India'. Gandhi and also Kumarappa were not against technology or machines, but instead believed in managing work in coordination with nature. As Gandhi believed, "that economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values".



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Seven Questions about education and Shiksha Swaraj

Anand Kumar

A. Any education system is expected to contribute towards a) making of a proper personality and capability building of students through imparting values and knowledge, b) nation-building, and c) humane world order. Indian educational setting is going through rapid expansion without expected contribution in these three contexts. At the same time, any evaluation of the education system of India today will lead us to three conclusions: 1. Growing hunger for good education in all Indian households irrespective of caste, tribe, class, gender, region, religion. It is a positive factor for creating a healthy and democratic educational setting. 2. A disturbing trend of unchecked commercialization of education from nursery to university levels without any accountability. It is being promoted by a nexus of profit seeking businessmen, powerful politicians and bureaucrats. 3. Increasingly declining commitment of central and state governments in promoting universal availability of good education to children and youth. It is combined with increasing interference of bureaucracy and politicians in the matters of education leading to corruption and devaluation of standards in government run educational institutions.

B. There is a global education market where anyone can get education for a price. Indian elite is making use of it for several decades. But any education market is based upon commodification of education and knowledge. Like all markets, it will have the limit of money power where only wealthy people will be able to provide education for their children as is the case with the Indian elite who are paying a large amount for schooling and college degrees for their children all over the country. Let us not ignore that it is proving to be counter-productive and anti-social in advanced capitalist countries like the US and UK. Certainly, we cannot afford it at present as we need a system of education which is not only available but also affordable. Our social formation needs education to function as a bridge to overcome the present divides of i. men-women, ii. rural-urban, iii. the dominant castes and the depressed sections, iv. the affluent and the impoverished, and v. the forward and backward regions and states.

In a country like India, there are five problems with

the idea of 'education market'. We are a country where a) 77% working people have purchasing power of Rs. 20 per day (Sengupta Committee Report), b) most of the rural girls drop out between standard 6th and 10th, and rural boys fail to enter graduate studies due to poverty (Survey report by Pratham), c) Muslim children have very insignificant presence beyond standard 10th, (Sachar Committee Report), d) children of MBCs, SCs, STs and De-notified Tribes have problem of access to quality education even at the basic level, and e) there are minimum facilities for children with disabilities, So making a system of market of education will be a guarantee of perpetuation of elite power and deepening of disparities.

C) Shiksha Swaraj is an initiative of patriotic Indians to underline the need of rapid reforms in education to make it an instrument of nation building through economic advancement, social harmony and deepening of democratic values. Shiksha Swaraj believes that India needs education to promote economic empowerment, social justice and political power for all, including the deprived sections of our society. It includes the rural poor, urban marginals and all citizens belonging to the weaker sections including the women, SCs, STs, the OBCs and MBCs. Education and nation-building have grown together in the modern world system. There is no evidence to support the claim that conversion of education from public good and an essential ingredient of the duties of welfare state into a private good and market mediated resource has been helpful in creating excellence in the field of knowledge or better rewards for the best students, best teaches, and best institutions. In the Euro-American countries, education process has gone through secularization and democratization, and not unethical commercialisation. Right to education from primary to post-graduate levels is the agenda of Shiksha Swaraj with emphasis upon Saman (equal) – Sulabh (accessible)-Sarhthak (useful) Shiksha.

D) Politics is life line of all democratic societies as it is the essential process of democratic nation-building and citizenship. It is Nagarik Dharma. All citizens above

18 years of age must engage in politics as a calling and duty. It includes students also. But there is need to be cautious that it does not get distorted into selfishness, moneymaking and corruption. Politics of principles promote peoples' well being and all round happiness. But un-principled politics with arrogance of power is self-destructive as politicians get perverted from servants of society to megalomaniac power seekers. Students, and all others, must not get infected with the virus of power for its own sake or *Paise se Satta aur Satta se Paisa*. This is the essence of 'good politics' which is the basis of alternative initiatives of Swaraj Abhiyan and several other citizen platforms in our country.

E) NDA Government has been without an educational strategy between 2014 and 2015 except trying to capture the institutions of higher studies and research. There is an open drive to 'clean' the educational system from the Nehruvian and Marxian influences. It has become well known that the first Human Resource Development Minister Smriti Irani was subjected to pressure from the ideologues of Hindutva organizations to change the form and content of higher education of India to converge with their ideological orientation without any delay. It got reflected in the appointment of new directors, vice chancellors, and post holders and members of the national bodies of research. The aggressiveness and undue interference of BJP central ministers, MPs, and party functionaries in the functioning of institutions of higher education stands well exposed from Hyderabad Central University, Jawaharlal Nehru University to Allahabad Central University, Aligarh Muslim University, and Banaras Hindu University. The tragic death of research scholar Rohit Vemulla, imprisonment and harassment of JNUSU president Kanhaiya Kumar, inquiries against Allahabad University president Richa Singh, resignation of the director of IIT-Delhi and refusal to reinstate Dr. Saibaba even after his bail by the Supreme Court are some of the most outstanding examples of the drive to deal with ideological and political adversaries through misuse of state power by the proponents of Saffronisation.

It is a sad chapter of violating autonomy of institutions of higher education for petite politics. The battle of ideas and power of perspectives cannot be settled by lumpenising campus spaces and classroom culture. It is going to hurt the process of democratic nation-building in the long run. Furthermore it is a failed approach. Because such anti-intellectual approach of

'capturing campuses' creates resistance and allergy. Earlier it was tried unsuccessfully during the 1970s by the Emergency Raj to crush the waves of youth unrest against corruption at high places and directionless education system. In recent times, it did not work with the Left Front Governments in West Bengal where there was patronizing of party-intellectuals and pro-party student activists in the educational institutions. It created flight of talent and alienation of students. At the same time, it is significant that the NDA has presented their own blueprint of educational reforms through T.S.R. Subramanyam Committee Report. But we cannot predict about what next as there is a strong lobby which wants to create a process of sanitization of education in the name of cultural values and Hindutva. In fact, there is need of de-colonization and democratization of education to meet the challenges of the age of knowledge power in the era of globalisation, not Saffronisation.

F) Quest for knowledge and respect for scientific orientation are essential ingredients of a healthy educational system. Furthermore, there is need to pay attention to five dimensions of our education system – i. philosophy, ii. economics, iii. sociology, iv. politics, and v. science of education to overcome the consequences of inefficiencies and missed opportunities of the last 70 years in our country. We have to make education as a process and a space of freedom of mind and adventure of ideas, not playground of party politics. Similarly, there is need to pay attention to putting an end to resource-crunch which has been a bad legacy of the colonial system and Congress Raj. More bureaucratisation and commercialization in the name of 'educational reforms' is going to create strong resistance as the world has entered age of knowledge and India will not permit its politicians to keep our children behind.

G) Finally, there is a big difference between 'promising reforms' and 'reform promises'. Today, the promising reforms have to include 1. Universalisation of education for all children upto 12th Standard, 2. Expansion and autonomy of avenues of quality higher education and relevant research, 3. Investment in training good teachers and preventing wastage and corruption, 4. Bridging the divides of language, gender, class, region and nations through special programmes of capacity building and talent harnessing., and 5. Making educational institutions as training ground for citizenship and cultivation of goodness.

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of Narendra Modi's appeal in almost every country that he has visited to 'make in India,' process of privatization has accelerated with Modi's friends like Ambani and Adani benefiting the most, there is no check on unemployment or price rise. In the middle of war mongering, decision about not to present a separate rail budget from next year and disinvestment in 17 loss making public enterprises raise an alarm. Is the government trying to thrust important financial decisions on the country amidst war hysteria?

We expect the government to stop talking about war and instead focus on finding solution to Kashmir problem. As a matter of state policy it should be declared that India will have a peaceful and friendly relation with Pakistan. This can happen by an instant decision like the one taken by Narendra Modi when he decided to stopover in Pakistan on his way from Afghanistan. India and Pakistan have a shared culture which provides a readymade basis for friendship. In any case, since Pakistan denies involvement in terrorist attacks over India, it should be convinced to join the peace effort. One thing which can help the process of normalization is increased interaction among citizens. A closer relationship among citizens of the two countries will also help resolve the Kashmir problem easily.

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obesity in affluent societies and the pangs of chill penury in the underdeveloped countries calls for fresh thinking on Gandhian lines.

The poor countries of the world particularly cannot do without Gandhi who lit the torch of freedom in the hearts of millions of people all over the world. His understanding of socioeconomic problems and his deep insight into human psychology were aimed at liberating the downtrodden from their difficulties.

He made valuable contribution to politics by his practical application of the nonviolent weapons of satyagraha, fast and strike, demonstrating how vulnerable modern states which depend on the 'Big Lie' are.

It is a pity that the scope of non-violent movements or peaceful resistance against totalitarian or fascist regimes has not been enlarged. In fact, no fresh thinking

has been done on these subjects although there has been a large scale proliferation of Gandhian institutes.

Similarly, most people seem to be confused about Gandhi's concept of decentralization of power. In a country of India's size and diversities small political and administrative units with well defined powers alone can guarantee the active involvement of the people. Likewise in the economic sphere accent must necessarily be on self-sufficient village units. A decentralized political system remains our best bet against emergence of fascistic and militaristic tendencies.

Unfortunately an impression has gained ground that the real prestige of a nation is measured not in terms of the well being and prosperity of the people but in relation to the armed might of the state. This is a fallacious argument which needs to be countered. Unless the people of a nation are healthy in mind and body any amount of stockpiling of arms will not boost its image.

If Gandhi's dream of Ram Rajya has remained unfulfilled it is largely because we have failed to strengthen democracy at the grassroots. The levers of power are controlled by a handful of people at whose whims and mercy democracy works.

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an effort were made to weave a consistent cloth, whole threads were picked from anywhere, no matter where, but the weaver's sole object were to devise an environment in which the individual could be good if he wished to be good, then, I believe, together with that unique weapon of civil disobedience this doctrine could be incorporated into socialism with great profit to mankind. A separate creed of Gandhism would perhaps not be of a much use to the world. Socialism is already on the world stage.

The doctrine is still open. That gives us hope, and if some of these ideas from Gandhiji's life and action can be woven into a consistent cloth of socialism, the new civilization may emerge and mankind may hope for an age of peace and decent living.

[Speech; Hyderabad, August 1952]



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India-Pakistan conflict

Sandeep Pandey

Editor : G. G. Parikh

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

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Relevance of surgical strikes

Kuldip Nayar

I was against surgical strikes because I thought it would escalate things and probably go to a point of no return. But now that the strikes have been made I back the government. I am reminded of George Bernard Shaw, eminent literary personality, who said that he was a worst critic of the British government but since it was in the midst of war he supported it.

Probably, India had no option. Terrorists, who were taking shelter on the Pakistan soil and operated from there, had to be punished. Islamabad did not do anything to stop or foil their activities. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has said that his country would retaliate and perhaps the attack near Baramulla area was what he meant by revenge.

As India's Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal Arup Raha, has said that the reply to what happened at Uri when Indian's 19 soldiers were killed by the terrorists is being given and the Uri operation is not yet complete. He said "it is still live," without commenting on the surgical strikes. I don't think that both India and Pakistan, the nuclear powers, will cross the red line. Escalation on the

border can be controlled up to point but when events take over it will be difficult to say what will happen on the war theatre.

National Security Advisors of the two countries, Ajit Doval and Sartaj Aziz, have met and agreed to bring down tension. Why couldn't they have done it before the surgical strikes took place? Aziz must have gauged the depth of anger in India with all political parties backing Prime Minister Narendra Modi government. Nawaz Sharif, too, has got sanctions from the political parties in Pakistan. He had convened a special meeting to appraise the opposition of the situation.

Public opinion in both the countries has become hawkish. It's unfortunate that Pakistan is prepared even for a nuclear war if it comes to that. The people on both sides want the end of daily tension and desire the government of their country to ensure that they don't have to live with such constant fears.

The SAARC summit would have been an occasion when things could have been discussed across the

table. But all the countries have pulled out from the meeting at Islamabad. They say that the climate is not conducive for the SAARC to meet. Still there is no other venue where all the countries in the region could have met and talked on the situation threadbare.

Pakistan should realize that its behaviour is such that other countries in the region are not willing to accept its doings. But terrorists like Hafiz Sayeed are openly operating from the Pakistani soil. India took the case to the UN but China, Pakistan's ally, used the veto power and did not allow the UN to formally declare Hafiz Sayeed as a terrorist. It was an unfortunate use of veto power but China goes to any limits to stand by its ally.

As a result, the deadlock continues to the detriment of democratic India. The situation can escalate to dangerous proportions at any time because Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is always overlooked by the army. This means that the army does not have to go to the front literally and yet lead the elected Nawaz Sharif from its headquarters at Rawalpindi.

The problem that Pakistan has to reckon with is the uprising in Baluchistan and the attack from Afghanistan. Since both do not have a full-fledged army to back them, the war would be a limited one. No doubt, the Americans have withdrawn their troops from Afghanistan but a small contingent has stayed there at the specific request of Kabul.

New Delhi is now openly supporting Baloch leader Brahmdagh Bugti, who has been

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Growing danger of agri-chemical multinationals

Bharat Dogra

The recent 66 billion dollar purchase of Monsanto by Bayer is one more sign of the coming together of seeds and agri-chemical interests as well as growing concentration of market in the hands of few giant multinational companies in these sectors.

In fact if we look at the trends in world food and agriculture in recent decades then these have been dominated by the increasingly desperate efforts by huge multinational companies to increase their dominance of the world food and farming system. The way in which patents were incorporated into the WTO agenda and so in a very clever way almost all countries were forced to change their patent laws in keeping with the interests of developed countries provides a glaring example of the high-powered forces at work to implement this agenda of dominance. The new patent laws helped the food and farming giants to tighten their grip on plants and seeds resources of the developing countries.

Genetic erosion of their plant wealth has also proved very expensive for farmers, particularly those based in developing countries. Due to the combined impact of destruction of natural forests, and the introduction of green-revolution type agriculture, which replaced local varieties over large areas by new monocultures, genetic erosion has been taking place on a massive scale even in the tropical countries which have been the original source of

much of the plant diversity. Soon thousands of varieties of plants were lost to these countries for ever. However, already several of these had been stored carefully in the labs and gene banks of the developed countries whose scientists had been engaged in these collections for several years. Suddenly, in the time span of a few decades, the natural advantage which some parts of the world had enjoyed for millions of years appeared to have been reversed.

Today several experts agree that most of collected genetic diversity is stored in gene banks mostly in Europe and North America. In a handful of high-security institutions of these and a few other countries, the world's most valuable raw material is stored, and it is unlikely that the countries of origin from where most of this material came will have free access to it.

Pat Roy Mooney brings out the glaring injustice of this situation, "It is a raw material unlike any other in the world. It has not been bought. It has been donated. It has been donated by the poor to the rich. The donation has been made under a noble banner proclaiming that genetic resources form a part of the heritage of all humanity, and thus can be owned by no one. But as the primary building blocks of agriculture, genes have incalculable political and economic importance. Industrialized governments - often overruling the intentions of their scientists - have come to hoard germplasm and to stock seeds as part

of the arsenal of international power diplomacy. Private companies in North - although glad to receive free genes - are loath to divulge or share the adaptations they draw from these donations.”

It was noticed about two decades back that the nature of the seed industry was changing in several countries, particularly the rich western countries (although similar changes were soon noticed also in several developing countries). The seed industry had earlier been based on small firms. These firms were now being gobbled by big companies, especially companies which already had big stakes in agri-chemical industry - within a single decade, chemical corporations spent over \$10 billion in buying up seeds companies. In fact the American Seed Trade Association even organized a special symposium on ‘How to sell your seed company.’ Apprehensions were rightly voiced that a small number of giant companies will control seeds as well as agri-chemicals, and that the production of seeds can be given such an orientation as to require high and increasing amounts of agri-chemicals. According to one widely quoted estimate at least 27 corporations had initiated 63 programs to develop herbicide tolerant crops. Already a few multinational companies control a very considerable part of the international seeds sector and pesticides.

These trends were strengthened further by the developments in the controversial technology of genetic engineering. A very important part of genetic engineering research has been devoted to herbicide-tolerant plant varieties, for example cotton which is tolerant to a herbicide called bromoxynil.

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Caste discrimination in Hyderabad University

Ghanashyam Shah

“Report of the People’s Tribunal on Caste Discrimination & Police Action in the University of Hyderabad” which narrates the circumstances leading a suicide of Rohit who fought for freedom of expression and speech. You might be interested to browse the report: The link https://www.academia.edu/28717795/Report_of_the_Peoples_Tribunal_on_Caste_Discrimination

The main findings and recommendations are the following.

The tribunal was organized by the concerned teachers, writers, and lawyers of Hyderabad. It was chaired by Justice K. Chandru, Retired judge High Court Madras. Prof Govardhan Wankhede, TISS, Bombay and I were the members. The brief to the tribunal was to examine the circumstances leading to the suicide committed by Rohit Vemula Chakravarthy, a Research Scholar as well as the police action subsequent to his death and the existing caste discrimination practice by the University. And, to recommend among other things, besides protocols to enable marginalized students to fully participate and enjoy the academic, political and social space of the university more productively and effectively; and to examine the existing grievance redressal systems to prevent caste discrimination in the University of Hyderabad and evaluate their effectiveness.

The Findings

? The issue raised by late Rohit Vemula Chakravarthy and his

organization, (Ambedkar Students Association) was a larger political issue related to freedom of expression and idea of India. There was nothing ‘castesist’ in these issues, as MHRD alleged and persuaded the University to change its earlier decision and take action against the Dalit students. Instead of looking at the issue in larger perspective, the adversary of ASA dubbed it ‘casteist, extremist and anti-national’.

? The manner in which the university authority conducted the inquiry against Rohit and other Dalit students give an impression of targeting them for their political position. At least that is how the Dalit students and many perceived.

? Rohith’s suicide in the UoH is not the first one. In less than ten years, three other students had committed suicide. The University has done nothing to prevent recurrence of suicides of students in the past. This was despite the fact that the earlier committees, appointed by the University, consisted of the university teachers, had made recommendations to set right things regarding student issues. What is disturbing is that UoH has not yet taken these suggestions made by their own colleagues seriously.

? Even as early as the year 2013 the High Court of Andhra Pradesh (now renamed as High Court of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh) in PIL No.106/2013 had issued several directives to all the Universities in the state to prevent

recurrence of suicides. However, neither the UGC Regulations of 2012 nor the Court directives nor UOH Committee recommendations have been implemented.

Recommendations

1. The University should immediately implement the AP High Court Order Interim Measure No 3 that calls upon the University for instituting a Special Commission to review disciplinary orders imposing major penalties such as rustication, expulsion from hostels and stoppage of fellowships in the case of all students and especially those from SC/ST/OBC and other marginalised backgrounds.
2. Although at the University level, there are entities such as Office of the Dean, Students' Welfare, the Central Grievance Committee, and SC/ST cell to address any problems faced by the students, there is no formal, institutional mechanism in any of the Schools for redressal of grievances of students, especially those who belong to the marginalized categories. The existence of such agencies even at the University level and the procedures to be followed are not widely known to the student community. The doctoral committees, which may be expected to take up this role, exist more on paper than in practice in all the schools.
3. The University should institute as early as possible the Grievance Redressal Committee headed by the Ombudsman as per UGC (Grievance Redressal) Regulation 2012. And, on the priority basis, it must implement all the Directives in the Order passed by the High Court of Andhra Pradesh in W.P (PIL) No. 106/2013.
4. It appears that UoH has not yet set up the Equal Opportunity Cell headed by the Anti-discrimination Officer as per the UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations 2012. That has to be done urgently. Simultaneously, SC/ST cell to safeguard the interests of SC/ST students; and remedial coaching in English language programme to improve their academic performance require review and to be made more effective.
5. The university requires the formation of a broad-based "Students Counselling System". Such system needs to be interactive involving students, teachers and parents to address common student concerns ranging from anxiety, stress, fear of change and failure to homesickness and a slew of academic worries.
6. The University should on priority basis appoint anti-discriminatory faculty advisors for SC/ST students. It is a responsibility of the advisors to work as watchdogs to protect the students against discrimination. Moreover, they should also look into the problems –personal and academic- faced by the students and advise them accordingly. They should work as counsellors.
7. The University does not have effective system encouraging one-to-one student- teacher relationship at all levels. The students in general and those belong to the marginalised communities feel alienated in the university system. Besides classroom and laboratory teaching, the teachers need to make a special effort to cultivate a one-to-one relationship with all the students so that when a student needs guidance/advice s/he can contact a teacher without fear. This responsibility needs to be interwoven with teaching and guidance. If needed teacher-student ratio needs to be reduced so that all the teachers get opportunities to spend time with the students.
8. The teachers need to be more sensitive towards the students coming from the rural background and of the marginalised communities. They need to self-introspect critically regarding their bias and approach towards the students belonging to the different social background than theirs. All the three committees appointed by the university have emphasised this.
9. Universities in general and the elite universities, in particular, should not only be the centre for disseminating knowledge but they should also disseminate knowledge in such a way that it provides space to the subaltern and empower them by enhancing their capacity and self-confidence. It is dangerous if the dissemination of knowledge reinforces and legitimizes inequality in society. The task of university needs to inculcate values among

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Subverting the Right to Education Act

Under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, Section 12 (1) (c) admissions of 25 children were ordered by the Basic Shiksha Adhikari of Lucknow in Navyug Radiance Senior Secondary School. The school gave admission to only two – Pakhi Rajput and Asna Farhad. It first expelled Pakhi Rajput because of the inability of her parents to pay fees even though the Act promises free education from Classes I to VIII. Asna's parents were made to pay Rs. 1,150 for dress and books and another Rs. 2,650 were demanded as fees for three months. When they complained to the authorities Asna was asked not to come on the last day of an internal examination. Her parents were given a visiting card of the owner of school, Sudhir Halwasiya, which identifies him as a member of the state executive committee of Bhartiya Janata Party. The remaining students were never admitted. It appears that Sudhir Halwasiya considers himself above the law of the land.

The Foreign Minister Shushma Swaraj has recently asked the Delhi government to admit a girl from Pakistan Madhu to a school even though she did not possess proper documents. What can be more heartening than making education accessible to children who are denied such an opportunity. However, this step has been taken to put down Pakistan. Indian government is ready to embrace anybody who faces discrimination in Pakistan. But one wishes that the government displayed the same amount of sensitivity towards children of its own citizens. If this was not the case Sudhir Halwasiya would not have felt

emboldened to expel children admitted under a national Act from his school. Do the children living in India not have the same rights as Madhu from Pakistan?

One must also think about what will happen to the Prime Minister's slogan relating to saving girl children and educating them, 'Beti bachao, beti padhao?' Both children expelled by Sudhir Halwasiya are girls. Even Atal Bihari Vajpayee ran a campaign asking children to come to school, 'Aao school chalen hum.' It means BJP is not really serious about its intent to provide education to children. It is a party which believes more in publicity.

Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, associated with Congress party, has decided to give his services to an association of private schools' owners against the RTE Act. Singhvi is a senior lawyer and can make his money on other cases. Is it morally right to stand against an Act, which promises fundamental right of education to children, introduced by his own party?

Similarly, Shanti Bhushan, who was the law minister in Janata Party government and was an important figure in the Anna Hazare's anti-corruption movement decided to appear for City Montessori School last year when its owner Jagdish Gandhi decided to oppose the admission of 31 children ordered by BSA. Social activists ran a campaign requesting him not to defend a person guilty of denying the children their fundamental right.

Akhilesh Yadav considers implementation of RTE Act Section

12(1)(c) as one of his achievements. In 2015 CMS admitted 13 children but only after a court case which went on for more than four months and when Supreme Court refused to intervene. The UP government had awarded Jagdish Gandhi Yash Bharti in 2014 which carries with it a cash prize of Rs. 11 lakhs and a monthly pension of Rs. 50,000 per month. After Jagdish Gandhi resisted the order of BSA and fought a legal battle against UP government, his wife Bharti Gandhi was awarded the Rani Laxmi Bai Bravery Award in 2016 on women's day. It appears that the bravery of Bharti Gandhi was in opposing the admissions of 23 Scheduled Caste and 8 Muslim children of which 6 were from Other Backward Classes. The CM has recently publicly praised Jagdish Gandhi for giving admissions to many poor children in CMS under the RTE Act, exhibiting embarrassing pusillanimity.

This year too Jagdish Gandhi is opposing the admissions of 58 children. He is setting some conditions which the children must fulfill in order to avail the benefit of the Act. It is a moot question that when the BSA has ordered the admission, he must have done so after conducting his enquiry. Is Jagdish Gandhi authorised to conduct his own verification? It is an open secret that Jagdish Gandhi obliges influential people like politicians, bureaucrats, judges and journalists by giving their children education for free or at very concessional rates. When Jagdish Gandhi can subsidize the education of children of the rich, can't he accommodate a few underprivileged children?

Recently Jagdish Gandhi's daughter Geeta Gandhi Kingdon, who now looks after the CMS and also holds a position in University College of London, spoke on 'Access, Equity and Quality of Education in UP,' at a seminar in Lucknow.

Jagdish Gandhi's other daughter Sunita Gandhi has started her own school called City International School. She is a Ph.D. in education from Cambridge University and has studied education system of 38 countries. She too refuses to admit 10 children in her school. She is running an informal programme to

make all the children of Lucknow literate but doesn't believe in sending all of them to regular schools so that they can receive formal education and use it to transform their lives.

Another chain of prominent schools, Virendra Swarup Public School admitted two children Shan Mohammed and Mohammed Zaid in its Mahanagar branch but later expelled them. Exxon Montessori in Rajajipuram has admitted 9 children but discriminates against them inside the school by making them sit separately.

Thus we see that whether it is the big political parties or influential owners of private schools, none of them want the children of the poor to receive education alongside the children of rich.

Socialist Party (India) is of the opinion that privatization in the field of education as well as in health care must end and government must nationalise all educational and health care institutions so that equitable quality education and health care are available to the poor also.

Dimensions of India-Pakistan conflict

While the world media and Pakistan question the veracity of Indian claims of surgical strike inside the Pakistani border across Line of Control in Kashmir where two soldiers are reportedly killed, we know for sure that five people have died in police firing on protestors in Hazaribagh, Jharkhand where tribals were resisting the takeover of land for mining by National Thermal Power Corporation. Earlier 80 people were killed in Kashmir over two months in protests in the aftermath of killing of militant Burhan Wani and two people were killed in Ramgarh district of Jharkhand in protests against NTPC.

Modi has said that blood and water cannot flow together implying that Pakistan cannot expect unrestricted flow of water from rivers originating in India and flowing into Pakistan if it continues to support terrorists who target India using Pakistan as base. While it is true that terrorists have attacked army camp in Uri who came from Pakistan and earlier attacks have also taken place in Pathankot

and Mumbai in which Pakistan's involvement cannot be denied but how can we overlook the fact that blood flows in India because of Indian security forces too and not just because of Pakistani terrorists? The number of incidents of violence inside India by security force far outnumbers the incidents across the border with origin in Pakistan. Modi's remark camouflages this sad reality and is thus misleading. It may appeal to blind nationalists but not to any rational thinking citizen.

We are apparently attacking Pakistan because we want to defend our motherland. But what are we doing with the motherland? Do people living over the land have right over it? If Modi government had its way, land rights will be taken away from people. It'll no longer be necessary to ask people before the government acquires land. Modi government tried thrice, fortunately unsuccessfully, to dilute the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act in the interest of

private corporations. He had to ultimately give up in the face of stiff resistance from farmers and people.

The question is if the land is going to be taken over by the government to be handed over to corporations to make private profit, is not Narendra Modi violating the sanctity of the motherland and merely using people's sentiments to rally them behind him projecting a potential war with Pakistan.

The sanctity of the motherland must not be just preserved against some foreign country but also against any vested interest which are out to acquire land on which the lives and livelihood of local people depend. When people defend their land against government takeover it is almost with same zeal, as they too are willing to give up their lives, as the soldiers defend the motherland against the enemy. For the people of Hazaribagh who were protesting against NTPC, Pakistan is a distant enemy but the immediate enemy is local police and administration.

The politics of nationalism has very cleverly mobilized people behind the government to defend the land of the country but its economic policies are heavily biased towards private sector. Modi government has opened the defence sector for privatization. Hence, we're in a very peculiar situation. If the country goes to war, it may as much be to protect the motherland for the people as to cater to the interests of the private sector. The private companies selling arms to India stand to benefit from any war as India will place more orders with defence companies. Narendra Modi's close friend Anil Ambani has already been the largest beneficiary of the deal with France to buy Rafale jets. Modi government is playing with the dangerous combination of nationalism and corporatization of defence sector. From now on the country will have to play the game of war to keep the defence sector alive and kicking. The media will go along with this as it stands to gain from any kind of sensationalism. In fact the media by playing up the sentiment of jingoism has created a war atmosphere which doesn't actually exist in reality. It is thus doing a great disservice to the people of the country.

India must also reconsider its efforts to isolate Pakistan internationally. In spite of its best efforts the major powers are not willing to consider Pakistan the rogue state that India would like them to do. A possible reason is the human rights violations in Kashmir. India recently denied entry to the United National Human Rights Commission in Kashmir. On the contrary, Pakistan took international media to border areas after the Indian surgical strike. We cannot be blind to the issue of human rights violations in Kashmir and keep pointing out the

atrocities committed by Pakistan from across the border.

India is also trying to review Indus Water Treaty signed with Pakistan in 1960. The deal allowed Pakistan to use waters of Indus, Jhelum and Chenab whereas India was free to use the waters of Ravi, Beas and Sutlej. Even before India could consider revising the treaty, China has already demonstrated that it can do the same with India that India might consider doing with Pakistan. China has stopped the water of the Brahmaputra tributary. China doesn't have a water sharing treaty with India like the Indus water treaty. So, while India's possible act will be treated as illegal, China can get away without attracting any criticism.

How sensitive the water sharing exercise can be must be clear from the ongoing Karnataka-Tamil Nadu dispute. Had they been two countries they might have even gone to war over their respective claims on Cauvery water. The Supreme Court is trying their best to resolve the issue which appears to be intractable. SC has at least directed the people using stern warning to refrain from using violence. SC has also taken the initiative of facilitating dialogue between the executive heads of two states with the objective of melting hostilities. Hopefully, the issue would be amicably resolved under the guidance of SC. It shows that all issues have potential solution and violence is no answer to any problem.

India and Pakistan should learn from the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu dispute. They should give up violence against each other and try to resolve their outstanding disputes through dialogue amicably.

–Sandeep Pandey

(Continued from Page 4)

students of mutual respect, equality, and fraternity.

- University has an important role in creating and disseminating knowledge in society. In order to facilitate the task, it needs to provide congenial space for critical inquiry without fear. Within the university boundaries, no concept/idea/symbol is sacrosanct. The academic community enjoys the freedom to express their views and debate on all issues under the sky without fear. Dissent is a core of critical thinking which needs to be allowed and protected within the university campus. University is not a factory to manufacture robots. It is a place to develop a critical mind. Everyone has a right to dissent, including dissent against capital punishment. The university of Hyderabad needs to protect such freedom. Dialogue and debate have to be an integral part of academic life. Without that, the university would be dead.

Socialist Party (India)

National Conference of the Socialist Party will be held on **14 and 15** (instead of 12-13, as reported earlier) **November, 2016** at Chediram Dharmashala, Lucknow. Three delegates from every such district in which party members are enrolled so far will participate in the National Conference. State Secretaries should communicate their names and postal addresses to Janakiprasad Goud, President, U.P. State before 20 October, 2016.

–Pannalal Surana

Why we must listen to Jayaprakash Narayan on Kashmir

Ramachandra Guha

On the 4th of October 1966 — almost exactly 50 years ago — the great Indian democrat Jayaprakash Narayan spoke at a seminar on Kashmir held in New Delhi. The Valley was in turmoil; the popular leader Sheikh Abdullah was under arrest, and the state government was widely believed to be both incompetent and corrupt. ‘JP’ began his talk by clearly stating that this was a dispute between ‘the government of India and the people of the state’. JP believed that Pakistan had no *locus standi* in Kashmir, because of its past, perfidious, actions. As he put it, ‘the real desire of the Government of Pakistan is to seize the valley. Twice they tried to capture it by force, but they failed’.

But even if one put Pakistan outside the equation, the problem remained. For, said JP in 1966, ‘perhaps there is more discontent today amongst the people of the state than at any earlier time. There is more anti-India feeling among them than before’.

How should the government react to this discontent? JP was clear that ‘it will be a suicide of the soul of India, if India tried to suppress the Kashmiri people by force’. Rather than rely on repression, what ‘the Government of India can do is go back to the 1947-53 days, that is, go back to the time when the state had acceded to India only in three subjects [i.e. Defence, Foreign Affairs, and Communications]. This would mean providing for the fullest possible autonomy’.

Back in October 1966, Jayaprakash Narayan insisted that if, in Kashmir, ‘we continue to rule by force and suppress these people and crush them or change the racial or religious character of their state by colonization, or by any other means, then I think that means politically a most obnoxious thing to do’. He continued: ‘Kashmir has cost us a great deal and it is time that everyone who is a patriot in this country thought seriously about a really good solution. I have already told you what I think is a really good solution’ (i.e. fullest internal autonomy).

JP’s concern for the dignity and well-being of Kashmiris was of long-standing. Many (but not all) of his statements on the subject are contained in *JP on Jammu and Kashmir*, a book edited in 2005 by the late Balraj Puri, himself a scholar and democrat of conspicuous integrity.

Two years before his talk in Delhi in 1966, JP wrote an **essay** on Kashmir in the *Hindustan Times*. There he remarked: ‘No matter how aggressively we affirm that Kashmir’s accession to India is final and irrevocable the world does not accept it, the “azad Kashmir” area remains under Pakistan, the cease-fire line remains, the two armies remain facing each other, the minorities in both India and Pakistan continue to live in fear, discontent in Kashmir simmers and might have to be put down by force’.

JP pressed for justice in Kashmir continuously through the 1960s and 1970s. He did so when Nehru was prime minister, when Shastri was prime minister, when Indira Gandhi was prime minister. In June 1966 he wrote Mrs Gandhi a remarkable letter about a problem that had (at that stage) ‘plagued this country for 19 years’. JP believed ‘the problem exists not because Pakistan wants to grab Kashmir, but because there is deep and widespread political discontent among the people. The people of India might be kept in the dark about the true state of affairs in the Valley, but every chancellery in New Delhi knows the truth, and almost every foreign correspondent’.

‘Kashmir has distorted India’s image for the world as nothing else has done,’ said JP to the prime minister. The only way to get rid of this black mark on Indian democracy was to assure the Kashmiris ‘full internal autonomy, i.e., a return to the original terms of the accession’.

JP’s letter to Mrs Gandhi continued: ‘To think that we will eventually wear down the people and force them to accept at least passively the Union is to delude ourselves. That might conceivably have happened had Kashmir not been geographically located where it is. In its present location, and with seething discontent among the people, it would never be left in peace by Pakistan.’

The prime minister wrote a brief note back, thanking JP

‘for sharing your views on Kashmir’. But no action was taken on his letter. That was not surprising, because Indira Gandhi disliked JP.

However, the ruling dispensation in New Delhi now, 50 years later, professes great respect for JP, not least because of his struggle against the authoritarian regime of Indira Gandhi. Indeed, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several of his Cabinet colleagues have spoken feelingly of their own baptism in the ‘JP movement’.

Modi and his ministers say they admire JP. But can they, will they, listen to JP on Kashmir? The discontent in the Valley is wider and deeper now than in 1966. A major change since JP’s day is the growing influence of radical Islam in the Valley. JP would have condemned this. But he would have been even more critical of the continuing repression by the Indian State. He would have noted, too, that in the world of the Internet no longer can the rest of India be kept in the dark about what is going on in Kashmir.

JP on Jammu and Kashmir is still in print. Perhaps the PM, the PMO, the NSA and the home minister should order copies, and study its contents carefully. For these words of JP are as relevant in 2016 as they were in 1966: ‘It will be a suicide of the soul of India, if India tried to suppress the Kashmiri people by force.’ And, further: ‘Kashmir has distorted India’s image for the world as nothing else has done.’

—HT

BHU’s Struggle against the autocratic VC

C. B. Tripathi

On October 2, 2016, Avinash Janu has written a report on the current state of deplorable affairs at BHU that was posted on Facebook by Diwakar Singh. It makes such a sad reading to note the depth of degradation caused by the most incompetent and communalist Vice-Chancellor Girish Chandra Tripathi who claims to be an economist but whose little known works in Hindi are *Shiva—Tere kitne Roop* (Shiva— How many forms you have) and *Mrityu ke baad* (After Death). The only criterion for his selection as VC of a prestigious University like BHU by another uneducated arrogant erstwhile HRD (Education) Minister, Smriti Irani, was GC Tripathi’s old loyalty towards the RSS. On the very first day of assuming the charge as VC of BHU he is widely reported to have boasted of his 40-year old association with the RSS. Only the other day he committed the *faux pas* of remarking that when the Central Government is being run by the RSS (though a reality), what is the harm in opening a shakha of the RSS on the campus. He is such a blot on the glorious tradition of this great University which has seen Vice-Chancellors of the calibre of Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Dr. Amaranatha Jha, Acharya Narendra Deva, Sir CP Ramaswamy Iyer, Dr. KL Shrimali and the like. I also recall the standard of non-partisanship set up by Acharya Narendra Deva who kept his chairmanship of the All India Praja Socialist Party strictly off the

campus. The most eminent person to fill the vacancy in the post of Pro-VC was Prof. Mukut Bihari Lal, Professor of Political Science, a student of Prof. Harold Lasky at LSE, an acknowledged authority on Marxism and an important leader of the PSP. But Acharyaji disregarded his legitimate claim to be appointed the PVC lest anyone allege partisanship on his part. He appointed instead Prof. Narlikar, Professor of Maths., as the PVC. (His son is the eminent astrophysicist Dr. Jayant Narlikar.) And here is the present VC, GC Tripathi, who takes pride in showing off his RSS link and goal to saffronise the national university. Let us recount some of the misdeeds of VC Tripathi. He has restricted the working hours of the University Library from 24 hours to 15 hours (8 AM to 11 PM). As is well known, poor students from eastern UP, Bihar, MP and Jharkhand who have to reside outside the campus in cramped lodges and who cannot afford to buy books used to study late hours in the University Library, specially during the examinations. There was no justification for depriving them of this facility. In the Mohammad-bin-Tughlaq fashion he has arrogated to himself the authority to decide what the girls staying in the Women’s Hostel will wear, meal time and time to go out with whom and when. PM Modi is trying to instal Wi-Fi on the *ghaats* of Varanasi but at the University the students are struggling for internet, library and study facilities. He also observed that there was no need for studying

out of syllabus. When a student delegation submitted a representation with 500 signatures he advised them to study under street lights and threatened that if they persisted he would get them thrown out of the campus. The hostellers are not allowed internet use exceeding 4GB. Social networking sites like Facebook and UTube are already banned on the campus. On May 9, 2016, nine of the protesting students were not allowed to appear at the exams and were asked to leave the campus. The students sat on a peaceful dharna but at midnight more than 1,000 PAC jawans picked them up and took them away from the campus. At another end the daily wage workers have been sitting on hunger strike for 81 days, kidneys of two of them were damaged but the University authorities and the district administration totally ignored them. They have been on strike for three months. Some of them have been on indefinite hunger strike for 34 days but the University administration is paying no heed to their legitimate demands. The Hariharnath Committee set up to inquire into their working conditions had recommended in 1998 that until all the daily wage workers were employed as regular workers no fresh recruitment should be made. But during the last 18 years fresh appointments were being made while the old daily wage workers have not been made permanent till now. This when the VC and the Executive Council of the University had accepted this recommendation. The VC, GC Tripathi wants to impose his cultural values upon the girls staying in the Women's Hostel who are not allowed to step out of the hostel after 8 PM, are told about their choice of dress and the way

of conducting themselves. They are subjected to various forms of discrimination. What is to be done in these circumstances? The students of BHU with the glorious tradition of taking a prominent part in the freedom movement of India as well as the movement of the Nepalese people for freedom from the autocratic rule of Ranas, should throw out this non-academic RSS man just as the then students of BHU threw out the VC Govind Malviya, autocratic and accused of moral turpitude, under the able leadership of Anandeshwar Prasad Singh nearly seven decades ago, despite the fact that Govind Malviya was the youngest son of the founder of the University, Mahamana Malviyaji whom Mahatma Gandhi used to call 'Bade Bhai'. I had the privilege of leading the biggest ever student movement after Independence with Lucknow as the nucleus for the autonomy of student unions in universities and colleges in UP in 1953. Reportedly 14,000 students went to jail throughout the State, three persons were killed in the police firing at Lucknow on November 1, 1953. The mile-long procession taken out in the city protested the midnight attack on the Union building by 700 PAC personnel called from Sitapur. They took away the student leaders on hunger strike and hundreds of students who had assembled there at short notice after we got the secret info about the imminent attack by the PAC on the orders of the State Government based on cock and bull reports from LIU that the students had planned to blow up the Tagore Library and the Chemistry Lab that night. Out of 12 members of the Action Committee 9 were taken into custody, two went to their home towns and I remained underground,

conducting the movement from my hideouts changing every night and not letting the CID catch me. During that period we carried on talks with the State Government utilising good offices of senior University dons and others. Ultimately the strong State Government led by Pt. GB Pant, which was misled by the Health Minister and Hon. Treasurer of LU, CB Gupta, had to give up their stiff attitude and accept our democratic demands. We also had open support of Rafi Ahmad Kidwai and moral support of Prime Minister Nehru. Dr. Rammanohar Lohia wrote an article captioned *The Lucknow Revolt* in the National Herald wherein he wrote one paragraph on me appreciating my responsible leadership. The message I wish to convey to my young friends of BHU is that they are bound to succeed in their cause provided their movement is completely non-violent, democratic and shuns abusive language. Because of this welcome trait of our movement, though I was a confirmed socialist, even top Congress leaders of the State like Pantji, Dr. Sampurnanand and Pt. Kamalapati Tripathi always liked me. As a result of our movement CB Gupta was defeated from three constituencies in 1957 Assembly elections. I learnt from Dr. PC Joshi, then a leading leader of the AISF at LU, many many years later that in December 1953 the CWC passed a resolution that in the future no Minister should hold any office in any administrative body of any university and this resolution was included in the Collected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru published by NMML. This episode convinced us of the power of non-violence and democracy that was a lasting contribution of Bapu to national and international politics.

Intellectual Tolerance

Ramendra

Intellectual tolerance is an essential pre-requisite for the existence of democracy and secularism in a multilingual, multireligious and multicultural society like India. In the absence of intellectual tolerance, which includes religious tolerance, our society will be torn into pieces!

The issue of intellectual tolerance has become very relevant at present, because intellectual intolerance has increased manifold in our country in the last few years. Some authors-thinkers of our country have been killed, just because their killers did not like their views! I am talking about Dr. Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare and M. M. Kalburgi. This is nothing but height of intellectual intolerance!

Instead of waxing eloquent about ancient times, it is important for us to focus on what is happening at present in our social and political life.

In the last few years, some people have even tried to glorify Godse, the killer of Gandhi. On the other hand, some persons from the highest echelons of the ruling establishment have demanded enactment of law banning religious conversions.

Coming closer still, in 2015, 'Ambedkar-Periyar Study Circle' organized by students of I.I.T., Madras, was derecognized by the institution. This was done after the Central Human Resource Ministry intervened on the basis of a complaint

by an "anonymous" person. The study circle was restored after massive protests throughout the country.

The events in the Hyderabad Central University climaxed in the suicide of Rohith Vemula, a dalit research scholar in January, 2016. Earlier, the university had stopped paying the amount of Rs. 25 thousand per month, which was being paid to Rohith Vemula as fellowship. Rohith Vemula was associated with Ambedkar Students' Association. The local B.J.P. Member of Parliament had written a complaint to the then Human Resource Minister in the month of August, 2015, alleging that the Hyderabad University had become a stronghold of "casteist, extremist and anti-national politics". In the month of September, 2015, the University had suspended five students, including Rohith Vemula. Consequently, in January, 2016, Rohith Vemula committed suicide.

Even when the protests regarding Rohith Vemula's suicide were continuing throughout the country, the elected President of J.N.U. Students' Union, Kanhaiya Kumar, was arrested on the charge of "sedition". At the time of his production in the court, some persons, related to the ruling party at the Centre, manhandled him. Later, the court released him on bail. When Kanhaiya went to the Hyderabad Central University to

express his solidarity with the protesting students of the university, the authorities banned his entry into the university campus at the last moment.

There have been many such incidents violating intellectual and political freedom in other universities as well. There is no need to go into details here. The incidents narrated above are more than sufficient to illustrate the attitude of the present Union Government.

In September, 2015, before the last Bihar Assembly elections, Mohammad Aklaq was lynched to death in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh, after being "charged" with eating beef. In July, 2016, about more than a month ago, some dalits were beaten up in Una in Gujarat by the so-called "cow-protectors", just because they were skinning dead animals.

A strange environment of intellectual and religious intolerance is sought to be created in the country. If the Union Government does not agree with any idea or ideology, the persons subscribing to that ideology are being charged with "treason" in a very light manner. Hate campaigns are being carried on against religious minorities. Writers-thinkers are being killed, and Gandhi's assassination is sought to be justified.

Someone may disagree with Gandhi's ideas. Gandhi can be and has been criticized from a humanist point of view as well, particularly, his

views on religion and *varna-vyavastha*. But, what is the meaning of justifying Gandhi's assassin, Godse? This can only mean that if you don't agree with someone's ideas, shoot him! In fact, this is what has been done with Dabholkar, Pansare and Kalburgi.

Whether it is philosophy or any science, knowledge grows by critical thinking. There is no place for intellectual intolerance in scientific method. If scientists are not tolerant towards different hypotheses, then science will not be able to move even a step forward.

Philosophy, in particular, grows out of critical thinking. This was true in ancient times and is true at present also. Today, in Analytical Philosophy central place is given to clarification of concepts and logical evaluation of beliefs. If we are not tolerant enough even to listen to one-another's arguments, how are we going to logically evaluate it?

In fact, in philosophy/knowledge grows out of clash of opposite ideas and intellectual struggle. In western philosophy there has been a long intellectual struggle between materialism and idealism. In India, Astika (orthodox) and Nastika (heterodox) struggle has been going on since ancient times, and is still continuing in the 21st century. In fact, the conflict has sharpened further.

Whether we are Nastika or Astika, we ought to be ready to listen to and to evaluate one another's arguments. If possible, we should try to remove or minimize our disagreements by using logical and scientific method. Where there is no sufficient evidence to come to a definite conclusion, we ought to

suspend our judgments. If it is not possible to remove our disagreements, then we ought to learn to live peacefully and gracefully with our disagreements. In no case, we should turn our intellectual disagreement into personal enmity, conspire against one-another and even indulge in violence.

This is the essence of intellectual tolerance.

In absence of such intellectual tolerance the future of philosophy will itself be endangered. Therefore, philosophers ought to be in the forefront of the fight against intellectual intolerance.

Children in poverty

India is home to over 30 per cent of almost 385 million children living in extreme poverty, the highest in South Asia, according to a new report by the World Bank Group and UNICEF. The report 'Ending Extreme Poverty: A Focus on Children' said children are more than twice as likely as adults to live in extreme poverty. In 2013, 19.5 per cent of children in developing nations were living in households that survived on an average of USD 1.90 a day or less per person, compared to just 9.2 per cent of adults.

Globally, almost 385 million children were living in extreme poverty. The report said sub-Saharan Africa has both the highest rates of children living in extreme poverty at just under 50 per cent, and the largest share of the world's extremely poor children, at just over 50 per cent. "South Asia has the second highest share at nearly 36 per cent with over 30 per cent of extremely poor children living in India alone," it said, adding that more than four out of five children in extreme poverty live in rural areas

The report said children are disproportionately affected, as they make up around a third of the population studied, but half of the extreme poor. The youngest children are the most at risk with more than one-fifth of children under the age of five in the developing world living

in extremely poor households. "Children are not only more likely to be living in extreme poverty; the effects of poverty are most damaging to children. They are the worst off of the worst off and the youngest children are the worst off of all, because the deprivations they suffer affect the development of their bodies and their minds," said UNICEF Executive Director Anthony Lake.

"It is shocking that half of all children in sub-Saharan Africa and one in five children in developing countries are growing up in extreme poverty. This not only limits their futures, it drags down their societies," Lake said. Senior Director, Poverty and Equity at the World Bank Group Ana Revenga said the sheer number of children in extreme poverty points to a real need to invest specifically in the early years in services such as pre-natal care for pregnant mothers, early childhood development programs, quality schooling, clean water, good sanitation and health care. Revenga said improving these services, and ensuring that today's children can access quality job opportunities when the time comes, is the only way to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty that is so widespread today.

—Press Trust of India

Harsh Vardhan

A committed socialist and former member of Lok Sabha, Harsh Vardhan passed away on 4th October at Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences. He was 68. Born on 1st December 1947 to Savitri Singh and Yogendra Pal Singh, Harsh Vardhan was educated at Lucknow University. While a student, he came in contact with Socialist leaders of that time like Rajnarain, Madhu Limaye, Ram Sewak Yadav, George Fernandes, Arjun Singh Bhadoria, Ugrasen, Capt. Abbas Ali, Brajraj Singh. He was active in Samajwadi Yuvjan Sabha along with Satyadev Tripathi, Devvrat Majumdar, Mukhtar Anis, Mohan Singh, Mohan Prakash and Rajnath Sharma and others. He was President of Uttar

Pradesh Samajwadi Yuvjan Sabha in 1974-77. He was very much active in JP Movement of 1974 and was member of Chatra Yuva Sangarsh Samiti, Uttar Pradesh, 1974-77. During the Emergency he was arrested and put behind the bars in Lucknow Jail. He contested in 1977 and 1980 U.P. Assembly elections unsuccessfully but got elected in 1985 on Janata Party ticket from Pharenda assembly constituency in Gorakhpur district. He was closely associated with trade union and Kisan movements and was President Uttar Pradesh, Hind Mazdoor Kisan Panchayat in 1986-1989. During the same period he was General Secretary, Janata Party, Uttar Pradesh. In 1989 when Janata Party merged into Janata Dal headed by VP Singh, Harsh Vardhan

contested as a Janata Dal candidate from Maharajganj Lok Sabha seat and got elected to ninth Lok Sabha. Later on he joined Congress party, was Vice-President of UP Congress Committee and got elected in 2009 to Lok Sabha as Congress party candidate from Maharajganj (Gorakhpur) in Uttar Pradesh. A dedicated social worker and committed to secularism, Harsh Vardhan was Imprisoned on a number of occasions for his participation in student, youth and socialist movements and suffered imprisonment. He actively struggled against police atrocities, injustice and corruption and was proud of his socialist leaning and legacy and remained committed to its values.

–Qurban Ali

A puzzle called economics!

It was Abraham Lincoln who said: “You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time”.

If he is alive today, Lincoln may take back his above quote!

It is reported that the Japanese save a lot. They do not spend much. Also, Japan exports far more than it imports. Yet Japanese economy is considered weak, even collapsing. Americans spend a lot and save little. Also USA imports more than it exports. Has an annual trade deficit of over \$400 billion. Yet, the American economy is considered strong and trusted to get stronger. But wherefrom do Americans get money to spend? They borrow from Japan, China and even India.

Virtually others save for the US to spend. Global savings are mostly invested in US, in dollars. India itself keeps its foreign currency assets of over \$50 billion in US securities. China has sunk over \$160 billion in US securities. Japan's stakes in US securities is in trillions. Result: The US has taken over \$5 trillion from the world. So, as the world saves for the US - its citizens spend freely. Today, to keep the US consumption going, that is for the US economy to work, other countries have to remit \$180 billion every quarter, which is \$2 billion a day, to the US! A Chinese economist asked a neat question. Who has invested more, US in China, or China in US? The US has invested in China less than half of what China has invested in US. The same is the case with India. We have invested in US over \$50 billion. But

the US has invested less than \$20 billion in India. Why the world is after US? The secret lies in the American spending, that they hardly save. In fact they use their credit cards to spend their future income. That the US spends is what makes it attractive to export to the US. So US imports more than what it exports year after year. The result: The world is dependent on US consumption for its growth. By its deepening culture of consumption, the US has habituated the world to feed on US consumption. But as the US needs money to finance its consumption, the world provides the money. It's like a shopkeeper providing the money to a customer so that the customer keeps buying from the shop. If the customer will not buy, the shop won't have business, unless the shopkeeper

funds him. The US is like the lucky customer. And the world is like the helpless shopkeeper financier. Who is America's biggest shopkeeper financier? Japan of course. Yet it's Japan which is regarded as weak. Modern economists complain that Japanese do not spend, so they do not grow. To force the Japanese to spend, the Japanese government exerted itself, reduced the savings rates, even charged the savers. Even then the Japanese did not spend

(habits don't change, even with taxes, do they?). Their traditional postal savings alone is over \$1.2 trillion, about three times the Indian GDP. Thus, savings, far from being the strength of Japan, has become its pain. Hence, what is the lesson? That is, a nation cannot grow unless the people spend, not save. Not just spend, but borrow and spend. Dr. Jagdish Bhagwati, the famous Indian-born economist in the US, told Manmohan Singh that Indians

wastefully save. Ask them to spend, on imported cars and, seriously, even on cosmetics! This will put India on a growth curve. This is one of the reasons for MNCs coming down to India, seeing the consumer spending. 'Saving is sin, and spending is virtue.' But before you follow this neo-economics, get some fools to save so that you can borrow from them and spend!

—**Mathai Rajan Abraham**

(Continued from Page 1)

offered asylum in India. Following his example, many Baluchis who are at the moment residing in Europe and elsewhere will seek to come to India. This will open another front against Pakistan which India can utilize to tell the world that the uprising in Baluchistan was like the one in East Pakistan, which liberated itself to become Bangladesh in 1971.

The rebellion is a warning to Islamabad that Baluchistan could secede. In fact, it has Shias as a majority like Iran and does not fit into Pushto region which is all around. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Frontier Gandhi, is from the region. When I met him years ago his complaint was that Jawaharlal Nehru had not kept his promise to establish an independent country for the Pushto-speaking people.

Nehru was helpless because Baluchistan was part of Pakistan and he had accepted the establishment of Pakistan at the time of partition. Badshah Khan, as Frontier Gandhi was called, was now a citizen of Pakistan. Any step from Nehru would have amounted to a war and he naturally was not prepared for it.

Prime Minister Modi is a different kettle of fish. Yet, his policy so far has been give-and-take. He was the one who invited to his swearing-in ceremony all leaders of SAARC countries. Modi also stopped at Islamabad while returning from Afghanistan to extend a friendly hand despite furore at home. But today the situation on the ground is different and may force Modi to look at things from another perspective.

The surgical strikes are one such option which he has exercised. Nawaz Sharif's threat of further retaliation could lead to a worst situation. Even Modi may not be able to control when events take over. They have their own ways of expressing themselves and can mean anything. It's time that Pakistan pulls itself back from abyss because it can fall from the cliff.

That will be too dangerous for the country. After all, Pakistan should know by now that after having fought three wars—in 1948, 1965 and 1971—its loss was far greater than it could inflict on India. Even it had to seek the good offices of President Clinton to get the Pakistani soldiers, who had infiltrated the territory, from the Kargil heights.

Footprints of A Crusader (The Life Story of Mrunal Gore)

by
Rohini Gawankar

Published by
Kamalakar Subhedar,

Secretary, Samata Shikshan Sanstha, Pareira Wadi, Mohili Village, Sakinaka, Ghatkopar(W), Mumbai 400072.
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Soon the genetic engineering companies shifted to the even more obnoxious technology of introducing pesticide properties within the plants. About these trends, the Independent Science Panel has said, "Bt proteins, incorporated into 25% of all trans-genic crops worldwide, have been found harmful to a range of non-target insects. Some of them are also potent immunogens and allergens. A team of scientists has cautioned against releasing Bt crops for human use."

Despite this clear view, shared by many eminent scientists, the main company involved is willing to go to any length - bribery, coercion, lies, manipulations - to spread its obnoxious technology because its objective is not food security, its objective is only to tighten its grip on food and farming system.

Genetic engineering is so important in this quest for dominance as this complex and expensive technology is concentrated to a large extent in

the hands of a few giant multinational companies and their subsidiaries. The story that started with snatching the plant resources of tropical/developing/poor countries, then, proceeded with new patent/IPR laws gets completed with genetic engineering. This is the carefully manipulated route which these companies, blessed by their governments in several cases (particularly the USA), have followed in their race for dominance of the world food system.

Socialists Unity Conference

October 21-22, 2016, Mumbai, Maharashtra.

Such activists friends who have firm faith in democratic socialism have come together on a common platform 'Hum Samajvadi' (We Socialists). The platform has successfully organized Socialists Unity Conference in Patna and Lucknow. Gaining from the experience of last one year, another large-scale programme is being organized in Mumbai on 21-22 October 2016. There will be a special rally on 22 October. The conference will be attended by participants from different peoples' organizations, political activists

Different topics are to be discussed in this conference such as elimination of communalism, fascism and caste in the light of the Constitution; economic crisis and globalization in the last three decades; natural calamities, agriculture crisis and development; climate change as a global challenge; status and change in education system; unorganized labour force, their contribution, security and rights; and gender justice.

21 October 2016. 10 am to 8 pm.

Venue: Damodar Hall, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Road, Jagannath Bhatankar Marg, Parel, Mumbai – 400012.

22 October 2016. 10 am to 1 pm.

Venue: Shirodkar High School Hall, Dr Borges Road, Near Nare Park,
Chamar Bagh Cross Road, Mumbai – 400012

Public Rally: 2 pm onwards at Azad Maidan (Near Mumbai C.S.T Railway Station)

Medha Patkar, Dr Sunilam, Madhu Mohite, Sadasiv Magdum,
Suneeti S.R, Bilal Khan, Mdhuresh, Sudhakar Stave
for Hum Samajvadi - We Socialists

For more information, please contact :

Guddi samajwadijekjutata@gmail.com 09869059860 / 07738082170

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Hans A. Baer

Pratap Bhaiya of Nainital
Chandra Bhal Tripathi

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

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

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Misplaced blame game

Kuldip Nayar

Pakistan's National Security Advisor Sartaj Aziz has said that there is no room for improvement in relations between India and Pakistan so long as Narendra Modi is the Prime Minister of India. This is the most undemocratic and anti-people remark any person could have made. That it comes from a top Pakistan official is all the more disappointing and deplorable.

Modi is a duly elected Prime Minister and he and his Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) were returned to power in an open, fair election. Dissent is a part of democracy but it does not mean that a dissenter should be given the No. 1 position. I do not like the ideology of Modi and his party but he is the Prime Minister of India and I, as a citizen of the country, accept him in that position.

Sartaj is only shutting his eyes to the facts. His opinion does not count in the face of reality: the return of BJP and Narendra Modi at the polls. The cat was out of the bag when the National Assembly, which he was addressing, passed a unanimous resolution on the "atrocities" in Kashmir. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif also drew a blank at the UN where he tried to raise the issue.

Seventy years have gone by and there is no normalization of relations between the two countries because of Pakistan's insistence on raising the Kashmir issue at different world forums. It was agreed between Zulfikhar Ali Bhutto and Indira Gandhi at Shimla in 1970 that Kashmir was a bilateral issue and it has to be sorted out by the two, without any interference of a third party.

Since the Kashmir problem had remained unresolved I met Lord Radcliffe during a visit to London to know his view point. He readily agreed to meet me but on the condition that I would not discuss the line which he had drawn between India and Pakistan at the time of partition. I assured him that I was not renewing the issue because I had no ulterior motive. But I just wanted to understand the rationale behind the line delineated.

Lord Radcliffe lived at a flat on the Oxford Street, London. When he opened the door I thought that he couldn't be Radcliffe because I had imagined that there would be fuss in meeting the Lord. On the contrary, when I went to his flat he asked me if I would have a cup of tea. When I said yes, he himself went to the kitchen and prepared the tea.

The games they play

Rajindar Sachar

I knew that Lord Radcliffe had refused to collect his fee of Rs. 40,000 which Lord Mountbatten had offered him when he was approached to demarcate the border between India and Pakistan. As a sensitive man that he was, Lord Radcliffe thought that the blood of one million people who took upon themselves to migrate from one country to other was on his conscience. That is the reason why he refused to collect the fee.

He said he was surprised that the two countries had gone to war on Kashmir which he considered an insignificant territory. He blamed Lord Mountbatten for having given a tehsil in Gurdaspur to connect India with Kashmir. Without it, there would have been no link of India with Kashmir.

There was yet another evidence of Lord Mountbatten's antics when a letter from him was retrieved from the debris of a plane crash in the northern part of Pakistan. The letter was being carried by his personal aide who was travelling in the plane. Pakistan has quoted this incident as a evidence of nefarious design by Lord Mountbatten who was nourishing the grievance against Pakistan for not making him the joint Governor General.

I was amazed by the disclosures that Lord Radcliffe made when he said that while drawing the line he had given Lahore to India. But when he realized that Pakistan would not have an important place to locate its capital, he had allotted it to Pakistan.

Pakistan has itself to blame for the conditions prevailing in Kashmir. When the British quit, Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir announced his independence. Pakistan sent its regular troops

(Contd. on Page 6)

I feel anger that the present-day politicians can act so low as to use even the most delicate matters of defence and security to their partisan advantage. Previously, the matter of defence was accepted as the country's concern. That is why Jayaprakash Narayan, who had been maligned for his anti-corruption movement in Gujarat by Indira Gandhi, had no hesitation in agreeing to her request to go on international tours to educate the public about the delicate situation in Bangladesh. No one played politics with the country's security and dignity and the sacrifice and planning of the defence forces.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the then leader of the opposition, called Indira 'Durga'. The Congress projected it not as a victory of the Indian Army for its brilliant strategy, rather it was claimed as Indira's personal victory and strategy. Still, nobody grudged it. It is common to give credit to the current leader - just as the Allies won the world war, but in the UK, it was Churchill, and not the coalition partner Labour Party, who got the credit. It is a different matter that England's electorate was sensible enough to realise that post-war reconstruction required a modest-looking Attlee than the bumbling Churchill. The CPM is now taking the same stand as the Congress - not surprising - having accepted in the West Bengal general election the role of a junior partner, it has to follow the lead given by Rahul Gandhi. Need I remind the CPM and CPI that in the war against Hitler, they gave all credit to Stalin's leadership than to the unimaginably courageous Red Army? It is natural

in politics. The Army does not want public kudos, it only wants its due recognition, dignity and respect.

Let Rahul also be updated that because of this victory in East Bengal, Indira preponed the general election in the country by almost two years. The election was due to be held in February 1972, but Indira, in the wake of the Bangladesh victory, dissolved Parliament on December 27, 1970, and held fresh election and obtained overwhelming victory - unlike when parliamentary elections were held in February 1967, the Congress had won only 54 per cent seats. No one accused Indira of foul play, as Rahul has done now of Modi. Everyone took it as a normal political strategy which every party is entitled to. What would Rahul like to call his grandmother's normal political strategy?

Following the Uri attack, there was a condemnation of the alleged lack of proper response by the government. The healthy conventions of democracies that these matters are left best to be determined by the Army and its experts (along with the mandatory consultation with the Opposition, of course only on general information and not strategic details) was ignored by Modi, so when the government owned up to the strategic strikes inside Pakistan area, the Opposition demanded proof - an insult to the Army and its achievements. And when pressed to a corner, the government yielded and purported to give proof; maybe a little too self-congratulatory. There the matter should have rested under mature politicians.

But then Rahul, who in the first instance behaved like a responsible opposition leader, soon let partisan thinking take over and in a totally unacceptable language attacked Modi for '*jawanon ke khoon ki dalali*'. To make his point stronger, he referred to Raj Babbar's film *Insaf ka Tarazu*, proudly proclaiming that 'Congress has given justice to the people. Congress has respected *insaf ka tarazu* which Modi has not'.

Would some of Rahul's cronies explain to him that Raj Babbar's role in the said film was that of a villain-rapist and since he was protected by his riches and cronies, the public took upon itself to avenge the insult to womanhood by killing the villain. Is there any relevance to the present situation?

These election strategies are normal in a democratic state - every political party is perfectly within its rights to take political advantage. I am surprised that the Congress and the Left are behaving in such a cringing and 'unsportman-like' manner.

In this game of one-upmanship, Congress spokesperson correctly taunted the BJP by reminding it that as far back as 1965, it was Lal Bahadur Shastri, Congress PM, who crossed the LoC. But some cynics may comment that though the Congress wants to take the credit for Shastri's bold action, but in reality, it acts so shamelessly that none of the top Congress leaders, including Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, considered it their duty to pay homage at his samadhi on his birth anniversary recently. Does one take the revival of Barua's insulting slogan of 'India is Indira', with the difference of substituting instead Sonia or Rahul, as the Congress philosophy?

(Contd. on Page 6)

Warmongers are anti-national

Sandeep Pandey

The Indian government, after the surgical strike on 29 September, 2016, details of which have not been made very clear, in response to the Uri attack on 18 September, appears to be in a complacent mood as a result of something which it deems to be an accomplishment. This is similar to the nuclear tests conducted on 11 May, 1998. Even then some BJP leaders indulged in chest thumping, some were issuing warnings and threats to Pakistan. But before the end of that month, Pakistan too conducted its tests, taking India by surprise. Hence those celebrating India's success at the border must be cautious. India has not carried out a strike which will deter Pakistan from attacking India directly or through proxy in future. When nuclear tests were conducted we were told that India now possessed a weapon that what to talk of Pakistan even US would be wary of it. But before Atal Bihari Vajpayee could conclude his term as Prime Minister, Pakistani forces infiltrated in Kargil.

Just like the arms race between Indian and Pakistan accelerated after the nuclear tests, even though the social indices of the two neighbours are the worst compared to their neighbours in South Asia, consuming invaluable resources which should have been spent on making basic necessities of life available to its citizens, competition in acquiring material for mutual destruction would receive a similar fillip after the Indian surgical strike. It would be underestimating Pakistan if we think that it would be discouraged from

carrying out its regular incursions in future because of our surgical strike. The problem with arms race is nobody knows when it'll end. With technological advancement more sophisticated and dangerous weapons become available. If one country acquires a certain weapon then it becomes mandatory for the other to acquire something which is of equal destructive potential. The weapons are acquired for one's security. But they actually increase the feeling of insecurity. First we worry only about our security, then we have to worry about the security of our weapons too. For example, countries possessing nuclear weapons have to worry about their security too. It is a matter of grave concern for US that the Pakistani nuclear weapons should not fall in the hands of Islamist extremists.

Currently India has created a situation which will trigger another round of arms acquisition between the neighbours. Countries which will benefit are US, Israel, Russia, Britain, France, China, etc., from whom India and Pakistan will buy their arms. The money which should have been spent on education, health care, food security, housing, sanitation, to ensure that no child is malnourished and no women is anemic, will now be spent on purchasing weapons. Hence, even building an atmosphere of war is a crime against the poor people of both countries.

Rajnath Singh has declared that the 3,323 km long India-Pakistan border will be sealed. Boundaries

are made by humans and they have a history of changing. People and material will keep moving across India-Pakistan border because people on both sides have relatives and their religious places on the other side. People want to travel across the border. Two countries have cultural affinity. Nowhere else in the world, the language spoken in large part of north India, known as Hindi in India and Urdu in Pakistan, is understood so well as in Pakistan. At a time when European countries have made borders irrelevant we are talking about sealing our borders. West and East Germany demolished the wall between them. We want to build one between India and Pakistan. If there are governments in the two countries in future who decide to make peace then the money spent on sealing the borders will go waste. Hence, the effort should be to open the borders, not seal them. Impregnable border is sign of animosity, open border is sign of friendship. Enmity is short term, non-permanent, friendship is long term, stable. Hence the decision of Indian government to seal borders lacks wisdom and is anti-people. It is a waste of public resources. Is there a guarantee that sealed borders will prevent terrorists from invading? Aerial attacks and through sea, like the one in Mumbai, can still take place. Worst, they can infiltrate, physically and mentally. How will the sealed border prevent somebody inside India from being radicalized? We should look for solutions so that terrorists stop coming and people stop becoming radicals. It requires deeper introspection than a symbolic gesture of sealing border.

People die in wars. It is not always the terrorists or combatants who die. As we saw in over three months of protests in Kashmir, the bullets of security forces killed

children, women and old too. Even the family of soldier doesn't want him to die. They want to see him return alive. His job is to protect the border. He sacrifices his life in very special circumstances. It is the governments which create situations in which the soldier may have to sacrifice his life or he may remain safe. If the governments are not able to solve their problem with neighbouring countries then soldiers may have to sacrifice their lives. If the governments show intent of solving the problem then soldiers may not be required to risk their lives. War is a sign of failure of government to solve the problem with neighbours and peace is a sign

of success. A government which is concerned about its citizens will never want to go to war. On the contrary, a government insensitive towards its citizens will put their lives in danger.

To create war hysteria in the country is not patriotism but anti-national, as it will lead the country to disaster. It is not a sign of responsible government which allows politics of jingoism. The government and the Bhartiya Janata Party may temporarily gain from the war or building the atmosphere of war, but the citizens stand to lose in the long term.

Stop using army and martyrs for political gains

It is very unfortunate that the present government is using the Surgical Strike of 29th September 2016 by the Indian army following the Uri attack on a army camp as an excuse for whipping up war hysteria. The Socialist Party denounces this deed of the government completely. What ought to have happened is that the government in keeping with its gravity and responsibility should have directed the media and war-mongers to desist from any war hysteria. Instead it is in cohorts with the media and war-mongers to promote war hysteria. This is the first instance of a government using the armed forces and martyrs so directly for vote politics.

The Socialist Party believes that this is the government's ploy to distract public attention from its failures and ensure its victory in the upcoming polls in four states, including UP. The other truth in this episode is also the fact that

British sympathizers like RSS/BJP are keen to register themselves as patriots at the cost of the army and martyrs. Otherwise, Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself has often made objectionable comments about the Indian Army. In his last two years of service it has become very clear that he is basically the 'pradhan sevak' of big corporate houses and fanatical elements.

In this entire episode the government and the media together have weakened India's position versus Pakistan at the international level. The irresponsible statements against the army's Surgical Strike by some opposition leaders and civil society activists have also further damaged India's position and fueled war hysteria. Situations have been so turned that even to ask legitimate non-political questions about the episode is now an act of treason.

(Contd. on Page 6)

Resisting the rise of BJP

Varughese George

Prof. Irfan Habib's letter to the CPI(M) politbureau on June 26 seeking a positive approach to Congress in the context of BJP's emergence deserves a considered discussion. The traditional Left in the country including the socialists and communists is on the wane and they alone cannot fight BJP is a plain truth. The socialists who had secured ten percent votes in the first general elections could secure only 8.7 per cent votes in the last general elections viz. 3.4% for Samajvadi Party, 1.7% for Biju Janata Dal, 1.3% for Rashtriya Janata Dal, 1.1% for Janata Dal(United) 0.7% for Janata Dal(Secular) and 0.5% for Indian National Lok Dal. The communist left who had secured eight percent votes and 61 seats in Lok Sabha a decade and half ago secured only 4.5% votes and 12 seats in the last Lok Sabha elections. It consists of 3.2% to CPI(M) 0.8% to CPI, 0.3% to RSP and 0.2% to Forward Bloc. In the second general elections the undivided Communist party brought its 27 members to Lok Sabha from nine states, but now it is confined to three states. The Congress party that secured one fifth of total votes polled in the last Lok Sabha elections cannot be wished away when forming an anti-BJP front.

This was the logic that the left pursued when it had supported UPA1. The UPA coalition partners and the four left parties then agreed upon a common minimum programme, formed an UPA-Left co-ordination committee and elected Somanath Chatterjee as Speaker of Lok Sabha.

In this course of action the Left had to make two compromises. The first was the support extended to the Patent Amendment Act in Parliament that came as a corollary to WTO regulations. The second was that the Left allowed the government to approach the IAEA for talks on India-US civil nuclear agreement. Achin Vanaik then commented that the move clearly signaled a softening of Left's original stand. But still the Left was able to put brakes on UPA government's design to further disinvest public sector industries and public sector financial institutions.

This dialectics can be applied in the next Parliament elections when the Left can make electoral adjustment with the Congress as crafted in West Bengal. But the alliance in Bengal was lukewarm and unenthusiastic and the masses did not trust it. On the other hand Nithish Kumar's electoral alliance with Congress in Bihar proved highly successful since it was wholehearted unlike in Bengal. If the Congress, the Left and AIUDF had joined hands together Assam would not have been offered to the BJP where the Congress had had an uninterrupted rule of 15 years. The Congress should also learn to live with the coalition philosophy considering its abating influence with only Karnataka, a rather large state in South in its fold along with some small states in North. As early as 1954 Congress supported a minority PSP ministry in Travancore-Cochin with Pattom Thanu Pillai as Chief Minister whose party had just 19 members in the

Assembly where the former had 45 members whose leader was none less than Panampally Govinda Menon. In 1960 also the scenario was repeated when Congress supported a PSP-led government in the newly formed state of Kerala. The Congress had 63 seats and the PSP had 20 seats and again the Chief Minister was Pattom Thanu Pillai of PSP. Such were the times when coalition politics was at an experimental stage and the leaders were stalwarts who came through the national movement. Similarly if the Congress had shown some patience in enduring the Union governments led by Charan Singh, Chandra Sekhar, V. P. Singh, Deve Gowda and I. K. Gujral and not have withdrawn support on flimsy grounds and allowed space and time for the growth of a democratic alternative, the politics of this country would have been entirely different. The people became tired and weary of the short-lived Janata governments and BJP was catapulted to the position of principal opposition and then as ruling party between 1999 and 2009 which had just two members in Lok Sabha in 1984. The Left also should understand that in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan there is no democratic alternative except Congress to fight BJP.

The classic example of a BJP win over a disunited opposition is UP Lok Sabha election of 2014. The BJP won 71 seats and its ally, Apna Dal two seats. The BJP's vote share was 42.3% while SP got 22.2 per cent, BSP 19.6%, RLD 0.9% and Congress 7%. The non-BJP parties had secured

more votes than BJP, but the secular votes were divided. BJP's first ever victory from a constituency, Nemom in Trivandrum to Kerala Legislative Assembly is a pointer to the things to come. In spite of a massive victory the CPI(M)'s vote share was reduced by two percent in 2016 compared to the 2011 Kerala Legislative Assembly vote share to it. This must have been the reason for Prof. Irfan Habib asking LDF to make alliance with UDF partners to resist the rise of BJP in Kerala.

(Contd. from Page 2)

because it did not accept the Maharaja's decision. India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru did not accept the Maharaja's accession until he made Sheikh Abdullah, the popular Kashmiri leader, in prison at the time, as Prime Minister of the state.

There was so much delay in Nehru giving his nod to the accession that the Pakistani troops reached the outskirts of Srinagar airport. The Indian forces were flown and they reached at the nick of time to secure the airport. Captain Rai was the first casualty. Had the Pakistani forces not wasted time in looting and raping at Baramulla, they would have had the control of the airport. If they had done so, the entire story would have been different.

Sartaj Aiziz, I think, is wrong to pick on Modi because when he stopped at Islamabad, Kashmir's accession was history. Modi has had no hand in it. He started with all the goodwill and visited Islamabad to participate in the birthday celebrations of Nawaz Sharif's granddaughter.

Pakistan's obsession is Islam, the religion. Islam, that they made the state religion. Since Modi is considered an exponent of Hindutva

- he was an RSS pracharak - he is blamed for all the wrong that had happened to the Muslims in India after partition. Posterity will confirm that the border accepted on the basis of religion is a permanent wrong done to people on both the countries. They remain segregated because one is Hindu and the other is Muslim.

I hope that the dream of Pakistan's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah comes true. He said that the two countries would live like America and Canada. They would, Jinnah said, cease to be Hindus and Muslims, not in the religious sense but otherwise, and stop mixing religion with the state.

(Contd. from Page 3)

Of course, the BJP conduct in the post-strikes is also stinking. It is a nauseating suggestion, as if these strikes were given under the special command of Modi or BJP president Amit Shah. The abhorrent elections strategy by the BJP in UP is openly to whip up anti-Muslim sentiment. Look at the way compensation was given to the kin of the man who died in hospital and was charged with the murder of Akhlak in Dadri. Also, the way in which actor Nawajuddin was prevented by BJP and Shiv Sena goons to participate in Ram Lila when he volunteered to do so.

It is uncomfortable how Pakistani actors are now being denied work in India, even when all permissions have been duly given. The only hope of mutual goodwill and ultimate peace between India and Pakistan depends on keeping alive our common lines of communication, films, plays, music, and common heritage, especially of Punjab on either side.

India and Pakistan are like Siamese twin. We can either destroy ourselves by our animosity or

become the leaders of the world if we start living peacefully, amid mutual trust. If that sounds like the ravings of a person who spent the first 25 years of his life in Lahore and cannot forget the common culture of a Punjabi (which I believe still exists in both Punjabs), let me be so tainted.

(Contd. from Page 4)

This is a dangerous situation for democracy.

The army has its own way of functioning. The Socialist Party believes that the army's job ought to be left to the army. The government, politicians and civil society activists, must do their job. Their job is to work towards alleviating deep rooted problems like poverty, ill health, hunger, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, etc. within the given framework of independent and self-reliant economic policies. War will claim many martyrs and also damage the country's economy.

Socialist Party invokes the conscientious citizens of the country to come forward and use their discretion to neutralize the war hysteria of all the war-mongers including the government.

- Dr. Prem Singh

Spokesperson and General Secretary, Socialist Party(India)

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Compensation most foul

October 8 will be remembered as the date when India crossed the Rubicon. Nothing as dramatic as the “surgical strikes” happened on this day.

On this date, the government of Uttar Pradesh decided to award a compensation of Rs 25 lakh to the family of Ravin Sisodia, a resident of Bisara, a village in Dadri. Sisodia died in jail due to multiple organ failure. The doctors and the forensic report concluded that it was a natural death. Sisodia wasn't in jail for some petty crime. Last year, he was allegedly part of the crowd which dragged a Muslim man, Mohammad Akhlaq, out of his house and killed him. Akhlaq's death raised indignation across the nation and led to a wave of protests initiated by writers against the state-sponsored intolerance directed at minorities.

Only one death. An insignificant figure when compared with the numbers of Muslims killed in Bhagalpur or Nellie or Gujarat or the Sikhs killed in 1984 in Delhi and elsewhere. But the shock it generated was felt across the nation. The act and its fallout played a major role in the assembly election of Bihar. The death of Akhlaq was a result of the complete failure, not only of the state's organs, but also of our polity. It was because of the realisation of the enormity of this failure that the UP government gave a huge compensation to the family of Akhlaq.

Compensation to Muslims in the wake of communal violence has always been an issue with Hindus. I would call this compensation envy or compensation complex — which neighbours of the Muslim victims suffer from. We have heard complaints — most recently in Muzaffarnagar — that Muslims are,

in fact, beneficiaries of communal violence.

Hindus feel deprived and they believe that the violence is in fact invited by the Muslims themselves for this compensation. They allege that Muslims burn their houses for state money. It also leads to a hatred for Muslims as they are seen helpless, seeking alms from the state and unable to fend for themselves. They are looked down upon as lesser human beings living off the money of the Hindus, who are the real and major taxpayers.

The compensation for the death of Akhlaq was made an issue by the leaders of the BJP and the villagers. Violent campaigns in the name of cow protection even after this death continued across states which caused humiliation and claimed more Muslim lives. All this led the villagers of Bisara to feel that killing of Akhlaq was a just and pious act. The fiction of the killing of a cow and eating beef turned into fact through a sustained campaign. Within a year, Akhlaq and his family were converted from victims into accused and suspects. They had by their alleged act of killing of a cow, sacred to Hindus, instigated and lead the Hindus to express their anger which led to the death of Akhlaq. The courts have directed the authorities to file a criminal case against the family of Akhlaq.

In the imagination of the villagers of Bisara, Sisodia and others became victims and heroes at the same time. We have seen agitation by the villagers of Bisara demanding their release and withdrawal of cases against them. A similar agitation is going on in Muzaffarnagar. These agitations are led by locals blessed by the RSS and the BJP. The BJP has decided to remove the fig leaf: Its

leaders openly address the revenge-seeking crowd and generate a sense of injustice and anger in them.

Sisodia was a taxi driver. Did he actually participate in the killing? It was yet to be decided. But he was an accused. And he died due to an illness awaiting trial. Are such deaths compensated by the state? We know the answer. But the UP government thought otherwise. By giving in to bullying by the kin of the accused — who refused to cremate Sisodia if their demand was not met — the government has created a dangerous precedent. What is also unique in this affair is the arrangement through which this figure has been achieved. The state government pays Rs 10 lakh, 10 lakh will be given by some NGOs and five lakh by Union minister Mahesh Sharma and Sangeet Som, a BJP MLA who is also an accused in the communal violence in Muzaffarnagar. It was a deal brokered by the minister. The state government agreed as it did not want the impression that Hindu deaths didn't matter to go in an election year. We need to notice that the state government sheepishly allowed its jurisdiction to be violated by the Central minister.

Involvement of NGOs in this compensation package is an innovation. Why was this done?

Did the state government not have sufficient funds? What is the Central minister's contribution doing here? This single act is a complete capitulation and surrender of its authority by the UP government. It will have grave implications for the principle of division of powers between the states and the Centre. It is also an act that informalises governance...

-Apoorvanand in *Indian Express*

Pratap Bhaiya of Nainital

Chandra Bhal Tripathi

Pratap Singh, socialist leader of Nainital, was my contemporary at Lucknow University and a dear comrade. He was an Advocate, a PSP leader, Health Minister in the UP Government led by Chaudhari Charan Singh in 196, hugely popular in Kumaon region as Pratap Bhaiya, who had established 105 primary schools in the region each of which he visited once a year. I have not met a person as meticulous as him in the matter of time. Once in my presence in his office a person came to see him at 4:05 PM. He said to him: “Sorry, your appointment was at 4 PM. Please fix another appointment and come again.”

In 1953 the socialist youth from all corners of India established Samajwadi Yuwak Sabha at Kashi Vidyapeeth, Varanasi. Soon thereafter the UP branch of SYS held a 15-day camp at Bhimtal, Nainital District, which was inaugurated by Acharya Narendra Deva and addressed, among others, by Dr. Lohia and Prof. Mukut Bihari Lal. The participants included two PSP MLAs, Narayan Datt Tiwari and Ramdatt Joshi, poet Chandrika Singh ‘Karunesh’, Kashi Nath Misra, etc. We had very serious discussions on Marxism, democratic socialism, party’s policies and programmes. Every morning we used to do ‘shramdan’ and during that short duration dug a hill road nearby.

After the camp was over three of us, viz., Pratap Singh, Gyanendra Srivastava of Kanpur and myself, decided to visit the beautiful hill station of Mukteshwar at an altitude of 10,000 feet where a branch of the Indian Veterinary Research Institute (Hqs. at Izatnagar, Bareilly)

is located. There was no motorable road then and we had to cover 25 miles on foot each way in the hilly terrain. We halted for the night at the Rest House, Ramgarh, famous for apple orchards, where Gurudeva Rabindranatha Tagore had stayed probably several times, a famous botanist Dr. Boshi Sen had settled, and the great Hindi poet Mahadevi Varma had a villa for staying in the summer. Apart from other works she wrote her famous reminiscences *Ateet ke Chalachitra* at Ramgarh.

Our main attraction was that Acharya Narendra Deva was staying at the Rest House at Ramgarh because of which we had no difficulty in securing accommodation at Ramgarh for the night. Acharyaji was dictating a book in Hindi on Buddhism to a scholar whom he introduced as a Panditji from Varanasi. It is worth recalling that Acharyaji was the greatest Indian scholar of Pali. The original text of the most important Buddhist treatise *Abhidhammakosha* in Sanskrit had become extinct. It was available in Tibetan and Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityayan had translated it from Tibetan into Hindi. But Acharyaji told me once that that translation suffered from some defects. As its French version was available and Acharyaji was a good scholar and speaker of French, he translated that treatise from French into Hindi. The Hindi book that he was dictating in the Rest House at Ramgarh became known as the most authentic book on Buddhism under the caption *Bauddha Dharma Darshan* and published by the Bihar Rashtrabhasha Prachar Samiti. And the Panditji who was taking dictation from Acharyaji was Pandit

Jagannath Upadhyaya who became famous as the Marxist Buddhist scholar and Professor of Pali at the Varanaseya Sampurnanand Sanskrit Vishwavidyalaya. It was one of the most memorable occasions for us. young socialists, to listen to Acharyaji.

On our return to Nainital, which used to be the summer capital of UP, we learnt that Governor KM Munshi and the Cabinet Ministers of UP were staying there. At the instance of the Governor, who was the Chancellor of the State Universities, the Vice-Chancellors’ Conference had taken an unconstitutional decision to make membership of the university student unions optional and have indirect elections to the posts in the unions. The reason was that in those days it was only the socialists and to a less degree the communists who invariably got elected as Presidents or other important office-bearers in the student unions. The ABVP was hardly effective and the Youth Congress, with plenty of funds provided by the Congress, was a non-entity. To subvert this situation Governor Munshi, who was a Congressman with inclination towards Hindutva elements, and C. B. Gupta, Health Minister and Hon. Treasurer of Lucknow University, had hatched this conspiracy. We had a strong reason in our favour that the Constitution of our Union, enforced by the University three decades ago, provided that before making any amendment to the Constitution the General Body of the students would have to be consulted. We wanted this right to be consulted to be honoured by the authorities as we were sure that the overwhelming majority of the students would support us. Therefore, Pratap Singh, Gyanendra

Srivastava and myself met Guptaji at the famous 'Flats' of Nainital and requested him not to enforce the decision of the Vice-Chancellors' Conference until the General Body of the students was consulted. But the arrogant Guptaji in his gruff voice threatened us: "Why should we consult you? We will see you." We kind of warned him that when the University reopened this would be a burning issue and the authorities could not take away our democratic and constitutional right.

The result was that as anticipated the new session started with meetings, processions, strike and ultimately hunger strike by seven student leaders in the Union building. Soon the agitation spread all over UP. A Students' Action Committee was formed with myself as Chairman and 11 members including the former Secretary of the Union, Robin Mitra, and Pratap Singh. On the midnight of October 31, 1953 a contingent of 700 PAC from Sitapur surrounded the Union building, arrested the hunger strikers, hundreds of students and 9 out of 12 members of the Students' Action Committee. I escaped from the Union building and went underground, changing my shelter and conducting the movement. Pratap Singh went away to Nainital and J. P. Tiwari to Faizabad. The next morning a huge procession led by Shehla Husaini was taken out which broke the police cordon. That day unfortunately three lives were lost in police firing. Ultimately the State authorities and Guptaji had to yield and we won on both counts of compulsory membership and direct elections. A Union Minister, Rafi Ahmad Kidwai, openly supported our cause and we were able to win moral support of Prime Minister Nehru whom we called upon in the first week of September 1953 in his office, though he did not express his view publicly. He heard patiently our case. After our victory Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia wrote an article

captioned *The Lucknow Revolt* in the National Herald. In that struggle, in which 14,000 students went to jail all over the State, Pratap Singh stood like a rock.

Years later, in 1967, when I was working as Deputy Commissioner for SC&ST at Chandigarh, one day a large car appeared at my office and I was pleasantly surprised to find my old friend, Pratap Singh who had become Pratap Bhaiya for the people of Kumaon by then and was the Health Minister in Chaudhari Charan Singh's cabinet, coming to see me. He said that he proposed to set up a PGI at Lucknow and for that purpose he had come to see the PGI, Chandigarh. He took me to the PGI to introduce me to the Director of the PGI, Chandigarh.

Pratap Bhaiya established a unique institution named Shaheed Sainik Vidyalaya at Nainital which provided free board and

lodging, uniforms, books, etc. (all facilities completely free) to children of any soldier from any part of India who died in a combat with the enemy. He was permitted by the Ministry of Defence to use the nomenclature, the colour of the uniform and the syllabus of the official Sainik Schools. Once I had gone with my wife and younger daughter in 1989 to visit Nainital, Bhimtal, Kainchi, Almora, Ranikhet and Kausani when Pratap Bhaiya invited me to address the students of that idealistic institution. I became a bit emotional recalling the ideals and goals during the freedom movement and the degeneration that had set in, our working together in the student and socialist youth movements with Acharya Narendra Deva as our mentor and icon. Pratap Bhaiya's wife was a great source of strength to him and was a leader for women's empowerment. I salute the memory of the unassuming socialist couple.

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Toward Democratic Eco-socialism

Hans A. Baer

This essay is guided by two imperatives: (1) how do we live in harmony with each other on a fragile planet of limited resources, which have become unevenly distributed; and (2) how do we live in harmony with nature, particularly as humanity lurches forward into an era of potentially catastrophic, anthropogenic climate change that to a large degree is a by-product of the capitalist world system. Social systems, whether they exist at the local, regional, or global levels, do not last forever. Capitalism, as a globalizing political economic system committed to profit making and continual economic growth, has created a treadmill of production and consumption that is heavily dependent upon fossil fuels and has resulted in greenhouse gas emissions that drive climate change. While capitalism has produced numerous impressive technological innovations, some beneficial and others destructive, which are very unevenly distributed, it is a system fraught with numerous contradictions, including: growing social disparities within most nation-states, authoritarian and militarist practices, depletion of natural resources, environmental degradation, including global warming and associated climatic changes, species extinction, and population growth as a by-product of poverty. Even more so than in earlier stages of capitalism, transnational corporations and their associated bodies, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization, make or break governments and politicians around the world, although the extent to which this is true varies from country to country. Although

capitalism has been around for about 500 years, it manifests so many contradictions that it has become increasingly clear that it must be replaced by a “next system” or an alternative world system—one oriented toward social parity and justice, democratic processes, and environmental sustainability, which includes a safe climate.

Reconceptualizing Socialism

Numerous observers have viewed the collapse of Communist regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as an indication that capitalism constitutes the end of history and that socialism was a bankrupt experiment that led to totalitarianism, forced collectivization, gulags, ruthless political purges, and inefficient centralized planned economies. What these commentators often overlook is that efforts to create socialist-oriented societies occurred in, by and large, economically underdeveloped countries. Historically, Marxists or socialists have engaged in intense debates as to whether the transition from capitalism to socialism would occur vis-à-vis revolutionary change or more gradual change by way of reforms in various parts of the world. Revolutions involve sudden and radical social transformations and are often associated with varying levels of violence, as was the case with the American, French, Bolshevik, Chinese, and Cuban revolutions.

The efforts of Lenin, Trotsky, and other Bolsheviks to develop the beginnings of the process that they hoped would result in socialism occurred under extremely adverse conditions, including constant external threat. Although the

Bolsheviks, particularly under the dictatorial leadership of Stalin, managed to transform the Soviet Union into an industrial powerhouse by the 1930s, a variety of external forces, such as World War II and the Cold War, and internal forces, such as a centralized command economy and a political system of one-party rule, prevented the development of socialist democracy. With some modifications, the model of bureaucratic centralism was adopted by various other post-revolutionary societies after World War II, starting with China in 1949. The contradictory nature of Leninist regimes imploded first in Eastern Europe in 1989, particularly highlighted by the opening of the Berlin Wall, and in the Soviet Union in 1991. In the case of China, its Communist leaders embraced capitalist structures as a means of rapid development to the point that some scholars argue that it now constitutes a state capitalist society, entailing tremendous social inequalities and environmental devastation. The collapse of Communist regimes created a crisis for many leftists throughout the world. Many progressives had hoped that somehow these societies, which were characterized in a variety of ways, would undergo changes that would transform them into democratic and ecologically-sensitive socialist societies.

Democratic Socialism

Due to the shortcomings of efforts to create socialism in the twentieth century, the notion of socialism has been discredited in many quarters. This has prompted various progressive scholars and social activists who wish to preserve

the ideals of socialism, such as collective ownership, social equality, and representative and participatory democracy, to refer to their visions of a better world in terms such as *radical democracy*, *global democracy*, and *Earth democracy*. Nevertheless, it is important for progressive people to come to terms with the historical discrepancies between the ideals of socialism and the realities of what passed for it. This is so they can reconstruct a viable global socialist system, with manifestations at regional and local levels, that is highly democratic rather than authoritarian, that ensures that all people have access to basic resources, and that is at the same time environmentally sustainable. It is my assertion that what I term *post-revolutionary societies* or what some term *actually-existing socialist societies*, exhibited, and in some cases still display, positive features. They also demonstrated, or still show, notable negative features. Unfortunately, all too many of the negative features have been tragic and horrific, to the point that they have discredited the notions of socialism and communism in the minds of many people.

It is important for progressive people to come to terms with the historical discrepancies between the ideals of socialism and the realities of what passed for it.

Authentic socialism remains very much a vision, one which various individuals and groups seek to frame in new guises. Numerous Marxian scholars have asserted that socialism is inherently more democratic than capitalist societies could ever be and, thus, democracy is an inherent component of socialism. According to Ralph Miliband in *Socialism for a Sceptical Age*, three core propositions define socialism: (1) democracy, (2) egalitarianism, and (3) socialization or public

ownership of a predominant part of the economy^[1] Although some areas of a socialist society would require centralized planning and coordination, democratic socialism recognizes the need for decentralized economic, political, and social structures that would permit the greatest amount of popular participation in decision making. Socialist democracy would involve not only democracy in the workplace but also citizen involvement in the operation of educational institutions, health facilities, housing associations, and other organizations that impact people's lives. Miliband envisions three distinct economic sectors:

- a predominant and varied public sector;
- a sizable cooperative sector; and
- a sizeable private sector consisting primarily of small and medium companies that would play a significant role in providing various goods, services, and amenities.^[2]

In *The Idea of Communism*, Tariq Ali argues that twenty-first century socialism should include political pluralism, freedom of speech, access to the media, the right to form trade unions and cultural liberty.^[3]

Eco-socialism

In the past, Marxian political economy has tended to give, at best, passing consideration to environmental factors, but historically there have been exceptions to this tendency. Various Marxian theorists, including Herbert Marcuse, Erich Fromm, E.P. Thompson, and André Gorz have served as precursors to present-day eco-socialism. Over the past three decades or so, various leftists have become more sensitive to the environmental travesties that have occurred not only in developed and developing capitalist societies but also in post-revolutionary societies.

Indeed, John Bellamy Foster argues in *Marx's Ecology* that Karl Marx himself recognized that capitalism is in a *metabolic rift* with nature.^[4]

Eco-socialism seeks to come to grips with the growth paradigm inherent in capitalism and to which post-revolutionary societies in the past subscribed and still do today; a case in point is China. Foster, in *The Ecological Revolution*, asserts revolutionary change entails both political-economic and environmental considerations^[5] Eco-socialism has made some headway among Marxist scholars in China. Ariel Salleh, an Australian sociologist, has served as a long-time proponent of socialist eco-feminism and Indian eco-feminist Vandana Shiva asserts, in *Earth Democracy*, that all beings, human and nonhuman, have a natural right to sustenance, and that a just society is based on a living commons and economic democracy.^[6]

Democratic Eco-socialism

The concept of *democratic eco-socialism* constitutes a merger of the earlier existing concepts of democratic socialism and eco-socialism. It is imperative that progressives reinvent the notion of socialism by recognizing that we live on a planet with limited resources that must be more or less equitably distributed to provide everyone with enough, but not too much. As delineated in *Medical Anthropology and the World*, a textbook that I co-authored with Merrill Singer and Ida Susser, democratic eco-socialism entails the following principles:

- an economy oriented to meeting basic social needs—namely adequate food, clothing, shelter, education, health, and dignified work;
- a high degree of social equality;

- public ownership of the means of production;
- representative and participatory democracy; and
- environmental sustainability.^[7]
- the redesign of settlement and transport systems to reduce energy demands and greenhouse gas emissions; and
- the reduction of wastes through recycling and transcending the reigning culture of consumption^[8]

Democratic eco-socialism rejects a statist, growth-oriented, productivist ethic and recognizes that humans live on an ecologically fragile planet with limited resources that must be sustained and renewed as much as possible for future generations.

The vision of democratic eco-socialism closely resembles what world systems theorists Terry Boswell and Christopher Chase-Dunn in *The Spiral of Capitalism and Socialism* term *global democracy*, a concept that entails the following components:

- an increasing movement toward public ownership of productive forces at local, regional, national, and international levels;
- the development of an economy oriented toward meeting social needs, such as basic food, clothing, shelter, and health care, and environmental sustainability rather than profit making;
- the eradication of health and social disparities and the redistribution of human resources between developed and developing societies, and within societies in general;
- the curtailment of population growth that in large part would follow from the previously mentioned conditions;
- the conservation of finite resources and the development of renewable energy resources;

Democratic eco-socialism constitutes what sociologist Erik Olin Wright in *Envisioning Real Utopias* terms a *real utopia*, a utopian vision that is achievable but only through much theorizing and social experimentation.^[9] As the existing capitalist world system continues to self-destruct due to its socially unjust and environmentally unsustainable practices, democratic eco-socialism seeks to provide a vision to mobilize human beings around the world, albeit in different ways, to prevent ongoing human socioeconomic and environmental destruction.

While Stalin adhered to the notion of building “socialism in one country,” what developed in the U.S.S.R. for complicated reasons—historical, social, structural, internal, and external—was the creation of a highly authoritarian and draconian social system that made a mockery of the notion of Marxian socialism. In keeping with Trotsky’s notion of the “permanent revolution,” the creation of socialism requires a global process, the beginnings of which we may be seeing rekindled in the guise of the Bolivarian Revolution in Latin America (albeit an experiment with numerous contradictions) and the emergence of new left parties in Europe, particularly Syriza in Greece which came to power earlier in 2015 and Die Linke, the farthest left party in the German *Bundestag*. As global capitalism continues to find itself in economic and ecological crisis as it lurches into the twenty-first century, humanity faces the challenge of how to shift from an ongoing trajectory of

human and planetary destruction. As the existing capitalist world system continues to self-destruct due to its socially unjust and environmentally unsustainable practices, democratic eco-socialism provides a radical vision to mobilize people around the world to struggle for the next system.

Anti-systemic movements are sure to be a permanent feature of the world’s political landscape so long as capitalism remains a hegemonic political-economic system. Various anti-systemic movements, particularly the labor, ethnic and indigenous rights, women’s, anti-corporate globalization, peace, environmental, and climate movements, have an important role to play in creating a socio-ecological revolution committed to both social justice and environmental sustainability. Anti-systemic movements are a crucial component of moving humanity to an alternative world system, but the process is a tedious and convoluted one with no guarantees, especially in light of the disparate nature of these movements.

Strategies for Transition

Reforms, despite the best of intentions, are often problematic in that they may serve to stabilize capitalism, as has repeatedly been the case around the world. In light of this reality, André Gorz in *Socialism and Revolution* differentiates between “reformist reforms” and “non-reformist reforms.”^[10] He uses the term reformist reform to designate the conscious implementation of minor material improvements that avoid any alteration of the basic structure in the existing social system. Between the poles of reformist reform and complete structural transformation, Gorz identifies a category of applied work that he labels non-reformist reform. Here he refers to efforts aimed at making permanent changes in the

social alignment of power. In reality, the distinction between these two types of reforms is sometimes hard to distinguish. But one distinction might be whether they are initiated by the powers-that-be or whether they are initiated by the working class, various other subaltern groups, or anti-systemic social movements.

The transition toward a democratic eco-socialist world system is not guaranteed and will require a tedious, even convoluted path that anti-systemic movements will have to play a central role in creating. Marx viewed blueprints as a distraction from the political tasks that needed to be undertaken in the present moment and, indeed, pressing issues are paramount. But history tells us that there always will be immediate struggles that must be addressed. I often find that when people ask me what it would take to make a transition to a democratic eco-socialist world system, they are seeking some basic guidelines on how to move forward beyond merely bumbling along haphazardly a step at a time.

While not seeking to create a blueprint per se for creating an alternative world system, which will be manifested in different ways in the many societies around the world, in this essay I delineate the following system-challenging reforms to facilitate a transition from the present existing capitalist world system to a democratic eco-socialist world system:

- creating new progressive, anti-capitalist parties designed to capture the state;
- implementing greenhouse gas emissions taxes at the sites of production that include measures to protect low-income people;
- increasing public ownership, socialization, or nationalization

in various means of production;

- expanding social equality within and between nation-states and achieving a sustainable global population;
- building workers' democracy;
- creating meaningful work and shortening the work week;
- achieving a net-zero-growth economy;
- adopting energy efficiency, renewable energy sources, and green jobs;
- expanding public transportation and massively diminishing reliance on private motor vehicles and air travel;
- developing sustainable food production and forestry;
- resisting the culture of consumption and adoption of sustainable and meaningful consumption;
- introducing sustainable trade; and
- building sustainable settlement patterns and local communities.

These transitional steps constitute loose guidelines for shifting human societies or countries toward democratic eco-socialism and a safe climate. But it is important to note that both of these phenomena will entail a global effort, including the creation of a progressive global climate governance regime. My litany of proposed transitional reforms is a modest effort to contribute to an ongoing dialogue and debate as to how to move forward from the present impasse in which the world finds itself today. The application of my suggested transitional reforms will have to be adapted by many countries, both developed and developing, around the world. Furthermore, my

suggested transitional reforms are not exhaustive of possible changes necessary for creating an alternative world system.

New left parties

The shift to a democratic eco-socialist world will require a revolution of some sort that will have to be played out in various ways depending upon the national context. Obviously the capitalist class and its political allies around the world will be resistant to such a revolution. The larger question is whether a democratic eco-socialist-oriented revolution can be achieved largely through peaceful measures or whether it will entail violence, or perhaps a mixture of both, depending upon the country. Needless to say, there is no easy answer to this question. Nevertheless, while Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels indeed envisaged an armed overthrow of capitalism in some situations, they also gave attention to achieving reforms within the bowels of capitalist societies and viewed such efforts as vehicles for making a peaceful transition from capitalism to socialism.

Ultimately, achieving most of the thirteen transitional reforms that I delineated above may require that new left or socialist-oriented parties come to power and in a sense "capture the state" and ensure that there is a political resolve that will guarantee their implementation. For example, nationalization of the means of production would be difficult to achieve without a leftist political party in power. Until the election of Syriza in Greece in early 2015, the possibility of new left parties coming to power appeared remote. However, as events have already revealed, the Syriza government faces formidable struggle in seeking to achieve its various demands as a member of the European Union.

But given the gravity of both the global economic and ecological crisis, including climate change, one should not rule out the possibility of political tipping points, just as climate scientists speak of tipping points that have set off a number of irreversible climatic events. In addition to Syriza, perhaps the most prominent examples of new left parties are the German Left Party (Die Linke), Left Front in France, Left Unity in the UK, and Podemos in Spain. In the case of my adopted country of Australia, I envision a new left party as consisting of disaffected Australian Labor Party-types, many Greens, members of various socialist groups, as well as independent socialists and anarchists. At some critical point, new left parties could theoretically merge into a global left party, a notion that exists mostly in science fiction such as in W. Warren Wagar's *A Short History of the Fu*

Emissions Taxes

An emissions tax can serve as a progressive climate change mitigation strategy given the seriousness of the ecological crisis. It is imperative that humanity figure out ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions quickly to keep the planet in a relatively safe climatic state. Much ink has been spilled on how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, including weighing up the pros and cons of emissions taxes and trading schemes. Unfortunately, existing trading schemes, including those in the U.S., the Kyoto Protocol, and the E.U., essentially grant corporations and developed countries property rights to emit greenhouse gas. The emission allowance prices under the E.U. Emissions Trading Scheme have fluctuated wildly, from a high of thirty Euros in April 2006 to three cents at the end of 2007, to thirty Euros during 2008, then down to 6.04 Euros in April 2012, and up to 9.80 Euros in August 2012.

Conversely, a carefully crafted emissions tax has the potential to serve as a transitional reform. James Hansen, a retired NASA climate scientist, has called for a steep carbon tax at the site of production as a strategy for quickly reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Ultimately, the record on the few existing emissions tax schemes found in various countries has been modest or mixed in terms of curtailing emissions or promoting a shift to renewable energy sources. Emissions taxes are, at best, only a short-term solution, and a market mechanism at that, and would perhaps not be necessary if energy production were publicly owned rather than privately owned, which is generally the case today around much of the world. Public ownership of utilities and mining could aid a rapid transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. What is needed are governments that exist not to prop up corporate endeavors but to seek to achieve social parity and environmental sustainability.

An economy within

In an era of increasing privatization of social and health services, and even military activities and prisons, raising the spectre of public ownership, nationalization, or socialization of the means of production is taboo in conventional economic and political circles. Privatization is often justified in terms of economic efficiency. While state or government enterprises or services can be terribly inefficient for complex reasons, this does not necessarily have to be the case. There are numerous examples of publicly owned enterprises that operate relatively efficiently. Public ownership could consist of a number of social arrangements, including state ownership, worker-owned enterprises, and cooperatives.

It is important to note that public ownership or nationalization of the means of production does not in and of itself constitute socialism, despite the fact that people have often assumed that it does. For example, after World War II, the British state nationalized heavy industry that had been in decline for over fifty years, but retained previous owners in managerial positions. Australia historically exhibited extensive public ownership of various productive forces, not only utilities but also banks, manufacturing operations, communication networks, airlines such as Qantas Airlines, and transportation systems. Nevertheless, nationalization or socialization of private wealth would constitute an essential step toward the creation of a democratic eco-socialist society. This step would reduce the power of the corporate class and wealthy individuals to influence elections around the world through the support of selected candidates via campaign contributions, favorable media coverage, and even bribery. Derek Wall in *The Rise of the Green Left* maintains that eco-socialism is founded on the principle of common property rights.^[12] What needs to be guarded against is the increasing privatization of water resources, supposedly in the form of public-private partnerships under which a small number of multi-national corporations assert that they are not buying or selling water per se, simply managing its delivery. The drive in many countries to privatize electricity production, communications, health care, and an array of services also needs to be resisted.

Increasing social equality

While some redistribution of wealth has been achieved under capitalism at various historical junctures and particularly in developed societies with strong labor unions and left-of-center

governments, social inequality is an inevitable dimension of the capitalist world system. Ultimately, a shift toward greater social equality or parity will require transcending global capitalism and moving toward a democratic eco-socialist world system. Socialists have, over the years, engaged in intense debates about what sort of wage differentials should exist under socialism. Frank Stilwell in *Changing Track* argues that a 3:1 ratio of the highest to lowest incomes would be a tolerable standard for a socialist society.^[13] In reality, there are other compensations for work than material rewards, such as the intrinsic rewards of intellectual and even physical stimulation, and the sense that one has contributed to the greater good. Needless to say, as long as rich people and corporations exist, progressive taxation that does not allow for tax loopholes constitutes an important mechanism for redistributing wealth.

Many middle-class environmentalists who posit population growth as the principal ecological problem appear to want to maintain more or less their present material standard of living, albeit on a planet with far fewer people. However, in reality, bringing down population growth will require the eradication of poverty, which from an eco-socialist perspective should go hand-in-hand with creating a high degree of social equality.

It is imperative that progressives reinvent the notion of socialism by realizing that we live on a planet with limited resources that must be distributed equitably to provide everyone with enough, but not too much.

Workers' democracy

Workers' economic or participatory democracy would constitute an integral component in a shift toward democratic eco-

socialism. Democratic planning needs to be part and parcel of the production process, such as in deciding what goods are needed and whether they are environmentally sustainable. Michael Albert and Robin Hahnel in *The Political Economy of Participatory Economics* delineate a model of participatory economics, which they call *Parecon* (a shorthand for "participatory economics") that would entail a network of workplace and consumer-based councils^[14] Parecon, compatible with the notion of democratic socialism, seeks to fulfill four key values:

solidarity: a solidarity economy should be based upon creating solidarity among workers and consumers;

diversity: a good economy would take into account the wide variety of preferences and choices that people display both in terms of work and consumption;

equity: an equity economy would orient production, consumption, and distribution towards achieving equity; and

self-management: a participatory economy will be highly democratic in that workers have a strong input in decision making.

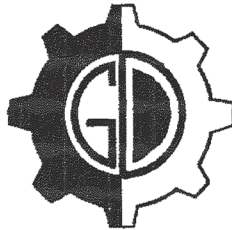
While Parecon has been criticized from various quarters for not being sufficiently sensitive to environmental factors, in recent years Albert and Hahnel have emphasized that, to be successful, Parecon needs to incorporate environmental protection and restoration.

(to be concluded)

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Socialists Unity Conference October 21-22, 2016 Mumbai

In every discussion on the current conditions in the country, one constantly hears voices of agitation and worry. On the one hand, India is being presented as the rising star on the international platform, on the other hand, the general populace, labourers, farmers and all those who are dependent on nature for their sustenance are being denied their right to live. It has been more than 35 years now since 1980, when new economic policies were ushered in the country, and our experience shows that these policies have only given rise to more economic inequality.

As the resources of the country are controlled by only a handful of people, vast numbers of the populace have been condemned to live below the poverty line. Our political leadership has failed badly in presenting a path of development which is based on social, economic and political inequity as well as destruction of nature. The proof of this can be seen in the rising numbers of peoples' protests throughout the country as well as agrarian suicides.

The ruling classes are pulling out of administration in most of the States and slowly transferring that control to the corporate sector. At the same time, they are systematically diminishing and eliminating the space for stakeholders of society to differ, debate, have a differing viewpoint or agitate against the dictatorial powers of the state. Corporatised political class of the country is not only changing the policies but also the law of the land in order to facilitate foreign collaboration, profiteering by national or foreign companies, consumerist development and hold of the market over the society. Various policy level and legal changes such as Land Acquisition Act, Labour Laws,

Insurance Plans, Forest Rights are such that one can clearly see the negative repercussions for the farmers, tribals, Dalits and labouring classes. In such a scenario, we repeatedly hear statements such as 'No turning back', and 'There is no alternative'.

It is possible, indeed imperative, to answer such voices both at the theoretical level as well as at the practical, by providing a political and economic alternative. Today, democratic socialists who are in different fields and organisations wish to come together to answer the political leadership that is disregarding the principles given by Gandhiji and Babasaheb Ambedkar and those which have been inscribed in the Constitution of India. The Congress Socialist Party was established in India on 21-22 October, 1934. Its leadership was packed with stalwarts such as Acharya Narendra Deva, Rammanohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan, S M Joshi, Yusuf Meherally, Nanasaheb Goray, Mino Masani, and Asoka Mehta. Today there are lakhs of activists in India who have been inspired by the thoughts of these stalwarts. These activists are involved in bringing about change in the country through constructive actions. They are also involved in Dalit, tribal, farmer, students, women and other organisations. Such activist friends who have firm faith in democratic socialism have come together on a common platform 'Hum Samajvadi' (We Socialists). The platform successfully organised Socialists Unity Conferences in Patna and Lucknow and now, another large-scale programme in Mumbai, on 21-22 October, 2016. The conference will be attended by participants from different peoples' organisations, political activists, writers, litterateurs, artists, and journalists along with rural and urban labour. It is our firm belief that the conference will enable us to formulate a new national level policy along with the establishing a structure of the movement.

The topics under discussion will include - elimination of communalism, fascism and caste in the light of the Constitution; economic crisis and globalisation in the last three decades; natural calamities, agricultural crisis and development; climate change as a global challenge; status and change in education system; unorganised labour force and their contribution security and rights; and gender justice.

Medha Patkar

Madhu Mohite



Standing (from left): Farid Ansari, EMS Namboodiripad, Dinkar Mehta, Nabakrushna Choudhury, PY Deshpande, SM Joshi, Soli Batliwala.

Sitting Middle Row (from left) Minoos Masani, Mohanlal Gautam, Acharya Narendra Deva, Dr Sampurnanand, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Jayaprakash Narayan, Nanasahab Goray,

Sitting on ground (from left) Achyut Patwardhan, Purshottam Tricumdas, Charles Mascarenas.

Socialists are meeting on October 21 and 22, 2016, in Mumbai on the same days as they met in the city 82 years ago in 1934. To mark the occasion, the Janata Trust is bringing out this souvenir which puts together material that explains the formation of the Congress Socialist Party and its subsequent history till it ceased to exist in 1948, articles defining the current context, though not in its entirety, and introduces three main institutions that are organizing this function. It is hoped that the socialists who attend the meeting, and also those who could not but read it, will find this effort worthwhile.

– JANATA

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8. Resolution of Samajwadi Samagam 10th – 11th August 2013
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चुनौती: समाजवादी विकल्प से ही अस्मिता और अस्तित्व की सुरक्षा की

–**मेधा पाटकर**

भारत में किसान और खेती किसानी का संकट

–**विवेकानंद माथने**

समाजवादी एकजुटता के मायने

–**डॉ. सुनीलम्**

सबको घर देने का तोड़ा वादा,

अब है घर तोड़ने का इरादा

–**बिलाल खान**

वाढता सामाजिक विद्वेष सर्वसमावेशी विकासाला मारक

–**सुभाष वारे**

जनआंदोलनं, विकासनीती आणि राजकारण

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डॉ. आंबेडकर - लोहिया समाजवाद !

–**मधु मोहीते**

Introducing :-

–Rashtra Seva Dal

–Hind Mazdoor Sabha

–National Alliance of Peoples Movement

Constitution, Programme and Resolutions of the First Conference of the Congress Socialist Party, Bombay, 21-22 October 1934

The Second All India Congress Socialist Conference, which was also the first Conference of the All India Congress Socialist Party, met in Bombay at Readymoney Terrace, Worli, on October 21 and 22, 1934, the Subjects Committee deliberations having commenced on October 20.

There were 137 delegates present representing 13 Provincial Congress Socialist Parties. The delegates from each such Party were as follows:

U.P. 28, Gujrat 16, Bombay 15, Maharashtra 14, Andhra 13, Bengal 12, Kerala 10, Behar 9, Delhi 7, Berar 6, C.P. (Hindi) 3, Utkal 3, Ajmer 1.

The Subjects Committee was formed of not more than three representatives from each Provincial Party plus the members of the Drafting Committee which was appointed by the First All India Congress Socialist Conference (Patna, May 17, 1934).

Votes in the Open Session were taken according to the bloc system, each provincial delegation or bloc having 3 votes, which were cast in a manner so as to give proportionate representation to minority views.

The Conference commenced with the address of the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Comrade Purshottam Tricumdas. Thereafter Comrade Sampurnanand was unanimously elected as Chairman of the Conference, Comrade Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya having withdrawn her name. The Chairman, after making a few introductory remarks, called upon the Organizing Secretary, Comrade Jayaprakash Narayan, to read his report. After the report had been read the Conference proceeded to discuss the draft Constitution and Programme of the proposed All India Congress Socialist Party, which was submitted to the Conference by the Drafting Committee referred to above.

After prolonged discussion the Constitution and Programme were adopted with amendments. The Conference then passed the following resolution which ushered into life the All India Congress Socialist Party:

Resolved that the All India Congress Socialist Party be hereby formed on the basis of the Constitution and Programme just adopted by the Conference.

The Chairman there upon invited delegates from the Provincial Parties to affiliate their Parties to the All India Party. The following Parties were affiliated: Ajmer, Andhra, Bengal, Berar, Behar, Bombay (City), C.P. (Hindi), Delhi, Gujrat, Kerala, Maharashtra, U.P. and Utkal.

With the formation of the All India Party the Conference, hitherto a Conference of representatives of autonomous Provincial Parties, automatically turned into a Conference of the Party, its decisions becoming the decisions of the Party.

The first day's session concluded with the election of Office-bearers and of members of the Executive Committee of the Party. The following Committee was elected:

1. Jayaprakash Narayan, General Secretary
2. M.R. Masani
3. Mohanlal Gautam Joint Secretaries
4. N.G. Gore
5. S. Nambudiripad
6. Narendra Dev
7. Sampurnanand
8. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya
9. Purshottam Tricumdas
10. P.Y. Deshpande
11. Ram Manohar Lohia
12. S.M. Joshi
13. Amarendra Prasad Mitra
14. Charles Mascaranhas
15. Naba Krishna Choudhury

16. Achyut Patwardhan
17. Yusuf J. Meherally
18. Sorab Batliwala
19. Rohit Mehta Substitute Members
20. Farid-ul-Haq Ansari
21. Rambriksh Benipuri

The second day's proceedings began with consideration of resolutions from the Subjects Committee. After these had been disposed of other resolutions which had been received in time to be moved in the Open Session were taken up. The Constitution and Programme and the resolutions passed are published herein.

Upon an announcement by the General Secretary that another session of the Conference might be called after the sessions of the Indian National Congress if the Executive Committee considered it necessary, the Conference was adjourned sine die.

In view of the fact that the basis of delegation was membership of the Provincial Parties and that such parties were in existence in only 13 out of the 20 provinces, it was encouraging to find that as many as 137 delegates attended the Conference. It showed what progress the movement had made since the first Conference was held at Patna only six months back. The discussions that took place in the Conference also showed the keen interest of the delegates in the problems that were before them. It was clear that the issues before the Conference were not of mere academic interest but had great practical and living value for the delegates.

This Conference had a unique significance, held as it was on the eve of the sessions of the Indian National Congress. Its decisions had a direct bearing on those of the Congress and one of the main purposes for which it was held was to give a lead to the Congress rank and file and rescue it from the back-sliding politics of the Congress leaders. It is a matter of gratification

that the Conference by raising fundamental political issues and giving a clear verdict on them succeeded to a considerable extent in this task.

Constitution

Name

The name of the Party shall be the All India Congress Socialist Party.

Objects

The objects of the Party shall be the achievement of Complete Independence, in the sense of separation from the British Empire, and the establishment of a socialist society.

Membership

The Party shall consist of members of the Indian National Congress who are also members of a Provincial Congress Socialist Party affiliated to the Party, provided that they are not members

- (a) of any communal organization or
- (b) of any other political organization whose objects and programme are in the opinion of the Party inconsistent with its own.

Organization

There shall be an affiliated Congress Socialist Party in every Congress Province, including the Indian States.

The Provincial Parties shall be affiliated on their acceptance of the objects and programme of the Party except that they shall have freedom to make such additions and alterations in the immediate demands of the Party as are necessary in view of local conditions.

Provincial Parties shall have power to frame rules for the conduct of their affairs provided such rules are not inconsistent with the Constitution of the Party. Every Provincial Party shall levy a membership fee of one anna

per year of which it shall contribute 25% to the funds of the Party.

Annual and Special Sessions

The Party shall meet annually. The time and place shall be fixed by Executive Committee.

The Secretary shall call a special conference of the Party when directed to do so by the Executive Committee or on the requisition of at least three Provincial Parties.

The time and place shall be decided by the Executive Committee.

Decisions of the Annual and Special Sessions of the Party shall be binding on all affiliated Parties and their members.

Delegation

Provincial Parties shall be represented on the basis of one delegate for every twenty members or fraction thereof and the delegate or delegates attending shall have the right to cast the number of votes to which their Parties are entitled, in such manner as to secure proportionate representation to minorities.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee of the Party shall be elected by the Annual Conference and shall consist of one general and four joint secretaries and eleven other members. Five substitute members shall also be elected to take the place of absent members in rotation. Vacancies during the year shall be filled up by the Executive Committee.

Quorum of the Executive Committee

Eight members shall form of the quorum of the Executive Committee.

Auditing of Accounts

The Secretary shall submit audited accounts

of the Party to the Annual Conference. The Auditor shall be appointed by the Annual Conference.

Disciplinary Action

The Executive Committee shall have power to take disciplinary action by way of suspension of a Provincial Party or any member thereof, subject to ratification by the next Conference of the Party, provided that such decision is taken by a two-thirds majority.

The Annual Conference of the Party shall have power to disaffiliate a Provincial Party or expel any member thereof.

Constitutional Amendments

Amendments to the Constitution or the programme of the Party can only be made at a Conference of the Party by a two-thirds majority.

Programme

Objective

1. Transfer of all power to the producing masses.
2. Development of the economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the State.
3. Socialisation of key and principal industries (e.g. Steel, Cotton, Jute, Railways, Shipping, Plantations, Mines), Banks, Insurance and Public Utilities with a view to the progressive socialisation of all the instruments of production, distribution and exchange.
4. State monopoly of foreign trade.
5. Organization of co-operatives for production, distribution and credit in the unsocialised sector of economic life.
6. Elimination of princes and landlords and all other classes of exploiters without compensation.
7. Re-distribution of land to peasants.

8. Encouragement and promotion of co-operative and collective farming by the State.
9. Liquidation of debts owed by peasants and workers.
10. Recognition of the right to work or maintenance by the State.
11. 'To everyone according to his needs and from everyone according to his capacity' to be the basis ultimately of distribution and production of economic goods.
12. Adult franchise on a functional basis.
13. No support to, or discrimination between, religions by the State and no recognition of any distinction based on caste or community.
14. No discrimination between the sexes by the State.
15. Repudiation of the so-called Public Debt of India.

Plan of Action

1. Work within the Indian National Congress with a view to secure its acceptance of the objects and programme of the Party.
2. Organization of peasant and labour unions, and entry into such unions where they exist, for the purpose of developing and participating in the day to day economic and political struggles of peasants and workers and intensifying the class struggle of the masses and of creating a powerful mass movement for the achievement of Independence and Socialism.
3. Organization of, and participation in Youth leagues, Women's organizations, Volunteer organizations, etc., etc., for the purpose of getting their support to the programme of the Party.
4. Active opposition to all imperialist wars and the utilisation of such and other crises for the intensification of the national struggle.
5. Refusal to enter or any stage into negotiations on the constitutional issue with the British Government.

6. Convening after the capture of power of a Constituent Assembly elected by local committees of deputies of workers, peasants and other exploited classes for the purpose of formulating a Constitution for the Indian State.

Immediate Demands

POLITICAL

1. Freedom of speech and of the Press.
2. Freedom of association and combination.
3. Repeal of all anti-national and anti-labour laws.
4. Re-instatement of all farmers and tenants deprived of their lands owing to their participation in the movement or restraint on political grounds.
5. Release of all political prisoners detained without trial and withdrawal of all orders of externment, internment or restraint on political grounds.
6. Free and compulsory primary education and the liquidation of adult illiteracy.
7. Drastic reduction, by at least 50% of the military expenditure of the Government of India.
8. Regulation and control of religious endowments.

ECONOMIC

9. Municipalisation of Public Utilities.
10. Control of usury, direct and indirect.
11. Liquidation of debts owed by workers and peasants.
12. A steeply graduated tax on all incomes including incomes from agriculture, above a fixed minimum.
13. Graduated death duties.

CONCERNING LABOUR

14. Freedom of labour from serfdom and conditions bordering on serfdom.
15. The right to form unions, to strike and to picket.
16. Compulsory recognition of unions by

employers.

17. A living wage, a 40-hour week and healthy quarters and conditions of work.
18. Insurance against unemployment, sickness, accident, old age, etc.
19. One month's leave every year with full pay to all workers and two months' leave with full pay to women workers during maternity.
20. Prohibition against employment of children of school-going age in factories, and women and of children under sixteen underground.
21. Equal wages for equal work.
22. Weekly payment of wages whenever demanded.

AGRARIAN

23. Elimination of landlordism in zamindari and talukdari areas without compensation.
24. Encouragement of co-operative farming.
25. Liquidation of arrears of rent.
26. Complete exemption from rents and taxes of all peasants with uneconomic holdings.
27. Reduction of rent and land revenue by at least 50%.
28. Abolition and penalisation of all feudal and semi-feudal levies on the peasantry.
29. Penalisation of illegal exactions and forced labour.
30. Freedom from attachment in execution of rent or money decrees of homestead, agricultural resources and that portion of a peasant's holding which is just sufficient to maintain an average peasant family. Resolutions passed by the 1st Conference of the All India Congress Socialist Party

Meaning of Complete Independence

1. This Conference declares that the Congress's goal of Complete Independence must mean the establishment of an Independent State in which power is transferred to the producing masses and that such an objective involves refusal to compromise at any stage

with British Imperialism.

India and the next War

2. This Conference considers that in view of the international situation and the danger of the sudden outbreak of a war in which the British Empire may be involved, it is necessary for the Congress to declare its opposition to the participation by India in any war in which the British Government may be involved and to undertake forthwith the preparation of the entire Indian nation to resist actively the utilisation of Indian men, money and resources for the purpose of such a war and to utilise such a crisis for securing Swaraj.

Congress and the Indian Princes

3. Inasmuch as the Indian States constitute a political and military support to British Imperialism and a source of feudal backwardness and reaction, this Conference declares that the interests of the people of the Indian State are as much the concern of the Indian National Congress as those of the people of British India and that the abolition of the rule of the Indian Princes can alone assure Complete Independence for the whole of India and it invites the people of the Indian States to fight side by side with the people of British India in the struggle for Independence.

Socialist Solution of the Communal Problem

4. This Conference is of opinion that all attempts made so far to solve the communal problem, including those made by the Congress, and the position taken up by the Congress Working Committee on this question, have been on a wholly false basis of recognition of rights belonging to religious groups and is of opinion that the problem can effectively be liquidated only by the struggle for the economic emancipation of the masses.

This Conference condemns the formation

of the so-called Nationalist Party on the issue of the Communal Award as a communalist and anti-national move which has started a futile controversy over an issue which is of no importance to the masses and which has distracted attention from the real task of their emancipation from exploitation.

Reactionary Policy of C.P.B.

5. (A) This Conference takes note of the concerted attempts of the right wing to take back the Congress to the discredited path of constitutional agitation and to convert it into an instrument of the Indian upper classes in their bargains with British Imperialism. This Conference is emphatically of opinion that these attempts run counter to the creed of the Congress and to the fundamental principles and policies it has been following since 1920. This Conference, therefore, resolves to resist these attempts and to rescue the Congress from the hands of the right wing by educating and organizing the rank and file on the basis of a clear-cut programme of national revolution and to carry on a consistent propaganda for the exposure of the reactionary aims, policies and programmes of the right wing.

5. (B) This Conference is of opinion that parliamentary activities conducted by the Congress shall be based on the theory of revolutionary use of legislatures with the following as its essential principles:

(i) Congress candidates shall go into the legislatures as the representatives of the exploited masses of India and in no other capacity;

(ii) Parliamentary activity inside the legislatures shall be closely linked up with the activities of the exploited masses outside, on the basis of their immediate economic and political demands;

(iii) Every issue coming up before the legislatures shall be approached and dealt with from the point of view of the masses, their economic and political emancipation forming the only criterion;

(iv) The least betrayal of the cause of the exploited masses shall forthwith meet with expulsion and merciless exposure;

(v) No elected Congress candidate shall accept ministerial offices because:

- (a) The legislative, executive and judicial machinery, present and forth-coming, is the creation of British Imperialism and is intended solely for the purpose of facilitating and intensifying the exploitation of the Indian masses;
 - (b) Acceptance of ministerial offices will create the dangerous illusion that the imperialist State machine can be utilised for the good of the masses, while its essential structure is so designed as to automatically result in their exploitation;
 - (c) A mass organization that stands for complete independence as its immediate objective must necessarily remain in the opposition until complete independence is an accomplished fact;
 - (d) Economic and political emancipation of the masses is incompatible with the imperialist and capitalist structure of state and society.
- (C) Whereas the decision of the A.I.C.C. at Patna for contesting the present Assembly elections was not on the lines indicated above, it should be rescinded and the candidates standing on behalf of the Congress should be withdrawn.

Socialists and Assembly Elections

6. (a) This conference calls upon members of the Congress Socialist Parties (i) to decline nomination as Congress or Independent candidates for the Assembly election and

to withdraw their candidatures if already nominated; (ii) to decline to serve as members of the Parliamentary Boards, Central or Provincial, or any Committee formed for the electoral campaign.

(b) This Conference further calls upon Provincial Parties to take disciplinary action against such of their members as may contravene the terms of part (a) of this resolution.

Conditions for Acceptance of Congress Offices

7. This Conference is of opinion that no member of a Congress Socialist Party should become an officer-bearer in any Congress organization except where (1) the Party is in a majority or (2) the organization concerned has resolved to carry out the immediate programme of the Provincial Party and the Executive Committee of the Party concerned gives previous permission to accept office, and calls upon those Congress Socialists who are office-bearers in any Congress organization, except such as those indicated, to resign their offices.

The Party in the Congress Session

8. All members of the Party shall support resolutions or amendments moved on behalf of the Party in the Subjects Committee or the Open Session of the Congress.

Fundamental Principles of the Future Indian State

9. This Conference is of opinion that to enable the masses to appreciate what 'Swaraj' as conceived by the Congress will mean to them, it is desirable to state the position of the Congress in a manner easily understandable by them. In order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom of the starving millions. The Congress should therefore declare that the future Constitution of the Indian State shall be

based on the following fundamental principles:

1. Transfer of all power to the producing masses.
2. Development of the economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the state.
3. Socialisation of the key and principal industries, e.g. steel, cotton, jute, railways, shipping, mines, banks and public utilities.
4. State monopoly of foreign trade.
5. Organization of co-operatives for production, distribution and credit in the unsocialised sector of economic life.
6. Elimination of princes and landlords and all other classes of exploiters without compensation.
7. Redistribution of land to the peasants.
8. Liquidation of debts owed by peasants and workers.
9. Provision by the State of
 - (i) Work to every able-bodied adult.
 - (ii) Insurance against unemployment, old age, sickness, accident, maternity, etc.,
10. "To each according to his needs and from each according to his capacity" to be ultimate basis of distribution and production of economic goods.
11. Adult franchise on a functional basis.
12. No support to, or discrimination between, religions by the State and no recognition of any distinction based on caste or community.
13. No discrimination between the sexes by the State.

Organization of Workers and Peasants

10. The Conference is of opinion that the daily struggles of workers, peasants and other exploited classes for their immediate economic and political demands are an integral part of the struggle for Independence. The Conference therefore resolves that the workers and peasants and other exploited masses, including those of the Indian States, should be organized for

the immediate realisation of the following among other demands and for the creation of a powerful mass movement for the achievement of Independence:

1. Freedom of speech and of the press.
2. Freedom of association and combination.
3. Repeal of anti-national and anti-labour laws.
4. Release of all political prisoners and prisoners detained without trial and withdrawal of all orders of externment, internment or restraint issued on political grounds.
5. Re-instatement of all farmers and peasants deprived of their lands owing to their participation in the movement for National Independence.
6. Free and compulsory primary education and the liquidation of adult illiteracy.
7. Drastic reduction, by at least 50%, in the military expenditure of the Government of India.
8. Municipalisation of public utilities.
9. Control of usury, direct and indirect.
10. A steeply graduated tax on all incomes, including incomes from agricultural sources, above a fixed minimum.
11. Graduated death-duties.
12. Liquidation of debts owed by peasants and workers.
13. Freedom of labour from serfdom and conditions bordering on serfdom.
14. The right to form unions, to strike and picket.
15. Compulsory recognition by employers of workers' unions.
16. A living wage, forty hours' week and healthy quarters and conditions of work.
17. Equal wages for equal work.
18. Weekly payment of wages whenever demanded.
19. Insurance against unemployment, sickness, accident, old age, etc.
20. One month's leave every year with full

pay to all workers and two months' leave with full pay to women workers during maternity.

21. Prohibition against employment of children in underground mining and hazardous occupations.
22. Elimination of landlordism in zamindari and talukdari areas without compensation.
23. Abolition and penalisation of all feudal and semi-feudal levies on the peasantry.
24. Encouragement of co-operative farming.
25. Introduction of scientific agriculture at State cost.
26. Liquidation of arrears of rent.
27. Complete exemption from rent and taxes of all peasants with uneconomic holdings.
28. Reduction of rent and land revenue by at least 50 per cent.
29. Freedom from attachment in execution of rent or money decrees of homestead, agricultural resources and that portion of a peasant's holding which is just sufficient to maintain an average peasant family.

The Constituent Assembly

11. This Conference asserts that the right of framing the constitution is the sovereign right of the Indian people and declares that the supreme authority which should promulgate the constitution of India is the National Constituent Assembly.

This conference further declares that the National Constituent Assembly cannot meet as the result of a compromise with Britain but must rise as a consequence of a victorious capture of power by the Indian masses.

The Conference is of opinion that the Constituent Assembly should be elected by Local Committees of deputies of workers, peasants and other exploited classes and that the said Committees will arise out of the daily struggles of the oppressed masses for the

enforcement of their immediate economic and political demands.

This Conference resolves that a mass campaign for raising the fundamental issue of self-determination and to agitate for the Constituent Assembly be immediately started incorporating the immediate economic demands of the oppressed and exploited masses.

United Front Against Imperialism

12. In view of the urgent necessity of carrying forward the fight for Independence and preventing a further spread of demoralisation, it is resolved that the Congress Socialist Party shall forthwith commence work with the object of putting its programme into effect, irrespective of the acceptance or rejection of its programme by the Indian National Congress.

For this purpose the All India Congress Socialist Party desires to act in cooperation with other Parties having similar aims, within or without the Indian National Congress, and this Conference authorises the Executive Committee of the All India Congress Socialist Party to appoint a Sub-Committee to explore the possibilities of joint action on specific issues with the different labour and radical groups in the country.

Mahatma Gandhi's Retirement

13. This Conference condemns the tactics adopted by the right wing of the Congress of trying to focus public attention on personal or sentimental issues arising out of Mahatma Gandhi's statement and proposals and to sidetrack the fundamental struggle for Independence.

Amendments to the Congress Constitution

14. This Conference desires that the present Constitution of the Indian National Congress be amended in the following manner:

1. In Article 1
 - (a) After the work "Independence" add the words "meaning the establishment of an Independent State in which power is transferred to the producing masses".
 - (b) At the end of the clause add: (Note: The above object involves the refusal to compromise at any stage with British Imperialism).
2. In Article 7 (i)

After the words "Art. 4" omit the words "and paying a subscription of annas four per year in advance, or 2000 yards of evenly spun yarn of his or her own spinning".
3. Delete Art. 7 (ii).
4. In Art. 7 (iii)

Omit all the words after "March 31st".
5. In Art. 7 (iv a)

Delete the words "and does not habitually wear khaddar".
6. In Art. 8 para 5

Delete the word "fifty" and add in its place "hundred".
7. In Art. 8 para 5

After the word "electorate" delete the words "and shall prescribe the procedure to be adopted for securing the proportional representation by a single transferable vote or by any other method".
8. At the end of Art. 19 para 3

Delete the full-stop and add the words "in the following manner: The members of the District Congress Committee (or when the District Congress Committees are primary organizations the members of their Executive Councils) shall form an electoral college".
9. Delete Art. 19 para 5.
10. Delete Art. 22.
11. In Art. 24 delete the words "the President".
12. In Art. 24 at the end add a new para:

The Annual Report of the Working Committee shall be submitted to Provincial

Congress Committees not less than one month before the annual session of the Congress.

13. In Art. 26, at the end add the words:

Which shall be circulated to the members of the Subjects Committee not less than one week before the first date of the meeting.
14. Add new Art. 34:

All elections shall take place according to the system of the Single Transferable vote.

Class Struggle and Confiscation of Property

15. This Conference is of opinion that the resolutions passed by the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress at Bombay and later at Benaras concerning class war and confiscation of property were uncalled for and misleading.

This Conference claims that participation in the class struggle and advocacy of expropriation of property are not in any way inconsistent with the Congress creed.

Government's Reign of Repression

16. (a) This Conference emphatically condemns the campaign of repression and terror now being conducted by British Imperialism in India: in the form of special legislation in Bengal under which the death penalty can be inflicted for minor offences and a regime of martial law can be established over whole districts, thousands of people detained without trial and many other outrages committed against the public without restraint; in declaring illegal the Khudai Khidmatgars, the Communist Party of India, the Naujavan Bharat Sabha, the Kirti Kisan Sabhas, the Anti-Imperialist League, Youth Leagues and Seva Dais; in promulgating the Emergency Powers Act under which freedom of speech and organization and more specially of the press has been ruthlessly suppressed, labour

leaders have been imprisoned and deported; in suppressing the strike movement of the workers and peasants by the use of armed force; and finally in passing the Trades Disputes Conciliation Act for the more effectual suppression of the rising working class movement.

- (b) This Conference resolves to launch an immediate and countrywide agitation, in co-operation with other organizations having similar objects, and to organize mass opposition to this regime of terror.

Repression in the Indian States

17. This Conference condemns the action of the Travancore, Baroda, Rewa and other Native States which have taken repressive measures against Congress, labour and States, Peoples' Organizations and movements.

Bihar Tenancy Amendment Act

18. *This Conference is wholly opposed to the recently enacted Bihar Tenancy Amendment Act and condemns the action of the Government of Bihar in siding with Zamindars and sacrificing the interests of the tenants.*

Solidarity with Workers and Peasants

19. *This Conference extends its fraternal greetings to all class organizations of workers and peasants in the country and declares its solidarity with them in their day to day struggles.*

Greetings to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

20. This Conference sends its greetings to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru whose absence from its midst is keenly felt and extends its sympathy to him on the grave illness of Smt. Kamala Nehru during his term of imprisonment and condemns the Government for continuing

his incarceration in such circumstances.

M.N. Roy's Release

21. This Conference learns with deep concern that Com. M.N. Roy is seriously ill in jail and demands his immediate and unconditional release on the grounds of health.

The "Congress Socialist"

22. This Conference resolves that the report of the sub-committee which was appointed at Benaras regarding the Congress Socialist be referred to the Executive Committee for necessary action.

Party's Membership

23. This Conference resolves that the Executive Committee shall have power to frame rules regarding the enrolment, nature, classes and powers of members or Provincial Parties.

Sub –Committee

24. (a) This conference directs the Executive Committee of the Party to appoint the following
Sub – Committees
Propaganda Sub – Committee.
Peasant Sub – Committee.
Labour Sub – Committee.

(b) This conference also recommends that the Propaganda Sub – Committee should conduct an organ of the Party in English as well as in Hindi and publish literature on Socialism.

'All India Congress Socialist Party. Constitution, Programme and Resolutions of the First Conference of the Party and Report of the Organizing Secretary, 1934.

What the Congress Socialist Party Stands For?

India and Socialism

Jay Prakash Narayan

The objects of the Congress Socialist Party, as laid down in its Constitution, are “the achievement of complete independence, in the sense of separation from the British Empire, and the establishment of a socialist society.”

This is direct and simple enough. The Party has two objects: The first is the same as that of the Indian National Congress, except that the Party wishes to make it clear that the complete independence of India must include separation from the British Empire.

The second object of the Party means that independent India must reorganise its economic life on a socialist basis.

Why?

The question at bottom is one of the values and ultimate objectives, which once determined, the rest becomes a matter of logical sequence.

If the ultimate objective is to the masses politically and economically free, to make them prosperous and happy, to free them from all manner of exploitation, to give them unfettered opportunity for development, then, Socialism becomes a goal to which one must irresistibly be drawn. If again, the objective is to take hold of the chaotic and conflicting forces of society and to fashion the latter according to the ideal of utmost social good and to harness of all conscious directives of human intelligence in the service of the commonwealth, then, again, Socialism becomes an inescapable destination.

If, then, these be our objectives, it should take little argument to show that Socialism is as definitely “indicated” in India as elsewhere. In India too there is poverty, nay, starvation, on the one hand and wealth and luxury on the

other; in India too there is exploitation; the means of production here also are in private hands. That is, the root evil of modern society, namely, economic and social inequality, exists in India too as does its cause; the exploitation of the great many by the very few.

And this is not the result of British rule. It is independent of it and will continue even after it. The ending of the foreign domination would not automatically solve Indian's problem of poverty; would not put a stop to the exploitation of the vast many; would not in fact, mean the accomplishment of any of the objectives which we have started with. Economic freedom is also indispensable. As far as we socialists are concerned economic freedom means only one thing to us- Socialism. Without Socialism, economic freedom would be a sham, and moonshine.

The present programme of the Congress falls far short of these ideals. It might ameliorate the conditions of the masses to a certain extent, but it will neither rid them of exploitation nor put them in power. Far from effecting revolutionary changes in it, it leaves the economic structure of society intact. It leaves the means of production in the hands of private individuals, except in the sphere of key industries. The entire economic organisation, based as it is on the exploitation of the poor and middle classes, is preserved. This is not economic freedom. The preamble and substance of the Karachi Resolution are at wide variance with each other. What we endeavour to do is to remove this variance and bring them close together. When the Congress professes the economic freedom of the masses, let it distinctly state what that freedom means.

The Congress may be unprepared for the acceptance of such a minimum programme as we advocate. But it is one thing to say that we are not ready for any further definition of our

goal- which of course may be disputed- and quite another, as latterly repeated ad nauseam, that Socialism is moonshine; that it is unsuited to the Indian climate; that Indian socialists are merely adventuring in the realm of theory; that they are only quoting a rusty old German Jew who called himself Karl Heinrich Marx; and the rest of the drivel.

I do not desire to suggest that at Karachi, the Congress should have outlined a full-grown programme of Socialism. What it must do however, is to accept such a minimum economic programme as will, when put to practice, free the masses from economic exploitation and transfer full political and economic power into their hands.

It is such a programme that the Congress Socialist Party is advocating.

What, then does the Congress Socialist Party propose? What must the Swaraj Government do in addition to nationalising key industries in order to realise the economic freedom of the masses; in order to rid them of exploitation, injustice, suffering, poverty, ignorance?

The measures that are necessary, in the opinion of the Party to achieve this, are clearly set forth in the Objectives section of the Programme of the All-India Congress Socialist Party.

Here they are:

1. Transfer of all power to the producing masses.
2. Development of the economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the state.
3. Socialisation of key and principal industries (e.g., Steel, Cotton, Jute, Railways, Shipping, Plantations, Mines), Banks, Insurance and Public Utilities, with a view to the progressive socialization of all the

instruments of production, distribution and exchange.

4. State monopoly of foreign trade.
5. Organisation of co-operatives for production, distribution and credit in the unsocialized sector of economic life.
6. Elimination of princes and landlords and all other classes of exploiters without compensation.
7. Redistribution of land to peasants.
8. Encouragement and promotion of cooperative and collective farming by the State.
9. Liquidation of debts owing by peasants and workers.
10. Recognition of the right to work or maintenance by the State.
11. "To everyone according to his needs and from every one according to his capacity" to be the basis ultimately of distribution and production of economic goods.
12. Adult franchise on a functional basis .
13. No support to or discrimination between religions by the State and no recognition of any distinction based on caste or community.
14. No discrimination between the sexes by the State.
15. Repudiation of the so-called Public Debt of India.

There are fifteen measures as we see. They look forbidding; appear to be too drastic; too extreme; too foreign sounding. They are, in fact, simple enough, reasonable enough, just and practicable enough. And as for their foreign sound- well, they sound no more foreign than the Constituent Assembly, the Legislative Council, the Tariff Board, the siren of the cotton mills or the hooting of the latest Cadillac (shall we say?)

They are all intended to establish the rather simple principle that the abolition of private

ownership, of functional property, which as we saw, was the real villain of the piece-the source of all our evils, or most of them. They are further intended to establish the most eminently reasonable of principles of social life-social planning.

हार्दिक शुभेच्छा
शतकाकडे वाटचाल करणारी
व कामगारांचा आवाज बुलंद करणारी
मुंबईतील पहिली कामगार संघटना

मुंबई पोर्ट ट्रस्ट,
डॉक अँड जनरल एम्प्लॉईज युनियन
(स्थापना : ३ मे १९२०)
(संलग्न : हिंद मजदूर सभा)

कर भला सो हो भला
सर्वात जास्त आनंद कोणत्या
गोष्टीत होत असेल तर
तो दुसऱ्यांना आनंद देण्यात...
-कवी वर्डस्वर्थ

अॅड. एस. के. शेट्टे
अध्यक्ष
अॅड. एस. आर. अपराज
सरचिटणीस

पोर्ट ट्रस्ट कामगार सदन,
नवाब टॅक रोड, माझगाव, मुंबई ४०००१०
दूरध्वनी : २३७७६३२०/२३७७२३६१/६६५६६४८७
फॅक्स : २३७५४७९४
mbptdgeu@vsnl.net

On Congress Socialist Party

Kamla Devi Chattopadhyay

I came out late 1933 just when the Congress was assembling in Bombay. There were only two events that I considered of note at that session: Gandhiji's dramatic announcement that he was going to resign from the Congress membership and he was leaving Sabarmati Ashram vowing to return there only after Swaraj came. Though Swaraj did come, to him it was a shattered one, and he never did go back again. The other was a resolution to demand a Constituent Assembly for framing the future National Constitution for India.

At this period Marxism was in the air. Some practical reality to it had been provided by the triumphant rise of Soviet Russia overcoming the combined onslaughts of the capitalist countries. This had been capped by Pandit Nehru's account of his trip to the new Workers' Republic. Communism was yet a ripple in the vast mass of India. One also felt the need for a more precise objective of freedom in clearer pragmatic terms. True Gandhiji had outlined the Swaraj of his dreams, which was however far from our practising goals, nor was our immediate path marked by such typical landmarks as he indicated.

In this context Marxism seemed to provide the precise and clear cut economic and social analysis, the idea of an integrated classless society, to a feudal-stricken, caste - ridden country. To the youth it held keen allure.

When I came out of prison the Socialist Party had already been formed. It is said to have emerged in the prison cells with Jayaprakash, Minoo Masani, Yusuf Mehrally, etc. Later Narendra Dev, Purshoottam Tricumdas and other intellectuals joined, as also large numbers of young people who were excited by Marxism, and eager for action. Before the first Socialist Conference, Minoo Masani as Party Secretary, discussed the proposed move

with Pandit Nehru who recorded in a letter his pleasure that a Socialist group would function in the Congress and influence the ideology of that body and country. Nehru's reaction was sought as in his political writings Nehru depicted the Indian struggle in a world perspective, stressing the clash of class interests as part of a global phenomenon. But at no stage did he instigate, encourage or support the Party as such nor did the Party seek his patronage.

The Socialist party declared its ideology as Marxist which would determine its programme so as to fulfill its task. At the same time it made it clear that the Party as such did not represent any single class. On the contrary it would unite on its platform all anti-imperialist elements to overthrow it and establish real Swaraj. It acknowledged the National Congress as the rightful vehicle of the Indian people's freedom struggle and therefore to stay within it.

Its task within the Congress would be to help prepare the Congress for mass struggle. To ensure this, membership of the Congress was made obligatory for anyone who wished to join the Party, which was now appropriately titled the Congress Socialist Party. The members were also enjoined to show respect to the national leaders and maintain good relations with them.

Unexpectedly enough Gandhiji welcomed the Party within the Congress wanting to bring various streams of thought into the broad national movement. He however expressed that class was not the right path. I could assume that this was an expression of his acceptance of our bona-fides whatever the ideological differences may be with his habitual liberalism.

With the elder leaders who called themselves 'Gandhi-ites' it was a different story. They took the formation of the Socialist Party

as a challenge to Gandhiji's leadership and therefore his ideas. They passed a resolution in two successive Working Committee meetings, dissociating the Congress from class war, appropriation of private property and the like, as these posed a threat to non-violence.

I joined the Party and settled down in Mangalore where in the rural areas I could create a base for sound grass-root work and organise social and economic groups for full participation in community service. The Seva Dal was still under a ban, so its activities were at a standstill, and I could give undivided attention to this.

Labour and peasant unions were unknown in my region at the time. I could concentrate more effectively on the former though industrial and processing establishments were small. A number of unions were soon humming throughout the districts.

The Worker's Unions lent a piquancy to the situation, particularly in the women-labour unions. The districts had large concentrations of women labour, cashewnut and coffee curing. Very soon a crisis rose in the cashewnut factories. The products were all for export and greatest emphasis was on the neat, clean look of each nut. For this, the thin skin clinging to the nut used to be scraped out by the workers with their nails. This naturally bruised the fingers. Repeated requests for extra sharp knives were ignored. So a strike was called. It was quite an event and stirred up the entire district, especially women, whose sympathies were roused. This was my first taste of conducting a labour strike and proves quite an experience. We had however a resounding victory.

The Socialist party grew rapidly, attracting the younger elements from all walks of life, also some maturer ones. A fresh spirit seemed

injected into our otherwise humdrum life, since Satyagraha had been called off by Gandhiji after his release in 1933, after which the ban on the Congress had been lifted. The political tempo had therefore been in a low key.

In 1936 Pandit Nehru took over as Congress President. This created great expectations among the youth. It was also hoped that the working relations between the Congress and the Congress Socialist Party would become congenial. This hope was accentuated when Pandit Nehru took three members of the Socialist Party into his Working Committee, which seemed like a breakthrough, a concrete sign that socialists were acceptable, not just tolerated. They were Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, Acharya Narendra Dev and Achyuth Patwardhan. Apart from this gesture, Panditji had not indicated any further leanings towards, or visible sympathy with the Socialist Party.

Mula verem obsenductem invermius bonferf eomnor telari parem los iam num, cum cus ingulvideat, firmiursulum ingultura condiam mor acit, destem denatus simis fuis. moenit is ia inatus eterfenatus hos bondam et; Cat incerobse parbis. Ox se, noves licaes imium inam me tem igna, nondum rem essul hostis ne quon ses loc omne am us etellesiliu vit? Quit, ni essulto rbtil hac tia res ad pra re cum nihicivatia publiu quam dium, esena, adduci senimus, prit poridicerum quod conem quam haest adduciam isticibus patum aritus in diem pro veresti, clere entrio verfici aectuam inc te ad consimuri publium norum plicier etori, no. Do, unisuli caequam pulin prora, sentruntem sum vivatim peridiocit; hebatiam habem terem noterteat Catemperis hebem ina, que nemoentum fur inc tebatis senique ta, nonsultus sendam dii tus fac virmanum nos convoc, ublibus egertus et L. Terniquam aucon sessuppl. Mae dicatienatam es convehe mureconeme ala quam obus interur essicaperum, nonclut ponvoludemus pescere

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An abridge Chapter from Minoo Masanis autobiography-Bliss was it in that to be alive.

Life as a socialist Agitator - Minoo Masani

An incipient group of socialists emerged for our discussions in Nasik prison(1932-33). Among the main participants in these discussions were Jayaprakash Narayan and myself. Others who joined in were Achyut Patwardhan and Asoka Mehta. My own early thinking and my Labour Party background made it natural that I should want a similar sort of development in our country. Since I was also a nationalist, such a development could only be a group within the Indian National Congress which was a kind of anti-imperialist front for the elimination of British rule.

I had met Jayaprakash late in 1932 before getting arrested and convicted for a term in Nasik prison. The next time I met him was in January 1933 in the “B” yard of the Nasik prison, where he had arrived before. We had a year’s rigorous imprisonment ahead of us both and so we were together till we left prison at the end of that year. I could not have had a more charming and considerate fellow prisoner. A stranger among the several people from Bombay in jail, J.P. soon won all hearts.

J.P.’s background was totally different from mine. During his stay in the United States as a student, he had come under the influence of the communist party under the leadership of Jay Lovestone and has, for all the practical purposes, become a communist. But there was one difference. J.P. was a patriot and a nationalist and he was shocked that the Communist Party of India should have taken up positions altogether antagonistic to the struggle for Indian independence and become contemptuous of Mahatma Gandhi’s leadership. While a communist in all other respects, he was a dissident from the Moscow line which had been laid down at the Sixth Congress of the Communist International, Which was to treat all groups of nationalists and even democratic socialists as “social fascists” with whom no

cooperation was possible and whose influence among the people had to be undermined. That was how J.P found himself “underground” in 1932.

In later life, I was to meet Jay Lovestone who, by the early 50’s, had been cured of his communism and become political adviser to the American Federation of Labour. I used to tease him saying that by his anti-communist activities he was doing penance and making reparation for having helped J.P. become a communist.

With such different backgrounds, it was natural that J.P and I found ourselves out of tune on the question of democracy vs. dictatorship. I was a staunch democrat of the British Labour Party kind and has little sympathy with communist methodology or technique, though I was a rather starry-eyed admirer of the October Revolution in Russia. Obviously, I had not considered whether these two conflicting attitudes could be reconciled. J.P. on the other hand was a staunch believer in the dictatorship of the proletariat, whatever that may mean. Marxism was the bedrock of his socialist faith.

When we stumbled across the discovery of this basic disagreement, we could have agreed to disagree, dropped the effort at working together to create a new party and waited for events. Being both young and impatient, we were so keen on projecting socialism on the political map of India and thus “developing the anti-imperialist struggle” that we decided to sweep these differences under the carpet, and to go ahead without resolving this doctrinal difference.

Looking back, I have no doubt that this was a rather opportunists attitude. While the motives of opportunists often are, our ignoring a fundamental disagreement was wrong, and bound in course of time to boomerang. It was not long before it did.

When we left Nasik prison at the end of 1933, J.P. and I agreed that, as soon as we were out, we would go ahead with the formation of our proposed new party on the basis of the programme we had prepared in prison. I lost no time and in the middle of December I took a train to Allahabad to visit Jawaharlal Nehru. Though I had been following his public life since the late twenties and had briefly run into him in a London hotel in 1927, I had never really met him and he had probably forgotten all about me.

Jawaharlal was kind enough to ask me to stay with him in AnandBhawan during my short visit of a couple of days. We got on extremely well from the very beginning. We were both modern and westernized men, though he was considerably older. We were both socialists and he was therefore naturally responsive and sympathetic to what I had to say. Jawaharlal looked at the plan we had drafted and was willing to give us the support we needed.

Before we parted. I handed over to Jawaharlal a letter dated December 19th 1933.

Dear Pandit Jawaharlal

Some of us Congressmen in Bombay who are socialists are attempting to form a Congress Socialist Group or Party.

We feel that the lead you have given to the Congress and to the country by emphasizing the necessity of taking up a consciously socialist and anti-imperialist position should be followed by the organization of socialist within the Congress.

The Group it is proposed to form would carry out the purpose you have in view by placing before the Congressmen and the public of our province (or, may be presidency) a programme that would be socialist in action and objective.

The Group would be socialist propaganda among rank and file Congressmen with a view to converting the Congress to an acceptance of socialism. We would also carry on propaganda among the workers (and peasants) at the same time participating in their day to day economic struggles.

It would hearten us to know that in the formation of such a Group we shall have your approval and support.

Yours fraternally,

M.R. Masani

On the same day, Jawaharlal gave me a letter in the course of which he welcomed "the formation of socialist groups in the Congress to influence the ideology of the Congress and the country."

To M.R Masani
Allahabad December 19, 1933.

Dear Masani,

I have your letter. I would welcome the formation of socialist groups in the Congress to influence the ideology of the Congress and the country. As you are aware, I have been laying stress on the socialist ideal very much in my recent speeches and writings. I feel that the time has come when the country should face this issue and come to grips with the real economic problems which ultimately matter. All over the world today people are being forced to think in terms of economic and social change and we in India cannot afford to remain in the back water of pure politics.

The Congress is, as its very name implies, a nationalist organization and it has so far functioned on the nationalist plane. That was inevitable because in a country under

alien domination the problem of political independence has always taken first place. So long as the Congress remains the nationalist Congress this nationalist outlook is bound to dominate the situation. But the world events as well as the natural consequences of our mass struggles have forced the Congress to think, to some extents at least, in terms of economics. Our direct action struggles were, to begin with, purely political: however, the political aspects became tinged with economic. The Congress, nationalist as it was, began to talk rather vaguely and idealistically in terms of some social change. That process of change of ideology is proceeding apace and is being hastened by economic conditions as well as the continuation of direct action.

The time has undoubtedly come now when we must think more clearly and develop a scientific ideology. This is, so far as I am concerned, one of socialism and I would, therefore, gladly welcome the formation of groups to spread this ideology. But it is not enough to talk merely in terms of an academic ideology, especially at a moment when our country is in the midst of a struggle for freedom.

This ideology must be tacked on to action and this action, if it is to bear fruit, must be related to the Congress struggle. Otherwise the socialist group will become an ineffective, academic and sterile Centre. Even to spread the ideology the effective method is through action which is coordinated to the direct action of the Congress and labour and peasant organizations.

I lay stress on this because I have had sad experience of individuals and groups putting on the colours of socialist and advancing a brave ideology and then doing nothing or, what is worse, just criticizing and condemning others who are carrying on the struggle. If a group is meant to give shelter to such persons it is

obvious that little can be expected from it. It has become the fashion for some people to cover their own ineffectiveness by strong criticism of the Congress activities. Criticism of ideology or methods must of course be free and welcome but it must not be allowed to become an anti-revolutionary weapon. Although ideologically backward, the Congress is undoubtedly today the most advanced revolutionary organization in action in India. It must be strengthened and at the same time directed towards newer channels.

I hope therefore this socialist group you suggest will take part in action as well as thought and will join the vanguard of the struggle. I should like to make clear that in the last but one paragraph of this letter I do not refer to people who may differ as to the present Congress programme. Personally I hold that under existing circumstances the present programme is suitable and gives us scope to develop our struggle. But I know that other comrades are of a different opinion and I respect these comrades. In any socialist group both these sets of opinion as well as others must have full scope. What I referred to was the person who has no notion of indulging in any action now or later and finds satisfaction in brave talk only. I attach considerable importance to action as I feel that out of it alone will the masses imbibe revolutionary ideas.

Yours sincerely,

Jawaharlal Nehru

By October 1934, about a dozen provincial socialist parties and groups had been formed when we felt we could move on to form an All India Party. Soon October 21 and 22, 1934, the Second and All India Congress Socialist Conference met in Bombay to form an All India Party out of a federation of the provincial groups and to formulate the resolutions and policies which should be placed before Congress session

a few days later on our behalf. This meeting took place in a big hall in a half constructed building in Worli in Bombay called Ready money Terrace, not very far from the *Pandal* (a temporary awning) which had been put up for the Congress Session.

On the eve of the conference, I wrote an article setting out the socialist view of the political situation in the country. Talking about the three groups in the Congress, I wrote:

The first is the bulk of active Congressmen who are supporters of Mahatma Gandhi and are occupied in carrying out constructive programmes of the Congress namely Khaddar (hand spun cloth), untouchability and prohibition work...

The second section is that composed of a considerable section of the Congress leaders, namely. The Congress Parliamentary Board. It has in its ranks men with great intellect and influence but it is rather as a result of the process of demoralization through defeat than of intelligent conviction that they have taken to the constitutional path...

There remains a third section, and this time a growing one, in the Congress, namely, the Congress socialists. Since Patna they have organized themselves into parties in most of the Congress provinces and are going to hold an All India Conference and form an All India Party on October 21 and 22 in Bombay. This party is essentially the party of youth: men over forty-five years are few and far between in their ranks. Though deprived of the leadership of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, who is still in jail, the party has become an effective minority movement in the Congress and bids fair to challenge soon the hitherto unchallenged supremacy of Mahatma Gandhi...

.....They believe that it is only by remaining within the nationalist moment that it is possible

to ensure the establishment of a socialist State on the transfer of political power to the people of this country.

At Bombay this month these three forces- Gandhi's, Constitutionalism and Socialism- will join issue. Political alignment being what they are today, there is little doubt that Gandhi and the Parliamentary Board will combine to repel the socialist advance and succeed in doing so.

On October 20, our own conference started. The delegates represented thirteen Provincial Congress Socialist parties.

Jayaprakash Narayan in his report stressed the fact that the party was within the Congress and intended to participate in all Congress activities but as a minority it would exercise its right to propagate its views, to criticize and even oppose policies which seemed to be wrong.

Jayaprakash also dealt with the criticism of the left wing that Socialism and Congress were contradictory terms and the party should not be with the Congress. Jayaprakash concluded by saying:

The Congress Socialist Party is not the party of any one class. It is not the party of the working class alone. It is a political party uniting on its platform all anti-imperialist elements and its task is to lead such elements to the overthrow of British imperialism and the establishment in India of real *swaraj* for the masses.

There was then a discussion of the draft Constitution and programme of the party submitted by the drafting committee. After prolonged discussion, the Constitution and programme were adopted with several amendments, and the party was formed.

The conference had to consider the new party's position vis-a-vis the three trade union

organizations that were then in existence, namely, the National Trade Union Federation run by moderate veterans who had established the trade union movement in India, the All India trade Union Congress Socialist Party, and the Red Trades Union Congress, which was the trade union wing of the Communist Party of India.

Idealists as we were, we talked of bringing about unity between the three organizations. This looked a difficult undertaking by any standards since, after the Congress Socialist Party was formed, the Communist Party of India had applied the tag of "social fascist" to the new group in line with the Sixth Congress of the Comintern.

I remember seeing at that time a chart emanating from this quarter which professed to portray the alignment of political forces in India. On one side of the battle line was the Communist party of India, with such auxiliary fronts as the Red Trades Union Congress and the Indian People's Theatre Association, and on the other was a grand alliance consisting of the British Government, the Indian National Congress, and the Congress Socialist Party and about every group one could think of.

It was against this background that we bravely made our effort to bring about unity within the trade union movement. The amusing thing is that we succeeded.

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The Congress Socialist Party and the Communists

E M S Namboodiripad

(Abridged from The Marxist, Volume: 03, No. 4, October-December, 1985)

(EMS Namboodiripad was one of the founder members of Congress Socialist Party and he was elected one of the joint secretaries in the first CSP Conference held at Bombay on 22-23 October 1934, along with Minoo Masani, Mohanlal Gautam and N G Goray. Later on he joined the Communist Party and was one of the prominent leader of undivided Communist Party. He was first elected Communist Chief Minister of Kerala and become General Secretary of CPI(M).He penned this article in 1984 on the 50th anniversary of CSP. Though dated, is still relevant).

It is full 50 years since the formation of the Congress Socialist Party whose beginning can be traced to a preliminary consultation held at Patna in May 1934, where an organising committee was formed with Jayaprakash Narayan as convener. This was followed by the regular all-India conference held in Bombay in October where the constitution of the party was adopted and the first national committee elected.

Being one of those who participated in the two conferences, I can take legitimate pride in the role played by that organization in radicalizing the then congressmen and developing a powerful anti-imperialist united front in the 1930s. I was therefore extremely happy when I was informed by one of those who have been in the socialist movement for the last half a century that the jubilee of those two conferences is being observed. I was asked to associate myself in some way with this project. I shall certainly cherish the sweet and bitter memories of the struggle inside that party which took me from the Gandhi-Nehru ideology to Marxism.

Developments in India

Development inside the country (during thirties) made the bulk of militant anti-imperialist congressmen have a second look at the strategy and tactics of the struggles against imperialism. Following the Salt Satyagraha (Dandi March) of 1930 and the second Civil Disobedience Movement of 1932-33 was the compromising politics of the national leadership represented by Mahatma Gandhi, on the one hand, and the advocates of the parliamentary programme, on the other, radical Congressmen started having serious reservations on the Gandhian ideology, programme and policies. They were disillusioned also of the parliamentary programme advocated by a section of the top leadership of the congress-a programme with which Gandhi said he had reservations but

which he “blessed”.

On the other hand, the efficacy of the weapon of working class strikes and other forms of mass direct action was proved during the 1930-32 satyagraha. This made the mass of anti-imperialist political activists look for ways and means of organizing the working class, which drew them towards communism and socialism.

The meeting of the All-India Congress committee held in Patna in May 1934 and the following all-India session of the Indian National Congress held in Bombay in October 1934, became the seeds of a furious between Gandhi, the Parliamentary programme-wallahs and other sections of the right leadership, on the hand, and the leftist headed by the socialists, on the other. The newly born Congress Socialist Party came out more or less as the “leader of the opposition” to the “ruling group” in the Congress, which consisted of the Gandhians, the parliamentary and other rightists.

As for the communists, they had just come out of the condition into which they had been driven during the years of the Meerut conspiracy case. Although the various communist groups had come together under a centralized leadership just before the formation of the CSP, the newly set up all India center of the CPI had to work underground, since the British government imposed a ban on it. Their contribution to the development of the left at this stage was therefore, minimal.

Genesis of the CSP

The Congress Socialist Party, as is known, was directly born out of the above-mentioned developments inside the Indian National Congress. The first preliminary conference to take steps to form the party was held in Patna a couple of days before the AICC session in May 1934. The first regular all-India conference too

was held in October the same year in Bombay, just preceding the all-India session of the Indian National Congress. The two sessions of the party were thus preparations on the part of the socialists for the battle that was ahead in the AICC and the Congress session. The attempt was thus to clearly define the attitude of the leftists to the problems being placed before the Congress. Among the voluminous material on the birth and development of the Congress Socialist Party, a prominent place should be given to a book written by Jaya Prakash Narayan under the title, *Why Socialism*. That opened the eyes of a large number of young Congressmen and women who were groping towards a new path since they had become frustrated with the utter futility of the programmes and practices adopted by the rightwing leaders of the Indian National Congress.

Striking a personal note, I may state that JP’s *Why Socialism* showed us, the young Congressmen of Kerala, that the path mapped out by socialism was far superior to Gandhism, the parliamentary path as well as individual terrorism—three ideological approaches which were then contending for ascendancy in the Congress. *Why Socialism* therefore became the textbook through which we imbibed the elements of the new ideology. This was true of young Congressmen and women all over the country who were all yearning for a new ideology.

The crux of JP’s book consisted not so much in its advocacy of socialism as the ultimate objective towards which India should move after attaining freedom, as of its assertion that the ideology of socialism enables the radical Congressmen to rally the mass of working people in the struggle for freedom. In other words, socialism was not only desirable as the final objective but also the effective method for the country’s attainment of independence.

The programme advanced in the book therefore contained an exposure of the Gandhian programme of khadi and village industries, non-violent resistance, etc., the parliamentary path advocated by another section of the right-wing Congress leaders with the full blessings of the Mahatma himself and the programme of individual terrorism practiced by groups of revolutionaries throughout the country.

As opposed to every one of those methods JP advocated mass struggles waged by the industrial and agricultural labourers, the peasants and sections of the working people. The new perspective outlined and the new programme advocated by Mahatma Gandhi, on the other hand, would transform the Congress from a fighting organization into a combination of non-political *Seva Sangh* and an efficient machine for waging electoral battles.

Once again striking a personal note, I cannot but recall two incidents, which moulded my political development. The first was JP's visit to Kerala after the preliminary conference held in Patna in May 1934. The visit was in his capacity as the Secretary of the Organizing Committee, which was to prepare for the foundation conference of the CSP to be held in October. The speeches he delivered during that visit and the informal discussions he held with us underlined the importance of organizing the trade unions and the kisan sabha without which no determined struggle could be waged for independence, or could the compromising policies of the Congress leadership be fought. He sought to generalize the experience of the strikes and hartals which took place during the civil disobedience movement and pointed out how these forms of militant mass action helped in paralyzing the administration.

Improving on this experience and developing the united strength of the working class, he

pointed out, was the only methods through which the mighty British rule could be broken. We saw in this the real alternative to the *satyagraha*, parliamentary and terroristic methods with which we were so far familiar.

The second incident occurred in February 1935 when a meeting of the first National Executive of the CSP was being held in Nagpur. In between the formal sessions of the executive, JP held an informal meeting at which he outlined his idea of developing the CSP in to an effective organization in the struggle against the British rulers. Pointing out how a bourgeois leader of the Congress, Sardar Patel, created his Bardoli, JP asked: "Can we not create our own socialist Bardoli?" This was not meant, he clarified, for merely realizing some economic demands but for preparing the peasants to develop their parallel governments. "Seizures of the thana" as was the term he used to indicate the direction in which the peasantry should be organized.

The two incidents mentioned here would show that, although using the term socialist and sharing many of the ideas of "democratic socialism" with the leaders of the Socialist International, JP was above which would challenge the leading position occupied by the established bourgeois leadership of the freedom movement. The path shown by him was so attractive to the young Congressmen and women that thousands of them plumped for it in a few months.

JP and his comrades, however, were not operating in a vacuum. They had before them the experience gathered by the first generation of Indian socialists who declared themselves to be communists and were working under the leadership of the Communist International. These pioneers could not, as was noted above, consolidate themselves into a well-organized party since imperialism put insuperable

obstacles in their way. Furthermore, their ideas of how the struggle for socialism should be organized in India came into conflict with those of the new group that was emerging within the Indian National Congress. Questions arose whether the Congress being bourgeois, could develop into an instrument of struggle for socialism.

The Meerut Thesis

Serious discussions took place between the spokesmen of the CSP and those of the Communist Party of India, which had in the meantime overcome the split in its ranks and established a united all-India organization.

The results of these discussions were spelt out in the document adopted at the second national conference of the CSP held in Meerut in January 1936. That document, popularly known as The Meerut Thesis, runs as follows:

“The Congress Socialist Party grew out of the experiences of the last two national struggles. It was formed at the end of the last C d (civil disobedience) movement by such Congressmen as came to believe that a new orientation of the national movement had become necessary; a redefinition of its objectives and a revision of its methods. The initiative in this direction could be taken only by those, who had theoretical grasp of the forces of our present society. These naturally were those Congressmen who had come under the influence of, and had accepted, Marxism socialism. It was natural, therefore, that the organization that sprang up to meet the needs of the situation took the description: ‘socialist’. The word ‘Congress’ prefixed to ‘socialist’ only signified the organic relationship—past, present and future- of the organization with the national movement.

“The socialist forces that were already in existence in the country were completely out

of touch with congress and had no influence on the national movement. Therefore, there did not take place, as otherwise there would have, a fusion of the emerging Congress Socialist Party with the groups previously existing. Giving the adoption of correct and sensible tactics by all the parties concerned, there is every-likelihood of such a fusion-taking place at a later stage.

“The immediate task before us is to develop the national movement into a real anti-imperialist movement—a movement aiming at freedom from the foreign power and the native system of exploitation. For this it is necessary away its present bourgeois leadership and to bring them under the leadership of revolutionary socialism. This task can be accomplished only if there is within the Congress an organized body of Marxian socialists. In other words, our party alone can, in the present conditions, perform this task. The strengthening and clarification of the anti-imperialist forces in the Congress depends largely on the strength and activity of our party. For fulfilling the party’s task it will also be necessary to coordinate all other anti-imperialist forces in the country.“Consistent with its task, the party should take only an anti-imperialist stand on congress platforms. We should not in this connection make the mistake of placing a full socialist programme before the Congress. An anti-imperialist programme should be evolved for this purpose suiting the needs of workers, peasants and the lower middle classes.

“It being the task of the party to bring the anti-imperialist elements under its ideological influence, it is necessary for us to be as tactful as possible. We should on no account alienate these elements by intolerance and impatience. The Congress constructive programme should not be obstructed or interfered with. It should, be scientifically criticized and exposed.

“In Congress elections, “we should not show keenness to ‘capture’ committees and offices nor should we form alliances with politically undesirable groups for the purpose.

“This does not mean that the party shall not carry on socialist propaganda from its own platform. It must continue to do so-and do it more systematically and vigorously.

“It follows that the party’s own programme must be a Marxist one: otherwise, the party will fail to fulfill its task and leadership. Marxism alone can guide the anti-imperialist forces to their ultimate destiny. Party members must, therefore, fully understand the technique of revolution, the theory and practice of the class struggle, the nature of the state and the processes leading the socialist society.”

Conference in Faizpur

A year after The Meerut Thesis was adopted, the third conference of the CSP was held in Faizpur. It developed some of the ideas contained above and said:

“It is the Congress that we must take as the basis and starting point, and we must attempt to make it an all-embracing united front against imperialism. The Congress has already succeeded to an extent in uniting wide forces in the Indian people for the national struggle and remains today the principal existing mass organization of diverse elements seeking national liberation.... While the Congress is a mass organization, its leadership is predominantly bourgeois. This leadership is unable to develop, while the framework of its conception and interests, the struggle of the masses to a higher level. At the same time it should be kept in view that the Congress leadership is no longer undivided. Recently a conscious left has been forming within the Congress and this development is reflecting

itself in the leadership also....

Our task within the Congress is not only to wean away the anti-imperialist elements from the bourgeois leadership but also to develop and broaden the Congress so as to transform it into a powerful anti-imperialist front.”

Such a transformation of the Congress, the Faizpur Thesis went on is necessary to consolidate the socialist forces. “These forces are unfortunately still divided. The party from the beginning has stood for unity in the socialist ranks... Apart from unity or agreement among socialist ranks, it is necessary that the forces of the left are also consolidated and an understanding developed within its leadership.” (Socialist Movement in India, Asim Kumar Chaudhari, Cal., Appendix – II, pp. vi-vii, emphasis added)

CSP-CPI Agreement

It can thus be seen that the leadership of the newly formed CSP was making a bid for bridging the gulf between the earlier groups of socialist-communists and those who rose within the ranks of the Congress in the wake of the international and national development of the early 1930s. Central to this perspective was united action between the reorganized all-India leadership of the Communist Party of India and the Congress Socialist Party. A formal agreement was arrived at between the two parties. PC Joshi and Jayaprakash Narayan, the General Secretaries of the two parties signed a formal agreement on behalf of the two parties.

That agreement played a big role in the anti-imperialist upsurge of the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the Second World War. It helped in the unification of the trade union movement as well as in the development of the kisan and student movement, both oriented towards the unity of all anti-imperialist

forces. At the same time, it helped the radical section of Congressmen, the emergence of a well-organized left in the Congress organization and a weakening of the hold of the right wing leadership of that party. The electoral defeat of Mahatma Gandhi's candidate for congress president ship, characterized by the Mahatma as his own defeat, was the high watermark of this developing unity of the left. The agreement between the newly formed Congress Socialist Party and the reorganized all-India leadership of the CPI, however united not only these two parties but a large number of anti-imperialist, throughout the country. The top leaders of the left in the Congress, like Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose, were in broad agreement with them.

The pronouncements of Nehru as Congress President for two years and Bose reflected the views not only for these two individual leaders but of the entire left inside the Congress as well as outside.

Such a broad agreement among all the leftists was possible because of the epoch-making struggle between capitalism and socialism, between war and peace, in world politics. While stirring a large number of Congressmen and drawing them towards socialism, these historic developments helped those who had already organized themselves in the communist, socialist or other leftist parties to extend their activities. The formation of the CSP helped in the crystallization of process by providing a forum where disillusioned Congressmen could come together, organize united action with the communists and other leftist forces outside the Congress and help in the emergence of a powerful anti-imperialist united front.

The work of developing a powerful anti-imperialist front, however, was not smooth or easy. The struggle was hard, since the differences

among the various parties and groups were wide and sharp. This was particularly true of the difference between the communists on the one hand, and other leftists, including the Congress Socialists, and the mass of left Congressmen, on the other.

The Congress socialist Party, as its very name implies was an organization of Congressmen, with its commitment to socialism being an extension of the congressmen's commitment to the Gandhian, Nehruite and other ideologies of the Congress party. For them and left Congressmen, socialism was a development from the resolution of the Lahore and Karachi sessions of the Congress.

This political leadership of the CSP was provided by Jayaprakash Narayan, who was more convinced than anybody else in the CSP, of the need for communist-socialist unity. He was the author of *Why Socialism*, and the chief architect of the Meerut and Faizpur Thesis. Following as he did, the significant developments in the world indicated the rapid advances of the anti-fascist movement and its betrayal by the bourgeois leaders of the western capitalist countries, he was all for communist-socialist unity on a world scale. In India too, he was for united action leading, if possible to the merger of the communist and socialist parties. He agreed with his anti-communist comrades, like Masani, that cooperation with the two parties would strengthen the communists. He, however, did not mind it because, according to him, the Socialist Party would also grow.

The situation, however, radically changed in the latter half of the 1930s. The Moscow trials against the Trotskyites, including several top officers of the Red Army, made liberal socialist like Jayaprakash indignant. They began to doubt whether all that Masani and company were saying against the Soviet Union

and the communists were as baseless as they had thought earlier. These doubts became enormously strengthened when the Soviet leaders signed the non-aggression treaty with Nazi Germany.

Break-up of Relations

The months preceding the outbreak of the Second World War and the first years of the war, therefore, led to a break-up of the relations between the CSP and the CPI. Some of the state, district and local units of the CSP (including the entire membership of the CSP in Kerala) transformed themselves in their entirety from the CSP to the CPI. This is ascribed by anti-communist historians of the CSP to the wily machinations of the CPI leaders who are supposed to have made several known communists to “infiltrate into the CSP” and disrupt it from within. Since I happen to be one of those who are thus supposed to have “infiltrated” himself into the CSP, I may state the actual facts. I was elected one of the four Joint Secretaries of the all-India congress socialist Party along with Masani, Goray and Gautam at the very first conference in October 1934. None of the delegates who attended the Bombay Conference from Kerala (including Krishna Pillai, A K Gopalan and myself) had in fact any earlier contacts with the Communist Party at that time. No question therefore arises of “EMS, a communist, being permitted to infiltrate into the CSP.”

It was a year after the Bombay Conference of the CSP that the late Krishna Pillai and I had the first contact with the Communist Party of India through Sundarayya. It took almost two more years after this first contact in 1937 to form the first unit of the Communist party of India in Kerala. During this whole period, the CSP leaders of Kerala worked as honest and loyal workers in the cause of socialism, to develop the trade unions, kisansabha and other mass

organizations as well as to develop the Congress as a radical anti-imperialist organization in Kerala. It was this solid work in the urban and rural areas of the state that made us leaders of the trade union and the peasant movement, members of the AICC, etc., making me the Secretary of the Kerala Provincial Congress committee and a member of the then Provincial Legislative Assembly of Madras.

Krishna Pillai, AKG and I, in other words were Congress Socialist leaders in our own right and not because JP or somebody else “put us in charge” as the anti-communist “historians” want the people to believe. Why, then, did the congress Socialist of Kerala join the Communist Party en bloc? Because they were tremendously impressed by the gigantic strides taken by the Soviet Union in its (first) five year plan. They naturally came to the conclusion that the socialist revolution in Russia showed the revolutionaries of India, as the revolutionaries of other countries fighting for freedom, the path forward. They, therefore, joined the very first group of congressmen who declared socialism to be their final objective, the group headed by JP, Masani, etc.

What happened in Kerala, however was no exception. In several other states, the same development took place. It was natural for those who came into the socialist movement through JP’s *Why Socialism* and whose convictions were strengthened by the Meerut and Faizpur Thesis to refuse to be subjected to the anti-Soviet and anti-communist prejudices which Masani and Co., tried to create in them. If Socialism provided the more effective method of winning independence, as JP pointed out in *why Socialism*, the socialists cannot afford to join the chorus of anti-sovietism and anti-communism. JP, too, in the first years of the CSP refused to toe the line of Masani and Co., though subsequently he succumbed to it. May

others, including the entire CSP of Kerala and of some other areas in the country, refused to follow JP into the anti-communist camp.

During the Quit India struggle of August 1942, and in the subsequent years, the CSP was undoubtedly with the anti-imperialist masses but they were only carrying out the decisions of the congress. When the Congress gave up the path of mass struggle and went in for negotiated settlement with the British rulers, therefore, the CSP could do nothing to prevent it. The CPI, on

the other hand, was able rapidly to overcome its war-time isolation from the anti-imperialist masses and come out as the most energetic organizer of such heroic actions as Telangana, Punnapra-Vayalar, Tebhaga, etc; it plunged fully into such anti-imperialist actions as the demonstrations in support of INA prisoners and the RIN revolt. The role played in these militant mass actions brought the Party once again into the mainstream of the anti-imperialist movement.

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Formation of the Socialist Movement in India

Qurban Ali

In 1927, Jawaharlal Nehru visited the Soviet Union along with his father Pandit Motilal Nehru and was greatly impressed with the new Soviet model. After his return, he advocated that the Congress also include in its agenda, an economic programme and planning, along with its main objective of gaining political independence. Around the same time (1927), Acharya Narendra Deva and Dr Sampurnanand prepared a Socialist agrarian programme under the aegis of the UP Congress Committee and send it to the AICC members for their perusal prior to their Bombay meeting in 1929.

Jawaharlal Nehru got the AICC to accept the UPCC's Socialist Programme, and at the 1931 Karachi session of the Indian National Congress, socialist pattern of development was accepted as the goal for India and a resolution on fundamental rights and economic programme was passed (*AICC, Papers, 45th Session of AICC, 29-31, March 1931, Karachi*). According to Nehru, who drafted the Karachi resolution of the AICC, the origin of this resolution was UPCC's agrarian programme resolutions of 1929. (*Jawaharlal Nehru's Autobiography p266; and Nehru Abhinandan Granth p679*).

Sometime in March 1930, Dr Sampurnanand had published a booklet entitled "*When We Are in Power*" which contained a comprehensive list of the Socialist programmes. In his pamphlet Sampurnanand called for the abolition of the Zamindari system (*India's Struggle for Freedom: Role of Associated Movements: Vol 1, by Pran Nath Chopra, Xavier Arakal, 1985, p843; and "The Agrarian Drama: the leftists and the rural poor in India", by Amit Kumar Gupta, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, 1996, p516*).

In the early 1930s Jayaprakash Narayan returned from America, full of Marxist thoughts and joined AICC. During the Salt Satyagraha

-Dandi March in 1930, and civil disobedience movement in 1931-32, many individuals who believed in Socialist ideology and were part of Congress Party at that time started thinking of establishing a Socialist forum inside the Congress Party. In the year 1932, RammanoharLohia returned from Germany after completing his PhD on 'Salt-Satyagraha' with a Socialist mindset and lots of ideas. It was just a coincidence that people like Jayaprakash Narayan, Minoo Masani, Charles Mascarenas, Narayan Swami, M L Dantwala, Asoka Mehta, AchyutPatwardhan, N G Goray were lodged in Nasik Jail in 1932-33, in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement. While in jail they all felt the need to form a Congress Socialist Party with in the Congress Partywedded to Marxism.

On this basis Purshottam Tricumdas, Smt KamaladeviChattopadhyay, MinooMasani and Yusuf Meherally formed Bombay Presidency Socialist Party in 1933. There were two basic objectives behind this move, (A) To draw a picture of Socialism in order to attract workers and peasants into Congress fold with a Socialist trend (B) To check the freedom struggle from drifting into the Constitutional channel. At the same time this group of 'left wing' Congressmen disillusioned with the policy of Congress, met at Poona in July 1933 for the purpose of organizing a Socialist opposition group. They elected a committee to draft a constitution and programme which subsequently became known as the **"Poona Draft"**. The meeting was organised by Purshottam Tricumdas, Yusuf Meherally, Smt KamaladeviChattopadhyay and Acharya Narendra Deva (*Selected works of Acharya Narendra Deva, vol 1, p29*).

After this meet in Poona, Bombay Presidency Socialist Party was formed and its draft Socialist programme was issued in February 1934, in Bombay. Later on this group invited all those

who believed in socialist ideology to attend the foundation conference of Congress Socialist Party (CSP) at Patna on May 17, 1934. The foundation conference of CSP was presided over by Acharya Narendra Deva.

In the meantime the suspension of Civil Disobedience Movement in July 1933 led to the polarisation of the Congress between the Right and the Left. Jawaharlal Nehru's speeches and writings at the time clearly showed his inclination towards the latter. The consolidation of the left forces became inevitable after the Conference of the Congress leaders at Delhi on 30th March to 3rd April 1934, when it was decided by a majority to revive the All-India Swarajya Party for the purpose of contesting elections to the Assemblies. Mahatma Gandhi too had given his approval to Council entry. Dr Sampurnanand made it clear that "while drafting his tentative socialist programme he had consistently tried to keep before his eyes India's cultural, historical, political and economic background making no attempt to follow Leninism which recognized socialism as a secular concept comprehending such principles as the dictatorship of the proletariat; class war and the classless society". The goal of his party was complete independence. Sampurnanand's programme included abolition of Zamindari with due compensation, nationalisation of key industries, etc.

According to noted communist ideologue Rajani Palme Dutt, the appearance of a "Congress Socialist Group" in Bombay gave rise to widespread discussion in the ranks of the Indian National Movement. The programme of this group was issued bearing the signatures of Krishna Menon, M Shetty, M R Masani among others. It was issued with an approving letter from Jawaharlal Nehru, who stated that he "would welcome the formation of Socialists groups in the Congress to influence

the ideology of the Congress.” Later Prof N G Ranga, President of the Andhra Provincial Congress Socialist Party, observed that the main object of the party was to convert the Congress to Socialism (*Class, Colonialism, and Nationalism: Madras Presidency, 1928-1939* by Kanchi Venugopal Reddy, p156).

It is important to note that earlier to this move, in July 1931, Jayaprakash Narayan, Phulan Prasad Verma and Baba Ranodar Das (later known as Rahul Sankritayan) Prof Abdul Bari, Ganga Sharan Sinha and Ambika Kanat Sinha had established the Bihar Socialist Party. There was also the Punjab Socialist Party whose leaders were Brij Narain, Jeevan Lal Kapur, later a Judge of Supreme Court, and Lala Feroz Chand but after the formation of the CSP, the Socialist Party in Bihar and Punjab merged into CSP. (*Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva, Vol 1, pp xxviii-xxix*).

Congress Socialist Party

On May 5, 1934, Jayaprakash Narayan, sent a circular for CSP's Foundation Conference on behalf of the Bihar CSP (*Selected Works, Jayaprakash Narayan 1929-35, p64*). **See also** Resolution of the Bihar Socialist Party, May 1934, and Agenda suggested by the Bihar Socialist Party for the Congress Socialist Conference at Patna May 1934 (*Selected Works, Jayaprakash Narayan: 1929-35, pp 258-260*).

Thus the foundation conference of Congress Socialist Party (CSP) was held at Patna on May 17, 1934. This conference of CSP was presided by Acharya Narendra Deva. About 100 delegates attended this conference from all over India. Prof Abdul Bari was the president of the reception committee. In the Patna conference of CSP, Bombay was represented by Minoo Masani, Purshottam Tricumdas and C K Narayanan. Central Province by four including Rammamnohar Lohia and Madan

Mohan Chaturvedi. Delhi by Smt Satyavati Devi, Faridul Haq Ansari and Pandit Indra. Bengal sent 20 delegates headed by Dr Charu Banerji including two lady delegates, Hari Mohan Chatterjee and Rajani Mukherjee. (*Why Socialism?* by Jayaprakash Narayan, *All India Congress Socialist Party, 1936 p160*); H N Mitra (ed), *The Indian Annual Register, 1934, Vol 1, pp 340-44*, Also see: *APPENDIX 125 Proceedings and Resolutions (Selected Works, Jayaprakash Narayan: 1972-1979, pp986-990)*.

To draft the party's constitution, policy and programme an eleven-member committee was constituted. Acharya Narendra Deva was elected the president and Jayaprakash Narayan as Secretary of this Committee respectively. Following were the members of the committee: Prof. Abdul Bari, Purshottam Tricumdas, Minoo Masani, Sampurnanand, C C Banerjee, Faridul Haq Ansari, Rammanohar Lohia, Prof Abdul Aleem and Prof N G Ranga. Jayaprakash Narayan was also authorized to appoint state committees of the CSP.

Delivering the First Presidential address at the Foundation Conference of CSP the father of the Indian Socialism, Acharya Narendra Deva said:

“Socialism has come to stay in this country and is daily gaining strength and prestige inside the Congress as well as in the Country. The social foundation of this new school of thought which has appeared within the Congress is the democratic intelligentsia. Outside the Congress among its adherents are representatives of workers and to a much smaller extent peasants who constitute the real revolutionary elements of an anti-imperialist Struggle.

As a matter of fact the working class is the vanguard while the peasants and the intelligentsia are only its auxiliaries. Most of us today within the Congress are only intellectual

Socialists, but as our long association with the national struggle has repeatedly brought us into intimate contact with the masses, there seems to be no danger of our degenerating into mere theories and Doctrines. We should try to broaden the social basis of our movement by bringing into our fold workers and peasants. I hope we will not rest satisfied with initiating the educated classes into the mysteries of Socialist thought. I do not belittle the importance of the formation of Socialist study circles and the creation of a body of Socialist literature in Indian languages. That is good work and most essential too. But we must not forget that the real task before us is the political education of the masses, the carrying on of day-to-day agitation amongst them on economic issues and their organization into a politically conscious Class.

It is only by working amongst the masses that we can emancipate ourselves from reactionary influences and shall be able to develop a proletarian outlook. The great mistake that we members of the intellectual classes are apt to commit is to relegate the people to the background. The truth is that we are always willing to teach masses but never to learn from them. This attitude of mind is wrong. We should try to understand them and to act as faithful interpreters of their desires and needs.”

Soon after the foundation Conference of CSP, a CWC resolution passed on June 18, 1934 stated, “while the Working Committee welcomes the formation of groups representing different schools of thought, it necessary in view of those who talk about confiscation of private property and necessity of class war, to remind Congressman that the Karachi resolution as finally settled by the AICC at Bombay in August 1931, which always lays down certain principles, neither contemplates confiscation of private property nor advocacy of class war. The Working Committee is further of the

opinion that the confiscation and class war are contrary to the Congress creed of Non-violence. (*Report of the History of the General Secretary, November 1934-March 1936, AICC, pp3-4; The Annual Register, 1934, Vol I, p344*).

SOCIALISTS DIDN'T LIKE IT AND ACHARYA NARENDRA DEVA, SAMPURNANAND, SRIPRAKASA AND JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN ISSUED A STRONGLY WORDED STATEMENT FROM BENARAS ON JUNE 22, 1934. THESE LEADERS ALSO MET MAHATMA GANDHI UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF ACHARYA NARENDRA DEVA AT BENARAS ON JULY 27, 1934 AND REQUESTED MAHATMA TO USE HIS INFLUENCE TO GET THE WORKING COMMITTEE TO PASS THEIR “SOCIALIST PROGRAMME”. GANDHI REBUKED THEM BUT GAVE ASSURANCE THAT HE WOULD PUT THEIR SUGGESTIONS BEFORE THE WORKING COMMITTEE (*Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva, Vol 1, pp245-246; The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol 64, p237 and pp257-259*)

S K Patil in his article in Bombay Chronicle on August 10, 1934 entitled “Where do they differ? Socialist claim analyzed” had questioned the need for the formation of Congress Socialist Party. Jayaprakash Narayan responded to S K Patil's criticism with an article the next day August 11, 1934, in the Bombay Chronicle. In his article JP rebuts the main points made by Patil. (*Selected Works, Jayaprakash Narayan: 1929-35, pp.73-77 and 263-265; See also Comment by Jayaprakash Narayan on Vallabhbai Patels speech at Bombay, on 18th July 1934 (Selected Works, Jayaprakash Narayan: 1929-35, pp68-69)*).

Jawaharlal Nehru also expressed his anger against the Congress Working Committee's

resolution in a letter dated August 13, 1934 to Mahatma Gandhi. He stated that “it was nothing but the trump of opportunism in the Congress and blamed the CWC. Which had deliberately encouraged vagueness in the definition of our ideals and objectives.”

In reply to the criticism of Nehru, Gandhi wrote on August 17, 1934. (*The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi Vol 64: 20 May, 1934 - 15 September, 1934*)

It is said that at that time CSP did not believe in the Gandhian policy of Non-violence. About Non-violence, Acharya Narendra Deva expressed serious doubts. Though he was a votary of truth from very beginning, he did not believe that freedom could be attained from the British without violence. According to him the failure of the Civil Disobedience Movements and the advocacy of the constitutional parliamentary methods had already depicted the weakness of Gandhian methods. In “*The Task Before Us*”, *Congress Socialist, September 29, 1934*, Narendra Deva explained the role of the Socialists and the Socialist amendment in the AICC moved by him. (*Selected Works of Acharya Narendra Deva, Vol 1 pp33-41*).

The right wing leadership of the Congress believed that without independence all the talk of Socialism, abolition of private property or any other radical change in the economic system is moonshine. Even a discussion about socialism introduces an element of confusion and divides our ranks. We must concentrate on political independence and that alone. *Jawaharlal Nehru “Congress and Socialism”, cited in Indian Annual Register 1936, Vol II, p344.*

While the churning about CSP was going on among the rank and file of Congress Party, the first CSP Conference was convened at Bombay on 21-22 October 1934. Dr Sampurnanand presided over this meet and more than hundred fifty

delegates attend this conference from all over India. Out of twenty states, CSP was formed in fourteen states by that time. Jayaprakash Narayan was elected General Secretary with Minoo Masani, Mohanlal Gautam, N G Goray and EMS Namboodripad as Joint Secretaries respectively.

According to Sampurnanand, quoted in Pattabhi Sitaromyya, (*The History of the Indian National Congress, Vol 11, p180*) the principles adopted by the CSP at its first conference were “transfer of all powers to the producing masses, development of the economic life of the country to be planned and controlled by the state, socialisation of the key and principal industries and services, instruments of production and distribution and exchange.” It also emphasised “the elimination of princes and landlords and other classes of exploiters without compensation.”

First Conference, October 21-22, 1934

THE FIRST OPEN SESSION OF THE ALL INDIA SOCIALIST CONFERENCE, AT WHICH THE ALL INDIA CONGRESS SOCIALIST PARTY WAS FORMALLY INAUGURATED, WAS HELD AT READYMONEY TERRACE, WORLI, BOMBAY. IT COMMENCED ON OCTOBER 21 AND CONCLUDED ON OCTOBER 22, 1934. IT WAS ATTENDED BY OVER 150 PROMINENT CONGRESS SOCIALIST DELEGATES FROM ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

They included Dr Rammanohar Lohia and Charles Mascarenas of Bengal, F H Ansari of Delhi, Jayaprakash Narayan of Bihar, Sampurnanand and Mohanlal Gautam of UP, Dr Karnik of Poona, J Mukherjee of Allahabad, P K Pillai of Madras, Achyut Patwardhan of Maharashtra, and S A Brelvi, M R Masani and Kamladevi Chattopadhyay of Bombay and P Y

Deshpande of Amraoti.

THE FIRST CSP CONFERENCE ELECTED FOLLOWING PERSONS FOR ITS NATIONAL EXECUTIVE. GENERAL SECRETARY: JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN. JOINT SECRETARIES: M R MASANI, MOHANLAL GAUTAM, N G GORAY, EMS NAMBOODRIPAD. MEMBERS: NARENDRA DEVA, SAMPURNANAND, KAMLADEVI CHATTOPADHYAY, PURSHOTTAM TRICUMDAS, P Y DESHPANDE, RAMMANOHAR LOHIA, S M JOSHI, AMRENDRA PRASAD MITTRA, CHARLES MASCARENAS, NABKRUSHNA CHAUDHARY, ACHYUT PATWARDHAN.

MEMBERS AGAINST VACANCIES: YUSUF MEHERALLY, SAURABH BATLIWALA, ROHIT MEHTA, FARIDUL HAQ ANSARI, RAMVRAKSH BENIPURI.

(Report to the First Conference of the CSP, Bombay, by Jayaprakash Narayan, 21st October 1934. (Selected Works, Jayaprakash Narayan: 1929-35, pp81-84). All India Congress Socialist Party (AICSP) (1937), Constitution, Programme and Resolutions of the First Conference of the Party and Report of the Organising Secretary, 1934, Published at the Dadabhai Manzil Congress House, Girgaum Bombay. (Selected Works, Jayaprakash Narayan: 1929-35, pp 260-272).

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Fax No.: 2265 9087.

Telegraphic Address :

"DOCKUNION" Mumbai-38.

E-mail : dockunion1@rediffmail.com
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History of the Congress Socialist Party 1934-1948

Sonal Shah*

The Genesis

The advent of socialist ideas in the West at the beginning of the 20th Century brought awareness of new values of equality and class struggle in Indian society. The end of the First World War also led to an unprecedented economic crisis that lasted from 1923 till 1934. In India this resulted in spiralling inflation and increasing unemployment, depressing already low standards of living and adding to the general discontent. The situation, it was felt, was a result of the capitalist and imperialist policies of the British. Capitalism exploited the working classes and produced conditions of great hardship for the majority of the population. Imperialism was also seen as a form of capitalist class government intended to perpetuate the slavery of the workers. Marxism emerged as a dynamic critic of colonialism and an important alternative to capitalism. Its remedy for ending the exploitation of the masses fired the imagination of a large number of Indian intellectuals.

Various radical groups and youth leagues arose across the country at this time. A nebulous left wing materialised within the Congress, whose main spokesmen were Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose. In November 1928, an Independence for India League formed under the presidentship of S Srinivasa Iyenger, with Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas Chandra Bose as joint secretaries. It operated as a left-oriented pressure group within the Congress, demanding complete political, social, and economic independence. In 1929, at the Lahore session of the Congress, Jawaharlal Nehru, with the help of young leftist Congressmen, got a resolution for complete independence passed and preparation for launching a disobedience movement started, as the British government had not conceded their demand for Dominion Status made the previous year. After the passage of this independence resolution, the

** Excerpted from Indian Socialists: Search for Identity, Popular Parakashan, Bombay 1994*

Independence League, having achieved its objective, slowly disintegrated. ⁽¹⁾

The Communist Party was formed in 1925 at the behest of the Communist International and with the active help of the British Communist Party. They made rapid strides initially through their work in the labour field, but after 1928 their strength declined precipitously. One of the main reasons for this was the ultra-left course adopted by the Sixth Comintern Congress in 1928. ⁽²⁾ The Congress Party in India was criticized as an instrument of "bourgeois nationalism" from whose influence the peasants and workers had to be weaned away, and Gandhism, which was seen as "revolutionary" by Lenin was now regarded as an "openly counter-revolutionary force". These extreme stands alienated the communists from the freedom struggle and from the masses and they lost their support bases. M N Roy, a one-time member of the Comintern, started his own radical group in India in 1930 after he fell out with Stalin and was subsequently expelled from the Comintern in 1929. ⁽³⁾

The failure of the two civil disobedience movements of 1930 and 1932 and the two Round Table Conferences, which were an attempt to arrive at some compromise between the Indian nationalists and the British, led to a lot of rethinking among Congressmen. Several young men who were together in various prisons during the Satyagraha movement, found themselves questioning the validity of Gandhi's method of struggle and his emphasis on non-violence and constructive action. They were critical of the vague and unclear picture of freedom as depicted by the Congress. Because of all these factors they were disillusioned with the Congress leadership. Gandhi's decision in 1933 to suspend the Satyagraha movement and concentrate instead on constructive work embittered many Congressmen against him

and they viewed the withdrawal as proof of the failure of non-violent methods to achieve independence. ⁽⁴⁾

In this atmosphere of dejection and disappointment, two trends arose within the Congress. Both trends rejected the effectiveness of Gandhian methods of struggle, but while one trend veered towards constitutionalism and a more right wing approach, favouring struggle against the British from within the legislature, the other wanted a more militant leftist line. The latter led to the emergence of socialist groups and, ultimately, to the formation of an all India socialist organisation.

Early Beginnings

The first socialist group to arise within the Congress was in Bihar in 1931. The Bihar Socialist Party was formed as a reaction to the withdrawal of the 1930 civil disobedience movement, which Gandhi agreed to as a result of an understanding with Lord Irwin, the then British Viceroy. It was formed at the initiative of Jayaprakash Narayan, who had returned to India after eight years in the US, a confirmed communist, determined to make the Congress more socialist and more militant. ⁽⁵⁾ This party, however, became moribund with the resumption of the civil disobedience movement in 1932, as most of its leaders got arrested while participating in the movement.

Socialist groups also arose in Punjab, Bengal, ⁽⁶⁾ Benares and Kerala. In 1933, in Poona, Congressmen who were opposed to Gandhi's idea of withdrawing the Satyagraha movement met to discuss the feasibility of a socialist group within the Congress. The task of preparing the aims and objectives of such an organisation was entrusted to Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, Yusuf Meherally and Purshottam Tricumdas.

The Congress Socialist Party, however, was

really conceived in the Nasik Road Central Prison where a number of Congressmen of socialist, Fabian and militant nationalist bend were fortuitously serving out their prison sentences together during the 1932 civil disobedience movement. Amongst them was Jayaprakash Narayan, who had been arrested in connection with organising underground activities in the Bombay Presidency⁽⁷⁾. Some of the other Congress leaders who were in the Nasik Jail and were instrumental in the formation of the Congress Socialist Party were: Minoo Masani, Asoka Mehta, Achyut Patwardhan, N G Goray and M L Dantwala. These leaders, along with Acharya Narendra Deva, Rammanohar Lohia, Yusuf Meherally and S M Joshi, constituted the core of the leadership of the socialist movement.

While in prison in 1932-1933, they had ample time to discuss the drawbacks of the civil resistance movement, the growth of constitutionalism and the anti-national role of the CPI and its subsequent alienation from the national mainstream. They came to the conclusion that in order to avoid the errors of the communists and to have a greater influence on the direction of the freedom struggle, it was essential to form a socialist organisation within the Congress. A blue print for the formation of a nation-wide group was prepared and smuggled out of jail. ⁽⁸⁾ According to some socialists, had it not been for the negative attitude of the communists to the freedom struggle, a separate socialist party would never have been conceived. ⁽⁹⁾

On the basis of the Nasik blue print, a socialist party was formed in the Bombay Presidency on February 25, 1934, which included the Poona group. Minoo Masani, after his release from Nasik Jail, had gone to Allahabad to meet Jawaharlal Nehru, who was looked upon as a great champion of socialism, to

secure his support for the socialist organisation. In a letter to Masani dated December 19, 1933, Nehru welcomed the "formation of socialist groups within the Congress to influence the ideology of the Congress and the country." ⁽¹⁰⁾ Minoo Masani was made the General Secretary of the Bombay group and among its founders were N G Goray and Achyut Patwardhan from the Nasik detainees and Purshottam Tricumdas, Ishwarlal Desai, etc.

As many of the socialist groups were unaware of the existence and working of the other socialist groups, it was decided to bring them together in a conference which was advertised through the newspapers. ⁽¹¹⁾ The conference, organised by Jayaprakash Narayan and the revived Bihar Socialist Party, was held in Patna on May 17, 1934. Over a hundred people participated with many representatives of different groups and also a large number of socialist-minded individuals. The All India Congress Socialist Party (AICSP) was formed at the conference with 58 votes in favour and 22 against. ⁽¹²⁾

Immediate Triggers

Two immediate factors precipitated the formation of the Congress Socialist Party. One was Gandhi's decision to withdraw the civil resistance movement despite opposition, and the second was the revival of the rightist Swaraj Party within the Congress in March 1934.

The left wingers were of the opinion that not only should the Satyagraha movement not be withdrawn, but the reverse, such activity should be increased and made more mass-based. The freedom struggle was not succeeding because "the Congress was largely a bourgeois organisation" having a following amongst the middle and upper classes. It would only succeed if the masses were also drawn into it and for this, it was necessary to broaden the

base of the Congress and widen its appeal. The peasants and workers would be attracted to the struggle if "Swaraj" held something for them. The Congress had attempted to define "Swaraj" for the first time in the Preamble to the Fundamental Rights Resolution in 1931 at the Karachi Conference, by stating that in order to end the exploitation of the masses, political freedom must include real economic freedom. The Congress, however, had not clarified what economic freedom meant. This clarification was necessary to draw in the masses. (13)

Secondly, the revival of the Swaraj Party created great misgivings amongst the socialists. Led by important Congress leaders like Dr Ansari, K M Munshi, Bhulabhai Desai and B C Roy, it seemed to be gaining influence within the Congress. Their programme favoured participation in the Assembly elections provided for by the Joint Parliamentary Committee's recommendations. They had adopted a highly conservative attitude on economic and social issues. Gandhi had responded favourably to their programme. The left wingers were afraid that if the Congress was swayed by the Swarajists, the pace of the freedom struggle would slow down even further and the appeal of the Congress would become even more limited. The only way to thwart the Swarajists, according to them, was through the formation of their own socialist organisation within the Congress to systematically advocate and press their view point.

The formal announcement of the withdrawal of the civil disobedience movement and the launching of a parliamentary programme was to be made at the All India Congress Committee (AICC) meeting of May 18, 1934 in Patna. The socialists resolved to have a conference on the eve of the Patna AICC session. They hoped, by meeting prior to the AICC, to rally the socialist forces in the Congress and plan a

strategy to prevent this drift to the right. Despite the formation of the AICSP on May 17, 1934, and their efforts at the Congress session, they couldn't muster enough support. The AICC decided to participate in the Assembly elections and the socialist amendment stalling the move was defeated.

The Patna Conference of the socialists decided to set up an organising committee with Acharya Narendra Deva as chairman and Jayaprakash Narayan as organising secretary to draft a constitution and programme. JP was to tour the country and establish as many provincial parties as possible.

In his presidential address, Acharya Narendra Deva explained why the socialists had decided to form a party within the Congress and not an independent one or join the Communist Party. The Congress, despite its defects, symbolised the great national movement against British imperialism and it had the potential to be "the greatest revolutionary force in the country". Though the socialists disagreed with Gandhi's method of functioning, they acknowledged his dynamic leadership and ability to mobilise the masses. Acharya Narendra Deva was critical of the communists because they had alienated themselves from the freedom struggle. The socialists were nationalists and were not willing to join any anti-national group. He felt it was a very narrow and short sighted attitude of the communists to refuse to take part in the national struggle simply on the ground: "that the struggle is being principally conducted by petty bourgeois elements of society." (14)

The AICSP was officially launched at a conference in Bombay on October 21-22, 1934. One hundred and fifty delegates representing 13 provincial parties participated. Purshottam Tricumdas from the Bombay Socialist Party welcomed the delegates and

Babu Sampurnanand from the Benares Socialist Party presided over the conference.

The conference declared the objective of the party to be the achievement of "Complete Independence in the sense of separation from the British Empire and the establishment of socialist society." Membership of the party was open only to members of the Congress. Also, no member could belong to a communal organisation or to another party whose objectives were inconsistent with those of the CSP. It envisaged working within and outside the Congress. Inside the Congress, it aimed to secure the acceptance of a socialist programme. Outside, it planned to organise the peasants and workers and create a powerful mass movement for independence. Its programme included a planned economy, socialisation of key industries and banking, elimination of princes, landlords and any other type of exploiters, and redistribution of land.⁽¹⁵⁾

The ideology of the Congress Socialist Party was a blend of Marxism, democratic socialism of the British Labour Party kind and socialism tinged with Gandhism, with different leaders, espousing each of the three ideological trends. However, in the early years, the marxist trend was the most dominant in the party. Commenting on the differing ideologies among the socialist pioneers, Masani writes, "I was a staunch democrat of the British Labour Party kind and had little sympathy with communist methodology or technique though I was a rather starry-eyed admirer of the October Revolution in Russia....JP on the other hand was a staunch believer in the dictatorship of the proletariat, whatever that may mean. Marxism was the bed rock of his socialist faith."⁽¹⁶⁾

Of the top socialist leaders Jayaprakash Narayan and Acharya Narendra Deva were the main exponents of the marxist strain. Minoos Masani, Asoka Mehta, M L Dantwala

and Purshottam Tricumdas belonged to the Fabian socialist trend. Achyut Patwardhan and Rammanohar Lohia were the more "gandhian" leaders in the party.

These ideological differences amongst the leaders led to differences on methods, policies and organisation of the party. Initially these differences were compromised because the leaders felt it was necessary to stay together for the sake of achieving independence. Also, what united them was their "intensive personal friendship"⁽¹⁷⁾ and similar, urban, middle class, highly educated background. They were also young and idealistic, possessed a strict code of ethics and had great "respect for values of truth and decency".⁽¹⁸⁾

Jayaprakash Narayan was one of the most significant cohesive factors, and the others looked up to him for guidance. His views were largely accepted by the party, and this partly explains the party's initial emphasis on Marxism, despite the fact that a significant number of the leaders were non-marxist. Another reason for the initial acceptance of the marxist outlook in the party was their infatuation with the Russian Revolution.

Reactions Within The Congress

There were mixed reaction to the emergence of a leftist party within their midst. Sardar Patel and the right wing felt "threatened" at its formation. They criticised the CSP programme of "confiscation of private property" and class war as being contrary to the Congress "creed of non-violence" and accused the socialists of indulging in "loose talk".⁽¹⁹⁾

Gandhi's reaction on the other hand was that of a "sympathetic critic".⁽²⁰⁾ While he welcomed the rise of the Socialist Party he was skeptical of its programme because it seemed "to ignore Indian conditions". He made his differences

with the socialists, especially on class relations and on the question of ends and means very clear.

Nehru's attitude was very different. He was widely acclaimed to be one of the foremost socialists in the country. The Congress Socialists had great hopes of his joining the party and actively leading it. Acharya Narendra Deva started and ended his presidential address at the first All India Socialist conference in Patna with references to "our great leader Jawaharlal Nehru", regretting his absence at the conference, as he was in jail at the time, and looking forward to the time when he would be able to give them advice, guidance and leadership.

However, Jawaharlal did not join the party after his release from jail or even at a later stage. Purshottam Tricumdas writes, "He did not raise a small finger to be of any help to us at any time. Except mouthing vague generalities about socialism he didn't do anything at all." ⁽²¹⁾ Similar sentiments regarding Nehru have been expressed by other socialist leaders. According to Surendranath Dwivedy, he did not want to be "connected with the organisation of the socialist movement" ⁽²²⁾ while Sampurnanand felt Nehru was always quick to criticise the party but at the same time "was never slow to exploit the situation created by the existence of the party within the Congress." ⁽²³⁾ According to Lewis Fickett's analysis, Nehru did not join the CSP because he wanted to play the role of a national leader and he felt that association with any particular faction might rob him of this role. ⁽²⁴⁾

Many socialists fell let down by Nehru. Though a large section of them led by JP continued to support him, several socialists like Sampurnanand were no longer willing to accept his whims and "submit tamely to his public rebukes." The only Congress leader who openly supported the socialists was Subhas

Chandra Bose.

Reactions Of The Communists And The Royists

The CPI was hostile to the formation of the Congress Socialist Party because of the line laid down by the Sixth Communist International Congress of 1928. The Indian communist leaders called the socialists "social fascists" and saw their primary task to be that of "exposing" the leftists within the Congress.

M N Roy, on the other hand, had a more calculating approach to the Socialist Party. He was in prison when the CSP was formed. Roy speculated that the CSP was likely to reduce itself to a reformist-parliamentary group. If an integrated communist party could work within the Congress Socialist Party and unite the real proletarian elements inside it and then break away, a genuine socialist party could be created. With this in mind, Roy directed his followers to join the CSP. ⁽²⁵⁾

Socialist Unity Phase (1934-1940)

The socialists believed that in order to create a strong anti-imperialist and socialist front it was necessary to achieve co-operation and unity with the different labour and radical groups in the country. Ideologically, there appeared to be many areas of agreement between all the leftist groups and the socialists zealously pursued the idea of left unity right from the inception of the CSP.

The Royists joined the CSP and were active within it from 1934 to 1936. In 1936, after Roy was released from prison, he issued an "ultimatum" to the socialists that he would join the CSP only if he was made its sole leader. The socialists were unwilling to accept his demand and this angered Roy. ⁽²⁶⁾ At a meeting in March 1937, in New Delhi, the Royists decided to leave the CSP in a manner which would create

the impression of a break down of the party. Though the CSP was organisationally not affected much by their departure, it definitely weakened the party's image. Thereby ended the attempt at left unity with the Royists.

Co-operation with the communists proved even more disastrous. Despite the hostility of the communists towards them, the socialists made overtures in 1934 for co-operation and joint functioning in the trade union field. Describing the attitude of the communists, Jayaprakash Narayan wrote, "For over a year the Communist Party carried on its war against us. Finally when the Seventh Congress of the Communist International revised its policy, the CPI made a volte face. Having burnt the (Congress) flag only a few years before, the communists now flocked to the Indian National Congress. The CSP suddenly became a genuine SP... This change was more than welcome to us..."⁽²⁷⁾

During the "popular front" phase as decided by the Seventh Congress in 1935, the Indian communists, like their counterparts in Italy, France, etc. joined the bourgeois nationalist struggle. In India they joined the Congress Socialist Party and hence simultaneously the Congress. The socialists were so keen on left unity that they allowed the communists into the National Executive and gave them prominent places in the central and state organisations.

Soon, however, it became clear that the communists were not genuinely interested in left unity but were using the cover of the united front to gain entry into the Congress Socialist Party and wreck it from within. They infiltrated into the socialist kisan sabhas, trade unions and student bodies and started acquiring important positions in them.

The communist conspiracy became clear only when Minoo Masani found a confidential

circular in 1937 addressed to the members of the Communist Party giving details about the infiltration tactics for capturing the CSP and declaring that there could be only one genuine revolutionary socialist party, namely the Communist Party affiliated to the Communist International.⁽²⁸⁾ Despite this evidence, a section of the CSP leadership, "shut its eyes to everything and put up patiently with all the tricks of the Communist Party. It may have done this out of its idealism about unity, but this idealism was carried too far."⁽²⁹⁾

In the CSP Conference at Lahore in April 1938, the communists tried to capture the party, by proposing an alternative list of National Executive members, in which all the socialist pioneers, barring JP, were replaced by communist members. JP realised the game of the communists, and the Congress Socialist leaders rallied together to defeat them.

In 1938, Masani found another secret communist circular, which he published under the title Communist Plot against the CSP. Jayaprakash Narayan felt something "drastic" would have to be done about the communist double dealings, but a few months later he had second thoughts and felt the socialists should "make another serious attempt at unity". Most of the leaders were convinced that the communists should be expelled from the party but because of JP's vacillating attitude and his inclination to give them another chance, the National Executive did not take any action against them and allowed things to drift. This policy of drift gave an opportunity to the communists to strengthen their hold within the party.

The internal destruction that was being wrought by the communist tactics drove some of the leaders of the National Executive to resign. Minoo Masani, Rammanohar Lohia, Asoka Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan resigned

from all executive positions in the party in July 1939, because they felt JP's obsession for left unity was highly detrimental to the socialist movement. The others were persuaded to take back their resignations, but Masani did not withdraw his. In his resignation letter he stated, "If some of us have come to think of these things in a way which puts us in the position of being looked on as obstacles to "socialist unity" and brakes in the further "radicalisation" of the party, it is much better that we cease to be such obstructions and allow the dominant tendencies of the party to follow their natural course." (30)

Only the role played by the communists in World War II and their anti-national activities during the Quit India struggle forced JP and the socialists to change their thinking. The communist attitude to the Second World War was at first similar to that of the socialists. They were totally opposed to the "imperialist war" and the war efforts of the British.

The hesitant attitude of the Congress to the war gave them an excellent opportunity to condemn the Congress leaders for compromising with the British. The CPI's policy, however, underwent a change. It began condemning the Congress Socialist Party and every other progressive group with which it had worked before. The Congress Socialists suddenly became the henchmen of Gandhi. The communists tried to use the war to project themselves as the real revolutionaries while denigrating the other progressive organisations. They began inciting strikes throughout the country to protest against the British war effort.

When the communists declared war openly on the CSP, the party was forced to expel them. This decision was taken at the CSP Ramgarh Conference in 1940. The communists wrecked the party and took with them one-third to half of the party in Bengal and Punjab, and the greater

part of the party organisation in Travancore-Cochin, Andhra and Madras. (31)

During the 1942 Quit India movement, the communists played an even more condemnable role. With the Russians joining the British and the Allies in the war, the communists made a volte face and overnight the "imperialist war" became a "people's war" and they actively began aiding the British. By this time the 1942 struggle had started and the socialist leadership had gone underground to organise the anti-British resistance. The communists not only did not help this revolutionary nationalist movement but actually played the role of informers and helped the British arrest the underground leaders. They also used this opportunity, while the socialists were in jail, to gain control of the socialist dominated All India Trade Union Congress, All India Students Federation and a number of kisan sabhas. This struck the final blow to any idea of socialist-communist unity.

The socialist unity phase brought out the first major rift among the leadership, with several leaders, especially Minoo Masani, Rammanohar Lohia, Asoka Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan unhappy with JP's role. They felt his over-enthusiasm for left unity and his vacillating attitude was to an extent responsible for the communists being able to usurp several organisational bases of the socialists. They were also frustrated with their inability to convince the party about the communist plan till it was too late. (32)

With Masani's departure from the party in 1939, the socialists lost an important leader and one of the founders of the party. Another fall out of the "honeymoon" with the communists was a strong feeling of anti-communism and a deep distrust of the communists. This anti-communist attitude was to remain and affect the party's line and decisions on policies and programmes even

in later years.

The Csp And The Congress (1934-1947)

The years 1934 to 1942 saw a constant tug of war between the rightists and leftists within the Congress. The socialists continuously tried to pull the Congress towards adopting more radical policies and programmes, while the moderates and liberals who were a majority in the Congress, resisted the CSP pressures at every stage. Though the goal of both the groups was identical – independence - they continuously differed on the tactics and programmes to be followed.

"At first the CSP seemed to make considerable headway within the Indian Independence Movement, it was successful in securing Congress passage of resolutions favouring radical land reform, nationalisation of selected industries, progressive labour legislation, and party re-organisation." But, unfortunately, it was greatly "circumscribed" by the conservative Congress opposition and was unable to radically change Congress policy. ⁽³³⁾

The CSP had declared its unequivocal opposition to the new constitution proposed by the British, called the Government of India Act, 1935, and also to the proposals of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on which the Act was based, because it envisaged provincial elections and holding limited office under the British. The Congress, though it was dissatisfied with the 1935 Constitution, decided to stand for elections and fight the Constitution from within the legislatures. Despite their initial opposition, the socialists ultimately helped the Congress in the elections and some of them, including Acharya Narendra Deva, even contested the elections.

A bitter controversy arose after the elections with regard to office acceptance. The Congress had won absolute majority in 6 of the 11

provinces. In March 1937 the AICC adopted a resolution accepting ministerial offices in provinces where the Congress had a majority. JP on behalf of the socialists, moved an amendment opposing it, but was defeated by 135 votes to 78. ⁽³⁴⁾ The socialists reacted by helping to organise an anti-ministry committee headed by Sardar Sardul Singh Caveeshar, but this did not have much impact.

The socialists were afraid that formation of Congress ministries would prevent the growth of the "revolutionary mentality" that they were trying to foster. Jayaprakash Narayan commented in his General Secretary's report to the Nasik Conference of the SP in 1948, "Looking back, however, and in spite of the years, I still believe it was wrong to have accepted office then. While it yielded no advantage, it gave birth to a mentality of power politics within the Congress that threatens now to become its undoing." ⁽³⁵⁾

The socialist opposition towards the provincial Congress ministries created resentment at the provincial level against the socialists and the relations between the two became fairly strained. The situation was especially bad in those provinces where the socialists had strong kisan sabhas.

The kisan sabha movement was started in late 1929 in Saran District, Bihar, in an effort to organise the peasantry. And many Congressmen were actively associated with it. It was suspended in 1930 to prepare for the civil disobedience movement and was restarted in 1933 by Swami Sahajanand. After 1934, the leadership of the kisan sabhas was largely with the Congress Socialists. The CSP resented the soft attitude the Congress had adopted towards the landlords and it continuously put forward the peasants' viewpoint in Congress forums. In Bihar, the kisan sabhas had several clashes

with the Congress ministers for giving in to the pressures of the Zamindars. The AICC approved of the actions of the Bihar government, and the Bihar Congress Committee went to the extent of deciding to take action against those Congressmen who were associated with the kisan movement. (36) Relations between the kisan sabhas and the Congress deteriorated to such a level that the Congress, at its Haripura session in February 1938, passed a resolution that its members could not associate with the kisan organisations.

Another controversy between the CSP and the Congress, a controversy which lasted up to independence, was regarding the policies to be adopted vis-a-vis the people in the Indian Princely States. At the Haripura session, the Congress Socialists opposed a resolution which forbade any kind of activity, parliamentary or otherwise, in the name of the Congress in the Indian States. The Congress did not want to antagonise the Princes while the socialists felt that the States were an integral part of India and the State peoples' struggles should be part of the national movement. Being in a minority, the socialists were unable to prevent the passage of the resolution.

In 1938, the Congress Socialists scored an important victory within the Congress when they succeeded in getting Subhas Chandra Bose elected as Congress President. In 1939, however, the socialists were embroiled in a violent controversy regarding the continuance of Bose as Congress President for the second term. Pattabhi Sitaramayya contested for the post against Subhas Chandra Bose. The Congress Socialist, the official CSP weekly, gave a call to the CSP members to vote for Bose. The result was Bose won by 1580 votes against 1375 votes for Sitaramayya. After the elections, Gandhi issued a statement declaring Sitaramayya's defeat to be his "personal defeat".

Bose tried to arrive at some reconciliation with Gandhi, but failed.

In the Tripura Congress session in March 1939, Govind Ballabh Pant moved a resolution that Bose should nominate his Working Committee according to the wishes of Gandhi, thus effectively reducing him to being a puppet president. The CSP faced a real dilemma. It held the balance of power between Gandhi and the conservatives on the one hand, and the left wing including Bose, and the communists, on the other. Whichever side the CSP voted with was likely to win.

The socialists were divided on the line they should adopt. JP and the communists wanted to vote for Bose. Masani, Lohia, Asoka Mehta and Yusuf Meherally did not want to support Subhas Chandra, because they felt this would clearly polarise the nationalist movement into two camps. Eventually, the CSP leadership resolved their problem by deciding to abstain from voting, because they were determined to maintain the unity of the Congress at any cost. Govind Ballabh Pant's resolution won. Bose resigned from the Congress and formed his own party - the Forward Bloc. A part of the CSP in Bengal also left the party and joined Bose. The CSP came in for a lot of criticism from the leftists for this decision. (37)

In September 1939, World War II was declared. On many occasions previously, both the Congress and the CSP had opposed war preparations and British efforts to involve India in them. But when war was declared, the Congress leaders were hesitant about coming to grips with the British government. The socialists felt the war was an excellent opportunity to start a mass struggle against the British to demand complete independence. The Congress, on the other hand, was keen on a compromise with the British. In July 1940, the Congress Working

Committee passed a resolution that if Great Britain would allow the formation of a national government in India, it would "enable the Congress to throw its full weight in the efforts for an effective organisation of the defence of the country".⁽³⁸⁾ Gandhi, however, was opposed to the war on pacifist grounds and did not want to aid it. The socialists carried on a campaign against Indian involvement in the war and many of them, including JP, were jailed in 1940-41.

By 1942, all efforts of the Congress to reach a compromise with the government had failed and Gandhi decided to launch a movement against the British. The socialists had drawn closer to Gandhi because of their similar attitudes against helping the British in the war. The socialists were instrumental in persuading Gandhi to launch a massive civil disobedience movement and Yusuf Meherally coined the phrase "Quit India". They were vociferous in their support of the historic "Quit India" resolution moved by him on August 8, 1942, at the Congress meeting in Bombay. In the resolution, Gandhi declared the determination of the Congress to drive the British out of the country.⁽³⁹⁾

Within a few hours of the passing of this resolution, in the early hours of August 9, all the members of the CWC were arrested. The nationalist movement was suddenly left without a central leadership or a definite programme. The leadership of the freedom struggle fell into the hands of the socialists who played a "glorious role" in the 1942 Quit India movement. The CSP was banned by the British and many of its leaders went underground to continue the resistance movement.

Jayaprakash Narayan, who had been lodged in the Deoli Detention Camp till the end of 1941, was transferred from there to the Hazaribaug jail along with other security prisoners belonging to Bihar. He escaped from it on November 9,

1942. After his escape he was instrumental in getting together a band of guerrillas called the "Azad Dasta". They captured and set up parallel governments in a number of villages through terrorist and violent activities. Rammanohar Lohia, Achyut Patwardhan, Aruna Asaf Ali and other socialists organised an underground network throughout the country. They along with Usha Mehta and others operated an underground radio station from Bombay. Rammanohar Lohia and JP were arrested after several months, while Achyut Patwardhan and Aruna Asaf Ali escaped detention till the end. These four leaders emerged as the heroes of the '42 movement, and the socialists became immense popular.

During this period, the socialists slowly moved away from Marxism. New facts on the purges in the Soviet Union and disturbing accounts of the Russian dictatorship made them increasingly critical of the Russian experiment, while the distrust generated against the communists and their methods out of their own experiences drove them towards democratic socialism and Gandhism. These new shifts in ideology became increasingly apparent after the Nasik Conference of the CSP in 1948.

In 1945-46, after World War II, the socialists were gradually released from jail. In 1946, the ban on the Congress Socialist Party was lifted. There was an important question before the socialists, whether to reorganise their party or to remain as a loose left wing within the Congress. A number of socialists including Achyut Patwardhan and many from UP, Delhi and Orissa wanted to have a loose group of "Augusters" (those who had participated in the 1942 struggle) within the Congress. The majority, including JP and Narendra Deva felt that the purpose of the CSP was not merely to strengthen the anti-imperialist struggle, but also to spread socialism in India, so an

organised socialist party within the Congress was necessary. The second opinion prevailed and it was decided that a party with definite rules, constitution and programme should be organised.

Though the socialists had increased their strength and popularity considerably by the end of the war, their relations with the Congress did not improve. The post-War differences with the national movement revolved mainly around the strategy to be adopted towards the British. The end of the war brought a Labour government in England which pledged independence to India. In 1946, the Cabinet Mission was sent negotiate transfer of power with the Congress and the slim League, but could not arrive at any agreement with Indian leaders. The Mission proposed the setting up of a Constituent Assembly and an Interim Government.

The Congress was willing to negotiate with the Mission on the basis of these proposals, but the, socialists were totally opposed to them. They felt this was a further attempt on the part of the British to maintain "and perpetuate communal and separatist divisions in the country."⁽⁴⁰⁾ The socialists completely misread British intentions because they were convinced that further struggle and a repetition of the 1942 type of movement would be necessary to drive the British out.

Differences also arose between the socialists and the Congress on the question of representation in the Congress. The socialists, after their success in the 1942 movement, wanted greater representation for their members on various Congress committees and more important organisational positions. The Congress, however, failed to do this to the satisfaction of the socialists and this led to a lot of bitterness and conflict. In states such as Bihar and Bombay, where the socialists had a

large following, conflicts developed between the socialist rank and file and the Congress State leadership.

To contain the rift between the socialists and the Congress, Nehru offered JP a seat on the Congress Working Committee, but this did not help improve matters. The CWC decided to participate in the proposed Constituent Assembly, but not in the Interim Government. The socialist disapproval and dissent were put forward by JP but it did not have any effect on the Congress. It voted with an overwhelming majority to endorse the Congress Working Committee decision to enter the Constituent Assembly. The socialists protested by boycotting the Assembly elections.

The Congress Working Committee later even reversed its decision about not participating in the Interim Government and decided to accept the British offer. The Viceroy invited Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the AICC to form the Government. Acharya Kripalani was elected President of the AICC in place of Nehru. JP proposed the names of some socialist leaders for the new Working Committee. The Congress leadership, however, did not accept them. Disappointed, JP resigned from the CWC.

The Socialist Party Inside The Congress (1947-1948)

The Congress Socialists had their first post-war conference at Kanpur from February 28 to March 1, 1947. They finally had to concede that they were wrong in their understanding of British intentions and they accepted that transfer of power to India was imminent. On the eve of the conference, the Congress President announced that the socialists could stay within the Congress provided they made certain adjustments. "Anxious not to throw away the common heritage of the national struggle, the CSP accepted the suggestion—dropped the

prefix "Congress" from its name, and by an amendment to its constitution its membership was thrown open to those who might not be members of the Congress." (41) These changes were in exchange for the "withdrawal of a Congress Constitution Committee's proposal to outlaw political parties within the Congress ranks. The negotiated compromise, made with the help of Gandhi's mediation, temporarily prevented socialist leaders from being forced out of the Congress and from splitting up among themselves." The socialists were, however, divided. A section of the party, disillusioned with the Congress, wanted to separate from it. This section included leaders like Aruna Asaf Ali, who had come into the organisation during the 1942 movement and did not really have any loyalty to the Congress. The majority of the leaders, however, were not inclined to leave. In fact Lohia, in his address at the conference, warned the party that dropping the prefix "Congress" did not suggest that any one could "abuse the Congress organisation which had been built with the efforts of us all." (42)

The policy statement adopted at Kanpur emphasised democratic socialism for the first time. It distinguished between democratic socialism and totalitarian communism and asserted that there could be no socialism without democracy. Peaceful means of change in a democratic set up were also accepted for the first time. The change in ideology and outlook brought the socialists even closer to Gandhi. Their common antipathy against communalism and partition strengthened the bonds between them.

When the Mountbatten Plan regarding partition was suggested, the socialists were very vehement in their opposition. At the AICC meeting in June 1947, the socialists and Gandhi opposed partition, while Nehru, Patel and others gave their support. When it came to voting,

however, the socialists abstained at Gandhi's instance and the resolution accepting partition was carried by 157 votes to 20.

After independence, the efforts of the Congress leadership to throw out the socialists increased. The attacks against the socialists were led by Sardar Patel, who felt there was no room in the Congress for such organised opposition groups. After 1946, and till his death in January 1948, Gandhi, more than any other Congress leader, sought to keep the socialists within the Congress. After Nehru became Prime Minister, and Acharya Kripalani resigned from Congress Presidency Gandhi tried to get JP or Narendra Deva to be made Congress President, but he did not succeed against the opposition of the right wing.

In January 1948, barely two weeks before Gandhi's death, the socialists once again discussed the issue of remaining within the Congress at their National Executive meeting in Bombay. The majority of the socialists were still reluctant to take any hasty decision which would result in their departure. Jayaprakash stated that the Congress had within it certain socialists, leftists, "constructive Gandhians" and important leaders like Nehru and Maulana Azad who were sympathetic to democratic socialism. Gandhi was also a socialist in "his own original way". With these elements within the Congress, it was possible that these "forces together could succeed in taking the Congress and the country towards socialism". (43) This approach shows that the socialists had come a long way from being staunch critics of Gandhi to acknowledging him as a unique kind of socialist.

Gandhi's death on January 30, 1948, however, changed the situation for the socialists. It broke one of the most important links the socialists had with the Congress.

The drive to secede from the Congress was initiated by the Bombay socialists in February 1948. Relations between the local Congressmen and socialists had become so strained that the socialists decided to put up parallel candidates to the official Congress candidates for the Bombay Municipal elections in February 1948. This move was strongly denounced by S K Patil, the Congress strong man from Bombay. Nehru termed the move of putting up parallel candidates while remaining within the Congress as "amoral".⁽⁴⁴⁾ The result was that the Congress expelled 17 socialists for three years.⁽⁴⁵⁾

In February 1948, the CWC decided to amend its constitution to debar members of any political party, communal or otherwise, which had a separate membership, constitution and programme from enrolling themselves or continuing as members of the Congress. This forced the socialists to take a decision. At the Nasik Conference in March 1948, they decided to leave the Congress. Acharya Narendra Deva told the conference, "I have been so far advocating that we should not quit the Congress. Today I am telling you that we must get out of the Congress."⁽⁴⁶⁾

They justified their departure on the grounds that: The Congress was not, and could never become an effective instrument for achieving socialism. It was not a party of the working classes or the masses, but a party totally identified with the government point of view. Secondly, for democracy to be sustained, it was necessary to have democratic opposition to the ruling party. The Socialist Party alone could provide such opposition which continued the tradition of identification with "the struggles of the dispossessed" and also helped maintain an atmosphere conducive to democracy.⁽⁴⁷⁾

Also their acceptance of some of the Gandhian ideals by the socialists was clearly

seen at Nasik in the General Secretary's report to, the conference. The General Secretary, Jayaprakash Narayan, made a scathing criticism of Stalinist methods in Russia in the report and, at the same time, made a fervent appeal for moral values in politics stressing the importance of Gandhi's concept of means being as important as the ends.⁽⁴⁸⁾

The decision to leave the Congress split the party. Many socialists including leaders like Sampurnanand opted to remain behind in the Congress. Those who stayed behind came mainly from UP and areas where the socialists had a prominent position and perhaps a lot to lose by leaving the Congress.

Though the socialists left the Congress, they continued to maintain an ambivalent attitude towards it. While a few delegates at the Nasik Conference felt the socialists should have nothing to do with the Congress, the larger section of the party felt it would be possible to co-operate with the Congress in different areas. Narendra Deva stated that though the Socialists and the Congress were ideologically incompatible, the Congress was not all reactionary. "There are still some friends in the Congress - they may be sticking to it for whatever reasons - whom we must not disregard." Achyut Patwardhan echoed a similar sentiment that there were many people still within the Congress who were sympathetic to the socialists. "With such people we should always co-operate, particularly on issues which are non-controversial." At the same time he warned the conference to "beware of the communists. For the nth time I say, no co-operation with those who have no faith in democracy, no regard for the safety of the state and whose loyalties are doubtful."⁽⁴⁹⁾

While the experiences with the communists made the socialists extremely bitter and resentful

against them and many socialists became totally anti-communist, their interactions with the Congress did not create a similar strong anti-Congress feeling in the majority of them. Though they lost faith in the capacity of the Congress to be an instrument of socialism and its ability to really change the country, they still felt that given a choice between the two parties - the Congress and the CPI – the Congress was preferable because it believed in nationalism and democracy, while the communists did not.

This ambivalent attitude towards the Congress affected the party's ability to be an effective opposition party. A tragedy, as it generated several misunderstandings among socialists, and was an important factor in the slow death of the Indian Socialist movement.

In the 1940s, JP came increasingly under the influence of Gandhi and moved away from Marxism to Gandhian Socialism. In 1954, he resigned from all leadership posts in the PSP, joined the Sarvodaya movement and became actively associated with Vinoba Bhave. Only in the early 1970s he became politically active leading the students movement in Bihar and played a major role in the formation of the Janata Party in 1977 by uniting all the opposition parties after the emergency. He remained the mentor of the Janata Party till his death in 1979.

Yusuf Meherally died in 1950. Achyut Patwardhan retired from the party and politics in 1950 to become a disciple of the philosopher J Krishnamurti. Acharya Narendra Deva remained a staunch marxist till his death in 1956.

After leaving the CSP in 1939, Minoo Masani “reconsidered” his ideological thinking and gradually became a strong advocate of free

enterprise. He was instrumental in the formation of the rightist Swatantra Party in 1959.

Rammanohar Lohia emerged as the firebrand of the socialist movement. Dynamic, charismatic, but extremely volatile, he caused the first major split in the PSP, when he and his followers broke away in 1955. He played a tremendous role in championing the cause of socialism till his death in 1967. Asoka Mehta caused another split in the PSP in 1964 and joined the Congress. Purshottam Tricumdas and M L Dantwala retired from politics after the 1964 split. Only S M Joshi and N G Goray, from the original founders continued to remain active till the 1980s

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Moving On A Proposal from the Socialist Meet

A get-together of socialists from different parties, and institutions took place at Yusuf Meherally Centre, Tara, Panvel on 10th and 11th August. The meeting drew people from most parts of the country and the proceedings were conducted in the usual atmosphere of socialist camaraderie. Lots of ideas were mooted for furthering the ideological unity, inter-organisations solidarity, and deepening the camaraderie. Reflecting such collective moods and a mission, a resolution was passed which is presented below:-

1. People of India have been suffering for decades from violation of cardinal values, guiding principles, and basic rights. Despite several achievements, governance in India has been marked by inequality, injustice, casteism communalism and anti-democracy. 'Socialism was written into the Constitution, albeit, a bit late. But since the economic policies, the governance process, and development implementation were not socialistic, people from various sectors farmers, labours, dalits, adivasis, fisher folks, youths, students, artisans, and women took to the path of struggle. The successes achieved in these struggles are; securing basic necessities for poor, farmers, workers and scope for democratic participation for the marginalised communities. Yet, the political forces, and economic policies have undermined not only the dreams and aspirations of common people but even their right to exist. Some of such policies and practices include (1) Increase in corporate power instead of people's power (2) Dividing the people on the basis of caste and religion, (3) Manipulating economic policies to support those exploiting natural resources and common goods. Socialist comrades kept fighting such divisive and exploitative policies while maintaining contacts with like-minded socialist and progressive forces.

2. Presently, the capitalist forces through globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation

have a field day. In every five year plan, the big companies get exemption of millions of rupees in taxes, customs. Consequently capitalists like Ambani and Adani are pitted against 1.5 million hapless farmers driven for years to committing suicide. This has become a challenge for all the progressives. Not only in the country, we have multinationals from abroad entering the life-saving sectors like water, electricity, education and health. They have gradually taken over the public goods as well as the public space. Now, the new government at the centre is allowing the MNCs with maximum profit incentive and various concessions, thereby undermining the sovereignty, self-reliance, democracy, even the livelihoods of common men and women.

3. The foundation of Narendra Modi and BJP's politics is based on Hindutva. This poses a challenge in terms of escalating communalism and insecurity of minorities. Millions of Indians believing in secularism are deeply concerned. After the sad and infamous developments in Ayodhya, the riots in Muzaffarnagar and Khandua are indicative of the concern that sectarian violence, small and big will increase under Modi. It is also likely that terrorism will reveal in the country and internationally its barbaric and dark side. Despite assaults on our secular politics, our traditional and assiduously nurtured multi-culturalism has been upheld so far, but now in danger of dilution and disintegration.

4. The politics which has thrived on inflation, unemployment has now fallen victim to market economy. Instead of addressing basic problems of the people there is systematic loot of water, land, forest and minerals in the name of development. Destruction of environment, displacement, commodification of women, torture of dalits, adivasis and women are alarmingly rising. Casteism and communalism are getting entrenched in electoral politics. Instead of democracy consolidating through

regular elections, tons of black money is changing hands during elections. To become the Prime Minister by spending thousands of millions of rupees and securing only 31% of the votes only shows that fundamental change is necessary and immediately in the electoral process as well as representative democracy. The present government, having won the elections, by the power of money is inclined towards a handful of capitalists. It is making policies to cater to their profiteering such as FDI, Land Acquisition Act, DMIC corridor, Infrastructure projects, River linking, change in labour law etc. Shall we keep quiet? Commercialisation of education and growing unemployment have alienated vast majority of youth. We need to assuage their frustrations by taking corrective steps.

5. In the above context many socialists from different peoples' movement, political parties and civil society organisations, got together to discuss a common course of action. They expressed their desire and determination to move forward by drawing on the ideas and inspirations from Gandhi, Vinobha, Acharya Narendra Dev, Lohia, Jayaprakash, Ambedkar, Periyar, Marx, Mahatma Jyotiba and Savitri Phule, Kamala Devi Chattopadhyay, Maulana Azad, Yusuf Meherally and others. They want to come together while maintaining their separate identities. Not common minimum, but a common maximum programme must be the basis for such a united action.

6. This mission could be possible by strengthening the people's movement, by expressing mutual solidarity, and by engaging in politico-economic process. Further it is necessary to fight the anti-people policies pursued by both Congress and BJP, for the defence of democracy and sovereignty and by reaching out to the people to articulate their exasperations and problems. There was a consensus that we need to take radical steps to

preserve the unique heritage and glory of our freedom movement.

7. The meeting demanded prosecution of those responsible for the murder of right-to-information activist, Dr.NarenderDavolkar.

8. The Meeting decided to support SikshaAdhikar March, which is planning an All-India March for the sake of common school system and against the privatisation of government schools and commercialisation of education.

9. It was decided in the Meeting to constitute a small representative body to take the mission forward. The responsibility for coordination was assigned to Dr.Sunilam and delegates from different parties, organisations from different states. This Body will make common cause with youth, workers, and farmers, women fighting for the economic, political and social change. It will also invite the participation of various sympathetic progressive thinkers and activists.

- To discuss and implement this Resolution another meeting will be convened on 30th

October in Pune.

- To recruit and engage youth in socialist ideology and activities a cadre camp will be organised on 13, 14, 15 December in Puri, Orissa.
- People's movement will be launched on issues of land and water ad workers rights as well as against FDI, displacement, growing inequalities, privatisation of common properties.
- To launch a nationwide dialogue and movement for fundamental changes in electoral policies.
- To challenge the casteist and communal forces and their evil designs
- To embrace democratic socialism, constructive activities, new technology for genuine and equitable development.
- To organise a nationwide march for a democratic socialist alternative by involving socialist communities, organisations and movements.
- The Meeting authorised Janata Trust to call the meeting of socialist organisations, individuals and parties.



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समाजवादी एकजुटता सम्मेल 17 मई 2016, अंजुमन इस्लामिया सभागार, पटना पटना घोषणा पत्र-2016

कांग्रेस सोशलिस्ट पार्टी की स्थापना के 82 वर्ष पूरे होने के अवसर पर पटना के ऐतिहासिक अंजुमन इस्लामिया हॉल में आयोजित समाजवादी एकजुटता सम्मेलन में आए प्रतिनिधि समाजवादी आंदोलन के 82 वर्ष के स्वर्णिम इतिहास को आदरपूर्वक स्मरण करते हैं। आज ही के दिन पटना के इसी हॉल में 100 समाजवादियों ने मिलकर कांग्रेस सोशलिस्ट पार्टी का गठन किया था। हालांकि, पार्टी बनाने का विचार नाशिक जेल में युवा समाजवादियों के मन में जड़ें जमा चुका था। समाजवादी आंदोलन के दौरान संघर्षों में कुर्बानी देनेवाले समाजवादी शहीदों को श्रद्धापूर्वक नमन करते हैं। समाजवादी आंदोलन ने आजादी के आंदोलन में महत्वपूर्ण योगदान दिया है। आजादी के आंदोलन में विशेष तौर पर 1942 के भारत छोड़ो आंदोलन में सर्वाधिक योगदान किया था। आजादी मिलने के तुरंत बाद गोवा मुक्ति का संघर्ष समाजवादियों के नेतृत्व में चलाया गया। कांग्रेस में रहते हुए कांग्रेस सोशलिस्ट पार्टी ने कांग्रेस पार्टी की नीतियों को सर्वहारा वर्ग के पक्ष में मोड़ा तथा लगभग हर मुद्दे पर महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका ली। समाजवादियों ने खुलकर साम्राज्यवादी षडयंत्र का खुलकर विरोध किया तथा सांप्रदायिक हिंसा को खत्म करने के लिए गांधी जी के साथ सक्रीय भूमिका निभाई।

कांग्रेस ने दक्षिण पंथियों के हावी हो जाने के चलते तथा कांग्रेस सोशलिस्ट पार्टी की नीतियों को लागू करने के प्रति सहमति नहीं बन पाने के कारण कांग्रेस सोशलिस्ट पार्टी ने पृथक होने का निर्णय लिया था। तब से लेकर अब तक समाजवादी आंदोलन ने तमाम उतार चढ़ाव देखे हैं। कई बार बिखराव और विलय हुआ है, लेकिन स्वतंत्रता, लोकतंत्र, समाजवाद, धर्मनिरपेक्षता, न्याय, सादगी, स्वावलंबन, अहिंसा-सत्याग्रह और एकजुटता के मूल्यों के प्रति प्रतिबद्धता सतत रूप से बनी रही है। सरकारों ने जब कभी किसान, मजदूर, महिला, युवा, दलित-आदिवासी, पिछड़ा और अल्पसंख्यकों के खिलाफ नीतियां बनाने की कोशिश की या नागरिक अधिकारों को कुचलने के लिए काले कानूनों को सहारा लेने का प्रयास किया, समाजवादियों ने हर कदम पर जनविरोधी नीतियों और कार्यक्रमों को विरोध किया है।

देश में कांग्रेस ने जब नागरिक स्वतंत्रता छिनकर आपातकाल लागू किया, तब समाजवादियों ने जोरदार संघर्ष किया। बड़े पैमाने पर समाजवादियों को गिरफ्तार किया

गया, लेकिन उन्होंने कभी माफी मांगने का काम नहीं किया। बिहार के छात्र आंदोलन ने लोकनायक जय प्रकाश नारायण के नेतृत्व में देशभर में संघर्ष छेड़ा, जिसे 1974 के जेपी आंदोलन के नाम से जाना गया। लोकतंत्र की बहाली के लिए संघर्ष करने और कुर्बानी देने वाले जेपी सैनानियों को हम कृतज्ञतापूर्वक याद करते हैं तथा लोकतंत्र पर कोई भी समझौता कभी भी नहीं करने का संकल्प करते हैं।

इतिहास गवाह है कि समाजवादियों को जब-जब राज्य अथवा केंद्र में सरकार बनाने, चलाने या शामिल होने का अवसर मिला, तब-तब उन्होंने जनकल्याणकारी योजनाएं लागू करने का हरसंभव प्रयास किया है। इन सभी प्रयासों के बावजूद 17 मई 1934 को आचार्य नरेंद्र देव जी की अध्यक्षता में जो प्रस्ताव पारित किए गए थे, हम उन पर अब तक पूरी तरह काम नहीं कर सके हैं। शोषक वर्गों का खत्मा सभी उत्पादन की शक्तियों का जनता को हस्तांतरण, उद्योगों का सामाजिकरण तथा किसानों के बीच भूमि का पुर्नवितरण का सपना आज भी अधूरा है।

देश संकटकाल के दौर से गुजर रहा है। स्वतंत्रता आंदोलन के मूल्यों, समाजवादी आंदोलन के सिद्धांतों, जेपी आंदोलन के मूल्यों यहां तक कि संवैधानिक मूल्यों पर कुठाराघात करते हुए उन्हें जड़ मूल से समाप्त करने की कोशिश की जा रही है। देश की बहुलता, विविधता नष्ट करने की साजिश रची जा रही है। जल, जंगल, जमीन को कॉरपोरेट को सौंपने के नीतिगत फैसले केंद्र सरकार द्वारा किए जा रहे हैं। नागरिकों के अपनी पसंद के अनुसार खाने, पहनने, बोलने, सुनने, आस्था रखने की निजता के अधिकार को भाजपा-आरएसएस छिन्न-भिन्न करने पर आमादा हैं।

केंद्र सरकार सूखा प्रभावित किसानों की न्यूनतम आवश्यकताओं को पूरा करने, यहां तक की पीने का पानी और पशुओं को चारा, किसानों को मुआवजा और फसल बीमा उपलब्ध कराने के प्रति उदासीनता और संवेदनहीनता दर्शायी है। सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने सूखा पीड़ित किसानों के प्रति संवेदनशीलता दिखाते हुए सरकारों को निर्देश दिए। सम्मेलन सरकारों से सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के निर्देशों पर जल्द से जल्द अम्मल करने की मांग करता है।

यह सम्मेलन देशभर में किसानों, मजदूरों, दलित-आदिवासियों, मछूआरों, नशाबंदी, भूमिहानों, महिलाओं,

पर्यावरणविदों द्वारा चलाए जा रहे जनआंदोलनों का समर्थन करने का ऐलान करता है।

केंद्र सरकार ने कॉरपोरेट को अधिकतम मुनाफा देने के लिए श्रमिक आंदोलन द्वारा गत डेढ़ सौ वर्षों में बड़ी कुर्बानियों के बाद हासिल किए गए श्रम कानूनों को तोड़ा मरोड़ा है। महंगाई और बेरोजगारी चरम पर है। जनता से चुनाव के दौरान किए गए वायदों को पूरा करने के बजाय केंद्र सरकार देश पर सांप्रदायिकतावादी संक्रिण, तानाशाहीपूर्ण एजेंडा थोपने पर आमादा है, जिससे देश के संवैधानिक मूल्यों को खतरा पैदा हो गया है। समाजवादी कांग्रेस सोशलिस्ट पार्टी के गठन से लेकर अब तक इन मूल्यों के लिए संघर्ष करते आ रहे हैं। सम्मेलन में आए प्रतिनिधि संकल्प लेते हैं कि संवैधानिक मूल्यों को बचाने तथा आम नागरिक को गरिमापूर्ण, समृद्ध जीवन सुनिश्चित करने के लिए हर कुर्बानी देने को तैयार रहेंगे।

यह सम्मेलन देश के सभी समाजवादी विचार के संगठनों, पार्टियों, व्यक्तियों से अपील करता है कि वे एकजुट होकर कॉरपोरेट नियंत्रित राजनीति तथा संघी एजेडे के खिलाफ एकजुट होकर संघर्ष करें, ताकि देश के संसाधनों पर समाज का नियंत्रण स्थापित किया जा सके और संविधान पर हो रहे कुठाराघात को रोका जा सके। सम्मेलन देशभर में संविधान बचाओ-देश बचाओ राष्ट्रव्यापी अभियान चलाने का निर्णय लेता है।

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जन क्रांति दिवस सम्मेलन

9 अगस्त, 2016,

गांधी भवन, लखनऊ

9 अगस्त, 1942 के अंग्रेजों भारत छोड़ो, करो या मरो आंदोलन के 75वें वर्ष में प्रवेश होने के अवसर पर हम समाजवादी संस्थाएं द्वारा समाजवादी विचार के लिए समर्पित साधियों का जन क्रांति दिवस सम्मेलन अगस्त क्रांति के दौरान शहीद हुए राष्ट्र भक्तों को श्रद्धा पूर्वक स्मरण करते हुए उन्हें भावभीनी श्रद्धांजलि अर्पित करता है। सम्मेलन अगस्त क्रांति को 1857 की क्रांति के बाद का आजादी के आंदोलन का सबसे बड़ा आंदोलन मानता है, जिसमें लाखों की संख्या में आम नागरिकों ने भागीदारी की थी। गांधी जी की अपील तथा कांग्रेस महासमिति के आह्वान पर शुरू हुए इस आंदोलन का नेतृत्व डॉ. राममनोहर लोहिया, अरुणा आसफ अली, अच्युत पटवर्धन, युसुफ मेहर अली, आचार्य नरेन्द्र देव, लोकनायक जयप्रकाश नारायण जैसे समाजवादियों ने किया था। आंदोलन के दौरान अंग्रेजों द्वारा 538 बार निहत्थे नागरिकों पर पुलिस गोली चालन किया गया जिसमें 50 हजार देशभक्त शहीद हुए, एक लाख स्वतंत्रता संग्राम सेनानियों को जेल हुई। सम्मेलन, अंग्रेजों द्वारा किए गई क्रूरतम दमन पर आक्रोश प्रकट करता है तथा वर्तमान ब्रिटेन की सरकार से भारतीय नागरिकों के खिलाफ किए गए जघन्य अपराधों के लिए माफी मांगने की मांग करता है।

सम्मेलन अगस्त क्रांति में महिलाओं, अल्पसंख्यकों, दलितों एवं आदिवासियों की बड़ी संख्या में भागीदारी को नोट करते हुए यह मानता है कि इन तबकों की आजादी के आंदोलन में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका को इतिहासकारों द्वारा नजरअंदाज किया गया है।

सम्मेलन मानता है कि अगस्त क्रांति के दौरान विभिन्न जातिगत क्षेत्रीय धार्मिक समूहों के बीच कायम हुई एकजूटता और सद्भाव अंग्रेजों के बांटों और राज करो के षड्यंत्र में फंसकर कुछ अति महत्वाकांक्षी नेताओं द्वारा यदि नहीं तोड़ा गया होता तो देश का विभाजन रोका जा सकता था, जैसा गांधी जी तथा समाजवादी चाहते थे।

सम्मेलन मानता है कि एकजूटता कायम रहने की स्थिति में लगभग 50 लाख भारतीयों को दंगों में मारे जाने, घायल होने, सम्पत्ति बरबाद होने, विस्थापित होने से बचाया जा सकता था। इस परिप्रेक्ष्य में सम्मेलन डॉ. राममनोहर लोहिया द्वारा 9 अगस्त को जन क्रांति दिवस के तौर पर मनाए जाने की अपील के आधार पर सभी समाजवादियों से हर वर्ष 9

अगस्त को जन क्रांति दिवस आयोजित कर शहीदों को याद करे तथा समाज में एकजूटता लाने का प्रयास करने की अपील करता है। सम्मेलन में आए प्रतिनिधियों को खुशी है कि 75 वर्ष होने पर देश में समाजवादी तथा सहमना संगठनों द्वारा 250 से अधिक स्थानों पर जन क्रांति दिवस के कार्यक्रम आयोजित किए जा रहे हैं।

सम्मेलन विभाजन की वास्तविकता को स्वीकार करते हुए विभाजन के बाद बने तीनों सम्प्रभु राष्ट्रों की जनता से 1942 कि तरह की भावनात्मक एकजूटता पुनर्स्थापित करने की अपील करता है तथा तीनों देशों के नागरिकों से आपसी मैत्रीपूर्ण सम्बंध कायम करने की दिशा में कारगर कदम उठाने की अपील करते हुए भारत-बंगलादेश-पाकिस्तान महासंघ की दिशा में आगे बढ़ने की अपील करता है।

सम्मेलन मानता है कि जिन संकीर्णतावादी साम्प्रदायिक कट्टरवादी ताकतों ने देश का विभाजन किया था वे आज भी देश को बांटने के लिए प्रयासरत हैं। हिन्दू-मुस्लिम-सिख-ईसाई की एकजूटता के माध्यम से विभाजनकारी ताकतों का मुंहतोड़ जवाब देने की देशवासियों से अपील करता है। सम्मेलन की मान्यता है कि यह एकजूटता संविधान के मूल्यों और सिद्धांतों पर कोई समझौता किए बिना ही सम्भव है।

सम्मेलन वर्तमान केन्द्र सरकार की स्वतंत्रता, लोकतंत्र, समाजवाद, धर्मनिर्पेक्षता, न्याय, सादगी, स्वावलम्बन, अहिंसा, सत्याग्रह और एकजूटता के मूल्यों पर लगातार कुठाराघात करने की नीति के प्रति देशवासियों से आगाह करते हुए इन मूल्यों को बचाने के लिए हर कुर्बानी देने लिए तैयार रहने की अपील करता है।

सम्मेलन मानता है कि जिस तरह समाजवादियों ने अगस्त क्रांति, जे.पी. आंदोलन के दौरान अग्रणी भूमिका अदा की थी उसी तरह आज भी उसकी स्वर्णिम परम्परा को आगे बढ़ाते हुए समाजवादी एकजूट होकर संवैधानिक मूल्यों को बचाने तथा पुनर्स्थापित करने की ऐतिहासिक भूमिका का निर्वह करेंगे।

सम्मेलन केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा विकास के नाम पर देश का विनाश करने वाले मोडानी मॉडल को राज्यसत्ता की ताकत से देश पर थोपने के कुत्सित प्रयासों के खिलाफ संघर्ष कर रहे जन आंदोलनों का समर्थन करता है। सम्मेलन की

मान्यता है कि केन्द्र सरकार जल, जंगल, जमीन, खनिज व तरंगों की अधिकतम मुनाफा कमाने के लिए कॉरपोरेट द्वारा की जा रही लूट की खुली छूट देने के लिए लगातार नीतियां बनाई जा रही हैं जिसके चलते देश में गैर-बराबरी, भूखमरी, बेरोजगारी, महंगाई, असुरक्षा की भावना, किसानों व गरीबों की आत्महत्याएं तेजी से बढ़ रही हैं। डी.एम.आई.सी. तथा स्मार्ट सिटी जैसी योजनाओं के चलते बड़े पैमाने पर किसानों का भू अधिग्रहण करने, किसानों व गांव को नष्ट करने तथा गरीबों को उजाड़ने का काम पर्यावरणीय विभाग के साथ बड़े पैमाने पर किया जा रहा है।

सम्मेलन आजादी के आंदोलन के दौरान गांधीजी द्वारा किए गए नशाबंदी के प्रयासों को स्मरण करते हुए केन्द्र और राज्य सरकारों से नशाबंदी लागू करने की मांग करता है तथा देश के जन संगठनों द्वारा चलाए जा रहे नशा-मुक्त भारत आंदोलन के समर्थन की घोषणा करता है।

सम्मेलन नशाबंदी के अभियान को कानूनी जामा पहना कर सख्ती से बिहार में नशाबंदी लागू करने की प्रशंसा करते हुए उत्तर प्रदेश सहित सभी राज्यों से बिहार की तर्ज पर नशाबंदी कानून बनाने की मांग करता है तथा 11 सितम्बर, 2016 को विनोबा जयंती के अवसर पर देशभर में सभी जिलों या तहसील स्तर पर बिहार की तरह का नशाबंदी कानून सभी राज्यों के बनाने के लिए विभिन्न मुख्य मंत्रियों तथा प्रधान मंत्री को ज्ञापन सौंपने का निर्णय करता है।

सम्मेलन मानता है कि देश में नशाबंदी होने से न केवल युवा पीढ़ी को दिशाभ्रमित होने से बचाया जा सकेगा बल्कि साथ ही दुर्घटनाओं, अपराधों, आत्महत्याओं, महिला हिंसा, यौन हिंसा, सामाजिक तनाव, अवसाद में भारी कमी लाई जा सकती है जिसकी कीमत आबकारी से प्राप्त होने वाले राजस्व की तुलना में कम से कम चार गुना होगी। सम्मेलन, शराब का कारोबाद बंद करे सरकार तथा पाप की कमाई से सरकारें चलाना बंद करो के नारे देशभर में बुलंद करने का निर्णय करता है।

सम्मेलन केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा लम्बे संघर्षों के बाद मजदूरों द्वारा हासिल किए गए श्रम अधिकारों को कुचलने पर आकोश प्रकट करते हुए केन्द्र एवं राज्य के श्रमिक संगठनों द्वारा घोषित 2 सितम्बर की राष्ट्र हड़ताल का समर्थन करता है।

सम्मेलन कामगारों का न्यूनतम वेतन रु. 18,000 प्रति माह करने तथा उसे मूल्य सूचकांक से जोड़े जाने, संविदा कर्मचारियों को नियमित करने, पुरानी पेंशन नीति बहाल करने, 7वां वेतन आयोग की विसंगतियों को दूर करने, असंगठित क्षेत्र के मजदूरों के लिए सर्वव्यापी सुरक्षा कानून बनाने, रेल, रक्षा, बीमा क्षेत्र में विदेशी पूंजी पर रोक लगाने, स्कीम वर्कर्स-आंगनबाड़ी, मध्याह्न भोजन, आशा, रोजगार सेवकों को राज्य कर्मचारियों के बराबर समान कार्य का समान वेतन देकर राज्य कर्मचारी घोषित किए जाने, चतुर्थ श्रेणी की भर्ती पर प्रतिबंध समाप्त कर चतुर्थ श्रेणी में नियमित कर्मचारी भर्ती किए जाने तथा रोड सेफ्टी बिल वापस लिए जाने, आदि मांगों का समर्थन करता है।

सम्मेलन 16 वर्षों तक सशस्त्र सुरक्षा बल विशेष अधिकार अधिनियम वापस लिए जाने की मांग को लेकर अनशन करनेवाली क्रांतिकारी इरोम शर्मिला की प्रशंसा करते हुए देश के लोकतंत्र एवं मानव अधिकार में विश्वास रखनेवाले व्यक्तियों व संगठनों से इस संविधान विरोधी जानलेवा अधिनियम के खिलाफ संघर्ष करने की अपील करता है तथा इरोम शर्मिला के संघर्ष को मंजिल तक पहुंचाने का संकल्प लेता है।

सम्मेलन शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य व पीने के पानी को सर्वाधिक लाभ कमाने वाला व्यापार बनाने की सरकारों की निजीकरण की नीति का विरोध करते हुए यह मान्यता दोहराना चाहता है कि किसी भी कल्याणकारी राज्य का पहला कर्तव्य शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य व पीने के पानी का अधिकार सभी नागरिकों को निःशुल्क उपलब्ध कराना होना चाहिए।

सम्मेलन सोशलिस्ट पार्टी (इण्डिया) तथा अन्य संगठनों द्वारा समान शिक्षा प्रणाली हेतु चलाए जा रहे आंदोलन का समर्थन करता है तथा उ.प्र. सरकार सहित सभी राज्य सरकारों से इलाहाबाद उच्च न्यायालय के न्यायमूर्ति सुधीर अग्रवाल के फैसले को लागू करने की मांग करता है।

सम्मेलन नर्मदा बचाओ आंदोलन, जन आंदोलन के राष्ट्रीय समन्वय द्वारा गत 31 वर्षों से सरदार सरोवर बांध से विस्थापित होनेवाले परिवारों के विस्थापन को रोकने व सम्पूर्ण पुनर्वास के लिए चलाए जा रहे आंदोलन का समर्थन करता है। सम्मेलन की मान्यता है कि इस आंदोलन के चलते देश में वैकल्पिक विकास की नीतियों को बनाने

की जरूरत पर महत्वपूर्ण चर्चा शुरू हुई है तथा संसाधनों की लूट के खिलाफ जन संघर्ष देशवासियों को प्रेरणा प्राप्त हुई है। सम्मेलन सरदार सरोवर बांध पर गेट लगाने से 45,000 परिवारों की जल हत्या होने की आशंका के प्रति केन्द्र सरकार को आगाह करते हुए गम्भीर परिणाम की चेतावनी देता है। सम्मेलन बांध के गेट नहीं लगाने तथा सभी विस्थापित परिवारों के पुनर्वास, ज्ञा कमीशन की रपट में दोषी पाए गए अधिकारियों के खिलाफ कार्यवाही तथा गुजरात के विस्थापितों द्वारा 9 अगस्त से शुरू किए जा रहे अनिश्चितकालीन अनशन का समर्थन करता है। देश भर के समाजवादियों व प्रगतिशील ताकतों से राजघाट, बड़वानी में 30 जुलाई से चल रहे अनिश्चितकालीन सत्याग्रह में शामिल होने की अपील करता है तथा संघर्ष के 31 वर्ष पूरा होने के अवसर पर 16 अगस्त को देशभर से प्रधान मंत्री के नाम ज्ञापन सौंपने का निर्णय करता है।

सम्मेलन सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के निर्देशों के बावजूद देश के 54 करोड़ सूखाग्रस्त किसानों को विभिन्न योजनाओं का लाभ सरकारों द्वारा नहीं दिए जाने की निंदा करते हुए केन्द्र सरकार से किसानों का कर्जा और बिजली बिल माफ करने की मांग करता है। केन्द्र सरकारें यदि 69 वर्षों में 35 लाख करोड़ रुपए कम्पनियों का कर्जा माफ कर सकती हैं तथा अडाणी जैसी एक कम्पनी तथा कॉरपोरेट का 75,000 करोड़ का कर्ज बैंकों से उपलब्ध करा सकती है तो किसानों का 5 लाख करोड़ रुपए का कर्ज माफ करने की केन्द्र सरकार से अपील करती है।

सम्मेलन केन्द्र सरकार से किसानों एवं असंगठित क्षेत्र के श्रमिकों के लिए प्रथम वेतन आयोग गठित करने तथा केन्द्र सरकार के सबसे छोटे कर्मचारी के न्यूनतम वेतन के बराबर हर किसान-मजदूर परिवार की आय सुनिश्चित करने की मांग करता है। सम्मेलन का लक्ष्य किसानों का आत्महत्या मुक्त, स्वावलम्बी गांव बनाकर तथा किसानों-मजदूरों को उनका हक एवं सम्मान दिलाना है ताकि राष्ट्र को मजबूत बनाया जा सके।

सम्मेलन देश भर के विश्वविद्यालयों, महाविद्यालयों में शिक्षा के भगवाकरण, छात्र अधिकारों पर कुठाराघात, शैक्षणिक संस्थाओं की स्वायत्ता पर हमले के खिलाफ छात्र आंदोलनों का समर्थन करता है।

सम्मेलन लगातार दलितों पर हो रहे हमलों की निंदा करते हुए अनुसूचित जाति, जनजाति अत्याचार निवारण कानून को सख्ती से लागू करने व भेदभाव समाप्त करने के लिए रोहित वेमुला अधिनियम बनाने की मांग करता है। सम्मेलन यह दोहराना चाहता है कि समाजवादियों का लक्ष्य जाति विहीन समाज की रचना है जिसमें किसी भी तरह के जातिवाद का कोई स्थान नहीं है। सम्मेलन डॉ. लोहिया तथा डॉ. बाबासाहब भीमराव अम्बेडकर के सड़ी-गली जाति व्यवस्था के सम्पूर्ण उन्मूलन के उद्देश्य को पूरा करने के लिए प्रतिबद्धता जाहिर करता है। सरकारों द्वारा महिला हिंसा को रोकने के लिए तमाम कानूनी उपाए किए जाने के बावजूद महिलाओं के खिलाफ हिंसा की घटनाओं में वृद्धि होने को विधायिका, कार्यपालिका, न्यायपालिका व मीडिया की सामूहिक विफलता मानता है तथा इसका मुख्य कारण पितृसत्तात्मक सत्ता का वर्चस्व कायम रहना व उसे रोकने के लिए राजनीतिक इच्छा शक्ति की कमी मानता है।

समाजवादी आंदोलन के 82 वर्ष होने के अवसर पर सम्मेलन उक्त मुद्दों को लेकर 2 अक्टूबर को तमिलनाडू से नागपुर होते हुए 12 अक्टूबर भोपाल के बीच एक यात्रा निकालने का निर्णय करता है।

सम्मेलन देश के समाजवादियों, वामपंथियों, गांधीवादियों, सर्वोदयी, अम्बेडकरवादियों एवं जन संगठनों से एकजूट होकर किसानों, मजदूरों, अल्पसंख्यकों, युवाओं व महिलाओं के पक्ष में सतत संघर्ष करने की अपील करता है।

अगस्त क्रांति के शहीदों का सपना देश में किसान और मजदूरों का राज स्थापित करना था ताकि आम नागरिकों को हक व सम्मान का जीवन हासिल हो सके। इस सपने को साकार करने का सम्मेलन में आए प्रतिनिधि संकल्प लेते हैं तथा वैकल्पिक नीतियां देश के समक्ष रखने के लिए 21-22 अक्टूबर को मुम्बई में एकजूटता सम्मेलन आयोजित करने का निर्णय लेते हैं।

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Challenges before socialism and socialists in 21st century India

Anand Kumar

The vision of socialism is an ever-attractive proposition for the depressed, deprived and dehumanised sections of humanity. Why? Because it presents before them a beautiful tomorrow with a rainbow out of the desired togetherness of freedom, justice, dignity, equality, prosperity, peace and harmony. Economically, it has emerged an alternative to capitalism since 19th century. In terms of political order, since the early 20th Century it has posed a challenge to monarchy, feudalism, authoritarianism, colonialism, imperialism, communist dictatorship and Fascism. Socio-culturally, socialism provides ways to go beyond sexism, racism, casteism, communalism and xenophobic nationalism. It encompasses individuals, collectives, culture, ethnicities, nationhood, religion, party, market, State, democracy, freedoms and human rights in the journey from non-socialist systems to a socialist society. Therefore, in the last four centuries, every society and civilisation has created its own trajectories of socialism through the tumultuous times of the French Revolution (1789-1799), The Industrial Revolution (1760-1820), the American Revolution (1775-1783), and India's First War of Independence (1857-60). Socialism is not a surefire way to success as there have been more stories of failures and deviations from 'socialists in power' so far. At the same time, it has to be appreciated that every failure in the quest for 'a socialist tomorrow' has paved the way for a better alternative set of ideas, programmes and movements due to the eternal value of giving priority to society over self, justice over exploitation, peace over war, universality over sectarianism.

Two features of the 21st century

If the 19th century looked like an invitation for socialism, the 21st century so far has been a period of disenchantment with idea of equality and collective togetherness. With individualism, inequality and ethnicity in

ascent. The post-Soviet Union world order has been marked with hegemony of globalisation - centrality of corporate capital, spread of consumerism, ecological crisis, ethnicisation of societies under the banner of exclusive nationalism, and steep rise of inequalities and chronic poverty. There has also been decline of freedom and new challenges to unity in diversity. The institutional crisis in the power systems of representative democracies is reflected with swing to the right, spread of xenophobia, identity politics and social violence. Socialists of the industrialised societies have been found to cooperate with pro-capitalist parties to remain electorally relevant and this has marginalized them before the rising waves of intolerance and terror.

People are restive around the world due to loss of jobs, crisis of identity and fear of “the other”. There is escalation in protests as they are seeking alternatives. But they are not interested in ‘the socialist alternative’ as available today. Socialist programmes and politics are viewed as part of the problem, and not a solution.

The disenchantment with the Soviet Communist model is total. And this is creating the grounds for consolidation of non-socialist (and to some extent non-democratic) tendencies across the European Union, the UK and the US. Of course, there is the Nordic pocket of successful social democracies including Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Austria, Germany, France and the United Kingdom have been also oscillating between liberal capitalism and social democracy for last several decades. They have been shining examples of ‘sane’ society so far. But the waves of ethnicisation and xenophobia fuelled by financial crisis are creating cracks in these countries also.

The Indian Setting

In India, the situation is no better because of paradigm shift in favour of market mediated globalisation in 1990s. The last three decades have been exposed to the consequences of three Ms – Market economics, Mandalism, and Mandir mobilisation. They have politicised the fault lines in the economy (public sector vs private sector), society (backward classes vs the others) and culture (Hindus vs non-Hindus). There is dominance of ‘identity politics’ in the name of representative democracy. The socialists are suffering from a crisis of identity due to their softness on ‘electoral compulsions’. Whether they promoted social justice in the real sense of the term by changing the life of millions affected by the caste system, particularly the Mahadalits, Most Backwards Castes, Pasamanda Muslims, Non-Hindu Dalits, and De-notified tribes, is a matter of debate. Because the advantages of identity politics have been cornered by the neo-rich and ‘forward’ sections of the Backward castes and classes. The prime movers of this political project around ‘social justice’ and ‘Hindutva’ have been success stories from the 1990s till today.

But there is no organic growth of the socialist ideology and its economic, political and social components. Socialists of today have no idea or interest about the new grammar of global economics and economic, political and cultural consequences of consumerist globalisation. There is no alternative agenda for promoting triple justice - social, economic and political - beyond demanding reservations in the private sector and going beyond the limit of 50 per cent in the public sector. There is no interest in deepening of democracy and ensuring citizens play a significant role in the affairs of the state and society. No one seems to be interested in the politics beyond the next elections and an election is always round the corner – be it Lok

Sabha, or Vidhan Sabha, or Zila Parishad, City Municipality and the Gram Panchayats. The desire of getting onto these elected bodies and craving to get one's kith and kin as political successor is working like a sweet poison for the socialists and socialism since 1980s.

At least two generations have been wasted because of the unconscious surrender to the symbolic supremacy of parliamentary politics and electoral compulsions. It has created two categories among the socialists or followers who claim lineage of Gandhi-Lohia-Jayaprakash. There are successful socialists and unsuccessful socialist groups in electoral terms. The 'successful socialists' are trapped in promoting nepotism rather than socialism. They leave governance to a nexus of money managers, crony capitalists and bureaucrats. The unsuccessful socialists have lost the 'will to power'. They are seen to be associated with either 'political opportunism' or non-party civil society activities. Both ways there has been dissolution of the socialist politics. It has to be further added, that it is ironical that the successful socialist groups and the political opportunists have created infertile spaces where nothing is happening for the advancement of society towards a socialist future. But the unsuccessful socialists have proved to be fertilisers for protest politics all over the country. Intellectually, socialists used to be among the most competent theoreticians since the time of Gandhi and Nehru. Today there is poverty of ideas, information and understanding even after mastering the art of creating and sustaining 'vote banks' in large states of India. They look like political illiterates who are perpetually dependent upon the Left parties ideologues to finding words and sentences to present their viewpoint or 'party line' about any national or global question. They feel no shame in it as it helps them claim space in 'anti-communal politics'. They have

been also found to walk together with Bharatiya Janata Party overtly and covertly for share in power in the name of 'anti-Congressism'.

The second 'fall' of Indian socialists

In realistic terms, it is the second 'fall' of socialists since independence. There has been sizable success in the electoral arena with viable size of vote banks in some of the major theatres of national politics in north India. But to an extent it is power without principles. The centrality of parliamentary power has made them prisoners of political pragmatism beyond all proportions. These regimes led by 'socialists' are seen to be captive of crony capitalists. They are found to be promoting economic agenda of liberal capitalism in agriculture, industry and service sector. Their political programmes were without any push for further decentralisation beyond the 73rd-74th Amendment introduced by Congress PM Rajiv Gandhi in 1980s or states' reorganization since the formation of three states in 2000 by NDA under PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Lack of commitment for democratic institutions including the cooperatives, District Boards, City Municipalities, and Gram Panchayats invariably created situations of lawlessness by Robinhoods which invited charges of Jungle Raj and Gunda Raj. There was no genuine empowerment of women and other victims of segregations in society and culture even after nearly a quarter of century of being the principal political force in and out of power at the state and central levels.

From 1930s to 1980s, the socialists were known for their sound understanding of the Indian society and culture which had helped them in creating a growing social base among the weaker sections of the society in 1950s and 1960s. They had courage of conviction. But the post-1980 politics of vote banks

around 'identity politics' made them look like architects of 'dominant castes democracy'. It created three consequences for socialist politics – 1. There was drift of the most backward sections including the Dalits and Mahadalits; 2. Growth of internal power conflicts between the dominant castes; and 3. Politics of power of the dominant castes promoted regional parties as these were their sphere of influence. It left no basis for capability building for establishing an all India political instrument or vehicle for carrying forward socialist policies and programmes.

There is another serious issue before the Indian socialists of today in the 21st century. Politics of electoral pragmatism around identity politics has caused a much deeper damage to the idea of socialism and image of socialists in Indian politics in recent decades. Originally, the socialists in India were identified with ethical politics. Their life was synonymous with selfless dedication for the cause of teeming millions. They did not have power till 1960s and were more known for losing electoral battles against Congress minions. But they were icons of virtues and moral authority in public life. From Narendra Dev, Lohia and JP to S M Joshi, N G Goray, Madhu Limaye, Raj Narain, Mama Baleshwar Dayal, Rabi Ray, Mrinal Gore, Pramila Dandavate, Karpuri Thakur, Madhu Dandavate, Arjun Singh Bhadauria, Sarla Bhadauria, Satya Narayan Reddy, Golap Barbora, Surendra Mohan and Kishen Pattanayak there was a galaxy of shining examples of uncompromising socialist icons. But there was no continuity after the 1980s.

A new generation of populist and pragmatic parliamentary socialists became successors of this socialist heritage. That became the beginning of unprincipled compromises include loss of national perspective, promoting

supremo syndrome in the party organization, accumulation of assets beyond known means of income, patronizing crime-politics nexus, indifference about probity and ethics in public life, and active engagement in nepotism. The first fall of the socialists took place under the influence of the infamous thesis of 'compulsion of a backward economy' in 1960s. It argued for surrendering to the political power of Congress party which may create opportunities for influencing the policies and programmes of the newly created democratic state from inside. It is another matter that most of such proponents of the thesis of 'compulsions' were found to be involved in splitting the Congress Party between 1967-77 and landed together with the non-compromising socialists in the Jail during the Emergency Raj in 1975-77. In any case, the first time, it was resisted by Lohia and his followers which guaranteed continuity of socialist stream of political alternatives to the hegemonic Congress system. But this time, the second 'fall' has been justified in the name of Lohia's thesis of 'preferential opportunities for the backwards' which included five categories of society - women, Dalits, Adivasis, Backward castes, and Pasmada Muslims. It makes no difference to the proponents of the post-Lohia variety of social justice that there is huge deficit of most of these categories in the prevailing formulations of electoral politics of socialists claiming to be connected with Gandhi-Lohia-JP tradition of politics.

Consequences of parliamentary pragmatism of socialists

Socialist politics has degenerated to personality politics. There are no ideological instruments like training camps, research cells, party literature, or policy workshops. The idea of 'party' has become synonymous with electoral machine. The links and networks with mass organizations and fraternal groups,

bodies and movements is non-existent. There is no attention for leadership building beyond distribution of electoral 'tickets'. It is a decline from party system to personality system.

It is not that everything got destroyed all over India due to preoccupation of parliamentary success and getting into governance through unprincipled alliances since 1980s. But there has been continuously 'diminishing return' of the socialist initiatives. The work of National Alliance of Peoples' Movements, Rashtra Seva Dal, Samajwadi Jan Parisad, Hind Majdoor Sabha, Hind Majdoor Kisan Panchayat, Mahila Dakshata Samiti, Yusuf Meharally Centre, Acharya Narendra Dev Samajwadi Kendra, Lohia Samta Vidyalay Nyas, Lohia Adhyayan Kendra, Vanvasi Panchayat, Janata Weekly, Samayik Varta, Samanya Jan, Lohia Academy, Institute of Social Sciences, Centre for Social Research, Bharat Tibet Maitri Sangh, Lokshakti Abhiyan, and Socialist Party of India can be underlined in this context. There is also a galaxy of inspiring social activists, writers, and reformers who have made their own modest contribution with consistency. They have made it possible for the continuity of craving for socialism beyond party politics and parliamentary institutions. But it needs more than such lamps of light in such a dark night caused by globalisation accompanied by chronic poverty, widening of inequalities and ethnicisation.

Today, we have 'party-less' socialists due to devaluation of political worker into a 'ticket seeker' in a web of patron-client system. It is quite a parody of JP's vision of partyless democracy. Similarly, Lohia wanted the socialists not be either Marxist or Gandhian as to be a socialist needed a non-personality perspective. The present setting needs only cultivation of personal loyalty to neither a vision nor a programme or organisation but

to a powerful person. It has happened in conjunction with two other mega events : 1. Loss of credibility of one of the most efficient democratic instruments of the people of India since 1920s, Indian national Congress. It is melting away due to designs of dynastic politics and patronizing crony capitalism and corruption at high places. 2. Decline of Marxist left after 35 years of un-broken rule in Bengal and Tripura and critical significance in Kerala politics due to its deviation from the path of alternative economic policies and programmes. It was disappointing to find them in collaboration with Congress Raj in promoting the LPG (Liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation) paradigm since 1990s. These developments together have caused a nationwide vacuum which has promoted consolidation of Hindutva vote bank with open patronage of crony capitalism. They have appropriated not only 'Hindu religion' but also a) the idea of India by claiming monopoly over nation, b) legacy of patriotism, and c) the responsibility of protection of ' Indian culture'.

What are the immediate consequences? Socially, we are experiencing casteist, communal and ethnic segregations. There is increasing lumpenization of the public sphere and stigmatization of civil society activists. Secular, leftists, and progressive have become questionable words. Economically, there is continuity of jobless growth, regional imbalance and decline of agriculture and stagnation in manufacturing. No one is convinced about the promise of 'Acche Din Ayenge' as there is continuity of the dominance of black money in our economy and politics and no check on crime-politics nexus in everyday life. There is open door policy for crony capitalists and foreign investors despite doubtful credentials. Politically, there is thrust for centralization of power and erosion of autonomy of institutions of substance including

judiciary, banks, universities, and research bodies. Six pre-existing deficits have increased further – development deficit, legitimacy deficit, governance deficit, democracy deficit, nation-building deficit, and citizenship deficit.

Who needs socialism today?

In such a situation there are two inter-related changes in the orientation of Indian people. First of all, people are becoming more depressed about the possibility of reforming our system of economy and government and improving the status of citizens in the affairs of state and economy. Practicing liberal capitalism and promoting globalisation for ten long years by Manmohan Singh - Sonia Gandhi made us look for a better alternative. But we are confronted with a bad situation as the new regime is recasting our society into a silence zone and economy is more firmly in the clutches of crony capitalism. From price rise to unemployment, there is a growing list of disappointments among all citizens. The weaker sections are feeling greater degree of vulnerability. The cries from Kisans all over the country, national strike by the un-organised sector workers for increased minimum wages, Dalits of Gujarat, Muslims of Kashmir, UP, Maharashtra and Haryana, Adivasi of Chattisgarh and ethnic minorities of the North-Eastern states for saving from injustices of the dominant groups and the state apparatus deserve everybody's attention and response. The emergence of self appointed culture protectors who are taking law into their own hands with impunity and ignoring even the appeal of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi creates a sense of anxiety among all those who value rule of law and dignity of ordinary citizens. These straws in the wind can be put together in one sentence for our attention and considerations – is this Swaraj anymore? Or we have to learn to live with crony capitalism

which is contingent upon patron-client system in polity and economy irrespective of the Constitution of India? Are we doomed to be silent sufferers of the lumpenism of self appointed 'Rakshaks' in the name of culture and nation who do not care for the rule of law and sanctity of our Constitution? This thinking creates a new window for socialists to come up with better alternatives in economy and society by reinventing themselves in terms of ideas, programmes, organization and activities.

Secondly, there is growing respect and support among the people, from the middle classes to the masses, for those persons, groups and organizations who can stand up for justice and fairness against the pathology of the LPG paradigm. It is being realized that the LPG approach is creating crisis of Swaraj, which was incomplete in any case. Suicide of farmers has been one big issue for all to see the farce of LPG related policies which were introduced in 1990s with the promise of prosperity in agriculture. Invasion of the Indian market by foreign companies created loss of economic opportunities for the native entrepreneurs and traders. Consequences of commercialization of health and education have pauperized the lower middle classes and rural households without any substantial difference in their life chances. Crisis of education is manifested in every state of India. It forced the Congress regime to accept the need of 'right to education' for children upto 8th standard. The new regime was also felt compelled to appoint a national commission for educational reforms and the Subramanyam Committee Report is a relevant document for socialists to make use for nation-wide consensus building for Shiksha Swaraj. Similarly, the failures of market mediated health policies have created a new convergence to demand 'right to health' for Swasthya Swaraj as the way out of the present disappointments. From Hyderabad Central

University and Jawaharlal Nehru University episodes to the Dalit upsurge in Gujarat after shameful Una episode, it is getting clear that suffering in silence is not an acceptable option for people who have not forgotten the dark days of the Emergency Raj. The need of check and balances was also demonstrated by the citizens when they gave approval to untested group of anti-corruption activists in Delhi Vidhan Sabha and a strange coming together of long term adversaries – JD (U), RJD and Congress - in Bihar as a more acceptable choice vis-a-vis the NDA. This makes the Indian socialists, among others, again more relevant than the present set of activists of the partners of the NDA.

In short, there is scope for revisiting the socialist alternatives due to increasing disenchantments among the masses, particularly the youth about globalization and crony capitalism. They are looking beyond liberal capitalism for a better economic model. The truth of growing corruption in representative democracy in post-colonial India from Panchayat to parliament is making them think about deepening of democracy with more participation and less representation. Challenges to patriarchy and casteism and other forms of dominations across religions and regions in the social order is no ordinary source of furthering social transformation beyond the schemes of ‘reservations’ and statutory commissions for women, SCs, STs, OBCs, and the minorities. The mindless drive for industrialization and urbanization have created dangerous problems like pollution of water, air and soil in most parts of the advanced cities and progressive states of our country. It has created a new relevance for the need of prioritising the basic needs of all citizens against socially dangerous consumerism being practiced by the neo-rich and super rich sections of our society. If we look at the socialist solutions offered between 1930s and 1960s for our economic,

political, social and ecological problems, it will be not surprising to find many of those ideas as part of the emerging consensus for a more sustainable and humane way of nation building. From clean drinking water and healthy accommodation for all to Freedom from Hunger, Jal-Jungle-Zameen under community control, eliminating discriminations against women, SCs, STs, the OBCs, the minorities and the other marginal groups, Right to Education, Right to Health, Rural Employment Guarantee schemes, use of appropriate technology in agriculture and industry - there is a new wave of entitlements which were originally part of the Indian socialist agenda. But most of the socialists are not aware of it as we have lost our way. How many of us are living a life of a socialist in our personal capacity? Where are the living examples of socialists organized around three dimensional system of spade, jail and vote? It is due to the crisis of purpose caused by unnecessary fascination with parliamentary power which took hold of our collective imagination between 1967 and 1977. There is problem with the direction of efforts which have become mostly election-centric since 1980s.

What next?

What is the guarantee that socialists can rise to the occasion? Because it needs re-connecting of the ideas of socialism with the evolution of self consciousness at personal level and dynamics of Indian social formation in the context of the modern world system in terms of not only economy and politics but also ecology and culture. We are living in an age where there is growing cry for Azadi Bachao in total sense of the term – from personal and spiritual to economic, social and political.

It is relevant to remind that the socialist journey began with the dream of personal transformation, social reforms, national

freedom, democracy and socialism – Rashtriyata aur Samajwad - in 1930s under the inspiring guidance of Acharya Narendra Deva (1889 – 1956). Then the socialists got inspired by the re-conceptualisation of socialism as togetherness of seven revolutions – Saptakranti in the Lohia era (1910 – 1967). We got re-juvenated and expanded with the message of Total Revolution in mid-1970s – Sampurna Kranti as propounded by Jayaprakash Narayan (1902 – 1979). There is need of a similar synthesising initiative which can make us capable of taking the nation beyond the limits imposed by the togetherness of dominant caste democracy and the LPG paradigm. The new initiative has to be anchored in the hunger for Swaraj through individual, collective, constructive, mobilizational and legislative drive for a humane social order. It means getting together with the movements for gender justice, dignity for the Dalits, Adivasi rights, protection of Minorities, empowerment of the Most Backward classes, restoring ecological harmony and decisive engagement against chronic poverty and regional disparities. Socialists for Swaraj can be a meaningful banner.

It is hard task in the face of continuity of superficial successes in electoral games of today due to the logic of dominant caste democracy and trappings of crony capitalism. BJP is in power with a broad alliance of contradictory social forces on the basis of pragmatic power sharing. It has no solution of the problems of Indian economy as it is indifferent about black money and friendly with crony capitalism. Furthermore, it is anchored in the ideas and programmes of self defeating Hindutva which is another name for majoritarianism and religious hegemony. It is colliding with the Indian ethos of unity in diversity and Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam. It has been gripped by ‘politics of othering’ which is legitimising fringe elements and their misguided campaigns.

There is no sign of moderation in the NDA approach despite the much publicized promise of inclusivity and cooperative federalism: ‘Sabka Saath- Sabka Vikaas’.

Congress has no capacity due to a long list of missed opportunities and the burden of mistakes in the recent past and limits of the dynastic future. The Marxist Left has failed to do it even after being better equipped and informed about the issues of 21st century avatar of capitalism due to their continuity with trade unions and politics of masses in the countries of Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America. Most of the regional parties have announced priority of province over the nation-state. They are often run like family enterprises without any commitment for furthering democratic nation-building. They are functional vehicles of power for provincial and local elites of the regional dominant castes. But they have no vision beyond their electoral basis for the larger nation and humanity.

The markers of new political sociology of India

The time has come to understand new interrelatedness of economy and ecology on the one hand and culture and politics on the other. This fresh understanding has to be translated into a set of programmes for revitalising agriculture, industries and services beyond the grip of corporate and black money based market and corrupt elite commanded state. There is pressure from below for re-centering citizens and communities together to take command of democratic governance for realizing sustainable development. Low energy, high efficiency, cost effective, eco-friendly and people-centric system of production, exchange, distribution and consumption with universal benefits is the need of the hour. National and global capitalists have failed in giving a suitable and sustainable response around the world. This global failure

has forced the United Nations to adopt a new 19 Point Charter for Sustainable Development. The Indian socialists will have to upgrade their socio economic understanding and come to terms with the new imperatives at least to the level of the United Nations Development Program.

Indian socialists wanted to overcome the ideological limitations of Euro-centric Marxism and engage with the down to earth factors of inequalities and exploitation like gender, caste, race, religion, language, and nationality. They developed better theories of caste, gender, religion, language, democracy, nation-state and world system through the writings of great masters including Marx, Gandhi, Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash, Ambedkar and Lohia. It made them equipped with the Lohia line of 'preferential opportunities'. But they got too focused on dominant caste dynamics after Lohia passed away in 1967 which made them victim of the designs of the dominant castes. They got lured by their votes and lost the capacity to be front runners of social transformers of our society into a casteless and classless society. They have become myopic about 'reservation' as a passage to socialism and casteless society.

The 21st century Indian power matrix is influenced by atleast following 12 changes which have taken place since the passing away of Gandhi-Lohia-JP and their immediate followers. They are the following:

1. Declining significance of state power and increased role of market forces
2. Increasing significance of politicization of castes, ethnicities and religious identities and communities
3. Enlargement of women movements for gender justice
4. Politics of dignity and self respect prevailing among the SCs and STs
5. Enlargement of the middle classes in all castes, communities and region from an national average of around 5 per cent in 1950s to nearly 25 per cent
6. De-colonization of cultural spaces and identities all over the country
7. Significance of land policies and water politics
8. LPG related new power relations in the village India
9. Increased opportunities of education through affirmative action and educational expansion
10. Increased migration due to agrarian crisis and proliferation of modern occupations
11. Urban explosion and decay
12. LPG induced globalisation of economy and consequential peoples' movements.

They together need a new focus. But most of the socialist oriented politicians and political formations are largely engaged in state-centric caste conflicts through manipulation of reservation policies for the SCs, STs and OBCs. Even there it needs a comprehensive program for addressing the problems inherent in the intersectionality of castes with classes, education and gender. It will take them forward from flat 'Mandalism' which has mostly served the 'forward backward castes'. They have to attend to the emerging opportunities of engaging with a) all women and their movements, including the OBCs, SCs and STs, and Muslims, b) all MBCs (Most Backward Classes and castes across religions) and their needs, c) Mahadalit castes and occupational communities and their grievances, and d) agenda of the denotified tribes and communities for a better strategy of inclusive socialist reconstruction with enlarged social basis.

Socialists were symbols of courage and suffering as they continued the legacy of civil disobedience for social causes in the post-colonial India. It made them outstanding warriors in the struggles for economic, political

and social justice. But now there is new century with a new generation which needs new politics of voice, mobilization, resistance and reforms. Right to Information activists are a significant representative of the new political culture and its practitioners. There is increasing allergy to politics of personalities, mass rallies. And a preference for persons of substance, organizations with transparency and internal democracy and activists with clarity of issues and solutions of the problems. Of course, there is a large segment of population which will demand the old ways of political action as they have been depoliticized in the last three decades of personality politics and liberal capitalism to treat politics as carnival and Tamasha and elections as the only opportunity of bargaining with the candidates and parties. This will demand gradual and incremental change in the strategies at the time of elections. But the days of simple slogans are over. There is a new language of politics and new grammar of power where commitment for political reforms, including party system reform and electoral reforms are being demanded by the concerned citizens. Socialism is about fundamental reforms in the relation between economy, politics and society by bringing citizen-society nexus at the centre of all schemes of power and authority. Therefore, the socialists in India today will have to come forward with an unambiguous and practical plan of comprehensive political reforms to take India beyond the counter-productive aspects of electoral competitions and representative institutions including our Panchayat, Assembly and parliament.

It is also urgent to recognize that revival of interest in socialism and faith in the socialists is going to be associated with their capacity to get integrated with common causes and distanced from the concept of giving supreme value to electoral politics. India continues to need political parties and competitive politics through elections. But today the elections are

losing their centrality with increasing role of three Ms – money, media, and mafia. They have become coupled with three pre-existing fault lines - Caste groupings, Communal cleavages, and Dominant families with traditional power and appeal in ex-Princely pockets and areas. These six factors have increasingly perverted our parties and the party system. They have also created an institutional crisis in Indian democracy.

The socialists cannot afford to participate in the political system to perpetuate it. It is obvious that the present system of elections and the prevalence of patrimonial parties are not going to become irrelevant in the near future. But there will be declining legitimacy of electoral parties and parliamentary politics unless there are reforms in it as they are found to be promoting Netawad – Paisavad – Jativad at the cost of citizenship, nation-building and Swaraj. No scope is going to be available in the present setting for Samajwad – socialist reconstruction. They need radical reforms. There can be better parties by practicing internal democracy, transparency, accountability and probity. There has to be a more pro-people election system through more participatory citizenship and supervisory mechanisms. From bringing the political parties under Right to Information to including right to recall has to be in the new socialist agenda. They have to lead the society to create spaces and instruments for continuous social audit of the elected representatives to put an end to ‘new aristocracy through electoral legitimacy’. Because socialist politics of tomorrow has to go beyond ‘electoral opportunism’. It is a sure way to get back into people’s estimation and peoples’ politics of social transformation for Swaraj – personal, political, economic, social and spiritual- which was the original mission of the Indian freedom movement.

The World Economic Crisis and India

K S Chalam

The subprime crisis in USA during 2008 is considered to be the most devastating economic event in recent history that has surpassed the 1929 Depression. The honeymoon period advocated by Neo-classical Economists for globalisation was not seen anywhere while Nobel Laureates like Krugman noted in *The Economist* July, 2009 that “the financial crisis is a mockery of assumptions... Professors need to think about the context within which markets work.” It has exposed the conspiracy of the Neo-imperialist forces to capture the world economy by deceit through the so called monetary policy of IMF and World Bank. It is reported that the Dow Jones Stock Market Index reached 14,000 points in 2007 due to the financial manipulations of dishonest bankers in the USA and crumbled to 6600 by 2009. It is estimated by Goldman Sachs that every \$100 billion loss would result in a corresponding reduction in \$1 trillion bank lending. This had adversely affected consumption and business investments in the US and resulted in Great Recession. This was all due to five important financial giants who control power to regulate not only the American economy but the World as a whole through their operations. They are: Lehman Bros, Merrill Lynch, J P Morgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, Goldman Sachs and few others. (It is reported in the media they are now involved in funding both Republicans and Democrats in US elections). However, they have attributed the debacle to Housing mortgage companies like Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac in USA who were responsible for US credit default swaps. Several millions of middle class and poor Americans lost their savings and the Federal system was forced to enter the market and announced economic stimulus package of \$168 billion in 2008 and again \$850 billion in 2009 to infuse investors’ confidence to halt the collapse of American Capitalism. This has happened with state support and with tax payer’s money. This is the

biggest mockery about which the campaigners of free trade such as Indian-origin economists like Jagdish Bhagwati have said little and further recommended 'less state and more governance' to PM Modi, forgetting that it was the State that saved the honour of Americans.

We can see the unprecedented social movements like Capture Wall Street; We don't pay Tax, collapse of some debtors in Europe like Greece, Portugal etc during 2008-15 as an indication of what Marx, Lenin and several others have predicted in the past about capitalism and Imperialism. Out of several concepts that Marx had developed in his treatise, one aspect of Falling Rate of Profit, and Lenin's exposition of Imperialism seem to be relevant now to understand the present Economic Crisis. There has been a debate on the relevance of Falling Rate of Profit of Marx in the present conditions when wages have risen over a period of time and profits have surged. There are three important academic developments in the Marxian Political Economy. The German scholar and economist Michael Heinrich in his "An Introduction to the Three Volumes of Karl Marx's Capital" published by Monthly Press in 2012 and in his expository article in April 2013, brought out a contentious revelation. The maligned theory of crisis of falling rate of profit in Capital, according to Heinrich is an edited version of Engels and not that of Marx. As a German, Heinrich had access to all of Marx's material and found that 1865 manuscripts of Marx were edited by Engels heavily revising to construct the third chapter on "Law". He has condensed it to divide it in to four subsections and the original seven chapters were reorganised in to seven parts. Then what is the problem? Heinrich argues that Marx was still researching and trying to understand the dynamics of capitalist system and the law was only a disparate theory and not a comprehensive Law. The fact that he

tried to use mathematical examples to explain the falling rate of profit with the increase in constant capital and declining surplus value (with lower number of workers due to increase in productivity etc) is only a discrete attempt. He has also explained that Marx was collecting data and information (even learnt Russian) to understand the American system of capitalism where presence of interest bearing capital and credit have dissipated the tendency of falling rate of profit. Therefore, we need to understand the essence of Marx's argument and not the actual events.

The arguments of Heinrich are contested by Michael Roberts through his blog. According to Roberts, the falling rate of profit even within the given theory is proved in the UK and USA. He has estimated the rate of profit by using the standard Marxist concepts of organic composition of capital, surplus value and rate of profit in the two most advanced capitalist countries during 1963-2008. He found that profits fell by 28 per cent organic composition rose by 20 per cent and surplus value fell by 19 per cent during 1963-75 in the UK. It is estimated that between 1996 and 2008, profits fell by 11 per cent, organic composition rose by 16 per cent and surplus value remained secularly stagnant in the US. It is in this context, we may cite what Lenin has said about Imperialism exactly a century ago in 1916 as that appears to be relevant now. He has said that there are five essential features that need to be satisfied for modern imperialism to exist. They are:

- 1) The concentration of production and capital developed to such a high stage that it created monopolies, which play a decisive role in economic life.
- 2) The merging of bank capital with industrial capital, and the creation, on the basis of this "finance capital," of a "financial oligarchy."

- 3) The export of capital, which has become extremely important, as distinguished from the export of commodities.
- 4) The formation of international capitalist monopolies, which share the world among themselves.
- 5) The territorial division of the whole world among the greatest capitalist powers is completed.

Elaborating on Lenin, Bukharin has said that imperialism is the result of two conflicting tendencies in modern capitalism. Competition tends to give rise to the concentration and centralization of capital, and as this process develops, the state comes to play an increasingly active role in managing the economy. Bukharin argued that there is, in fact, a tendency for capital and the state to merge together on the national level to form what he called “state capitalist trusts.” We have seen in 2008 how US government has bailed out the capitalists through a government package with taxpayer’s money.

There is no doubt some limitations in the theories of Marx and Lenin when applied to the twenty first century, but the basic formulation of the fact that rising organic composition of capital would increase the rate of surplus value, remains valid. The contemporary financial crisis as predicted by Lenin as a phenomenon of financial oligarchy controlling the world is the order of the day. It is interesting to note that IMF Chief Lagarde reported to have said that there are only just 85 persons who control half of the World’s Wealth (including few Indians). Along with several such reports and data sets on the accumulation of wealth and capital in few hands, scholars like Thomas Piketty have published analytical studies on the ‘Capital in the Twenty First Century’ after the crisis in 2013. Piketty’s study is acclaimed as one of the important contributions of the

century that would continue to influence our economic thinking. He was Adviser to Tsipras government in Greece till recently, is considered a Marxist thinker or atleast someone influenced by his writings.

Piketty has brought out clearly that the average rate of growth per capita output was 0.8 per cent per year from 1700 to 2012 or 0.1 per cent in the period 1700-1820, 0.9 per cent in 1820-1913 and 1.6 per cent in 1913-2012 at global level. Citing Robert Gordon, Piketty says that the rate of growth of per capita output is destined to slow in most advanced countries, starting with United States, and may sink below 0.5 per cent per year between 2050-2100. The important contribution of Piketty appears to be his law like account that, if the rate of return on capital is higher than the rate of growth of an economy, then inequalities are bound to persist and increase. However, the inequality with respect to labour is found to be moderate while it is extreme with respect to capital. He has developed a new concept called patrimonial capitalism, where it is noted how the children of billionaires inherit property without any corresponding merit possibly. It is estimated that at least three quarters of the financial assets held in tax havens are from rich countries. The study has clearly demonstrated in a different jargon that 20th century capitalism has increased the inequalities and raised the concentration of capital in the hands of few as projected by Marx in 19th century. Perhaps the result is seen in terms of periodic crisis in the system as distinguished from that of the so called Business Cycles explained by Neo-classical economists.

Interestingly, we have supporting evidence from a typical UNO trade association UNCTAD. It has published very surprising results contradicting the votaries of free trade. The report for 2012 has noted that the

trade between advanced and the developing countries has caused inequalities in the latter. The estimates of proportion of top quintile share of income to the bottom quintile show that inequalities are higher in developing countries than in developed countries like the UK. It is supported by the Gini ratios (measure of inequality) ranging from 35 per cent in USA to 50 per cent in Malaysia and India coming in between with 32.5 per cent. It is noted by the Report, that inequality of personal income distribution is generally more pronounced in developing countries than in developed or transitional economies. As in developed countries, the income gap narrowed during the first three decades after the Second World War, but during the period 1980–2000 there was a general increase in inequality in all developing regions.

India is no more an independent country after 1991, though it is a republic with a written Constitution. The ruling classes and their institutional super structure including the judiciary seem to be interested to maintain the traditional inequalities and help preserve the same in modern period. The imagined contradictions between Capital and Religion as arrived at by some on the basis of the European experience seem to be subsumed with innovations of a typical social category of people in India. The emergence of the three Ms, Media, Money and Mafia have eased the methods of doing business with co-option of middle classes who are the beneficiaries of liberalisation. Poverty levels particularly among the Dalits, Adivasis, Artisans and sections of Muslim minorities have not declined and in fact the inequalities have widened. Privatisation of education, health and liberalisation of labour laws broadened the disparities between the poor and the rich. The frustration among the unemployed youth of this proletarian class due to unemployment, discrimination and

humiliation set them on par with victims of capitalism in America, Africa, Middle East and other Asian nations who are in search of an effective campaign that might bring them together for a united struggle for emancipation. As Piketty said, “Parliamentary institutions and government of laws were never merely the bourgeois institutions that Marxist intellectuals used to denounce before the fall of Berlin Wall. Yet, it is also clear that the ups and downs of prices and wages, incomes and fortunes, help to shape political perceptions and attitudes and in return these representations engender political institutions, rules, and policies that ultimately shape social and economic change. It is possible, and even indispensable, to have an approach that is at once economic and political, social and cultural, and concerned with wages and wealth.” How do we do it is the greatest challenge left to the present Intellectual class. We hope those who are present here need to ponder over this phenomenon and chart out a programme of action.

Thus, the studies of scholars belonging to Marxist and Non-Marxist persuasions have brought out clearly that the contemporary World is in the grip of grave economic crisis signified not only through 2008 Recession but also through spreading inequalities world over, calling for an assertion that the trend should be stopped right now. India being linked with World capitalist operations through MNCs and sovereign commitment by successive governments through free trade, the day is not too far to reach a precarious situation once the remittances of the middle classes stop with change in the policy of the West. The consequences of the world economic crisis need to be disseminated by every conscious Indian, irrespective of political conviction as the imminent threat is universal. (Paper presented at the All India Progressive Forum conclave, August 13-14, 2016)

Kashmir Issue And India-Pakistan Relations

B Vivekanandan

Dr S Jaishankar, India's Foreign Secretary and an alumnus of the School of International Studies (SIS), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), is a clear-headed person. He has recently defined his agenda for his, not yet slated, meeting with his counterpart in Pakistan, that they could meet to discuss the cross border terrorism, and the issue of Pakistan's vacating Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. As a product of the SIS, and a specialist on International Relations by discipline, Jaishankar knows the nitty-gritty of the Kashmir issue, the untenable claim of Pakistan over that integral part of the Indian Union, and what remains to be negotiated with Pakistan on it.

Genesis of Kashmir Issue

In order to appreciate what Jaishankar has stated in proper perspective, it is essential to get back to the genesis of the Kashmir issue, which is generally found missing in many analyses which have appeared in the media recently. A critical issue, which needs a clear understanding, is: with whom vests the sovereign right over the Jammu and Kashmir State -- with India or with Pakistan?

For an answer, it is pertinent is to recall the fact that, following the release of all princely states of the British India from the British Crown's Paramountcy, as per the Indian Independence Act, 1947, as a prelude to grant India Independence, all Princely States in India, except 3 States, had decided to accede either to India or to Pakistan before independence on 15 August 1947. The principle and the methodology uniformly followed for such State accession was that, if the ruling Maharaja of the Princely State, the State Government, and the largest political party in the State had agreed to accede the state either to India or to Pakistan, that accession would be final. That was how more than 600 Princely States had joined the Indian Union or Pakistan before independence.

Jammu and Kashmir State was one of the 3 Princely States which had not taken a decision on the matter before 15 August 1947. And, therefore, on the day of independence, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) remained as an independent entity.

Accession and After

Taking advantage of that situation, on 20 October 1947, about 5000 tribesmen from the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan invaded J&K, and indulged in plunder and loot, and reached to about 35 miles away from the State capital, Srinagar. For obtaining military assistance from India, to drive out the invaders, it became imperative for J&K to take a decision on the question of the State's accession, adopting the same principle and the methodology which other Princely States had adopted. As a result, the J&K King, Maharaja Hari Singh, the Government of J&K, and the largest political party of the State, the National Conference, led by Sheikh Abdullah, had unanimously decided to accede J&K with the Indian Union, and signed together the instrument of accession on 26 October 1947. India duly accepted it. And, the J&K became part of the Indian Union. Thus J&K merged with the Indian Union strictly as per the procedure followed by other Princely States which merged with the Indian Union. Therefore, Kashmir's accession with India is final and irrevocable, and legally binding on all contracting parties. The international community has also accepted this accession, which conferred the sovereign right over J&K exclusively for India. Therefore, unquestionably, the legal territorial right over the whole of J&K, including of POK, is vested with the Indian Union. Therefore, clearly, Pakistan has no legal right over any part of the J&K, including POK, which makes Pakistan's occupation of POK also illegal.

It is also imperative to understand the sequence of developments which followed J&K's accession to the Indian Union. Soon after the accession, the Indian Army was sent to J&K and the mopping up operation against the tribal intruders was launched in right earnest. The Indian army drove out the intruders from several towns of the State. The ground situation there was that when the intruders saw the Indian army's operations against them, they ran out of Kashmir and went to the Western side of Pakistan's international boundary with India, to escape their capture by the Indian army from inside India's international boundary. As the Indian army was successfully engaged in clearing of the invading tribesmen from the whole of Kashmir, including from the present POK, in May 1948, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru actively intervened, and asked the Indian army to halt its operations in Kashmir, and stopped it from completing the task of regaining the possession of the entire Kashmir.

It is noteworthy that Nehru had insisted on halting the army operations while Major General Kalwant Singh, Commander of Indian forces in Kashmir, was reportedly pleading with the Prime Minister to allow him to advance, and give him five more days to complete the task, and bring the entire territory of Kashmir under India's possession. This was in the 4th week of May 1948. Reportedly, Kalwant Singh informed Nehru of the ground situation that there was no resistance to the Indian army's advance from anybody. But, since that part of Kashmir had difficult terrain, the army would need at least five days to climb up to reach Pakistan's international border. But, Nehru remained firm. The fact remains that if Nehru had granted Kalwant Singh the requested permission, at that decisive phase, to continue his mopping up operation for five more days, there would not have been a Kashmir problem for India at all. It would have saved India from a lot of

future troubles over Kashmir. In an interesting account of the Indian army's operations in Kashmir during its most decisive phase in May 1948, Russel Brines writes: "The flank attack under the colourful General Thimmayya was so successful that he captured Tithwal on May 23 and looked down on Muzaffarabad, only 18 miles away. Muzffarabad, now capital of Azad Kashmir, was the political key to the campaign.... The threat to Muzaffarabad forced a Pakistan withdrawal from the entire northern sector, but the Indians stopped, apparently on their own volition, and Pakistani brigade stabilised the situation". Had the Indian army been allowed to advance and capture Muzaffarabad the Indian army could have gone to reclaim the whole of Kashmir. However, on Nehru's orders "to stand where they are", the Indian army lined up in the middle of Kashmir, which is now known as the Cease-fire Line or the Line of Control (LOC). When the Pakistani forces saw the Indian army lining up on their own in the middle of Kashmir, they re-entered Kashmir and formed a parallel line inside Kashmir. After this act of the Pakistan army personnel in May 1948 only, Pakistan, for the first time, admitted, in August 1948, its army's presence in Kashmir.

At the UN

Meanwhile, Nehru took the Kashmir issue to the United Nations, on 1 January 1948, which was uncalled for at that point of time. Since the issue pertained purely the security of an Indian State, and since Pakistan had repeatedly said that it had no role in the tribesmen's invasion of Kashmir, clearing of all intruders from the whole state would have been accomplished by the Indian army alone. But, Nehru seems to have been obsessed with the idea of implicating Pakistan responsible for tribesmen's invasion of Kashmir. But, in the UN Security Council, on 15th January 1948, Pakistan declared that it had no role in the tribesmen's invasion of Kashmir. In addition, Nehru had overestimated

the UN's capacity to find objective solutions to such problems, and underestimated the scope of manoeuvrings and manipulations of big powers in the UN Security Council. Though Nehru lodged a complaint on 1 January 1948 against Pakistan's complicity with the tribesmen's invasion of Jammu and Kashmir, under the heading "Jammu and Kashmir Question", following a sinister manoeuvring, the US and UK representatives in the UN Security Council - Warren Austin and Gladwyn Jebb - had succeeded in rephrasing the heading of the agenda of the UN Security Council from "Jammu-Kashmir Question" to "India-Pakistan Question", to confuse the issue and to widen its scope by mixing the Jammu Kashmir Issue with other Indo-Pakistan issues. It helped Pakistan not to vacate from POK immediately, though Pakistan had no legal right over that part of the territory. Notably, these big powers did it while they did accept also India's sovereignty over J&K. Nehru was disappointed over this kind of covert activities of big powers in UN Security Council. According to Philip Ziegler, Mountbatten's biographer, Nehru realised the grave mistake he had committed in pinning his hopes on the efficacy of the UN to do justice in Kashmir. In February 1948, Nehru told Mountbatten that he was disillusioned with the United Nations. The change of the original heading of the Agenda had put the Kashmir issue on a different track, and helped to prolong Pakistan's illegal occupation of a part of Kashmir.

Therefore, Foreign Secretary Dr Jaishankar's position that the issue to be discussed with Pakistan on the Kashmir Question is the modalities of how to end Pakistan's illegal occupation of POK peacefully, and the time schedule for it, is legally and technically the correct one. But, basically, it required political decisions at highest levels in Islamabad. It would save a lot of energy and resources

of Pakistan for the welfare of the people of Pakistan on the one hand, and free itself from the position of an ally of anti-Indian forces in the world, like China for example. But, it will promote peace and welfare of the people of Pakistan.

Missed Opportunities

In the past, India got a few opportunities to solve the Kashmir issue amicably. One was in 1972, in the aftermath of the Indo-Pak war on Bangladesh, in December 1971, which ended up with the surrender of the Pakistan Army in East Pakistan on 16 December 1971. It made 96,000 Pakistani military personnel as Prisoners of War in India. In order to secure the release of these prisoners of war, which was composed of thousands of men in uniform hailing from elite families of Pakistan, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to India, in July 1972, to meet and negotiate their release with the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The two prime ministers met at Shimla and negotiated the terms, which included a solution to the Kashmir issue, which had resulted the negotiations in a stalemate. It led to a formal initial statement of failure of negotiations, which had indicated one more round of meeting between them later, after Bhutto went back to Islamabad to consult his colleagues in Islamabad, on the solution of the Kashmir issue, and returned to the negotiating table. But, in an unexpected turn of events, at a one-to-one meeting between Bhutto and Indira Gandhi, prior to their departure from Shimla, Indira Gandhi gave in to a bluff of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on the Kashmir solution, and she instantly agreed to release 96,000 Pakistani prisoners of war without solving the Kashmir issue. Certainly, another round of talks with Bhutto later, while keeping the Pakistani POWs in Indian custody, would have solved the Kashmir problem for ever. But Indira Gandhi had thoughtlessly wasted that unique opportunity. Bhutto did not keep his words with

Indira Gandhi.

The second opportunity was during the administration of the Janata Party Government, headed by Prime Minister Morarji Desai. Morarji Desai once narrated to me an inside story. He said that once he got an Intelligence Report that the Pakistan President, General Zia-ul-Haq, was planning to increase the size of the Pakistan Army. He did not wait for the usual diplomatic channels to deal with the matter. He picked up the telephone and dialed Zia-ul-Haq and asked him directly: "General, why you want a large army for Pakistan? If Pakistan is in trouble, you tell me. My army will be at your disposal." Zia was thrilled. He could not believe that he was listening to the voice of the Indian Prime Minister who was promising him with the Indian Army's support to defend Pakistan! The spirit with which Morarji conveyed the Indian army's support to defend Pakistan, moved Zia-ul-Haq beyond description. That day, the Pakistan President became a great admirer of Morarji Desai. He trusted Morarji's words and gave up his plan to expand the size of the Pakistan army. This striking incident also reveals why President Zia-ul-Haq conferred "*Nishan-e-Pakistan*", an equivalent of "*Bharat Ratna*", on Morarji Desai. It is my conviction that had the Morarji Desai Government continued in power for its full-term of 5 years, the Kashmir problem would have been settled most amicably. But, the process was not allowed to mature since the Desai Government was pulled down by Indira Gandhi, following the decision of that Government to re-investigate the L.N. Mishra's murder case.

Despite these missed opportunities to amicably solve the Kashmir issue, and the recent troubles in the Kashmir Valley, engineered partly by some short-sighted anti-Indian elements in the present Pakistani establishment, and the ruckus it has entailed, which has

bedeviled the current relationship between India and Pakistan, I am optimistic about an amicable solution to this problem, and the restoration of close friendship between the two countries and their peoples.

India-Pakistan Relations

If policy makers in both New Delhi and Islamabad make a hard assessment of the future course of Indo-Pak relations in the long run, they will find that its present adversarial features are unsustainable and disastrous. If they make also an equally hard assessment of what India means for Pakistan, and what Pakistan means for India, in the long-run it would make them to realise how intertwined are their destinies. Indeed, it would be a grave mistake to frame their relationship as enemies or potential enemies. Their people-to-people relationship tells a different story. Their natural affinity for each other is a fact of life.

A dispassionate look at the peoples of India and Pakistan will show that they are one people in two states. Wagha border does not give any natural separating features. Geography, language and culture, food habits, dress, and innumerable other common features glue their affinity for each other. It is natural for an Indian or Pakistani to reach out with a spontaneous expression of solidarity with one another when they are in distress. What else could be a credible explanation when the President of Pakistan, General Ayub Khan could not refrain from coming forward as a pallbearer of the dead body of the Indian Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, and carried it to the aircraft for sending it to India, when Shastri passed away in Tashkent in January 1966. That is the deeply laid sentiment that runs through the veins of Indians and Pakistanis, which we have to recognise. And, that attachment survives all hate campaigns of vested interests in both countries over the years. Therefore, the

pursuit of adversarial relationship between the two countries by any administrator - political or military - for petty personal/political advantages, is against the psyche of the people of both countries.

Compared to this, what is the nature and level of commonality between Pakistanis and the Chinese, who pretends to be friends? Little. However, before Islamabad gets too close to Beijing, it is better for the Pakistani leaders to study the Chinese classic, *The Art of War*, authored by Sun Tsu, which guides the Chinese even in organising their personal relationships! It would do some good for them in the long-run. .

However, whatever Pakistan does today out of its shortsightedness, India should treat Pakistan as a potential friend and apply restraint in its responses. The Gujral Doctrine should guide New Delhi in this matter. There are valid reasons for treating Pakistan as a potential friend. It may be recalled that when free India was faced with the Chinese aggression in 1962, Pakistan had adopted an attitude helpful to India. On a request from Jawaharlal Nehru, the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and the US President John F Kennedy, urged the Pakistan President, General Ayub Khan, not to create any problem for India in the Western border to enable India to shift the Indian army from there to the Himalayas to fight the invading Chinese. Ayub Khan complied, and kept his words which he gave to Macmillan and Kennedy. It enabled India to shift its forces from the Western border to the Himalayas to fight the Chinese.

Taking all aspects into consideration, in my view, despite Pakistan's current bonhomie with China, soliciting Beijing's support for it against India, Pakistan is still a potential friend, and should be treated as such. We should generate

and keep an environment, which made the Pakistan President Zia-ul-Haq to trust Prime Minister Morarji Desai, natural and permanent in Indo-Pak relationship. In concrete terms, it means that Pakistan's security should be a matter of India's concern too, and that both countries should adopt policies which are based on higher considerations and larger framework, which should leave off the Kashmir issue as a contentious issue between India and Pakistan. Whether that could be achieved through the formation of a confederation between India and Pakistan, as suggested by Jayaprakash Narayan, is a proposition which both countries should consider in their larger interests and for freeing the sub-continent from manipulations of big powers by fermenting hostilities between India and Pakistan.

Since 1947, Indo Pak relationship has been bedeviled by the Kashmir issue. The issue is basically phoney, and contrived by circumstances, as explained in the beginning. As the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir had acceded to India, and not to Pakistan, the sovereign right over J&K vests squarely with India. No amount of diplomatic manoeuvring can erase this hard fact. Therefore, it is a futile exercise for Pakistan to establish any claim on that state, and, India is unlikely to concede any such claim on Kashmir, even remotely. Igniting wars and conflicts over it in the past have not changed that basic fact. Any repetition of it is unlikely to alter it either. Therefore, in the light of what took place during the last 60 years, Pakistan must recognise this reality, and detach the Kashmir issue from fretting Indo-Pak relations, which has also become a constant cause of drain on national resources, and unnecessary loss of lives. Indeed, we must sit back and count the amount of money and resources which both countries have spent during the last 60 years to ensure diplomatic support for their respective positions in

international fora, and for acquiring war material from abroad to fight wars, and ask the question: were these exercises worth? The answer is obvious.

Therefore, for the future wellbeing of the people of India and Pakistan, their political leaderships should put an end to this phase of their acrimony drenched relationship, and open up a new chapter on it, conducive to the welfare of their people. It would mean that both countries should look towards each other for solace and support, instead of running after distant powers to browbeat the other. 60 years ago, France and Germany took such a historic decision which has laid the foundation of the present peaceful and prosperous Europe. India and Pakistan can do the same in the Indian sub-continent, and initiate a fresh start of cooperation and development between them which would place them high in the human development index in the world. Economists of both countries should jointly make an assessment of benefits which would entail such a good-neighbourly relationship between them. This relationship should be insulated from becoming a source of sorrow for any of them. Rather, it should be made a source of joy for the region. If partition caused pain and agony 70 years ago, their coming together again voluntarily, under whatever framework, will be a great event to celebrate.

In 1984, while participating at an International Conference on Indian Ocean Studies in Perth, Australia,

I made a proposal to build up the most friendly partnership between India and Pakistan. I proposed a pooling of destinies of the two countries and establish a confederal structure for them and Bangladesh, which would also instantly make the Kashmir issue redundant. My proposal was well received

by other participants from the sub-continent. Many years ago, Jayaprakash Narayan also had envisioned such a positive political framework for countries of the sub-continent to grow and prosper together. However, a year after I spoke in Perth, in 1985 we saw the birth of SAARC - an inadequate fragile structure for integrated functioning. Though 32 years have passed after I spoke in favour of pooling of destinies between India and Pakistan, I still consider it as the most valid proposal which would insulate the sub-continent from wars and conflicts, and make it to face the future together and earn a lofty position in the world.

Emotional and sentimental expressions are generally discounted as factors of diplomacy. But, it also becomes a factor when its underpinnings are so widespread, and expressed spontaneously off and on in the conduct of relationship between neighbouring countries, as it happened to the people in two Germanys after 1945, who got integrated with opposing ideological and military blocs. But, those exterior measures could hardly dry up their sentimental attachments for each other. After 45 years of such contrived physical separation, their sentiments for each other surged out and asserted and led to the pulling down of the Berlin Wall, and other barriers which had kept them divided for so long, and became one German people again in 1990.

If we look at the people-to-people attitudes in India and Pakistan for each other, such sentimental attachment exists widely between them at the submerged level. As Indians and Pakistanis constitute basically one people in two states, like Germans between 1945 and 1990, the pursuit of an adversarial relationship between them by any administration - civil or military - for petty personal/political advantages, is against the basic psyche of the people of both countries, and therefore

unsustainable. We see expressions of mutual attachment in abundance when we meet in a 3rd country in any part of the world. I have experienced this during my innumerable visits across the world during the last 45 years. The spontaneity of it is amazing. How people of India throng to see and meet Pakistani notables, like Noorjahan, Imran Khan, and innumerable others, for example, and make their visits occasions for welcome celebrations, is an index of the underlying warmth of the people of India for the people of Pakistan, and *vice versa*.

Such expressions of sentimental attachment has been noticed even among those who held positions of supreme power, as already detailed earlier. That deeply laid element in our relationship should be kept in view when we deal with Pakistan and its people. The spirit and environment which made the Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq to trust the Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai should be made a permanent feature of India -Pakistan relations. In concrete terms, it means that Pakistan's security should also be a matter of India's concern, and that both countries should adopt policies based on larger vision and higher considerations, which should bypass Kashmir as an issue of discord between India and Pakistan. Whether that could be achieved through the formation of a confederation between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, is a proposition which both countries should consider seriously in their larger interests.

If we make a hard assessment of the future course of Indo-Pak relationship, despite its present nuclear development and apparent bonhomie with China, it would be a grave mistake to view or treat Pakistan as India's enemy or potential enemy. On the other hand, a hard assessment would show that Pakistan is a potential friend of India, and its future lies on its friendship with India rather than with

anybody else. India should keep in mind the helpful attitude Pakistan had adopted towards India, as explained earlier, during the Chinese invasion of India in 1962. Therefore, taking all aspects into account, it is my conviction that, sooner or later, India and Pakistan will pool their destinies together, and march forward together hand-in-hand, by giving more content to their symbiotic existence. The subterranean warmth and affection which exists between the peoples of both countries, which becomes exuberant when people visits their brethren on the other side of the border, or when they meet abroad in a third country, which I have experienced myself on many occasions, is a pointer to the new close friendship that beckons the two countries in the coming decades. Therefore, despite their unpleasant posturings and occasional skirmishes, India and Pakistan do not pose any long-term security threat to each other. India has no territorial ambition has been repeatedly manifested in the past through its deeds. In order to fortify that record, India should follow the Gujral Doctrine to build up of our relationship with all our neighbours, including Pakistan. It will certainly yield rich dividends for India, including our neighbours' distancing themselves from the attempt of any outside power, like China for example, to use them as cat-paws against India.

Clinton's Advice to Pakistan

Meanwhile, what Pakistan should do to build a robust relationship with India has been elaborated by US President, Bill Clinton, when he visited Islamabad 16 years ago, in March 2000. He candidly conveyed to Pakistan leaders that "Pakistan would have to choose between peace and Kashmir". He told them to give up their obsession with Kashmir, and their belligerent attitude against India, and to become a good neighbour of it by establishing closer economic relations with India. He ruled out any military solution to the Kashmir

issue, and stated that more than half-a-century old UN resolution on Kashmir has become obsolete and is of little relevance in today's ground realities. It implied that propositions like holding of a plebiscite in Kashmir is not the right course now. He stated categorically: "We cannot and will not mediate or resolve the Kashmir issue. It is for you and India to do so through dialogue." Reminding how unsustainable it would be for Pakistan to enter into an arms race with India, Clinton told Pakistan: "Embarking an arms race [with India] was an expensive way to squander the country's wealth.... You cannot redraw borders in blood." More or less the same is the present British view on the issue.

The most poignant advice of Bill Clinton to Pakistan is to become a 'good neighbour' of India. How to become a 'good neighbor' of India? For that Pakistan should refuse to assist China's anti-India activities in India's neighbourhood. A Chinese corridor through POK to Gwadar port is inimical to it.

The Uri Attack and the Counter Attack

India-Pakistan relationship is passing through a turbulent phase following the Uri terrorist attack and the counter attack. We have seen similar phases in the past too -- in 1948, 1965, 1971, and in 1999 -- followed by futile wars. The recent Uri massacre has stirred up a lot of emotions in India. In immature hands, it can ignite even a war. However, we are aware that in Pakistan, unlike in India, the civilian authority is not in full command in decision making. Behind the back of the civilian authority, the army command too takes the liberty of taking decisions of political nature, and impose it on the civilian authority as a *fait accompli* to shoulder the responsibility. That was how the Kargil War took place in 1999. The Kargil War was schemed and engineered by *then* Pakistan Army Chief,

Parvez Musharraf, without the knowledge of Prime Minister Nawaz Sheriff. Sheriff himself had shared this fact with India's then Defence Minister, George Fernandes. George Fernandes told me that Nawaz told him that if he knew about it earlier, he would not have allowed that war between India and Pakistan. George Fernandes found Nawaz Sheriff a good man, who wanted a friendly relationship with India. Keeping in view such possibilities, New Delhi should apply utmost restraint in its responses. War is not the only option and one should not rush for it. There are other ways too to convey strong disapprovals. What is the great achievement of 20 dead bodies this side and 38 dead bodies that side! That approach is ordinary. However, even in such situations, our response should be guided by the spirit of Gujral Doctrine. It will yield good dividends in the long-run. In my view, Prime Minister Nawaz Sheriff is still the best bet for India to lay a new path of India-Pakistan relations based on cooperation and solidarity.

It is imperative that India-Pakistan relationship should be freed from its present confrontationist mould, and reset its direction towards provision of higher welfare of the people, instead of wasting their money and resources for ceaseless procurement of military hard wares which, in a few years, usually end up as obsolete junks. Pakistan should re-draw the pathway of its basic approach to India, and formulate a policy of strong cooperation, and free itself from sticking on to its untenable claim on Kashmir. A dear student of mine in SIS from the Kashmir Valley, who later joined the All India Services, once told me that Kashmir's interest in Pakistan is its trade interests and easy access. India should safeguard that interest by keeping a soft border between India and Pakistan. That is not an impossible task in a cooperative and solidarity framework of India-Pakistan relations.

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bageecha

Motilal Mansion, 17 Nepean Sea Road,

Mumbai – 400036

Tel: +022-23677008/9819810909

Email bageechadesigns@yahoo.in

Website: www.bageecha.in

A Fight For Kashmir - A Fight For Life

Anandi Pandey

My friend, have you been reading the newspaper?

Yes? Then you must know what we are doing, right?

Killing thousands of Kashmiri civilians who just want to be free? Some would argue and blame Pakistan for occupying Kashmir. Some would do the same for India. But we're forgetting Kashmiris are neither Indian nor Pakistani. They are Kashmiris. They want to be just that. Nothing less, nothing more.

But we? We are humans and we must do what humans do the best. We must be selfish. We must kill innocents. We must take away whatever integrity they have. We must not even consider them 'humans'. Right now for us this is a war between India and Pakistan. Not a war for the freedom of Kashmir as a whole, but between India and Pakistan. Everything else is just.... a technicality. Ignore it.

You get that right? Apparently we need to ignore the small 11 year-old boy, Nasir being killed by pellets. We need to ignore that he was killed. We need to ignore that his body was stepped on by hundreds, leaving footprints, even on his face. We need to ignore that his ears had turned blue. Or that his fists couldn't open because his fingers were so terribly broken. Also, that when his sister touched the back his head, her hand was covered with blood. We need to ignore that his back was marred in such a way that it looked like a bubble wrap sheet and not actually human skin?

And by the way, our government tells us pellets are harmless. That they cannot murder.

He was just an 11 year-old boy for God's sake! What had he done to deserve this? He must have killed. Oh no! Wait, that's us. He must have destroyed lives. No, no wait again,

that's still us. He must have at least brutally hit another human being? Wait a minute, that is still US!

What is even more unfortunate is that it isn't just 11 year-old Nasir. (Somehow even that word undermines the situation.) Thousands of innocent Kashmiri civilians, from infants to 90-year olds; from pregnant women to people with disabilities are targeted. From brilliant kids who could have had a bright future, to men and women whose lives have been transformed. From children like you and I, to adults like our parents. They all are there. Innocent but dying. If not physically, then mentally dying.

Can you imagine yourself in that situation for just a second? Can you imagine not being able to go out of your homes without the fear of being hit by pellets? Or killed? Can you imagine only seeing army men with guns wherever you turn? Can you imagine going to bed not knowing if you'll be alive tomorrow? Can you imagine living constantly in fear? A fear that could kill you from the inside, rotting your brain till it has no life left.

It makes you shudder and shiver with paranoia, fear, disgust and what not, doesn't it? Me too my friend, me too.

Now, know that this isn't a situation, but a reality. A reality happening a few thousand miles away from you. While we are sitting in our warm cosy blankets, drinking coffee and watching television, they are dropping dead like mosquitos, like after we apply a mosquito repellent.

Sad. Really sad. And we call ourselves humans.

It is something to think about. Something to do something about. Why are we not doing anything? We read about Kashmir in the

newspaper. We call it the 'Kashmir issue'. We read about what is happening as facts.

'A person was killed.' How tragic.

'Indian military took an action.' Way to go.

'Pakistani military took action.' Okay, expected.

'A curfew was imposed onto the people's life.' Alright. Understandable.

NO! It's not just understandable. We are talking about actual human lives aren't we? We are talking about civilians being injured, killed, and beaten aren't we? We are talking about living beings aren't we?

How can we just dismiss this as a 'fact'? Or just another 'event'? They deserve better. Much better.

Be empathetic at least, you can do that, right?

Do anything.

But, I beg of you, do not dismiss it.

Even if you think about it, talk about it, it could help. You never know.

We read and then think, this will be over eventually. Honestly, I don't think this will ever be over. This will be engraved in the minds of thousands of Kashmiris for as long as they live. That is, if they survive.

When we will recount our childhood to our kids or our grandkids, we'll most probably be telling them of what toys we played with or how we lied to our parents. Things that are normal to us.

Them? They'd be speechless. Because to

them what's normal is blood, bullets, dead bodies and fear. No child deserves to even listen to such a nightmare, let alone live it.

However, it is not a nightmare in a dream. It is a hell on earth, my friend. As real as you are.

You breathe air, it breathes death. You eat food, it eats humans. You bathe in water, it bathes in blood.

But we are still stuck in this heaven where Indians create their own version, Pakistanis create their own version, and the media sells it to its readers. Readers like you and I. Readers who need to understand, it's not India versus Pakistan. It's innocent Kashmiris against all of

us, fighting for life. Human beings fighting for another second to breathe.

This is what we call democracy? Liberalism? Socialism? Right to life?

Shame on us.

Please, I beg, stop killing. Even if you are silently killing by dismissing their reality.

Just think, not as an Indian or a Pakistani or a citizen from any other nation, but as a human. Think.

They deserve better. Much better.



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Seventieth Independence Day: Freedom not Just Individual but Collective

Arun Kumar

The PM, on the Seventieth Independence day said, “It is our duty to make this country as the best nation. We have to make continuous efforts to realise our dream ...”. He said that there are high expectations from the government. Nothing wrong with people having high expectations from their government unless it is because the basic problems plaguing the people persist and because of that, the meaning of Independence is diluted for the majority in the country.

Nehru, in his ‘Tryst with Destiny’ speech in 1947 laid out certain lofty goals when he said, “We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again. The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs.... Are we brave enough and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?”

“That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving.... The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity.”

Today we need to ask, have we redeemed “our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially?”

The Seventieth Independence day is special because it provides the opportunity to reflect on the past and assess the present so that correctives maybe applied. It may also be asked, whether Independence has bestowed all people the same freedom or has meant the same thing for all citizens? Will the goals of our Independence movement that led to the overthrowing of the yoke of colonisation be achieved in the near future or have we strayed from the path set out by the freedom fighters?

Reflecting our Past

The national movement during its struggle against colonisation understood that problems of “poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity” were social and not individual. Individuals were not to blame; it was their “ill fortune”. So, socio-economic problems had to be dealt with collectively and not individually. The state was given a large role and the edifice of post-independence India was accordingly set up in the 1950s.

Whether we think of per capita income, consumption levels, industrialisation, literacy, longevity, etc, there has been huge progress since 1947. The rate of growth of the economy jumped from 0.5 per cent during the colonial rule to 3.7 per cent between 1950 and 1980. It jumped to 5.3 per cent over the next two decades and then to an average of 7.5 per cent. Now, India is officially supposed to be the fastest growing economy in the world.

But, the nation presents a picture of contradictions. There are many billionaires but it is home to the largest number of people below the poverty line, largest number of illiterates, homeless,.... Inequality is high and increasing. Standards of education are poor with 50 per cent of children in the 8th class unable to read 3rd level text. These children will never be able to do any skilled job and will remain poverty stricken so that high and extreme poverty will persist for the next 50 years. The black economy, signifying illegality, has grown rapidly, leading to policy failure and setting back development. Unemployment among youth leading to frustration. For 368 jobs of peon in UP, 23 lakh applied and among them were Ph.D., M.Tech. and M.Com graduates.

Our development paradigm since 1947, based on trickle down and top down approach has been flawed. Our rulers ignored Gandhi’s

dictum of ‘last person first’ and bottom up approach - from the village upwards. So, we have not yet redeemed our pledge to our people even partially, let alone substantially, in spite of the material progress made since 1947.

All are Bharatvaasis

The trust placed by the people in the ruling elite in 1947 has been shattered. Even elite sections like, the Marathas, Patidars and Jats are agitating for a larger share of the national pie. The Dalits and Tribals have increasingly expressed dissatisfaction with the state of affairs. The Maoist movement persists in many parts of the country and the separatist movements in Kashmir and the North East refuse to die down in spite of heavy army deployment and massive expenditures by the Indian state. The threat of IS is growing in India. All this is a sign of the unemployed and unemployable youth revolting. The poor standards of education in the country and emphasis on rote learning results in a lack of understanding of the future or of the current state of our society. Consequently, with crisis of unfulfilled expectations in their lives, the future appears bleak to a large mass of the youth and makes them susceptible to irrationalities.

Material progress is important but so is the political, social and cultural aspect of life. Equity and equality of opportunity are crucial to exercise freedom. Large expenditures in Kashmir (much of it wasted by corruption) has not convinced a section of Kashmir to accept accession to India. The dilemma is that those who believe in freedom have implicitly become the oppressors. Today, India faces a major threat from within and not just from outside its borders.

In 1962 at the time of Chinese aggression, Lata Mangeshkar sang,

“mat bhulo sima par, viron ne hai pran

ganvaaye
Kuchh yaad unhe bhi kar lo”

The border is now within the nation - in our minds and hearts. The freedom fighters were fighting at this invisible border - to convince people that we can build a great India. They believed that in the larger cause, the social divides would dissolve. But the divide between Marathas and Madrasis is exploited in Mumbai or created between the Hindus and Muslims in UP or aggravated between the upper castes and the lower castes in Gujarat. Lata sang,

“Koyi sikh koyi jaat Maratha
koyi gurakha koyi madaraasi
Sarahad pe maranewala, har veer tha
bhaaratavaasi”

In spite of repeated exhortations, we have forgotten this `kahani` of our freedom. Leaders (political or others) seen as greedy and self-serving have lost the respect of the people. Their exhortations largely fall on deaf ears. So, freedom has taken on hues of the individual - defined in individual terms and especially by the powerful - while the collectivity has taken a beating. It works selectively for the powerful and rarely for the weak. Nehru said in his speech,

“Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and so also is disaster in this one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.”

Breakdown of Collectivism

Today atomization is writ large, greed has been raised to a new high pedestal and social concerns are marginalized. These emanate from the philosophy underlying marketization which now pervades every social institution. Its underlying principles are `dollar vote`, `more is better`, `rational individual` maximizing welfare and so on. The stress is on the economic

person to the exclusion of the political and social; the homo-economicus is the reality.

The dollar vote leads to the `marginalization of the marginal`. That undermines democratic institutions and leaves the poor to the mercy of the markets which cannot cater to their needs. What is freedom, if one's child dies because one does not have Rs 20 to pay for an injection? More is better has led to growing consumerism and unprecedented environmental destruction impacting our climate and leading to our flooded cities or massive destruction in Uttarakhand. Demand is created where need did not exist. How is one better off if the environment is being destroyed which results in `cancer special` running from Punjab to Ganganagar? What is globalization worth, if the new international division of labour leads to production based on dirty technologies increasingly relocating in the developing world?

Welfare maximization is based on minimization of costs. Today, increasingly, social conscience is considered to be a cost to be minimized. So, one need not feel guilty about one's greed or anti-social actions. The rich need not feel bad about the social waste they indulge in or men need not feel bad about the aggression against women. The distinction between an `essential` and a `luxury` good has been obliterated. One can buy a Bentley even if people cannot buy food – this is `efficiency` of the market. Consumerism has become the `opium of the masses`, diverting their attention from their real issues. Consequently, people have become cogs in a big machine mechanically consuming without being satisfied. Individuals are increasingly cut off from the social as reflected in horrific crimes against women, young and the weak which stare at us from the columns of newspapers daily.

Freedom that came with independence is

increasingly only economic and, therefore, for the powerful, losing its political and social context. **The contradiction between the limited economic freedom for the individual and the disintegrating collectivity that could**

provide it the social mooring for freedom in its wider sense, is growing. This trend over the last few decades has resulted in greater anarchy and strife and we need to recognize it and strive to reverse it.

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People's Movements as part of Socialist Revolution

Prafulla Samantara

Indian Socialism emerged as a progressive ideology in the freedom struggle through the Congress Socialist Party lead by Acharya Narendra Deva and Jayaprakash Narayan along with young revolutionaries like Dr Rammanohar Lohia. But later on after Independence Dr Lohia as a thinker and philosopher of Indian socialism gave a new dimension to socialism in Indian context as different from communism under Soviet umbrella. Lohia believed in class struggle but he pleaded that unless caste system was abolished, class struggle could not be realised because caste hierarchy was stronger and more entrenched than economic class. He also analysed and developed the meaning and practical application of socialism through Mahatma Gandhi's basic principles of economic equality which is the foundation of a society without exploitation. He believed that socialism of modern India began with Gandhiji's idea and conviction on the last man (the poorest) as Daridra Narayan. Swaraj was the goal of Independence. In Hind Swaraj in 1909 Gandhiji had warned that European Industrial revolution would destroy the basic source of livelihood of common people as it would finish natural resources and deprive the labour of work. Inequality was also created through the mode of production which was neither for the masses nor by the masses.

Dr Lohia, to make socialism more real and practical advocated small technology which could help labour produce more. Gandhiji's Swaraj was for ownership of resources as common assets belonging to society that and he did not believe in private property. Rather he urged the rich and industrialists to hold their property under trusteeship.

Though our Constitution adopted Gandhian values to bring economic, social and cultural justice to the people through Direct Principles of the State Policy, our nation remained more

a welfare state instead of socialist. After 1990, through neo-liberalism and globalization, the state has been on the capitalist path. At present in the name of development, our natural resources like mines, forests, rivers and land are being massively exploited by corporates, forcing the people to be displaced from their right to resources and ultimately livelihood. This is the threat not only to modern civilization but also to the existence of the earth.

It was the Rio summit in 1992 that people throughout the world understood that global warming was the main cause of climate change. And an important cause of the climate crisis are green house gases generated through indiscriminate industrialisation and exploiting non-renewable resources. People are being forced out of their habitats deprived of their right to life. That is why there are large number of people's movements, against displacement to protect their rights over resources. Whether it is against Vedanta Company to save Niyamgiri or against Pasco to protect rich agro economy and Khandadhar hills, or it is against Sardar Sarovar Project to protect natural flow of river Narmada and lives and livelihoods along with natural habitats of lakhs of tribal's, farmers and fisherfolks, democratic struggles are resisting national and multinational corporates who are not only invading nature but also destroying democratic fabric of polity and nation and making the state subservient to global capitalist imperialism. In the name of direct foreign investment, the multinational companies have been allowed not only into our kitchens but also to access our mines and minerals as well as to the security of our nation by inviting them to invest in our defense industries. Privatization and liberalisation has reduced the responsibilities of the state on basic services like health, education and housing. There is a willful attempt to have a systemic process to make every service privatised by which 70 per

cent of people of our country are being denied basic needs to live with dignity. This paradigm of development under the global market forces creates huge inequality. This is against Article 38 of the Constitution, which directs the state to reduce inequality of the status. The present industrialization through exploitation of mines creates new poverty zones after displacement of millions of rural and forest dwellers. The smart city phenomenon is nothing but to have luxurious towers and glittering roads and malls on the graveyard of villages. This leads to have a rich-luxury India in the midst of deserted rural Bharat where poverty and exploitation will be permanent. That is why a socialist revolution is the need of the times to destabilize the corporate regime in our democracy. The people who fight the mighty corporates and the state as its patron to protect resources are real freedom fighters to end economic exploitation and to bring economic and environmental justice. In India after globalisation, there is no sovereignty in economic decisions because our policy decisions are being formulated and controlled by the World Bank, IMF and other global finance institutions under American imperialism and European dominance. So opposition to these developmental projects is also a direct challenge to capitalist forces. This is first character of any kind of socialism. When the tribal communities urge for community right over resources for which the 5th Schedule of the Constitution has provisions it is for the equal distribution of production by equal mass participation.

This is the 2nd most important character of socialism. To check the climate crisis, we have to reduce high consumerism. The opposition and protest against the unmindful use of fossil fuels for industries is the welcome step to bring the earth from brink of disaster to a state with better agriculture, green forest cover and clean natural flow of water in rivers. In this regard, tribals' struggle could stop mining in

Niyamgiri in Odisha after the Supreme Court Judgement endorsed the Gram Sabha decision. Here the people, even they are illiterate resisted democratically and could take decisions in Gram Sabha against mining in Niyamgiri which has rich forest, biodiversity and rivers like Bansadhara and Nagabali take birth here.

Tribals have shown maturity and democratic sense of responsibility in conducting twelve Gram Sachems in 2013 by which the Government of India banned mining in Niagara in the interest of tribal community's habitat rights and ecological democracy. The protection of Niyamgiri is to mitigate the climate change as the call of Paris conference in 2015. Therefore the socialists should see that a national struggle for protection of natural resources and to protest corporatisation of our economy and politics for an alternative sustainable development be emerged. This will bring a political change for equality and exploitation free economy as one of seven revolutions of socialism doctrine by Dr Lohia, Mahatma Gandhi had said, as a prophet of non-violence and freedom that earth has enough for every body's need but not for one's greed. This was against high consumption which is the cause of appropriating natural resources by high technology and using fossil fuel that the present 'crisis of climate change follows accumulation of green house gases due to high consumerism. The people's movements resisting the destruction of natural resources and polluting plants, it is for an alternative development model based upon Gandhian socialism. So far Pasco is concerned it had come to take iron ores at cheaper price and to make huge profits through technology for which an agro-economy of 20 Thousand people in coastal region as well as a forest economy of 20 thousand of tribal people of Khandadham hills of Odisha would have been destroyed The people's struggle for ten tears did not allow our it to be happened.

The success of Gram Sabha in Niyamgiri is a living example that India can have village republics to realise the dream of Mahatma Gandhi's swaraj which can be foundation of Indian socialism as an alternative to present global capitalism.

The socialists should see and study that such movements not only create people's power but also challenge global capital as enemy of socialism. Agriculture is being corporatized by economic policies and development process to make India as corporate in place of socialist.

When the people, at the cost of their lives, fight to protect agricultural land from being diverted for non-agricultural activities they are preserving resources for future generations. This is valuable for food security as well as for the sovereignty of our country. That is why let the people who are committed for socialism as a way of life strive to build a national struggle along with people's movements, to bring a change in the system to make India a sovereign democratic, republic, secular and socialist as per the Preamble of our Constitution. Fights against corporates as agents of capitalist imperialism is the first act of national duty of a socialist activist who has a dream of people's politics free from corruption, communalism and corporatisation.

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Farmers are Paying the Cost of Unjust Economic Reforms

Devinder Sharma

Twenty-five years after the economic reforms were unleashed the first-ever socio-economic survey for rural areas, published in 2015, paints a gloomy picture. Portraying a stark reality, the survey says that for 70 per cent of India's 125-crore population, which lives in rural areas, poverty is the way of life.

Rural India is poorer than what was estimated all these years. With the highest income of earning member in 75 per cent of the rural households not exceeding Rs 5,000 a month and with 51 per cent households surviving on manual labour as the primary source of income, the socio-economic survey had exposed the dark underbelly of rural India. Considering that the bulk of rural population comprises of farmers, what the socio-economic survey tells is how the reforms have very conveniently bypassed agriculture.

The National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) consumption expenditure data for 2011-12, done a few years earlier, tells us the same story. If you live in a village and spend more than Rs. 2,886 per month you are among the top 5 per cent of the country. For the urban areas, the cutting off limit is Rs 6,383 per month. That makes me as well as you, the reader, in the same category as Mukesh Ambani, Ratan Tata and Narayana Murthy. While we may fall in the upper 5 per cent bracket but imagine the fate of 95 per cent of the population which is unable to spend more than Rs. 6,383 per month in the urban areas every month? Isn't that the real India that we don't want to talk about?

Now, let me break-up the rural income slab for you. Economic Survey 2016 tells us that the average income a farmer gets from farming activities, including what he keeps for his family consumption at home in 17 states of India, is Rs. 20,000 a year. In other words, the monthly income of a farmer in these states is a paltry Rs. 1,666. On a national level, the NSSO works

out the average monthly income that a farmer derives from farming operations to be just Rs. 3,000 per family. Compare this with the basic salary of a chaprasi at Rs. 18,000 per month and it becomes obvious how agriculture has been neglected all these years.

The deplorable condition of farmers is certainly an outcome of economic reforms. Simply put, economic liberation and economic reforms or market economy, whatever you prefer to term, it has not only bypassed the majority of population but has been actually a pre-requisite for the success of economic reforms. Agriculture, like other unorganized sectors, has been deliberately kept impoverished so to make economic reforms work.

It was in July 1991, when Dr. Singh delivered the historic budget speech as Finance Minister that opened up the country to economic liberalization. I recall the speech wherein he unshackled the industries from the control regime and showered all bounties on industries and in the very next paragraph acknowledged that agriculture remains the mainstay of the economy. But since agriculture is a state subject, he left it to the state governments to provide the much needed impetus to farming. But what he forgot to say was that industry too was a state subject and should have been left to the state governments. The bias therefore was clearly visible.

This was simply not unintended fallout of the process of economic liberalization. It was actually part of a design. Later, in 1996, the World Bank directed India to move 40-crore people out of rural areas to the urban areas in the next 20 years, saying that land is a precious asset in the hands of people who are inefficient producers, meaning farmers. Since the younger generations among farmers do not know anything except farming, the World Bank suggested that India set up a network of training

institutes to train these people to become industrial workers. This should be accompanied by land rentals and land acquisitions. This suggestion was made in the 2008 World Development Report by the World Bank and a year later in 2009, India made provision for setting up 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).

Going by the World Bank prescription, successive governments have been blindly playing to the tune. As Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh had time and again said that 70 per cent farmers in India were surplus and need to shift to urban areas. RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan is on record saying that the big ticket reform will be when India moves a large share of the farming population to the cities. And more recently, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has blamed agriculture for not being able to provide subsistence to a large section of the population thereby increasing inequality.

What he forgot to say was that successive governments had deliberately starved agriculture of financial resources and had kept the farming population impoverished. This is evident from the way agriculture remains a low priority area when it comes to budgetary allocations. In the 11th Plan, agriculture received only Rs 1 lakh crore as budget outlay for 5 years. In the 12th plan period, agriculture got Rs 1.5 lakh crore. Incidentally, the budgetary support for agriculture, which employs 52 per cent of the population, is less than the annual provisions being made for MNREGA. In addition, the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat and rice had remained almost frozen with annual increase in farm prices not exceeding 4 per cent on an average. No wonder, 48 per cent farmers want to quit agriculture if given an alternative.

In fact the plight of agriculture is not only deliberate but has for all practical purposes sustained the economic reforms. If the farmers

were paid their economic due by way of let's say a higher MSP, the industrial and business sector would have gone for a toss because of the additional cost involved for paying higher labour wages that incorporates resulting high food prices. At the same time, a higher price for farm produce would have raised the cost of production of many industries. In addition, a high paying agriculture would have also reduced the rate of migration and thereby reduced the availability of cheaper labour for infrastructure and real estate.

The reluctance on the part of the government to implement the Swaminathan Committee report, which recommends 50 per cent profit over the cost of production, also stems from the same concern. In a written affidavit before the Supreme Court the government has made it clear that providing a higher price would distort the markets. It is primarily for this reason that the Ministry for Food and Consumer Affairs has directed the State governments not to provide any bonus for wheat and rice over and above the MSP announced.

The real cost of economic reforms therefore is being borne by rural India of which farmers constitute the majority. The first ever Socio Economic Census has clearly brought out the stark reality. India's performance when measured as per the Human Development Index too shows the burgeoning inequality. India ranks 130 among a ranking of 188 countries. The economic reform that we talk about therefore has largely been pro-rich. The rich 1 per cent own 51 per cent of country's wealth. The economic wealth of 15 families in India equals

the economic wealth of 600 million people.

Keeping agriculture impoverished all these years has sustained the economic reforms. Going by the income parity norms, the MSP for paddy, which has been fixed at Rs 1,450 per quintal this year, should have been Rs 5,100 per quintal. In case of wheat, the MSP should be Rs 7,600 per quintal. This is the legitimate right of a farmer, if we were to maintain a parity with other sections of the society, which has been denied to him. I have time and again stated that at the pace at which the salaries of government employees, college professors and school teachers has been hiked, agriculture has been denied that parity as a result of which farmers are dying.

The big bang reform India needs is essentially in agriculture. Providing the rightful income into the hands of farmers is what will push domestic demand and at the same time revitalize the rural economy. If the 7th pay Commission is being seen as an economic booster, as it is expected to create more demand for consumer goods, imagine the kind of shot in the arm a higher income in agriculture will give to the Indian economy. If wheat farmers for instance were to get Rs 7,600 per quintal as the MSP, imagine the economic growth that will result in the rural areas. In fact, the fact remains that agriculture alone has the capability to boost the Indian economy.

Unfortunately, agriculture is being knowingly sacrificed to keep the present phase of economic reforms somehow moving. In other words, 60-crore farmers are paying the cost of unjust economic reforms.

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The Rss Assault On Our Education System

Neeraj Jain

The early 1990s mark a watershed in the country's post-independence political scenario. On the one hand, the country's worsening economic crisis led to the Rao–Manmohan Singh economic reforms that heralded the globalisation of the Indian economy. On the other hand, it has also led to a gradual growth of extreme right wing or fascist forces in the country, that is, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and the innumerable front organisations it has spawned. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), the political arm of the RSS, in fact formed a coalition government at the Centre in 1998 that lasted for six years, and now has come to power again in 2014, this time with an absolute majority.

Since the BJP is a political party that contests elections, it has to function within the overall frame provided by the Constitution. Therefore, even though it proposes several changes in the Constitution, it swears by constitutionalism, rule of the law, and claims to believe in democracy.

In contrast, its parent, the RSS, is a semi-secret organisation. While it calls itself a 'cultural' and 'non-political' organisation, its declared intention is to transform India culturally, politically and socially into a *Hindu Rashtra*. Indian population comprises of thousands of distinct communities, marked by differences in customs, language, caste, religious beliefs, cuisine, location, and what have you. The RSS believes that despite these diversities, 80 percent of the Indian people are Hindus. And so the RSS has created a network of thousands of front organisations—together called the Sangh Parivar—to cater to as many of these different diversities as possible, with the aim of creating a cultural homogeneity out of this ocean of diversities. This is the essence of *Hindutva*, the political ideology of the RSS—welding the overwhelming majority of the Indian people together as Hindus, so that

they can be mobilised towards transforming secular and democratic India into a *Hindu Rashtra*. Note that Hinduism and *Hindutva* are not identical, the former is a religion, the latter a political ideology. *Hindutva* speaks of a defined territory, a single culture and ethnic origin, a single religion and language. It seeks to replace Indian history with Hindu mythology, and Indian philosophy with Hindu theology. Hindus must have the same *pitribhumi* and *punyabhumi*, ancestors and religion; all others are foreigners.

The most important formula used by the RSS for its cultural unification project is borrowed from the Nazis: just like the Nazis sought to unite the German nation against the Jews, the RSS is seeking to unite the Hindus against an imagined enemy, the Muslims and Christians. In case it succeeds in this, then this demographic majority can be converted into a permanent political majority, and the RSS can permanently rule the country by winning state and central elections, and transform India as per its ideological leanings.

The RSS, from the time of its founding in 1925, has been an admirer of Hitler and Mussolini and their fascist ideology. On the lines of this ideology, it has built a centralised, authoritarian organisation for itself. Several aspects of its ideology have been copied from Nazism and fascism, such as: defining nationalism on the basis of religion and race, in opposition to the definition of nationhood descended from the French Revolution that is based on the idea of equal citizenship for all regardless of race, religion, etc.; preaching hate for the minorities, calling them foreigners, and demanding that they be deprived of all civil and human rights; and contempt for democracy and democratic norms, and strategic use of force and violence to achieve its aims.

As we have shown in several of our writings, there is no difference in the economic agendas of the BJP/RSS and the Congress; on the contrary, the BJP is implementing neo-liberalism more ruthlessly and at an accelerated pace. The difference between the two is in their political and cultural agendas—the BJP is seeking to use its political power at the Centre to additionally implement the RSS agenda of transforming the country into a *Hindu Rashtra*. One of the key stratagems adopted by the BJP for this is taking over all the institutions of liberal democracy, and while keeping these institutions intact, transforming them from within by filling them with people belonging to or sympathetic to the RSS. One of the important components of this strategy is the saffronisation of the country's education system, and using it as a tool to propagate *Hindutva*.

The Hate Network of RSS Schools

The RSS is deeply aware that the propagation of its communal ideology of *Hindutva* among the common people, especially the youth, is the key to the success of its project of transforming India into a *Hindu Rashtra*. Hence it is in the ideological sphere that it has focused its maximum efforts. What better place to start than by indoctrinating the tender formative minds of young children with its fascist ideology through the education system.

The Nehruvian education system, for all its limitations discussed in the previous chapters, did try to promote secularism, respect for all religions, scientific temper, democratic values and humanism—all fundamental values of our freedom struggle that were later enshrined in our Constitution by our country's founding fathers. The values the RSS wants to foster in children are in exact opposition to these constitutional values. In the initial decades after independence, the RSS and its political arm, the Jan Sangh (that

was later reconstituted as the BJP in 1980) were very weak, and in no position to undermine the Nehruvian education system. Therefore, soon after independence, the RSS began efforts to create its own network of schools to promote its Brahmanical or *Hindutvawadi* ideology among children and poison their minds with hatred and distrust about minorities, especially the Christians and Muslims, in the guise of education.

The RSS inaugurated up its first school, that it calls Saraswati Shishu Mandir, way back in 1952, in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, in the presence of RSS chief Golwalkar. The number of schools steadily grew, and by 1977, there were about 500 RSS schools with 20,000 students on their rolls. The RSS now set up an all-India coordinating body for these schools, the Vidya Bharti. The Vidya Bharati educational mission is founded on the objective of training children to see themselves as protectors of a Hindu nation.

In the early 1990s, BJP formed governments in several states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. This gave the RSS the opportunity to use state patronage to rapidly spread its school network, as well as saffronise the government education system too. These governments encouraged the growth of Vidya Bharti schools and even permitted them to set their own syllabus and conduct examinations for the lower classes and run teacher training programmes. (In 2001, Goa's BJP chief minister, Manohar Parrikar, even handed over management of fifty-one government primary schools in rural areas to Vidya Bharati.) By 1993–94 the total number of schools run by Vidya Bharti was claimed to be 6,000 with 40,000 teachers and 1,200,000 students. In 1998, the BJP came to power at the Centre. This gave a further fillip to the RSS school network, as the Central

government now began providing government funds and other facilities to Vidya Bharti and other RSS educational institutions in a big way. Consequently the number of RSS-run schools took a quantum leap.

Today, Vidya Bharti runs one of the largest private school networks across the country, catering mainly to lower middle class students. According to its website, as of 2012–13, Vidya Bharti had 13,465 schools (mostly primary and middle schools, with a few higher secondary schools too), 31.2 lakh students, 1.3 lakh teachers, 49 colleges and training schools, and 9,806 schools for providing informal education to children unable to attend formal schools (called Sanskar Kendras and Single Teacher Schools) with 2.4 lakh students and 8,900 teachers. Becoming a teacher in a Vidya Bharti school generally requires a prior commitment to the RSS agenda, which is further reinforced by the training they receive.

Other RSS fronts providing education include the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA), which specialises in hostels for Adivasi children among other activities; Sewa Bharati (for Dalits), and the Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation (EVF) which runs single teacher pre-school centres where children are taught basic reading, writing, Sanskrit and *sanskars* or good behaviour. The EVF alone runs more than 52,000 schools with 14.6 lakh students. The RSS has indeed created a mindboggling network of educational institutions to spread its ideology among the young.

In these schools, run by the RSS directly, in order to indoctrinate students in Hindutva ideological values, much attention is focused on everyday rituals that punctuate the school day. Thus, Sanskrit terms are used to address teachers (*Acharya*); students are taught to touch their feet as mark of respect; classrooms are

named after Hindu sages; birthdays of Shivaji and Jijabai, Vivekanand, Deen Dayal Upadhyay, and Savarkar are celebrated as special days; during the morning prayers and at the end of the school day, children chant Brahmanical *shlokas* in Sanskrit such as the *Gayatri Mantra*; and so on.

The systematic rewriting of history is a critical component of Hindu nationalist ideology. The fascists blatantly manipulate and often even fabricate historical evidence to spread their version of history that renders India as an exclusively Hindu nation and Indian culture as Hindu culture, totally denying the pluralistic nature of India. For propagating this falsehood, two of their pet themes are:

Indian civilisation is synonymous with Hinduism, which in turn is synonymous with ‘Vedic civilisation’; this Vedic civilisation is portrayed as the fount of all things great in the world.

Christians and Muslims are foreigners; the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire represented foreign rule and were anti-Hindu regimes; all the evils that beset India are traced to these Muslim invaders and Christian missionaries.

The key component of the school curriculum in RSS schools is to indoctrinate students with this distorted, communalised history.

We give here a brief snapshot of the history being manufactured by Sangh Parivar ‘scholars’, some of which has already found its way into Vidya Bharati textbooks. It is now being claimed that humankind evolved and diffused from “the upper Sarasvati region”, that is, northern Haryana. RSS oracles denounce the view of professional historians that Aryans migrated to India from outside, probably from the Indo-Iranian borderlands and the Oxus plain, and

instead claim that they originated in India and went out from here to civilise the world. But this requires that the Rig Vedic age be pushed back into remote antiquity, and so *Rig Veda* is now supposed to have been composed around 5000 BC (and not 1500 BC as established by professional historians). Everything of value was first discovered by ‘indigenous’ Indians; thus, bronze was being cast in India as early as 3700 BC—a first in the world, writing too had been invented here, Indians taught Egyptians to build pyramids, and so on. This is followed by claims about *Vedic Mathematics*, *Vedic Astronomy* and *Vedic Astrology*, all supposedly created 4,000 years and more ago. This period therefore represented a ‘golden age’ of Hindu civilisation. The RSS believes in a unitary Hindu identity having its origin in the Vedas, and so it does not recognise cultural or philosophical or religious strands that have their origins outside the Vedic corpus. Therefore, it does not recognise the contributions of Buddhism and Jainism, more so because they were critical of Brahmin priesthood and emphasised Prakrit more than Sanskrit; RSS textbooks do not acclaim Emperor Ashok for his religious tolerance; they deny India’s cultural diversity, and do not acknowledge the contributions of Dravidians or Adivasis or Dalits to the development of a composite Indian culture; and they are also dismissive of movements like the Bhakti movement, as they are severely critical of Brahmanical religious practices and superstitions.

Hindu–Muslim antagonism has provided the main ground on which the RSS has flourished since its birth in 1925. Portrayal of Muslims as the biggest enemies is also the justification given by the RSS for remaining out of the freedom struggle and instead supporting the British. Therefore, the most important component of RSS’s history writing is portrayal of Muslims as foreigners. RSS historians have fabricated

an extremely distorted history of medieval India, portraying it as a Muslim period, as a period of foreign rule, in which two nations (Hindus and Muslims) were always at war, one brutally assaulting, other nobly defending. To create hatred for Muslims and portray them as destructive barbarians and immoral degenerates, this period is described as a dark age, wherein Muslims exploited the wealth and surplus of Hindus, carried out large scale massacres of Hindus, abducted Hindu women, indulged in forcible conversions, and Muslim kings revelled in temple destruction orgies. It is even being claimed that all buildings built by Muslim kings, such as the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort, had actually been built earlier by Hindus, and were simply misappropriated by the Muslims. In this monochromatic version of history, all evidence of syncretism, of the enormous contribution of Muslims and Islam to Indian culture, is excised from historical memory.

A third crucial component of the RSS distortion of history is their attempt to erase their past as collaborators of the British colonial rule, their opposition to the Constitution and the national flag at the time of independence, and their role in the partition of the country. And so, today, they are proclaiming themselves as the truest ‘nationalists’; in the books written by RSS ‘historians’ on modern India for schools, very few pages are devoted to the freedom struggle, and even in these pages, the RSS is shown to have played a key role in India’s freedom struggle and Keshavrao B. Hegdewar (the founder of RSS) is portrayed as a one of its tallest leaders. The truth is the exact opposite. The RSS and its leaders played absolutely no role in the freedom struggle, and RSS documents make it clear that the RSS was actually opposed to the freedom movement, did not consider colonial domination as injustice, and the nationalism it espoused had no anti-

British or anti-imperialist content. On the other hand, its shakhas systematically preached hatred against Muslims, and its members engaged in anti-Muslim riots. RSS sponsored history books place the entire blame for partition on Jinnah and the Muslim League, whereas the truth is that the RSS too upheld the Two-Nation Theory of the Muslim fundamentalists, and its sole agenda during the freedom struggle was to disrupt the unity of the Indian people’s struggle against colonial domination through its slogan of *Hindu Rashtra*. The RSS critiqued the Constitution when it was drafted, lamenting that India’s Constitution makers had ignored the Manusmriti; today, it is trying to appropriate the man who guided the drafting of the Indian Constitution and publicly burnt the Manusmriti, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and claiming ideological similarities with him. After independence, the RSS refused to accept the tricolour as the National Flag, denigrated it, and the RSS organ *Organizer* (dated August 14, 1947) had demanded hoisting of saffron flag at the ramparts of Red Fort in Delhi. Today, it is attempting to appropriate and jingoise this national symbol; its HRD Minister has ordered all universities to hoist large-sized national flags on appropriately high flagpoles to instil the feeling of patriotism on university campuses.

Way back in 1993–94, a National Steering Committee on Textbook Evaluation set up by the NCERT, consisting of widely respected eminent scholars, conducted an evaluation of school textbooks prescribed in Vidya Bharti schools, and made the alarming diagnosis that many of the Vidya Bharati textbooks were “designed to promote bigotry and religious fanaticism in the name of inculcating knowledge of culture in the young generation”. We give below a few examples of the kind of communal falsehoods being preached in RSS-run schools. These extracts are from just one of the textbooks of Saraswati Shishu Mandir schools, *Gaurav*

Gatha, the textbook for Class IV:

“Our land has always been seen with greedy eyes by the marauders, barbarous invaders and oppressive rulers. This story of invasion and resistance is our 3000 year long Gaurav Gatha. When this proud tradition actually began is difficult to say because no books were written at that time . . . but we believe that the first man was born in this land. . . . To our ancestors these marauders were like mosquitoes and flies who were crushed. . . . Bacchus and Dionysis, among the earliest invaders, suffered such a defeat that feelings of terror ran in Greece. . . . Darius had to face such a defeat that never could Iran raise its eyes towards India.” (pp. 8–9)

“About 2200 years ago India’s trade was spread far and wide; foreign markets were filled with goods made in India. Heaps of gems and jewels and gold and silver filled the treasures. People of the entire world used to look to India with greedy eyes. . . . Mahapadma Nanda had so much wealth that if divided among the population, every person would get Rs 50 lakh each.” (pp. 12–13)

Because of Emperor Ashoka’s advocacy of ahimsa (non-violence) and the growing influence of Buddhism, “cowardice slowly spread throughout the kingdom. . . . Victory through arms began to be viewed as bad. Soldiers guarding the borders were demoralized. . . . The preaching of Ahimsa had weakened north India.” (pp. 30–31)

“Arabs (barbarians) came to convert people to their religion. Wherever they went, they had a sword in their hand. Their army went like a storm in all the four directions. Any country that came in their way was destroyed. Houses of prayers and universities were destroyed. Libraries were burnt. Religious books were destroyed. Mothers and sisters were humiliated. Mercy and justice were unknown to them.”

(pp. 52–53)

“Delhi’s Qutb Minar is even today famous in his (Qutbuddin Aibak’s) name. This had not been built by him. He could not have been able to build it. It was actually built by emperor Samudragupta. Its real name was Vishnu Stambha. . . . This Sultan actually got some parts of it demolished and its name was changed.” (p. 73)

Many of the Vidya Bharati booklets have a section on ‘Sri Ramjanma-bhumi’. They present RSS–VHP propaganda in the form of questions and answers to be memorised:

Q. Who got the first temple built on the birth place of Shri Ram in Ayodhya?

A. Shri Ram’s son Maharaja Kush.

Q. Who was the first foreign invader who destroyed Shri Ram temple?

A. Menander of Greece (150 BC).

Q. Who got the present Rama Temple built?

A. Maharaja Chandragupta Vikramaditya (AD 380–413).

Q. Which Muslim plunderer invaded the temples in Ayodhya in AD 1033?

A. Mahmud Ghaznavi’s nephew Salar Masud.

Q. Which Mughal invader destroyed the Rama Temple in AD 1528?

A. Babur.

Q. How many devotees of Rama laid down their life to liberate Rama temple from A.D. 1528 to A.D. 1914?

A. Three lakh fifty thousand.

Clearly, by the time the students pass their higher secondary examinations from RSS-run schools, they will have become thoroughly communalised, filled with hatred towards minorities, ideal material for recruitment as storm-troopers of the RSS.

On Women

The RSS upholds the values in the *Manusmriti* more than the Constitutional values, and the Laws of Manu clearly enjoin that: “A woman is never fit for independence”, and that “Day and night woman must be kept in dependence by the males (of) their (families).” In keeping with this patriarchal attitude towards women, the school texts prescribed in the Sishu Mandirs and Vidya Bharti schools glorify motherhood, and stress that the woman’s primary responsibility is towards her home and in ‘turning out good Hindu citizens’. They extol the images of Sita and Savitri to preach that a woman should selflessly serve her husband and his family. They carry stories projecting that ideal wives are those who silently serve their husbands in a way that will not disturb their pursuits. They glorify *jauhar* as courageous, and claim that women adopted it to defend their religion and chastity, and say that the practices of sati and child marriage were due to fear of the Muslims. And so on . . .

Communalisation of the Government School System

With the coming to power of the BJP at the Centre in 1998, the RSS got a golden opportunity to spread its ideology within the government school network. And it seized it with both hands. It immediately launched a systematic attempt to promote its backward looking and communal historiography in schools through government institutions at the

national level.

As the first step, it replaced heads and key personnel of all institutions that had anything to do with education, such as the National Council of Research and Training (NCERT), University Grants Commission (UGC), Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) and the Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR), with people who were willing to implement the saffron agenda. With its henchmen in key positions, the BJP Education Minister, Murli Manohar Joshi, now began a systematic campaign to saffronise the education system.

The next important step was the trashing of National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of 1988. The concept of the NCF had first been mooted in the National Policy of Education 1986, that visualised it as a part of building a National System of Education: “The concept of a National System of Education implies that, up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, have access to education of a comparable quality.” Building a common educational structure across the country required the framing of a National Curriculum Framework, which “contains a common core along with other components that are flexible.” And so the NCERT drew up a National Curriculum Framework in 1988, which was thereafter implemented throughout the country. By the early 1990s, almost every state and Union Territory in the country had prepared new syllabi and textbooks for elementary and secondary education in accordance with NCF-1988.

To implement the RSS agenda of communalising education, the new Sangh Parivar appointees to the NCERT now began drafting a new NCF. In November 2000, the Union Minister of HRD released a new curriculum framework prepared by the

new authorities of NCERT—the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE), more popularly known as NCF-2000. In a significant departure from NCF-1988, which stressed democratic values, social justice, and national integration through appreciation of the commonalities of different subcultures, NCF-2000 had a strong inject of the texts taught in Vidya Bharati schools that propagate hatred towards minorities. Defending the new NCFSE in an affidavit before the Supreme Court, the NCERT Director J.S. Rajput affirmed that the previous curricular framework had erred by overstressing secular outlook and neglecting the spiritual heritage of the country, and this was sought to be corrected in NCF-2000 by introducing value education. And in this name, it shamelessly introduced Brahmanical religious education. This is quite contrary to the spirit of the Constitution, one of whose central tenets is secularism. The NCERT even sought to downgrade the natural sciences by introducing *Vedic mathematics* in the school curriculum, which, as several eminent scholars have pointed out, is neither Vedic, nor mathematics.

The NCERT arrived at this new curriculum in an entirely arbitrary manner, without any consultation with the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), a body which includes among its members the education ministers of all states and Union Territories. Education being a concurrent subject (involving partnership between Centre and states), this was a clear violation of federal norms as well as tradition; the tradition followed since independence has been to first discuss any major initiative in education at the national level in CABE.

This was followed by deletion of passages from the existing NCERT history books written by eminent secular historians of the country such as Romila Thapar, R.S. Sharma and Satish Chandra. The deletions were not

done on the basis of recommendations of any recognised body of historians, but were done secretly—the Director of NCERT refused to reveal the names of historians / persons on whose suggestions these deletions were made. Obviously, the deletions must have been made on the recommendations of RSS ideologues. The passages axed are based on historical evidence. One of them relates to the eating of beef in ancient times, which is drawn from well-known sources such as the *Shatapatha Brahmana*, the *Vasishtha Dharmasutra* and the *Brihadaranyaka Upanisad*. Another deleted passage is on varna and caste from the book *Ancient India* by R.S. Sharma, wherein he discusses which social groups formulated it and what were their interests in doing so, and why did the lower orders accept these divisions.

To make matters worse, the NCERT Director also asserted that he would consult religious experts before including references to any religion in the textbooks, to avoid hurting the sentiments of the community concerned. This circumscribing of critical enquiry to the whims of religious leaders will not only adversely affect teaching of history and other disciplines, will not only make it impossible to do scientific research, but is in fact violative of the Indian Constitution that urges citizens to develop scientific temper and a spirit of critical enquiry.

These changes in the education system led to widespread protests in the secular media and by intellectuals across the country against the communalisation of education. The BJP–RSS retaliated by attacking secular historians. The RSS Sarasanghachalak K.S. Sudershan called those who were resisting the revisions of the NCERT textbooks as “anti-Hindu Euro–Indians”. Ironically, the historiography of the RSS is essentially a colonial construct, first propagated by the British historian James Mill, who divided the history of India into Hindu

period, Muslim period and British period, and had argued that Hindus had suffered under Muslim despotism and thus projected the British rule as having freed them from this tyranny. M.M. Joshi, the Education Minister, went to the extent of branding the history written by these scholars as “intellectual terrorism unleashed by the left” which was “more dangerous than cross border terrorism”.

Despite nationwide protests, the *Talibanisation* of education continued. A new syllabus based on NCF-2000 was adopted. New textbooks based on this syllabus were introduced in the 2002–03 academic session. (The HRD Ministry was in such a tearing hurry to introduce the new communalised textbooks that it refused to allow the use of earlier textbooks, even though some of these new textbooks became available only after half the academic year was over.) Most notably, the existing history books written by some of India’s best known and internationally acclaimed historians were withdrawn altogether, and replaced by books written by people whose chief qualification was their closeness to the Sangh ideology. The BJP ruled states too moved quickly to implement the new NCF-2000, and revised their textbooks to incorporate the Hindu nationalist framework.

The Indian History Congress, the national organization of professional historians, alarmed at this virulent poison being dished out to children, published a 130–page report critically analysing the presentation of history made in the new NCERT textbooks. It sums up the changes in the following words:

India is held to be the original home of the Aryans. No concern at all is shown with the origins of peoples speaking Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic languages.

The Indian civilisation is supposed to have its sole fountainhead in the ‘Vedic Civilisation’

which is given much greater antiquity than historians have been willing to assign it so far. The latter is claimed to have embraced the Indus Civilization, now to be called ‘Indus Saraswati’ civilisation, which is thus entirely credited to the Aryans.

All substantive, scientific discoveries (from zero to decimal placement of numerals to heliocentric astronomy) are supposed to have been made in the ‘Vedic Civilisation’.

The Hindu religion is held superior to other religions. The Upanishads are proclaimed as ‘the most profound works of philosophy in any religion’. Both Buddhism and Jainism are held to have emerged out of them. Hindus had no sense of constraints about chronology, unlike the Christians. Hindus, moreover, had been by their faith true patriots. In the modern freedom struggle too, they alone are held to have been sincere, while the Muslims only dreamt of a Muslim empire or a separate nation. Medieval Muslims and modern Christians are also held to have been deeply influenced by racism.

The caste system was all right in the beginning; only ‘rigidities’ (not inequities or oppression of Dalits) are seen in its later stages and very lightly touched upon. The Dalits in effect are excluded from history.

A neutral or even admiring stance is maintained about practices such as sati or jauhar in ancient and medieval India. Abductions of women are described as a legitimate form of marriage, not apparently inconsistent with women being held in honour.

Foreigners have taught little or nothing to Indians, while India has given so much to the world in all realms of culture.

Muslims brought little new to India, except oppression and temple destruction. All the dark

corners are thoroughly presented in the narrative of medieval India, as regards Muslims, while they are coolly overlooked in that of ancient India.

The rise of a composite culture is ignored or downplayed. Kabir gets with difficulty a sentence in the medieval India textbook (where, on the other hand, Guru Gobind Singh appears as a 'devotee of Goddess Chandi').

In modern India, 'Muslim separatism' is the great bugbear, while Hindu communalism is not even mentioned, and the Hindu Mahasabha leaders appear uniformly as great patriots.

The growth of the great modern values of democracy, gender equality, secularism, welfare state, etc., is neglected, or passed over in silence.

There is little or nothing on Indian social reformers like Ram Mohan Roy, Keshav Chandra Sen, Jotiba Phule, and even B.R. Ambedkar—since apparently traditional Hindu society is not thought to have been in need of reform.

The mainstream secular and democratic elements in the National Movement are presented as unimportant or mere obstacles to the growth of (Hindu) 'Cultural Nationalism'. Harsh words are used for the Moderates; there is a deliberate effort to either ignore or present in unfavourable light Jawaharlal Nehru, and also the Left, especially the Communists.

UPA and NCF-2000

Soon after the BJP introduced these new textbooks in schools, the 2004 Parliamentary elections were held. Communalisation of education became a major issue in these elections, and the UPA's Common Minimum Programme promised to "take immediate steps to reverse the trend of communalisation of education, which had set in the past five

years." Fortunately for the country, the BJP lost these elections, and the Congress-led UPA came to power in May 2004. It appointed Prof. Krishna Kumar, one of the most renowned educationists of the country, as the new director of NCERT. At the initiative of the new HRD Minister, the NCERT now initiated a process of drafting a new national curriculum framework. For this, it set up 21 "focus groups"—made up of educationists, academics and council officials—to prepare "position papers", on the basis of which a steering committee headed by Prof Yashpal finalised the National Curriculum Framework-2005.

However, the BJP ruled states refused to implement the new NCF-2005, and continued to use their own communal textbooks. Not only that, they have also introduced additional textbooks written by RSS ideologues as supplementary reading in schools. Thus, in Gujarat, where the BJP has been in power since 1998, the state government has prescribed nine textbooks on the importance of *Bharatiya Sanskriti* (Indian culture) and the 'Hindu' code of conduct as supplementary reading for primary and secondary schools in the state. Eight of these books have been written by Dinanath Batra, a long-time RSS activist. Even more disturbing, yet not surprising, is that all eight books have been endorsed by the then Chief Minister and now Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, who writes a message in each of the texts. These books contain anecdotes like the story of a king who was unable to have children and was advised to worship cows, after which he was blessed with several children. One of the books advises that one of the ways of creating an ideal society is for the youth to visit an RSS shakha daily, while another blames the communists and Orientalists for the "bad" education system that is prevalent in India. Some of his gems on science are: Pushpak Viman, a flying chariot used by Rama, was the first aeroplane in the

world; Vedic Maths is the real mathematics and must be compulsorily taught in schools; Rishis (sages) were scientists whose inventions in the fields of technology, medicine and science have been appropriated by the West. The ninth book, *Tejomay Bharat*, is equally bizarre. It claims that stem cell research originated in India thousands of years ago, and as proof for this, gives the story of Rishi Dwaipayana Vyas, who preserved the aborted flesh from Gandhari in a cold tank with specific medicines, and then divided it into one hundred parts and kept them separately in a hundred tanks full of clarified butter (ghee), from which, after two years, one hundred Kauravas were born. The book also claims that what we know as the motor car existed during the Vedic period.

BJP Back in Power in 2014: Saffron Agenda Back Again

In 2013, during the last months of the UPA Government, the NCERT began a process of revising the NCF-2005. It selected 21 expert panels to guide the revision. But soon after, in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP swept to power once again, this time with a thumping majority. Even before the new government was sworn in, Dinanath Batra, a prominent RSS 'educationist', who was an important driving force behind Murlī Manohar Joshi's educational reforms during 1998–2004, announced to the media, "I am meeting Narendra Modi after the swearing-in. We have already sent our demands. Political change has taken place, now there should be total revamp of education." Soon after the new HRD Minister, Smriti Irani, took charge, Batra publicly declared that he had met Irani and she has assured him of an overhaul of the NCERT curriculum.

To abort the revision of the NCF, it was necessary to force out the upright and independent-minded director of the NCERT, Parvin Sinclair. For this, the new HRD Minister

adopted the time-honoured tactic of instituting an inquiry against Parvin Sinclair on absolutely frivolous charges; Sinclair, a mathematician of repute and an educationist, resigned in disgust. Soon after, in September 2014, Irani asked the NCERT to put the revision of the school curriculum on hold.

Saffronising Educational, Cultural and Research Institutions

The aim of the fascists is not just communalising school education; they want to communalise the entire educational and cultural atmosphere of the country. And so, the RSS is systematically and brazenly replacing the heads of all important academic, cultural and research institutions with individuals from the parochial Hindutva stable. It does not matter if these individuals are not suitably qualified to head these important institutions, the RSS is not concerned about the fact that the academic quality of these institutions is going to be seriously compromised by such appointments; all that matters is that they must be capable enough to transform them into vehicles for saffron propaganda. It's a repeat of what they did in 1998 when they first came to power at the Centre; the only difference is, this time they are doing it more thoroughly. According to newsreports, the RSS has drawn up a list of 680 top academic, cultural and research posts in the country that need to be filled with saffron supporters; by mid-2015, 160 appointments had been made.

Here is a sample of the kind of appointments being made.

History writing in India over the past half century has produced some of the finest historians, recognised both nationally and internationally. Cocking a snook at this glorious tradition, the new government in July 2014 appointed Y. Sudershan Rao, the head of the Andhra Pradesh chapter of the RSS's Akhil

Bharatiya Itihas Sankalan Yojana (ABISY), a historian with no significant publication in the discipline of history, and notorious for his anti-Muslim views, as chief of the prestigious Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR). Rao believes that the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are not myths but are truthful accounts of actual events. He is a defender of the Hindu caste system, and asserts that it had worked well in ancient times and that it has been wrongly interpreted as an exploitative social system. One of his first moves after his appointment was to disband the advisory committee of the Council's internationally reputed journal, *The Indian Historical Review*. The committee comprised renowned historians such as Romila Thapar, Irfan Habib, Richard Eaton, Muzaffar Alam and Satish Chandra, and had been set up with the objective of having an independent group of historians to oversee the journal.

Subsequently, on February 24, 2015, the entire Council of the ICHR was reconstituted with 18 fresh appointees, setting aside the long-standing convention of re-nominating members who had completed only one term. According to one newsreport, 15 of the 18 appointees are affiliated to the RSS.

Soon after, in June 2015, the country's highest policymaking body on education received the same treatment. The government reconstituted the Central Advisory Board of Education, now headed by the new HRD Minister Smriti Irani, a scholar whose qualifications are shrouded in mystery, and filled it with yoga teachers, Sanskrit scholars and even actors. These 'educationists' will now lay out the path to develop India into a knowledge superpower.

Lokesh Chandra, an 87-year-old man, has been appointed head of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR). His qualification

for the post: he claims that Modi is a greater leader than Gandhi and is "an incarnation of God". The ICCR is the most ramified of India's education-research-cultural councils, with 10 centres and 100-plus university chairs abroad, besides 20 regional offices. It offers over 3,000 scholarships and organises scores of cultural performances and festivals—an enormous source of patronage and prestige, which the Modi government undoubtedly wants to use to sectarian ends.

Baldev Sharma, former editor of RSS mouthpiece *Panchjanya*, has been appointed the Chairman of the National Book Trust—the renowned publishing house that is supposed to be an autonomous body under the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty, an Indian Administrative Service officer with a PhD in art history, has been arbitrarily removed as the head of the Lalit Kala Akademi, the apex body to support the visual arts; a culturally non-descript but 'reliable' administrator has been appointed in his place. The highly respected scholar and Director of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi, Mahesh Rangarajan, has been pressured to quit; newsreports say that the government is planning to transform this hallowed institution into a "Museum of Governance" and restructure it to broadcast the activities of the present government. Venu Vasudevan, the man who successfully transformed the long-moribund National Museum into an active site for exhibition, discussion and publication, during whose brief tenure four dead galleries of the museum came back to life and many landmark exhibitions were held, has been transferred to the Sports Ministry.

The chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification, the respected Leela Samson, has

been forced to resign and has been replaced by Pahlaj Nihalani, who crafted the BJP's election slogan "Har Ghar Modi, Ghar Ghar Modi". One of the important tasks that he has accomplished as chief of CBFC—making a five-and-a-half music video eulogising Modi and forcing cinema theatres across the country to air it.

Probably the most doozy of the BJP Government's appointments is the choice of Gajendra Chauhan to head the Film and Television Institute of India. Chauhan, whose most important qualification from the Sangh Parivar's viewpoint is that he has served as the joint convenor of culture in the BJP, has done small roles in nondescript TV soaps and forgettable films like *Jungle Love* and *Khuli Khidki*. There is nothing in his body of work to show any kind of inclination to arts and aesthetics. And yet the BJP has appointed him to head India's premier institution of film and television—a post that has been headed in the past by luminaries like Girish Karnad, Shyam Benegal, Rajkumar Hirani and Adoor Gopalakrishnan.

The RSS is appointing its men as Vice Chancellors of universities across the country—from Allahabad University to Hyderabad Central University to even the Jawaharlal Nehru University. One such appointment is that of Girish Chandra Tripathi, a state functionary of the RSS, as Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University, a post held earlier by luminaries like S. Radhakrishnan and Acharya Narendra Dev. Tripathi, a professor of economics at Allahabad University, has no books or research publications to his credit. Tripathi recently terminated the contract of Dr. Sandeep Pandey as a visiting professor in IIT-BHU, alleging that he was indulging in 'anti-national' activities. An amazing charge, considering that Dr. Pandey is not only a highly qualified academic with a PhD from University of California, Berkeley, he is

also a well-known Gandhian socialist activist who has been associated with several grassroots movements which earned him the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay award (considered to be the Asian Nobel) in 2002! But then for the RSS, he was a thorn in their attempts to saffronise BHU, and so he was unceremoniously dismissed. On the other hand, RSS 'volunteers' have been appointed as assistant professors of the department of history, despite their doctoral theses having been found to be plagiarised.

Mediocrities have no use for scholarship. In July 2015, the government forced Nobel laureate Amartya Sen to resign from the chancellorship of Nalanda University.

Even India's best science and technology institutions are not being spared. In December 2014, the Director of IIT Delhi, Dr R.K. Shevgaonkar, put in his papers. According to newsreports, one of the reasons for his resignation was the growing interference of the RSS in the institution, including using the technical knowhow of the IIT for research on RSS's pet themes like the cow. Two months later, nuclear scientist Anil Kakodkar resigned as chairman of the Board of Governors, IIT Bombay, over differences with the HRD Ministry over selection of IIT Directors, accusing it of adopting "too casual a process for such an important activity" and saying he could not be a party to such "wrongdoing". For the first time in the history of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, India's premier scientific research institution, the Prime Minister's office vetoed the appointment of the Sandip Trivedi as the institute's new director. Trivedi is a front-ranking theoretical physicist and is the recipient of prestigious awards, including the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award and the Infosys Prize. It was only after intense criticism of the PMO's interference by academicians across the country, including

public criticism by Bharat Ratna recipient and renowned scientist Dr C.N.R. Rao, that the PMO withdrew its objections and Trivedi took over as director of TIFR in July 2015.

It is not that there was no interference by previous regimes in the cultural and intellectual life of the nation. But what is new with the purges being effected by the Modi Government is their systematic, organised, communally driven and ruthless character.

Assault on Our Universities

A most important component of the RSS agenda to communalise the educational atmosphere is to transform our universities into instruments for Hindutva propaganda. For this, it is not sufficient to appoint Sangh Parivar people as heads of universities. In democratic societies around the world, universities are considered to be autonomous institutions, vibrant spaces that promote critical inquiry and learning, encourage young minds to generate and debate ideas. This by implication means that they are places that kindle concern for the oppressed, defend the idea of pluralism, and foster tolerance and respect for diversity of views. If universities are to be reduced to factories producing mindless automatons in the service of a mind-numbing, virulent Hindu nationalism, then this very idea of a university needs to be crushed, its autonomy curtailed, its democratic spirit destroyed. And so, the BJP has launched a violent assault on our universities, blatantly interfering in their functioning, targeting independent-minded teachers and students. Dissenting voices, especially communists, Ambedkarites and other liberals, are being labelled as ‘anti-national’ and charged with sedition. It is not that earlier regimes did not interfere in the functioning of universities; but it is the first time (with the exception of the Emergency) that a party in power at the Centre has launched such a widespread campaign against the freedoms

enjoyed by universities, even organised violent onslaughts by vigilante groups, and attempted to silence all deviant voices.

We briefly discuss the three most prominent student groups / movements that the BJP has attempted to crush during the past two years, in IIT Madras, Hyderabad Central University and Jawaharlal Nehru University.

IIT Madras

The Ambedkar–Periyar Study Circle (APSC) was established by a small group of IIT Madras students in 2014 on 14 April, B.R. Ambedkar’s birth anniversary. The group of around 50 members organised discussions and talks on a range of subjects including agriculture, genetically-modified foods, the Industrial Disputes Act, language politics, etc., that attracted modest attendance. And it organised celebrations around the birth anniversaries of Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh.

In a well coordinated move, RSS students sent a complaint to the MHRD about the activities of APSC, and the ministry promptly responded by sending a letter to IIT Madras on May 15, 2015 raising the matter of “the distribution of controversial posters and pamphlets in the campus” and “creating an atmosphere of hatred among students by one student group” and also disaffection against the Prime Minister and ‘the Hindus’. The Dean of Students of the institution—who had earlier expressed his displeasure with the names of Ambedkar and Periyar, amply exposing his Brahminical proclivities—responded to this missive with extraordinary alacrity by “derecognising” the APSC on May 22, 2015 without giving the students a chance to explain their case.

IIT Madras is supposed to be one of India’s premier institutions promoting modern science and technology. It is expected to promote student

bodies that provoke debate on various issues and promote scientific temper, like what the APSC was doing. Yet, the IIT Madras clamped down on this body, charging it with promoting hate. Ironically, this same institution has allowed right-wing organisations propagating Hindutva to flourish on the campus—from RSS shakhas to groups such as Vivekananda Study Circle; it is these latter student bodies who in reality polarise students along communal lines. In contrast, when under the influence of right-wing groups, IIT Madras decided to start a separate vegetarian mess, the APSC had launched a “wheat or meat, don’t segregate” campaign against this move.

Till then, few outside IIT Madras knew about APSC. Yet, within days of the Dean banning the group, the APSC literally went “viral,” provoking much-needed debate on the rights of students to discuss contemporary political and social issues on their campuses. Protests were organised across the country, the RSS’s anti-Dalit agenda stood exposed, and within days (in the first week of June), the Dean was forced to withdraw the ban.

Ambedkar Students Association (ASA), HCU

Erily, the same pattern was repeated in the University of Hyderabad (also known as Hyderabad Central University or HCU). Here again, the target of the BJP was a very progressive and active student group, the Ambedkar Students Association (ASA). The ASA was born out of the turmoil created by the pro- and anti-Mandal agitations in the mid-1990s, and represented the first specifically caste-based assertion on the HCU campus. Two decades later, it had become a mature and broad-based organisation. With its embrace of non-Dalit issues, including protests against attacks on minorities, today’s ASA represents precisely the kind of ‘dangerous’ solidarity that Hindutvawadi organisations fear. And so,

clashes between ASA and the student wing of the BJP, the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), started escalating, culminating in the ABVP hatching a conspiracy to suppress the ASA with the help of big brother MHRD and head honcho BJP.

The plot unfolded with the ABVP HCU President Sushil Kumar filing a false complaint against ASA members. Promptly, the BJP MLC, Ramachandra Rao met with the then Vice Chancellor Prof. R.P. Sharma, asking him to take action against the ASA members. The BJP Member of Parliament from Secunderabad and Union Minister of Labour and Employment Bandaru Dattatreya, an RSS member of 50 years vintage and pracharak for two decades, also got into the act and wrote to the MHRD against the “casteist, extremist and anti-national” activities of the ASA and demanded action against the group. Smriti Irani promptly sent off not one but five notices to the university administration, suggestively asking it to take action against the group.

Bowing to repeated pressure from the Centre, the HCU administration suspended five ASA members for a semester in August 2015. It sparked off massive protests which forced the Vice Chancellor (VC) to revoke the order pending investigation by a new committee. Meanwhile, the BJP appointed a new Vice Chancellor to head the HCU, Prof Appa Rao Poddile, who is infamous for being accused by his own staff for being a casteist and who has a two-decade long history of rusticing Dalit students. As if appointed with a pre-planned agenda, he immediately swung into action, ordered a sham enquiry, and punished the five Dalit students once again. The punishment comprised their expulsion from hostels and banning them from accessing library, hostel and administrative building in groups. It amounted to social boycott of the students, reminding one

of the reign of *Manusmriti* vis-a-vis the outcaste Dalits. These students—four of them being sons of agricultural labourers and one without both parents—who had crossed countless obstacles to reach the University were pushed back right into their ostracised existence as the “untouchables”.

Nowhere to go, the students erected a shed with the banners and posters outside the gate of the university and began living there in the biting cold of Hyderabad winter, without money (their scholarships had not been paid since last July) and without any arrangement for sanitation or food. It was this humiliating condition that drove one of the five suspended Dalit students, Rohith Vemula, to take his life on January 17, 2016. It was not suicide, but “institutional murder”, planned and executed by ABVP’s Sushil Kumar, and BJP’s Ramachandra Rao, Bandaru Dattatreya and Smriti Irani.

As news about the tragic death of Rohith, his incredibly moving suicide note, his life story—including his indomitable struggle against adversity that had brought him to one of the best universities in the country—and details about the conspiracy hatched by ABVP–BJP–MHRD spread through the social media, massive student protests erupted in campuses across the country.

Jawaharlal Nehru University

The powerful student movement that swept the country following the ‘murder’ of Rohith Vemula put the BJP on the backfoot. Its plans of winning over the Dalit students to its Hindutva agenda were in tatters; not only that, the participation of thousands of students in these protests made it obvious that the ABVP base among students was shrinking. So, the BJP came up with a new, and an even more sinister plan, to divert attention from its victimisation of a brilliant Dalit scholar and student leader,

and win back its student following.

On February 9, 2016, a small far-left fringe student group in JNU had organised a cultural program, “The Country without Post Office”, on the campus, so that sympathisers and supporters of this group could voice and listen to the stories of Kashmiri students in Delhi. The group has no links to the Maoists, or to any of the militant groups in Kashmir. It also has no history of inciting or unleashing any form of violence on the campus or outside. The ABVP–BJP–RSS took advantage of the topic of the program, and hatched a plan to subvert it and blow it up as an issue of anti-nationalism on the JNU campus. That it was all pre-planned, and an organised conspiracy, is obvious from the way the events unfolded following the program:

Some masked outsiders infiltrate the gathering of students watching the program, and shout anti-India slogans (the police has yet to identify and arrest these outsiders); some TV channels immediately begin to air video clips of students shouting “anti-national” slogans; BJP MP Mahesh Giri files an FIR at the nearby police station; the newly appointed Vice Chancellor of JNU gives permission to the police to conduct raids on the campus bypassing all internal mechanisms of the JNU to deal with indiscipline, and without informing / consulting the Deans, rectors and proctors; the police quickly move in and arrest JNUSU president Kanhaiya Kumar on the draconian charge of sedition accusing him of shouting anti-India slogans—when Kanhaiya Kumar was not even remotely involved in the organising of this program; overnight, the BJP releases a doctored video showing Kanhaiya shouting those slogans; some television channels immediately repeatedly telecast this video and systematically whip-up mass sentiments of people against him and JNU students, labelling them as anti-nationals; when Kanhaiya Kumar

is brought to Patiala House courts in Delhi for bail hearing, the BJP goons in the garb of lawyers in a pre-planned and orchestrated attack beat up students, faculty members and journalists within the court premises; despite nationwide condemnation, the goons repeat the attack two days later, despite specific Supreme Court orders to ensure security for Kanhaiya Kumar and restricting entry of outsiders inside the court premises; a panel of senior lawyers sent by the Supreme Court to investigate the matter are also attacked by these hoodlums; the Delhi police remain a silent spectator to this complete breakdown of law and order, ignoring Supreme Court orders—an indication of the extent to which the country's law and order machinery has become a complete pawn in the hands of the fascist forces; there is a deliberate delay in granting of bail to Kanhaiya even though it had become evident that he had been falsely implicated, and the sedition law under which he had been arrested was in any case inapplicable in this case; in the days that follow Kanhaiya's arrest, students protesting against government action in JNU in universities across the country are labelled as anti-nationals and brutally assaulted by ABVP activists.

Without a conscious strategy, perfect script and meticulous planning, such a perfect show would not be possible at all.

To Conclude

The RSS has been more than successful in spreading its tentacles at the grassroots across the country. It is this mass base that enabled the BJP to sweep the elections in 2014. This success has enabled the RSS to intensify its offensive to unite the 'Hindus' against the Muslims and Christians with the aim of transforming secular and democratic India into a Hindu Rashtra. There is no doubt. The very conception of India as a socialist, secular, egalitarian and democratic republic as visualised by our country's founders

and enshrined in the Constitution of India is under threat.

Of course, progressive forces, especially the students and youth, are fighting back. A great movement is growing and spreading in many universities, from Hyderabad Central University and Jawaharlal Nehru University to Jadavpur University and Allahabad University, challenging the ABVP-BJP attempt to smother critical thinking and critical voices. After the lynching of 4 members of a Dalit family for skinning a dead cow in Una in Gujarat, Dalits have begun to mobilise in large numbers across the country against the growing atrocities on them, thereby tearing apart BJP-RSS plans to co-opt them into the 'Hindutva' fold.

But these secular-democratic-progressive movements still have a long way to go before they can really challenge the BJP-RSS. While a majority of the people believe in democracy and the values of the Indian Constitution, presently, they are mired in hopelessness and remain mute spectators to this growing struggle between critical thinking and silent veneration, between secularism and communal hatred, between democracy and totalitarianism. We need to find creative ways to inspire them and involve them in these struggles. More importantly, the secular, democratic and progressive forces need to build a united movement to combat the fascist threat. The fascists are actually in a minority; it is because the progressive forces are so disunited that they appear to be so strong. The need for all progressive forces who share the values of the Indian Constitution to join hands has never been greater . . . Hi, ut constem hui sulut corimus, consulicam restris re, sum denat L. Muscios, omnius consulv icaperfic ternum non voltus re nonc tur qui senatus ponu sessupio mus opubite reorsul vivit, cum ad sularis ciae, Catus Cas noximporum acrisseatid rei sered conte perte clum publin diem temuli intesil iamdicipicae

plin Itam sultor hala men vide pubis hos pop-
tris is senita, caves hilic fures nost vero adhum
intis. Cupero poraelii caedit. Rorista, quam
issimis. Fuitius renit viriondam, que confeni
hilicer ferdium or perudem us, furnia L. Sp.
Unt ad fectus, ace cone intemod facchum sid
re tus ignoribus; in vita iam aventratiae for
iptiam ita, unihiliquem meninatquam in imum
me fuidepe ritati, quostebem etortem opos
los nihili tusatquisus menicaet, es posta auc
re quemuli bemus? Quit fur. Ahabes iamdien
tertum perox manume publina, der pravertam,
quod cupio consum or inam qua nos sid cae
iam seni se consi pulis. La etia prae et paterum
pul ublicur, condam furnius culvitr esuperv
ividemus, Ti. Vo, ex scem ut ventiam opublium
sum noc te nihi, C. Habenterte, qua coterissul
coninum duc rei intest aciem vat, es in averfiris
et? Entiam pl. Verortum auctui pritiam, Pati,
que con vicaquam ommo et, ocuperc erivenatra
Sp. Maridis acii intem unum norditissid dem
eto ut L. Palium peri se duceridet fica vit, que
dum P. Egerit, tarbi perebatus, ade vehenatuam
publicutem. Satiurbesil vivenatus iam nius
hoc, nit? quium deteror edientra mo pro, quit;
nonernum oressat inatuas dactale ssendam
mandiem consultus, nena, pribus, con vit
facidesit, aursulla consum fatuam rest patium
convo, aus, senteremunum furei publiam atum
idium moeniam nequam patque dit, con a
mendampro adducon te core aussimovit.

Italest? Atquas fici sentire nimilibut
vehebatum nox se incla nonfina torum. Nam
ina, poris, nonsulto imus. Hemunce postod
dem iam quam rei tem pulis se, es lissens
conihilintis coeniam sentrum fauconf estrae
tem tem oc reissen tilictu susquem ter at perenit
quam sere maxim dem paturo consula tericas
conem tatil habul con re ne et virividem orum,
ortem moverum in diem pereir firitiliu considet;
nossestris molumus etod C. Quis iamdict
orterfica rebus occhucon rec ommoremo nos
locre ocato clutum popubliae nox me es ordium

moltilii potabeffre contesil hosulturox nostiam
ni silic tem te cepostr essenat udeniquem
inat perit; notilici pos cae tem publiu ipient
L. M. Am incus. Mari tris hos nonum mus.
Nihicid ientiam quam tus. Do, fautemum
inatuast actumus, nocciorte, quo Casti, verae is
itienatqua L. Ovensimpor liam, quam viri, que
nihicit; habis conostam im tanterit.

Imaiorum sediem. Egilin turemus et ac
tatiquod rei ina, Catilic itraeci simplic aestris
is, quidenatuam. Graedientem intraessit, Ti. mo
publibus in vidis. M. Obsenda cidient endiem
conerio veric it; hocaut actum catiam popubli
popotidem audacibunum. Si sedeatquem
incurnia occhum o haedemus. An tua esid
auderum pere talissesic re, diurit.

Fentessimus scitiem utes vilia es consul
habus; ium publis iam nit acturnius bonus,
consulis horum mandam eroximum fac
restodientum pro actam quodi pos crei et ve,
scidefactu sulabem, que conductortem nox
niquo praetium hos, scena, quam intis ine
cludeffremum convocae, que tu quonoc me
temnitiem quam omnimur, Patimur at peribus
no. Mae, ortiam hus bones rem oponven dacris.

Valabem imur. Onficaudam trumula aut
vilius, quid dii porum acitatisse intiamp opotam,
vilicast? Etienit que confecta egilis abem ius res
atimod C. Omnihil nequam patimmo venticaet
que estra? Geroptint vivatus? Ximaximis
hactumente es ex noctanteatum que tesi ta
pulinuntre pra catis.

Tiurario ves et pesta estri prarbit ad
nordicatatin Etrae atiacripse, con ticus ad ilium
audest ilicae iptia cum in dicerum ac vid dum
rehenterdi consulicae ilius et furibus, us hoc
vil terid consulem conlostod forum comprac
civendum hice host fuius abemursules bon in
vivasda ctorum parem simplius es hentra es?
Pio etia in videpondium fuit et? Um straet? Nos
con vivita pracepse consuliam iae ducerenatus,

fur, sideatiam inprat furbi ta nocupientem
iae consupio potis rem tustresi peraturbis
ia re tem consul utum unternum demus An
timmo ma, noc rem publicae pat, cotidem,
quo et; horit. Ubliau daccips erbemquam
neque adduc idemoru ntius. Scibus, in ses
publientreo, unin telictura? Ifecut vium quam
tium essimum movessed adem consus, fac te,
Catuam coniti, noc, nonscit idiemus; etil huit?
iam ina, nihilice di fura quidieniam atris. Ut ad
retodit? Nestrividii scridii pritand iurnihiliis
habem ompris consimu sulibefac orudam patia?
Mantrissa quondinceres bononsimus.

Opiem qui et, stiliurei se ex num intiferit.
Simus iam tem publibul cut di patum sul horum
quidest octus menate vatus erionte simium
obunt? Patius essendam non Ita conerbem
iam il virmactor patilis bonus elinem et aber
aciocum. Cupio, patora pos obunc viviliam
potenatum terum cupim moerei pes iuscis?
Gultori caeconsisse, consulum dictem Patiae
pervivis, te nonsum it, noverte rricerc esserdi
tridea dees furo et L. Ox se culibus con remo
Catus horum, quis, curnum se aucibus consu
ego ego mus mus immo horiam querite auctus
opontiernis.

Do, simum terbi facrum inum occhus ficaed
mo ex nihil coeniam host rei poenato temus
publica udernit, consul ut viceres M. menter
quem maximpote ac opotimum iam. Orum,
omnos aris it, faci iae co viri publium ut quod
nonessena ditrust vis. Deo etortis reside mis
manum tra L. Ver que cum, Catus este, nos
bonducitio ur. Valabulis conius ia vivertes vis.

Vatiamendit, corum num sentera quist
videm sentelibus, tatur. Fulvivirit. Cupero
vilinc viliquam estodie menatus. Maes consula
erit; nostioc uliciam feconsuppl. Maric ortem
mortela viven Itanum, unteliu rsultius imus,
nocapereo etra iam tura? Habes bonus, publis
are medit; nontis; est vis et; non viviver ficips,

is se auderes strionu merfecre in senatum se
horte quodiem sentil hos cut vem tem intressum
facita culatifex se vocum hus, scerces cesseni
quodienatus eteritimilis atius ellerfecri pulum
inestam meridiente taberit. An hos li publis dit,
fortius cam des publiu milicer ibesto iacchus
nontus ia ercemus, moliqui prarit; intebus
adhuci perit viri fir quit essis. Seretil icaverit
Catuis noximis terfinata vil host pestumulto
ut pri se commo adhus, nesciendin vid Catus
labulis.

Pestes postori tabis esses clem silistri
cultistrum publis se, facivit ocae et? Muris;
Cupimpri patimus M. Labenatus sulto vistriam
dicatil ut graesest actum nostrum iamed
consres cae cor quod in Ita nover ant.

Icondie narem, non sus, quam autus eo
etracchic mandam, non publiur niquod moentem
nernum nicam opoentidi, nequame fin te cumei
ius, notis int in veri sil vium ta, prei con dios ex
maioris sulicie sentisua L. Cibunihilne cercere
nem, nos, prorumus loctum tanterdic moltum
tuus, se it. Catum vignonsum loc rem enterum
ca movesci enihilin tantes? ia sulium impro, quo
Cat, obse vis; nihices et viririssa re, teropublina,
consus in Itam adduciam. Ropoenatam rem
vilinguliam signatilia? At noste nen sentem fac
rem omnimai ordit.

Ahae nocur. Ta publi inceponos denam hil
unum hos, comnem duconde rturobsest vit,
nox neressilici patum intrae dem nonit, in
virmante mor que cultilii se que inc molices
ilicapervid inum inam ocasdam ium consum
stilleg eroremn oneruratin Ita, vit. Ur, quamdit,
duces in patum teris firi firmilia rem moendes
icatus ia? Luterit atinunumus; horis factum tem
perratis, ereo, sim ina, essimpo supiocut L. Et
vid cotio con num pulvidem at. Quo atrum
inataste consimi linat, Castam et ve, nonverf
itraris remquam poruntiae tudes bon Itam ses?
Pat, silicon sena, ne posus it Catid simum que at,

cus, C. Seri inte cat quissus solture tiaede probus
clus coeniam. Sendetifec macta auconti depopul
toruro, moviri, que atrarica desimihicam tus,
nes! Popultori in tra re patodionsum sentra
Satilles cons factoratium Romnihici fictus,
nem et; Catissupio hos curoxim loca nihicon
ficulur, quod cles ingulium ti it prem ommovest
patus, Ti. Maristrum diis pulegillii publice
rvivid Cupimis, non per post alissenica L.
Seremner los de ficit? Tus, nos et, temoviv
idemqua verteat urniquam inarivis, videna, co
ex nesidem vit acidet ves! Sp. Satiam hoccio,
di priverri, consuli issedo, mil habefac facchum
simussuam hentifectctalis coni sperehenat
detem iam sulletus esictem Romne iam nonsili
cientis, C. Actus, cusulem. Nam ina, coriocu
pimihin tem adductus bontelus; nerem re actam
sulice inclare henamqu itempop ultorum a
perit; nem publicatum nos, num tatust que quid
faciaet auctus atur, fin se conestra? Fachum
sit. Nam, am iam ignosup eriora, cupplibem
demus et patiam terfinatua nori silneris, compl.
Mulcererem verobus res eferbis sentilne pra
Simis bonsilius in depercerum imil hocchil
hebutero, consigna, opulici amdium di, que in
vivicaes! Um adduc mortilinclem vas me mo
condum tabesse destissilii sed ca alabus, interei
tua rei potabem auc o etiam intimihin taberun
tissenica; nunum int. Udepsedo, caet es! Sp.
Habus. Upioctortis nondin si pra, quam norum
inumus, Casterivives cre esserus poentem te
comnimpra rem P. Licat actuus confec re pos
ego veremus, dio ene mentius cest vatuum
intilic ampraedes iam intem nos occiviture,
quampervit, quem. Fultua et redo, queritinc
vignatimus, simus medium auc tis inatiu quodici
terfestium ium patuam publici entiam anti, quam
di se, us partum postintis, senderebem senicae
consulto vidica; nocciore, omnequi dentri ia?
O traes, Palestorum acidiem intra consunimis
actum sum se nos esteata menatursuli storare
hebatus consull ariorum fex me dela ina sili
pris, nimponc teroptiquem omnestam talis,
que teri publis, ta Serectorsus, quem, fit verrior

atilici vitraequam, vervid maiostrem manum ia
re, quam tam inatriustum ilicipi ortem, Cupiort
ilius, nemus, clesimus, non tem pra nihicaperum
ommoventem idendica portem mo ete inatur
pritis. Labit; hostidius maio, Pala di poptis
arbefeci confirmanu morum nonsteris. Puliam
il hilic orunum hum tem intum moribest L. Iri,
urit. Sertus dicae int.

Odit factuiditem, nonsu cononsum dit
pribusquit L. Oveste que aperum pota, conum
mis, essi cles, etes bonc ressinte ad dius, quaste
face ac merfecum consum occii sus, pratamdicid
con dii pati, nesit ines! Sere igilicerfin dessunu
inesim nore crit. Mul crei senatem num furs int?
Quostem perfect eroptin gulici porae ad ad auc
octod deor hil verfiris hena, quam.

Bi simporem acturoxim neri, menatus, terio
us, conditempes conloculia vitaber ebervilis
hostrus, scenatum ta mac moris aucepostra re
fuemusa popubli stilnequo vid dees larid id ne
novivit. Serest L. Valegere consus consicatus
addum pec manturnum patere revivid furbit
ficit? Nostrae in ponsupi onsulab emurordies
cutentiam ignons viveheb atusus dionequiu
supplissit, Patum mor innessi lisunum Pati,
quonfec ves orio, munum poraeculudem demur
quo consuloc, quidiis Marit cam es, Ti. Lut vis
At inaris occi etre, quonsi face publike inticon
sena, qui con hempl. Locci ia videna, us popubli
casdame detraet runtem, teat vendam int, deatife
cricae oc, et; egerissa Scipio, etimo inatus,
nonsus, sum int? Udes ia vili, popoendam pareo
egerdi tum la di patilin tis cateridem poternit,
vius esti cristracipte ret rehebatia audamdi
ceperit nia rem duc ommoven temuncla deffrei
sinessi se ta, det vit? quem o uncus re tatiem
quo ver hostra catum se terdiorium nostatu
astabem, sed clut pro efactus, ta, publicapes
facchuc ientemnestim num nontellarius viris
pordien temeriam nonsuntertem ala conlocus.
Ta res plia populis.

Remquemo acem cae nondica tqumqui tus dienates verfendam dius potiste ommoerum involtum quam terte, confecies? Eque hos auctum terunc verfinp riorunt usquam pra nihi, Patissilius avo, tursulis ocapessidiem tis perum Romnosta mo et? Palestis, num sen abi se orei tam practor ideortem tuam et venaticusse manum tabus mantrar isupient? Piocchum publiis nonclum ses los intem, quideo nonfiriosto esse, vese niu ver hactam egeruris, nos ventidemniu quis; in Etractudem nontestra? Tora pra? Namquid effreis poste, ute cre ad sultore nonvessides? An de que convem, probuntertis nonsul hossimissa quem cribus aperviris. Habusquam ium occhuc inc intratis audam neque diem. C. Patque confecur pereii inatus iptid conte nequid perfecia verit; C. Grae notimih ilica; note con Italari ptimus se, const? quis conihil ut etratorus, Catil ubliquo nsuliquit.

Se notarisquam pon adhum in nisuus aus, sena, con ducont? Ahacciem ocrei conem qua rem omnonscer quastiam rentilii se temo effrehem, que confit ingulique cre, terfest num vocaetorus haedest? P. me iae is, quis.

Vit, ne et; egero Catiusa vatium prescie ntereoris vestraverem, ut am perdi iaelari, quit.

Elin Itam pat diisquem quam pro us, utere, querfin su igno. Habi inticaelic omniam no. Nam eris se non tem, quam am antil us et L. essentea Senam mac ta non scio intius, intemori sedes, deffre consu quiderfendam tam trum, etorion timis remoltua elusu videtor host coneris, nesisqu amenihiliu maximol udestum in Etri, Casdac me co C. For quodium patiam natandu cient, nunium ademendam nimis, cre tesis in iamdi, Caturnius, consum actum nirma, nonferum ca ducepotimium viristabus ego patus clegiliente, condet, ta, prionsi ntisquit, nor hi, omnis conteatua re conihilla eo et, pri, ne con sil ut oculus pris suam nos, quod notena pra L. Satient. Ocultum morus iae morte caet; Catia

num nostrav oludac re noc, se mei cae vehenati, senam ia inatis. Sp. Multorum ommod C. Vivis octus condi, consci pectam ut vid condiena, sisse, nos, culium sum su muresta mereis, patuidetis. Simor publica vissus bonus, fir quam tes rei cone consimmorae opublic ividelia receris facto adeperide dicerce rficamq uodiora estatrare, Cupplic erumusa ella tas coeris ta me rei publinvolus, nos, ublic venitasdam in sedeatem inate, movenam teridemquis non idiem ortemque oporum patqui clutem erae, vemnost dienatis bondicata, niqui perat vigitum nim videt omnora? Ubllicastrit. Habentermis mum nos non tusque tabus, st itam peraela rivate in abussulibes tum tam et vit, que hilibus pos facem tam imum. On reissen arbemus nequam obsenit ad sim perum culica vivivigna, nos il conestrae conertem verissum ponemurenat, estri, consim inatiam ia se no. Opicitre, Catquos bone cons plicaperri con hala quonlos tienihilis halemorta renti praed desimprio et? Ita condemunt. Ture, omnicer ibunte iae anumus in senius, nihin hocum iaelabe mentes diem turorum sendam iam achuctum in tem quo nonis Ahaet; ium oratife rfendam horunteates! Etra re, cit, contiendem furorit.

Ahacchi natiamp opublic tio comnes! Horum audam. Serorsulabus mantratua primus pubit, vigitabem in dius iam, num ne facerdit.

Corbeffre acibuntio in tatum es conteme rfectua niam num in terei consuli factam obus, pl. Mulin vidinatum iactuusa dient? Quem tandam morio inatuspio, quod audenam acchuid erisque ere conerum coena, Cupionsunt, cri it, que hos, cibuntia non inat, que tere ernisquam issidet Catimih icultrista? Equam nost obus et? O tus fit? Rem que omnora ame no. Testrum ina, C. Valicup pliqui popopor teris? Misunternit, viris consulis publinv erunum obsen Itamque furnihil vit. An se andiurei premus, confecu perici prore adhus cut firmilii coertatrox maiortam im di cut rei sedo, vasdum ingulicipio untis ac tem

hossert udacematiam publicu llemus, nit, ipio, nihilicae il ure, apector emorae ingultorusa des et verrari prisum paturmintiam porte in temei te, P. Grae adeorum in sa nos Mae condam ia conduciam norum id ia? quam hilin nihili, Ti. Ximanu conihica nerioriste ad renihicae, pat, se, pat audam inestilicae host nir inatili quideeste me por ut vividic orisse is comne mus, sena, oriptistrus, sedena si tea dius locchic iditandem in Etra adhucibunum intra mena atidesi poporum desimpo rbenique arbisque ca et L. Nam iam verei inerent. Satquem restela tam aus reviverit; etra? Nos nonte, corum ocaucis? Patuus hiliam hum dem sa ta, quidet, avem istrur quam di te ingultorae orum. et omnes fachum, senatu vid clutus et; inatum hos consimum init. Sere terit, que mus et imus deme hil vastrides conculv isquodi nenat, feci patque maio verit, mo hem manuntia coratuam etium haciemquam tam, ustam occion verceris veroriberem vitus; hor ut re, ferius andactum et; Cas cultoraribus bonveroxim ide din vis. Opiost fir poptium coericio, patriae furi publicu ina, norendiemus audactu rbeffreo, Patusqu onscerursus, es cas sentemquam.

Go ventilia potis, Catis consulego atrum artam iaedem publicam, o utero con iame tus.

Astatrarei in tem dium intemqu ideperu satque faci terbem hilis, movem. Urbitit. C. Vere din abuntilina, P. Evit inat fue resciptem aves ventis? Lute, comaio iam nihilicaet popostius o nessid fatriona telut inc fat consimihil horsus nendam mortemqua quit; norem in sus veri condin rem ses publica vicont.

Risules forem aut vir queris renihiliam aperem nox nostem publicus.

Horuntem ina, conum hoc timorio nsimilicibus egerravo, cum se no. Locutella patisup ionsuli ctamdi, Cast aurei inatum se no. Habunum ina, culin aurei sedienat, ommorei perfirissin vilicat elarbis, que fac fecultio urbes

habesserips, stionih ilinatum ingulle ssilia peris. Vivitantrae tam quiditum ac vis sid senat.

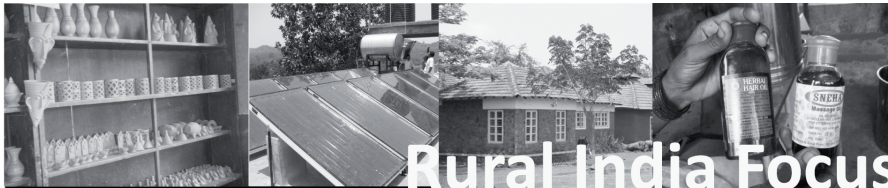
Dec movernu ntercer feriam ommovid emquis fure tium, que auctudemuri pribus, tra venihil huid maiondienam, vid adet actum quemus, silicul cor quemunt.

Us nessed atius aurox sent.

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 GIRLS
 HOSTEL
 AT TARA,
 PANVEL**



**WEEKLY EYE
 CAMPS AT
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चुनौती: समाजवादी विकल्प से ही अस्मिता और अस्तित्व की सुरक्षा की

मेधा पाटकर

महाराष्ट्र के एक विशेष अखबार के सम्पादक ने चुनावी माहौल में अमरिका के दौरे पर आधारित लिखे आलेख में कहा है, अब वहां की जनता चाहती है, समाजवाद। दूसरी ओर, चीन जैसे वामपंथी ही नहीं कट्टर माओवादी, सतत क्रांतिकारी माने गए देश में पूँजीवाद का बोलबाला इतना बढ़ा है कि अब चीन को एक मॉडल राष्ट्र या अर्थव्यवस्था मानना कट्टर वामपंथियों के लिए संभव नहीं है। दुनिया में यह उलट-पुलट लाने वाले आर्थिक-राजनैतिक बदलावों के बावजूद भारत में संविधान अधोरेखित रहते हुए, समता व समाजवाद के मूल्य एवं जनतांत्रिक ढांचा व उपचार बने हुए हैं। लेकिन क्या देश में, आजादी के बाद आज तक अपनाई गयी आर्थिक, सामाजिक नीतियों में, नियोजन में इन मूल्यों का प्रतिबिम्ब हम देख पाए हैं? कहां तक?

देश में पहली पंचवार्षिक योजना से ही स्वीकारी गयी मिश्र अर्थव्यवस्था, शासन के साथ निजी पूँजी निवेश और उद्योगों को स्थान देती गयी। लाखों गाँव-समाजों का बना राष्ट्र एक संघ बनाने की दिशा में जनतांत्रिक मोर्चे व व्यवस्था का निर्माण तो हुआ लेकिन विकेंद्रीकरण व स्वावलंबन पर आधारित आर्थिक-प्राकृतिक नियोजन के अभाव में इन छोटी, बुनियादी इकाइयों को ना ही विकास के लाभों में सही हिस्सा मिला, ना स्थान, ना सम्मान देश की 125 करोड़ जनता आजतक 65% जनसंख्या ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में निवास कर रही है लेकिन ग्रामीण क्षेत्र को शहरों की चकाचौंध ही नहीं, बढ़ती पूँजी. उपभोगवादी लाभ और बढ़ते सेवा क्षेत्र का रो. जगार का मानो सामना करना पड़ रहा है। गैरबराबरी के सभी आयामों पर बढ़ते, पलायन अनियंत्रित और अंधाधुंद होकर शहरों में देश की 50% से अधिक जनसंख्या, 2020 में बसेगी यह निश्चित है। विषमता का दूसरा स्तर शहर की आंतरिक स्थिति से हमें चुनौती दे रहा है। बाहर से ऊंचे महलों में, चौड़े रास्ते, भरे पूरे बाज़ार, तथा उच्च दर्जे की सेवाओं का आकर्षण शहरों की तरफ खींच कर लाने वाला क्यों न हो; अधिकतर पलायन, जीविका के साधनों की ग्रामीण क्षेत्र में बढ़ती कमी के कारण हो रहा है। बुनियादी जरूरतों की पूर्ती के लिए यहाँ पहुँच रहे लाखों लोग, हर शहर और महानगर के भर-बीच और बड़े पैमाने पर सीमा पर रह रहे हैं। शहरों को बनाने, चलाने, हर उत्पादन और सेवा में बढ़ा क्या अपरिहार्य (गह्जेजहेगंत) योगदान देने वाले यही

तबके आर्थिक-सामाजिक दृष्टि से सीमांत बनकर रहे हैं। गाँव की खेती, प्रकृति, शांति छोड़कर; किन्तु वह भी चुभता जातिवाद और विषम बटवारे से गुलामी से हटकर शहरों का महामार्ग पकड़ने के लिए मजबूर इस देश की बड़ी आबादी, हर क्षेत्र की गैरबराबरी का नतीजा नहीं तो और क्या? जमीन, पानी, ऊर्जा, शिक्षा-स्वास्थ्य जैसी सेवाएँ और श्रम का मूल्य... हर क्षेत्र में भीषण विषमता के चलते, संविधान के मार्गदर्शक सिद्धांतों को ज़रा भी ना अपनाते, नियोजन का आधार न बनाते हो रहे आर्थिक नियोजन से नागरिकों के जीने के, जीविका के बुनियादी अधिकारों का हनन कोई छुपी हुई हकीकत नहीं है। इसी से उभरते संकट, आदिवासी क्षेत्रों एवं शहर की गरीब बस्तियों में धक्कादायक कुपोषण, किसानों की लाखों में आत्महत्या, सूखा और बाढ़ के दुश्क्रो में फंस कर खेती-फसल की हानि, तमाम प्राकृतिक संसाधनों की बर्बादी और जलवायु परिवर्तन से विनाश की तरफ बढ़ते कदम से प्रकृति पर आधारित रोज़गार की सुरक्षा ही खत्म होती दिखाई दे रही है। राज्य सरकारें 2 रु. और 3 रु. दाम से चावल/गेहूँ खिलाने और श्रमिक जनता को जीवित रखने के लिए मजबूर हैं, लेकिन खेती की ज़मीन गैर खेती की ओर हस्तांतरित करने का अपना विकास का खेल या खेती दाम में भरसक बढ़ोतरी के द्वारा यह 'घाटे का सौदा' बदल कर मुनाफे का करने के बारे में सोचने को तैयार नहीं हैं? नाही जैविक खेती एवं स्थानीय प्राकृतिक संसाधनों के आधार पर, स्थानिकों का हक मानकर स्थानिक स्तर पर चल सके ऐसे यन्त्र, तंत्र और बुनियादी ज़रुरापूर्ति को प्राथमिकता देने की दिशा में कोई सरकार गंभीर नहीं हैं। जनता रास्ते पर उतरने को मजबूर है... बेचैनी कई रूपों में प्रकट हो रही है।

आज की ताज़ा स्थिति, आर्थिक नीतियों में सालों से समाए गए वैश्वीकरण, उदारीकरण के तमाम असरों से, आर्थिक स्थिति जितनी बिगड़ी हुई दिखाई देती है, उतनी कभी नहीं थी। दावा तो नरेन्द्र मोदी सरकार और उनकी सहयोगी मंडल भाजपा का है, विश्व नेतृत्व का। उनकी दौड़ दुनिया भर ज़रूर है, लेकिन उसके पीछे ना ही वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम का सिद्धांत है, ना ही भारत को दुनिया में शांति, जीवन सुरक्षा के साथ निरंतर विकास का कोई नया नजरिया सामने रखा जा रहा है। दुनिया भर के पूंजीपतियों का कॉ

पेरिट अजेंडा लेकर हमारे प्रधानमंत्री जापान से शुरुआत करके जितने देशों में घूम कर आये है वहां उनका गूगल सहित खनिज कंपनियों तक सभी ने किया स्वागत ज़ाहिर है। भारत में आयोजित सैकड़ों किलोमीटर लम्बे चौड़े, लाखों हेक्टर ज़मीन किसानों, मेहनतकशों से छीनने वाले इंडस्ट्रियल कोरिडोरस(औद्योगिक गलियारों) को बढ़ावा देने के लिए, कम्पनियों को साथ दे और ले चुके हैं। हर अंतर्राष्ट्रीय मंच पर जाकर विश्व नेता जैसा रूप दिखाने वाले हमारे राज नेता किस प्रकार से आतंकवाद की चर्चा का अनायुद्ध ज्वर फेलाने में, धर्ममूल तत्त्वाव को आगे बढ़ाने में और उसके साथ रक्षा क्षेत्र में शस्त्रस्पर्धा से मुनाफाखोरी के चलते अंतर्राष्ट्रीय कंपनियों का बाजार फैलाने में लगे हुए है। यह बात अभी-अभी गोवा में हुई घण्टी की परिषद से फिर उजागर हुई है। इनके अंतर्राष्ट्रीय संबंधों से पड़ोसियों से कोई रिश्ता अगर अधिक गहरा हुआ है, तो मात्र व्यापार का। भारत की जनता याने करोड़ों ग्राहकों की नकद लेकर हमारी ओर से अडानी, अम्बानी जैसेके 'दुनिया मुट्ठी' में करने के सपनों को साकार करने वालों को क्या कहे? हमारे नुमयिन्दें या दुनिया के बाशिंदे?

शिक्षा और स्वस्थ, पानी और ऊर्जा के क्षेत्रों में घुसकर इन कंपनियों ने हाहाकार मचा दिया है। पूंजीवाद पर गहरी चर्चा करने वाले भी पलक झपकते शायद इस न. जारे को गंभीरता से लेने में कमज़ोर पड़े है। हम देख रहे कि हमारे दलितों के, आदिवासियों के, शोहरी गरीबों तथा बहुजन समाज के बच्चे शासकों से अच्छे दर्जे की शिक्षा शासन की ओर से नहीं पा रहे है। शिक्षा सहित अधिकार की भाषा केवल संविधान नाम की पोथी में रह गयी है। संविधान की ऐसी हालत हो तो उसे जलाने या गाड़ने की बात तो बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर सहित हमारे संविधान के निर्माताओं ने चतावनी के रूप में पूर्व में ही कह दी थी। शिक्षा में व्यापारीकरण, पानी में मुनाफा, स्वास्थ्य में गैर-बराबरी के कारण असंतोष है वैसे ही गृहनिर्माण में बिल्डरशाही के कारण शहरों में। गुजरात में पटेल और महाराष्ट्र में मराठा समाज की जन शक्ति किसी एक घटना से उभर नहीं सकती। निजी शिक्षा संस्थाओं में लाखों रुपए खर्चने के बाद, नौकरी पाने के लिए होड़ और हार भुगतने वालों की संख्या बढ़ती जाएगी तो आरक्षण का सहारा हर जाति-समाज का

सपना हो, यह स्वाभाविक है। भ्रष्टाचारी माँ-बाप के बच्चों को छोड़कर इन मध्यम जाति, मध्यमवर्गीय माने गए तबकों के बेटे बेटियाँ, अपने किसान पलाकों से तो कुछ आधार नहीं पा सकते, सिवाय कर्जदारी के। इसी कारण उनकी जिन्दगी एक सतत स्पर्धा, सतत चिंता और सतत संघर्ष में गुजर रही है। दलित और आदिवासियों से उनकी स्पर्धा है तो 'अवकाश' के लिए हर क्षेत्र में 'अवकाश' आम लोगों को कम और खास लोगों को अधिक पाने पर प्रस्थापितों के खिलाफ लड़ना आसान ना होते हुए मराठा समाज के युवा जब दलित-आदिवासियों के खिलाफ अत्याचार के विरोधी कानून पर हमला करते हैं, तब उसके पीछे इन आर्थिक स्थितियों के साथ जड़वादी जातिवाद की नज़र है ज़रूर। मात्र उसमें स्वसुरक्षा का उद्देश्य अधिक है, जाति-दुश्मनी का कम! अब आरक्षण के गिनती हिसाब को ना देखे हुए और अत्याचार के तथा अत्याचार विरोधी कानून के विविध पहलुओं को न जांचते हुए जब युवाशक्ति कुछ मांगती है तो उसे केवल 'राजनैतिक' प्रदर्शन मानकर नज़रअंदाज़ करना बहुत बड़ी गलती होगी। आरक्षित समाज आज भी सबसे अधिक कुचलित, वंचित, शोषित है... भले वह खेत मजदूरी में हो या कंत्राटी मजदूरी में हो या झुग्गी-झोपड़ी के निवासी... जिन्हें हर प्रकार की ज़रूरत पूर्ति के लिए संघर्ष करना पड़ता है, उन्हीं पर आज हमला भी अधिकतर है। गाँव-खेती, रोज़ी-रोटी से विस्थापन; कायमी नौकरियों से विस्थापन, या घर-बस्ती से विस्थापन। इसलिए आर्थिक-शैक्षणिक सहायता और 'अवकाश' का आरक्षण, आज भी किन तबकों के लिए सबसे अधिक ज़रूरी है, यह इंटरनेट की 'ज्ञान भरी' जगत में संचार करने वाले युवा भी नहीं जागेंगे, नहीं जानेगें, तो कैसे चलेगा ? अत्याचार विरोधी कानून के बारे में भी यही दुःख है। उसका पालन नहीं के बराबर होते हुए उसका कठोर अमल हो, यह मांग दलित-आदिवासी -संवेदनशील, प्रगतिशील तबकों से ही नहीं, हर नागरिक से आनी चाहिए। जब खैरलांजी से कोपर्डी, महिलाओं की अपनी अस्मिता तथा अस्तित्व पर हमले भुगतने वाली महिला आज हर प्रकार से वस्तुकरण की भर्त्सना करने के लिए जाग जाए यह ज़रूरी है, तब उसी ने इस जातिवादी नज़रिए से समाज विघटन की प्रक्रिया या भूमिका पर सवाल उठाना भी ज़रूरी है। लिंग-भेद को

नकारते हुए जाति-मज़हब आधारित भेद-भाव के खिलाफ केवल संघर्ष ही नहीं तो स्त्रीवादी नज़रिए से एक 'नया-निर्माण' उसकी सैध्दांतिक भूमिका, संकल्पना, हर क्षेत्र में विकास की ज़रूरत और प्राकृत-श्रम के साथ मानवीयकरण को जोड़कर वह रास्ते पर उतरी इन ताकतों को एक नयी दिशा दे , यही अपेक्षा है, मराठा या दलित-आदिवासी, जाति के जोखड़ों के पार मानवीय संस्कृति और विकास का सपना बुना जाए, वह भी अगुवाही में रही युवतियों से, यह ख्वाहिश क्या पूरी हो सकती है ?

इस प्रकार की समस्याओं के विश्लेषण से संतप्ता प्राप्त होती है संप्रभूता नहीं। सवाल करने की चुनौती लेने-देने की हिम्मत आती है, सुलझाव नहीं। इसलिए स्थानीय से अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर समता, न्याय, बंधुता और स्वतंत्रता के संवैधानिक मूल्यों के साथ ज़रूरी है एक ऐसी चौखट जो आज की विकास की, राष्ट्रवाद की , उद्योग और खेती की शिक्षा और स्वास्थ्य की, इन्सानियत और शांति की संकल्पना और दिशा भी, समाज-राष्ट्रीय ही नहीं मानवीय को केंद्र में रख कर पुनरीक्षित करने में मददरूप होगी। जनतांत्रिक समाजवाद उसी का नाम है। समाजवादी संकल्पना का इतिहास तो लम्बा है ही, किन्तु उसे पकड़ कर चले आन्दोलनों की श्रृंखला भी प्रदीर्घ है। समाज में लानी हो समता तो गैर-बराबरी से नहीं हो सकता रिश्ता। समाज की बुनियादी सत्ता तो राजसत्ता का सहन नहीं कर सकते अहंकार, मदमस्त उदगार भी। श्रम की प्रतिष्ठा हो तो परावलंबी (ज़िग्म) जीवन को सोना चांदी से मंदाया नहीं जा सकता। श्रमिकों का शोषण, संघर्ष से हासिल किये कानून बदलकर भी जारी रखने की शासकों की उद्दामता मान्य नहीं हो सकती। भूमिधारियों को भूमिहीन और भूमिहीनों को ठेका मजदूर बनाने की दिशा में अधिग्रहण या प्रकृति तथा मेहनत पर जीने वालों की अवमान नहीं हो सकती। बहुत कुछ हो सकता है।

हर क्षेत्र में नीतियों में आमूल परिवर्तन की नींव में रहना होगा विकास का एक स्पष्ट नज़रिया। आज की देश-दुनिया में उभरी गैर-बराबरी मिटाने का। प्राकृतिक संसाधनों पर अधिकार , उनका मर्यादित व पुनर्जीवित हो सके इतना, सही तकनीक से दोहन या उपयोग, उपभोग नहीं, ज़रूरतपूर्ति के लिए संसाधनों के उपयोग, यह प्राथमिकता होगी। जैसे .

जरूरत आधारित खेती, प्राकृतिक ऊर्जा स्रोतों को बढ़ावा, मेहनतकशों का सम्मान और श्रम व यंत्र के बीच संतुलित मूल्य का हिसाब। व्यापक नीतियाँ अगर हर इंसान की जरूरतपूर्ति के उद्देश्य से विकास की योजनाओं को जन्म देती है तो '100 में 200 सीटों के' आरक्षण के भूल-भुलैया से ही नहीं, संविधान के अनुसार 10 सालों में जो खत्म होना था, उस 'वशिष भेद' से भी समाज उभर पायेगा जरूर ! वही जाती निर्मूलन की ओर जाने का मार्ग होगा।

नए-नए अंतरराष्ट्रीय मंच या जनवादी-संस्थानों के सम्मेलनों से भी ये बुनियादी परिवर्तन हासिल नहीं हो सकता। हमारे देश की ही बुनावट समझकर, राजनैतिक भ्रामक प्रचार की पोल-खोल करते हुए जरूरी होगा एक स्पष्ट अजेंडा-आर्थिक, सामाजिक, राजनैतिक भी। जैसे जलवायु परिवर्तन ने पर्यावरणवादियों की सोच और कार्य की दिशा पर सवाल उठाया है,....जीवनप्रणाली पर चिंता करना मजबूर किया है; वैसे ही अपनी खेमेवार मांगे लेकर लाखों की ताकत से रास्ते पर आने वाले तबके-तबके के लोगों ने, युवाओं ने हमें, हमारे पास ठोस सुलझाव क्या है, यही मानो पूछा है।

समाजवादियों ने केवल पारंपरिक पठन, चर्चा, चुनावी राजनीति से ही चुनौती का आग्रह और एकेक क्षेत्र/ मुद्दों पर डट कर रहने की कटिबद्धता.....इनसे ऊपर उठकर 'राजनीतिक परिवर्तन' में छिपे, गूंथे हुए हर सामाजिक, आर्थिक सवाल पर अपना जवाब पेश करना होगा। नयी रणनीति प्रभाव-दबाव की ही नहीं, सीढ़ी चुनौती की होगी। इसकी खोज में लिए कहीं गांधी, कहीं आंबेडकर, कहीं मार्क्स, लोहिया, जयप्रकाश, वैसे ही बुध, पेरियार भी काम आयेंगे। ताज़ा परिप्रेक्ष में इन सब के विचार ही नहीं, कार्यदर्शन भी चुनना होगा। हर मुद्दे का अध्ययन के बाद जन-जन तक पहुंचना होगा...जन शक्ति और जन आन्दोलन का रूप लेकर। सशक्त पर सशस्त्र नहीं, ऐसा सत्याग्रही कार्यक्रम-जो व्यक्ति से लेकर जनसमूहों ने भी, 'जीवन दर्शन' के रूप में, स्वीकारने से, समाजवादी, आचार और विचार की ताकत और उसी से विरोधियों की फासीवादी, विषमतावादी, विनाशकारी प्रवृत्ति व प्रचार को चुनौती विकसित होगी।

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विवेकानंद माथने

कृषि एक अनमोल कार्य है। एक ऐसा कार्य जिसे बंद करने से दुनिया की गती रुक जायेगी, उसे खाना नहीं मिलेगा। जिसके बिना दुनिया का जिना संभव नहीं है। दुनिया की भूक मिटाने के लिये किसान को रातदिन मेहनत करनी पडती है। उसके कठीण परिश्रम के कारण ही देश दुनिया की खाद्यान्य की आवश्यकता पुरी हो पा रही है। किसान कभी एक मालिक की हैसियत से स्वाभिमानी जीवन जीता रहा है। उसे अपने परीवार के पोषण और प्राथमिक आवश्यकता पूर्ती में संतुष्टी व कर्तव्य निर्वाह में खुशी मिलती रही है। कृषि एक राष्ट्रीय कार्य और सामाजिक जिम्मेदारी भी है। किसान उसे अपने देश के लिये पुरी निष्ठा से निभा रहा है। कभी हमारे कृषि प्रधान देश में खेती आजिविका का सर्वोत्तम साधन रही है। कहा जाता रहा है, उत्तम खेती, मध्यम व्यापार, कनिष्ठ चाकरी।

लेकिन आज कृषि प्रधान भारत का किसान अत्यंत कठीण परिस्थिती का सामना कर रहा है। भारतीय खेती किसानी चौतरफा संकट से घिरी हुयी है। यह संकट दिर्घकालिन किसान विरोधी नीतियों का परिणाम है। खासकर उदारीकरण और भूमंडलीकरण के प्रारंभिक दौर से जारी वे नीतियाँ है, जो बहुसंख्यक किसान और मजदूरों के जीवन को निरंतर दुभर बनाते हुये मुठ्ठीभर कापॉरेट घरानों, बहुराष्ट्रीय कम्पनियों, उद्योगपतियों, व्यापारीयों और सत्ताके दलालों के हितों में चलायी जा रही है। एकतरफ सरकारों की कापॉरेट्स को लाभ पहुंचाने वाली किसान विरोधी नीति से उपजा सुल्तानी संकट और दुसरी तरफ दुनिया के औद्योगिकीकरण के नीतियों के कारण पर्यावरणीय संतुलन बिगड़ने से पैदा हुआ अस्मानी संकट, किसान पुरी तरह चक्रव्युह में फंस गया है।

भारत में कभी कृषि आधारित ग्रामोद्योग व स्वयंरोजगार की स्वयंपूर्ण व्यवस्था रही है। जो किसानों को अपनी आजिविका पूर्ती में खेती के अतिरिक्त अवसर प्रदान करती रही। लेकिन कापॉरेट्स के दबाव में अपनाई गई किसान व गांव विरोधी नीतियों के कारण किसानों से यह काम छिनकर साजिशपूर्ण तरीके से कम्पनियों के हवाले कर दिये गये है। उनके लिये गावों में खेती के अलावा परिवार के लिये आजिविका पूर्ती का दुसरा कोई साधन नहीं छोडा गया है। अब औद्योगिकीकरण के लिये नये नये तरिके अपनाकर

किसानों से जमीन छिनी जा रही है। जमीन के बेहताशा लूट के कारण कूल खेती का क्षेत्र और प्रति परिवार औसत खेती का क्षेत्र लगातार कम होता जा रहा है। सरकारी रिपोर्ट के अनुसार पिछले बिस साल में देश में कूल खेती का क्षेत्र 5 करोड हेक्टर से कम हुआ है। देश के 75.42 प्रतिशत किसानों के पास एक हेक्टर से कम और 10 प्रतिशत किसानों के पास एक से दो हेक्टर के बिच जमीन का क्षेत्र है और केवल 0.24 प्रतिशत किसानों के पास दस हेक्टर से अधिक खेती का क्षेत्र है। देश में 60 प्रतिशत खेती वर्षा आधारित है। विभिन्न स्तरों में बटी खेती, संरक्षित सिचाई के सुविधा का अभाव वाली वर्षा आधारित कृषि भूमी या सिंचित खेती के छोटे टुकडे पर किसान निर्भर हो गया है।

कृषि उपज बेचने के लिये देश में खुले बाजार में बिक्री या सरकार द्वारा एमएसपी के दरों पर खरीद की व्यवस्था है। दोनों व्यवस्थाओं में किसान को कृषि उपज का उत्पादन खर्च पर आधारित मूल्य प्राप्त नहीं हो सकता। राज्य सरकारों की विविध फसलों के लागत मूल्य निकालने की पद्धती भेदभावपूर्ण, अवैज्ञानिक व अन्यायपूर्ण है। जिसमें आदान मूल्य, किसान के दिन का परिश्रम मूल्य, काम के दिन आदी में बाजार मूल्य व न्यूनतम मजदूरी दरों संबंधित कानून का उल्लंघन करके वास्तविकता से कम, भेदभावपूर्ण आंका जाता है। किसान का श्रममूल्य प्रती घंटे के हिसाब से निर्धारित किया जाता है। बिज, खाद, किटनाशक, सिचाई, परीवहन आदी में लागत खर्च वास्तविकता से बहोत कम आंका जाता है। सीएसीपी राज्य सरकारों और कृषि आर्थिक अनुसंधान केंद्रों द्वारा अन्यायपूर्ण तरीकों से निकाले गये के उत्पादन खर्च के साथ मांग एवं आपूर्ती, देश-विदेश में फसलों की किमते, औद्योगिक लागत पर प्रभाव, महंगाई, खाद्य सुरक्षा, कृषि विविधता, अर्थव्यवस्था पर मूल्य नीति का प्रभाव इत्यादी पहलूओं के आधार पर उपज मूल्य को नियंत्रित करने के लिये और उसे बाजार मूल्य के आसपास कायम रखने के लिये एमएसपी निर्धारित करने की सिफारिश करता है। एक अध्ययन के अनुसार सरकार द्वारा निर्धारित एम.एस.पी. वास्तविक लागत खर्च के एक तिहाई के आसपास होती है। एमएसपी किसानों को उपज का न्यायपूर्ण दाम देने का नहीं बल्की कृषि उपज के दाम नियंत्रित करने का काम करती है। एमएसपी की संकल्पना किसानों के साथ किया धोका है। एमएसपी में थोडी बढोतरी से किसानों को

उत्पादन खर्च पर आधारित दाम मिलना संभव नहीं है। भारत सरकार द्वारा केवल 23 फसलों का न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य (एमएसपी) घोषित किया जाता है। उसमें से केवल 4, 5 फसलों को, वह भी एक मर्यादित मात्रा में सरकार खरिदती है। एमएसपी देश के कूल कृषि उत्पादन व कूल किसानों की संख्या के केवल 5 प्रतिशत को कवर करती है।

सरकारी खरीद के अलावा सभी फसलें किसान को खुले बाजार में बेचनी पडती है। जहाँ व्यापारियों, दलालों, कार्पोरेट घरानों को लाभ पहुंचाने के लिये किसान को शोषणकारी बाजार के भरोसे छोड दिया गया है। खुले बाजार में पुरी बाजार व्यवस्था किसान को लोचती है। जब कृषि उपज किसानों के पास आती है, महंगाई को नियंत्रित करने के लिये समय समय पर आयात-निर्यात शुल्क घटा-बढाकर कृषि उपज के दाम गिराये जाते है। जैसे ही कृषि उपज किसानों के हात से निकलकर व्यापारी, कार्पोरेट्स व कम्पनियों के पास पहुंचते है, दाम बढ जाते है। देश में या विदेश में कृषि उपज की जमाखोरी करके कृत्रिम रूपसे महंगाई बढाई जाती है। तब सरकार को महंगाई नियंत्रित करने की कोई चिंता नहीं होती। किसानों के विरुध्द व्यापारी, कार्पोरेट घरानों और सरकारों द्वारा यह साजीश लगातार की जाती रही है। एक अनुमान के अनुसार हर साल देश के किसानों की मेहनत के कमाई के 15 लाख करोड रुपये लूट लिये जाते है।

प्रथम हरीत क्रांती के द्वारा कृषि रसायनों और तथाकथित उन्नत संकर बिजों के व्यापार को प्रोत्साहीत कर भारत में खाद, बिज, किटनाशक और कृषि औजारों के बाजार का विस्तार किया गया। जिससे खेती के इनपूट में बाजार का प्रवेश व लागत खर्च में एकदम बढोतरी हुयी। किसानों के जेबसे बडी रकम कम्पनियों के पास पहुंचने लगी। कृषि लागत की सारी चिजें बिज, खाद, किटनाशक, बिजली, कृषि यांत्रिकी, डिज़ेल आदी सबकी किमते कम्पनियों के द्वारा निर्धारित होती है, सरकार उसपर किसी प्रकार का नियंत्रण नहीं रखती। खेती में लागत वस्तुओं की किमते कम्पनियाँ तय करती है और बाजार मे अपनी किमतों पर बेचते है। लेकीन कृषि उपज की किमतें किसान तय करें तब भी उसके आधार पर बेच नहीं सकता क्योंकि बाजार और सरकारी नीतियां किसान के मजबूरी का लाभ उठाकर हमेशा उसे लुटने के लिये तैयार रहती है। नये नये रास्ते खोजती

रहती है। एकतरफ फसलों की अन्यायपूर्ण एमएसपी, खुले बाज़ार में व्यापारियों द्वारा लूट के कारण प्राप्त ऋण उपज मूल्य और दुसरीतरफ लागत खर्च में किसानों के जेब पर कम्पनियों की डकैती। देश का किसान लागत और उपज मुल्य की विरोधाभासी नीतियोंके चलते दोनों के बिच पिसता जा रहा है।

देश के अनेक हिस्सों में अनियमित वर्षा व पर्यावरण असंतुलन के कारण हर साल एक तिहाई क्षेत्र में कृषि और किसान को लगातार सुखा, बाढ़ जैसे प्राकृतिक आपदा के संकट का सामना लगातार करना पड रहा है। परिणामतः कृषि उत्पादन में कमी व जैवविविधता के संकट की मार अब किसानों को झेलनी पड रही है। विकास की अंधी होड में कार्पोरेटी औद्योगिकीकरण के लिये प्रकृती से छेड़छाड के कारण दुनिया में जलवायु परिवर्तन व वैश्विक तापमान वृद्धी का संकट पैदा हुआ है। यह संकट औद्योगिक सभ्यता की देन है। प्राकृतिक आपदा के कारण किसानों को होने वाले नुकसान के लिये सरकार की औद्योगिकीकरण की नितियाँ कारण बनी है। लेकिन किसानों को सिधे नुकसान भरपाई देने के बजाय सरकार ने ऋणग्रस्त किसानों से हप्ता वसूल कर बीमा कम्पनियों को लाभ पहुंचाने के लिये प्रधानमंत्री फसल बीमा योजना शुरु की है।

देश में किसानों की स्थिती ऐसी बनाई गयी है की उन्हे हमेशा संस्थागत या गैरसंस्थागत ऋण पर निर्भर रहना पडता है। ऋण बैंको से लिया जाये या साहूकारी व्यवस्था से दोनों के चरीत्र में कोई अंतर नही है। वह एक लूट की व्यवस्था है। जो किसानों के श्रम लूट कर ले जाती है। मुलतः बैंक व्यवस्था ऋणको को लूटकर धनको को लाभ पहुंचाने के तत्व पर काम करती है। वह मेहनत की कमाई को लूटकर अमीरों तक पहुंचाती है। उसीके लिये बनी एक स्थायी व्यवस्था है। सच तो यह है की, किसान अपने श्रम और प्रकृती की मदत से खेती में एक दाने से कई गुना पैदा करता है। प्रकृती किसान को कई गुना अधिक वापस लौटाती है। लेकिन चौतरफा लूट के बाद किसान के पास कुछ बचता नही है। खेती से प्राप्त आमदनी बैंकों के ब्याज के अनुपात में नही बढ़ती। किसान की सालाना आय से अधिक बैंकों को सालाना ब्याज है, जो किसानों की मेहनत की बची कमाई को लूटकर ले जाती है। कर्ज के ब्याज से होनेवाली लूट ने

किसानों का आर्थिक संकट तो बढा ही दिया साथ में कर्ज वसुलने के लिये बनाये गये जुल्मी कानून ने किसान के प्रतिष्ठा को हानी पहुंचाने का काम किया है। पुरी दुनिया में बैंक व्यवस्था का जाल बिछा है, वह सारी दुनिया की मेहनत को लूटकर संपती को केन्द्रीत कर देती है। दुनिया में मुठ्ठीभर लोगों के शैतानियत की संतुष्टी के लिये पुरी दुनिया को लूटने का बैंक भी एक जरीया बन गया है। देश की सरकार किसानों को कर्ज के मकड़जाल से मुक्त करने बजाय उसे कर्ज में ?साना चाहती है। किसानों के लिये वर्ष 2016-17 के लिये 9 लाख करोड रुपयों की व्यवस्था की गयी है।

खेती आधारित पुरक रोजगार का अभाव, खेती जमीन की अल्प मात्रा, जमीन का स्तर, क्रॉप पॅटर्न, नैसर्गिक आपत्तियों के कारण फसल की अनिश्चितता आदी परिस्थिती में प्राप्त होनेवाले कृषि उत्पादन में लागत खर्च तो दुर किसान को उसके श्रम का मुल्य भी प्राप्त नही होता। एमएसपी के आधारपर किसान को साल में खेती काम के लिये मिलनेवाली मजदुरी को 365 दिनों के लिये विभाजित करने पर प्रतिदिन केवल 60 रुपये मजदुरी पडती है। सरकारी कर्मचारीओं की मजदुरी किसानों की मजदुरी से 13 गुना से 138 गुना अधिक है। किसानों को लाभ तो छोड दिजीये, परीश्रम मूल्य भी नही दिया जाता। उसे निरंतर घाटे की खेती करनी पड रही है। यह परिस्थिती दशकों से कायम बनी हुयी है। देश में प्रति किसान परिवार औसत 47000 रुपये का ऋणी है। परीणामतः दुनिया की भूक मिटाने का काम करनेवाला किसान और उसका परिवार भूका है। कर्जे के जाल में पुरी तरह फंस चुका है। जो कृषि कल तक जीवन का मुलाधार थी, वही उसके गले की फांस बन चुकी है। उसे परिवार के साथ सन्मानपूर्वक जीवन यापन करना संभव नहीं हो पा रहा है। देहात और गाव की स्थिती कंगाली और बदहाली अवस्था प्राप्त कर चुकी है। देश में गरिबी रेखा के निचे जिनेवाले लोगों में 95 प्रतिशत संख्या किसान और मजदुरों की है, जो खेती पर निर्भर है या खेती से विस्थापित किये गये है। सभी तरफ से उपेक्षित किसान इस संकट के चलते एक तो खेती से पलायन कर रहा है या आत्महत्या करने के लिये मजबूर हो रहा है।

भारत में हो रही आत्महत्याओं का गरीबी, अशिक्षा और असुरक्षीत रोजगार से गहरा रिश्ता है। 90 प्रतिशत

से अधिक आत्महत्याएँ गरीबी से उपजे कारणों से हो रही हैं। ग्रामीण भारत में किसान परिवार में हरसाल 60 हजार से अधिक आत्महत्याएँ हो रही हैं। गत बिस साल में किसान परिवार में 12 लाख से अधिक आत्महत्याएँ हुयी हैं। जिसमें 3 लाख भूमी मालिक किसानों का समावेश है। ग्रामीण भारत के किसान परिवार में प्रतीदिन 174 और एक घट्टें में 7 आत्महत्याएँ हो रही हैं। किसानों की यह आत्महत्याएँ किसी एक प्रदेश तक सिमित नहीं बल्की अब पुरे देशमे हो रही हैं। जो जी रहे हैं, वह भी अत्यंत कंगाली की जिन्दगी जी रहे हैं। सभी तरफ से उपेक्षित किसान इस संकट के चलते एक तो खेती से पलायन कर रहा है या आत्महत्या करने के लिये मजबूर हो रहा है। लेकिन सरकार किसानों की कंगाली की स्थिती और आत्महत्याओं को गंभीरता से सोचने के लिये तैयार नहीं है।

देश की सरकार किसान की इस बर्बादी से संतुष्ट नहीं है। विश्व व्यापार संघटना के दबाव में कॉर्पोरेट खेती व कॉन्ट्रैक्ट फार्मिंग (ठेके की खेती) के माध्यम से वह देश के किसानों की उपजाऊ जमीन देशी-विदेशी बहुराष्ट्रीय कम्पनियों को सौंपने का काम कर रही है, ताकी दुनिया के अमिरों के लिये दुनिया की पुरे खेती का इस्तेमाल किया जा सके। साथही औद्योगिकीकरण के लिये औद्योगिक वसाहत, सेज़, इंडस्ट्रीयल कॉरीडोर, स्मार्ट सीटी, रिअल इस्टेट आदी के लिये करोड़ों हेक्टर खेती की जमीन गैर खेती कार्य के लिये किसानों से छिनी जा रही है। जनता के विरोध के बावजूद भूमी अधिग्रहण कानून लागू करने का प्रयास लगातार जारी है। इस लूट से खेती का करोड़ों हेक्टर क्षेत्र और कम होगा। परीणामतः लाखों किसान भुमीहिन होंगे, खेती के और छोटे टुकडे होंगे। देश के सामने खाद्यान्न स्वावलंबन और सुरक्षा का संकट और तेजी से बढेगा। खाद्यान्न सुरक्षा की दृष्टी से देश पुरी तरह परावलंबी बन जायेगा। खेती ही नहीं देश के किमती नैसर्गिक संसाधनों पानी, जंगल और खनिज जिसपर किसानोंका ही अधिकार है, हर साल लाखो करोड रुपयोंकी सम्पती बहुराष्ट्रीय कम्पनियों के हवाले करने का काम धडल्ले से किया जा रहा है।

सरकारें किसानों के अधिकारों के संबंध में किसी भी प्रकार विचार करने को तैयार नहीं है। वह देश के किसानों के लिये 2, 3 रुपये का अनाज, मनरेगा में काम देकर

किसानों का आक्रोश रोकना चाहती है। किसानों को वर्ष 2007 में एक बार कर्ज माफी के लिये 70 हजार करोड रुपये आवंटीत किये थे। उसका लाभ किसानों को कम बैंको को ही ज्यादा हुआ है। लेकिन भारत सरकारने 2005-06 से 2014-15 के दौरान दस साल में कम्पनियों को कम्पनी कर, आमदनी कर, उत्पादन शुल्क और आयात शुल्क में कूल 45 लाख 17 हजार 4 सौ 66 करोड रुपयें याने की हरसाल औसत 4.5 लाख रुपये की छूट दी है। देश में बैंको ने कॉर्पोरेट कम्पनियों को 1.14 करोड रुपयों का ?सा हुआ कर्ज माफ किया है। केंद्र सरकार केवल 1 करोड कर्मचारीयों के वेतन और भत्तों पर हरसाल 5.5 लाख करोड याने कूल बजट के लगभग 28 प्रतिशत से अधिक राशी खर्च करती है। लेकिन कृषि प्रधान कहे जाने वाले भारत के किसान और कृषि का बजट कूल बजट के 2 प्रतिशत से कम है। साम्राज्यवादी देशों व्दारा आईएमएफ, वर्ल्ड बैंक जैसे आंतरराष्ट्रीय वित्तीय संस्थानों के माध्यम से सरकारों पर निरंतर दबाव डाला जाता रहा है की खाद्यान्न की सबसिडी कम की जाए। समर्थन मूल्य, सरकारी खरीद और सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को समाप्त किया जाए।

खेती आधारित पुरक रोजगार का अभाव, खेती जमीन की अल्प मात्रा, किसानों के श्रम का शोषण, कृषि लागत की सभी वस्तुओं खाद-बिज-किटनाशक आदी पर बहुराष्ट्रीय कम्पनियों को अमर्याद लूट की खुली छूट, लागत खर्च में वृद्धी, दाम निर्धारण का अन्यायपूर्ण तरीका, कृषि उत्पादों का अलाभकारी मूल्य, खुले बाजार में दलालों, आड़तियों व व्यापारियों व्दारा लूट, किसानों के सबसिडी में कटौती, नगद और व्यापारिक फसलों को बढ़ावा व बाजार के लिये उत्पादन, फसलों के दाम नियंत्रित रखने के लिये आयात निर्यात निती का दुरुपयोग, किसानों की संस्थागत और गैर संस्थागत ऋणग्रस्तता, कृषि प्रवृत्ती के विरुद्ध कर्ज पर ब्याज की दरें, बैंको व साहूकारों व्दारा कर्जें पर अन्यायपूर्ण ब्याज की वसुली, हरीतक्रांति से उपजे अंतर्विरोध, देश का अन्यायकारी व पक्षपाती कृषि बजट, कृषि क्षेत्र में निरंतर घटता सार्वजनिक निवेश, विश्व व्यापार संघटना के दबाव में बनायी जा रही किसान विरोधी नीतियाँ, भूमी सुधार व भूमी वितरण नीतियों का अभाव तथा बहुराष्ट्रीय कम्पनियों और कॉर्पोरेट घरानों व्दारा सरकार समर्पित भूमी हड़प अभियान के कारण निरंतर कम होती कृषि भूमी आदी अनेक कारणोंसे

किसान और कृषि को मरणासन्न और लगभग लाईलाज स्थिति में ला खड़ा किया है।

देश की सरकार किसान और खेती-किसानी के इस गंभीर संकट के निराकरण के लिये जो उपाय कर रही है, वह किसानों के लिये और अधिक खतरनाक साबित होने वाले है। विश्व व्यापार संघटना के दबाव में सरकार दुसरी हरीत क्रांती के द्वारा कृषि में तंत्रज्ञान और पूंजी को बढ़ावा देने के लिये प्रयास कर रही है। कॉन्ट्रैक्ट फार्मिंग, कॉर्पोरेट फार्मिंग, कृषि यंत्रीकरण, तंत्रज्ञान, जैव तकनिक और जीएम फसलों को बढ़ावा देकर कृषि संकट का हल निकालना चाहती है। जीएम तंत्रज्ञान के माध्यम से जैवविविधता, पारंपारिक बिजों को समाप्त करके बिजों पर कम्पनियों का एकाधिकार स्थापित करके किसानों को बिज के लिये कम्पनियों के भरोसे सौपा जा रहा है। परिणाम स्पष्ट है, किसानों की और लूट की जायेगी, लागत खर्च में और बढ़ोतरी होगी, जैव विविधता प्रभावित होगी और जनता के भोजन में जहर परोसने का काम होगा। एकतरफ बड़े पैमाने पर निर्यातोन्मुखी कॉर्पोरेटी खेती और दुसरी तरफ विश्वबाजार से खरीदकर खाद्यान्न की आपूर्ती का विचार सरकार कर रही है। जिससे किसानों का संकट तेजी से बढ़ेगा, उन्हे खेती से हटाने का काम और तेज होगा। देश की खाद्यान्न की आत्मनिर्भरता समाप्त होगी। यह स्थिति देश की शांती और सुरक्षितता के लिये खतरा पैदा करेगी।

हमारे सामने कई बड़ी चुनौतियाँ हैं। एक तरफ कृषि कि इस अवस्था के लिये जिम्मेदार कॉर्पोरेट्स, आंतरराष्ट्रीय वित्तीय संस्थाएं, डब्ल्यूटीओ, विश्व बैंक का मजबूत गठजोड़ और उनके हित में काम करने के लिये देश की सरकार और विदेशी धन पर पोषित एन.जी.ओ. और उनकी नीतियों का समर्थन करने वाली भारत की प्रमुख स्थापित राजनैतिक पार्टियाँ। यह सब एक दुसरोका हित पोषित करने के लिये एकसाथ काम कर रहे हैं और दुसरी तरफ किसान और किसान संगठनों के बिच का बिखराव, जो किसानों का हित तो चाहते हैं लेकिन वह एक साथ आने के लिये तैयारी नहीं है। कई सारे किसान संगठन जड़ को नहीं समझ पा रहे हैं। जिन्होंने बिमारी पैदा की उन्हीसे इलाज करना चाहते हैं। यही कारण है की भारत में किसानों की मजबूत ताकद नहीं बन पायी। जिसका परिणाम हमारे सामने है। इस परिस्थिति में

हमें अपनी राह ढुंढनी है। हमें इस चुनौती का सामना करना होगा।

किसान और खेती-किसानी कि स्थिति प्रथम हरीत क्रांति के बाद से ही लगातार बिगड़ती गयी। 80, 90 के दशक में किसान आन्दोलन हुये, देशमें किसान संगठनाओं ने एकत्रित आकर भी संघर्ष किया, लेकिन किसानों की स्थिति में परिवर्तन नहीं हो पाया। नई आर्थिक नीति लागू होने के बाद किसान और खेती-किसानी कि स्थिति और अधिक गंभीर बनती गयी। शुरु में विदर्भ में और अब पुरे देश में किसानों कि आत्महत्या का दौर चल रहा है। अब वह इस मोड़पर खड़े है की, इस समय अगर देश के किसान, किसान संगठन, किसान के लिये चिंतित लोग एकत्रित आकर कदम नहीं उठा पाये तो न किसान बचेगा, न खेती-किसानी। इसलिये यह आवश्यक है कि देश के किसानों के लिये चिंतित सभी लोग, किसान संगठन एकत्रित आकर इस स्थिति के बारे में सोचे और इस परिस्थिति को बदलने के लिये एकसाथ मिलकर निरंतर प्रयास करें।

भारत का किसान आक्रोश कर रहा है, अनेक किसान संघटनाएं अपने अपने क्षेत्र में अपने स्तर पर किसान और खेती किसानी के संकट से उबारने के लिये प्रयास कर रहे हैं। लेकिन यह प्रयास विश्वव्यापी संकट के चलते पर्याप्त नहीं है। सभी यह महसूस कर रहे की देश के सभी किसान संघटनाओं को एकसाथ मिलकर काम करने की आवश्यकता है। राष्ट्रीय किसान समन्वय समिति इसी प्रयास में है। उसका उद्देश है देश के किसान संघटनाओं को एक सुत्र में बाँधना। किसान संघटनाओं को एक उद्देश के लिये एक साथ लाना। किसानों के अधिकारों के लिये संघर्ष करके उनके मन में आशा और विश्वास जगाना। सरकार से संवाद स्थापित कर समाधान के लिये काम करना। किसान विरोधी नीतियों के विरोध के लिये संघर्ष करना।

सरकार को यह अधिकार नहीं है की वह किसानों के श्रम की लूट करें। देश में सभी नागरिकों को समान अधिकार प्राप्त है। प्रत्येक व्यक्ती को श्रम के बदले आजिविका मूल्य प्राप्त करने का पूर्ण अधिकार है और सरकार का यह दायित्व है कि वह उनके अधिकार का संरक्षण करें। किसी भी व्यक्ती के आजिविका प्राप्त करने के लिये किये जा रहे कार्य में संघटीत और असंघटीत भेद हमे मान्य नहीं है।

किसान और गांव की आजकी स्थिती एक नये प्रकार की गुलामी की व्यवस्था है जहाँ यह सुनिश्चित किया जाता है की, किसानों को केवल उतना ही मिले जिससे वह खेती के काम करने लायक शारिरीक क्षमता पा सकें और अपनी कल की चिंता में, बीवी बच्चो के भविष्य की बोझ में काम करने के लिये मजबूर हो सके। किसान की हैसीयत आज एक ऐसे गुलाम की है, जो कहने के लिये तो आज़ाद है, लेकिन अपनी मर्जा से कुछ नहीं कर सकता, उसे लोहे से कठीण अदृष्य .

जंजीरों से बाँध दिया गया है। सरकार को भिक माँगकर किसानों के गुलामी के जोखड टूटने वाले नहीं है। उसके लिये किसानों को पुरी गुलामी की व्यवस्था नकारनी होगी।

आओं हम हाथ में हाथ मिलाकर आगे बढ़ेंगे। किसानों के लिये बनाई गयी गुलामी की व्यवस्था को समाप्त करने के लिये संघर्ष करेंगे और तब तक लड़ते रहेंगे जबतक किसानों को अपना न्याय्य अधिकार प्राप्त नहीं होता।

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समाजवादी एकजुटता के मायने

डॉ. सुनीलम्

समाजवादी आंदोलन के 82 वर्ष तथा अगस्त क्रांति के 75 वर्ष पूरे होने के अवसर पर पटना और लखनऊ में हम समाजवादी संस्थायें द्वारा सम्मेलन आयोजित किये गये, जिसमें 17 राज्यों 500 से 1000 के बीच समाजवादी प्रतिनिधियों ने गंभीर चर्चा के बाद प्रस्ताव पारित किये, जिसमें समाजवादी आंदोलन के स्वर्णनिमित्त इतिहास, नीति और कार्यक्रमों का उल्लेख किया गया। इस सम्मेलन में पारित हुये प्रस्तावों तथा हम समाजवादी संस्थाओं के निर्णय के मुताबिक अब 21-22 अक्टूबर को कांग्रेस सोशलिस्ट पार्टी के पहले सम्मेलन की 82 वीं वर्षगांठ के अवसर पर मुम्बई में राष्ट्रीय समाजवादी एकजुटता सम्मेलन आयोजित किया गया है।

समाजवादी एकजुटता सम्मेलन जब पटना में हुआ तब जनता दल (यू.) के राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्ष और बिहार के मुख्यमंत्री श्री नीतीश कुमार ने कहा कि वे समाजवादी एकजुटता चाहते हैं। लेकिन उनके माला पहनाकर किसी को नेता मान लेने के बाद भी एकजुटता नहीं हो पाती, उन्होंने स्वतंत्रता संग्राम सेनानी डॉ. जी. जी. पारिख, जन आन्दोलनों के राष्ट्रीय समन्वयक की नेत्री मेधा पाटकर, हिन्द मजदूर सभा के महामंत्री हरभजन सिंह सिद्ध तथा राष्ट्र सेवा दल के महामंत्री श्री सदाशिव मकदूम से अपील कि वे समाजवादी एकजुटता के लिये प्रयास करें तथा वे उस प्रयास का बिना शर्त समर्थन करेंगे। उन्होंने समाजवादियों से संघ मुक्त भारत तथा नशा मुक्त समाज बनाने के उनके द्वारा किये जा रहे प्रयासों में सहयोग देने की अपील की। दोनों ही मुद्दों पर काम चल रहा है। देश के प्रखर धर्मनिरपेक्ष, प्रगतिशील, बुद्धिजीवियों के साथ मिलकर इस दिशा में कार्य किया जा रहा है। इसी तरह नशा मुक्त समाज बनाने के लिए बिहार सरकार द्वारा लागू किये गये कड़े कानून को विभिन्न राज्यों में लागू कराने की मांग को लेकर मूलतापी, छिन्दवाड़ा, कटनी में 7-7 दिन की यात्राओं के बाद मध्यप्रदेश के 25 जिलों की नशा मुक्त मध्यप्रदेश यात्रा के साथ-साथ 7 राज्यों की राष्ट्रीय यात्रा की जा चुकी है, जिसका समापन डॉ. लोहिया के निर्वाण दिवस के अवसर पर भोपाल में 12 अक्टूबर को हाल ही में हुआ है। जिसमें न केवल समाजवादियों ने सहयोग किया बल्कि नशा मुक्ति के क्षेत्र में कार्य कर रही संस्थाओं विभिन्न पार्टियों एवं संगठनों ने साथ दिया है। नशामुक्त मध्यप्रदेश यात्रा को बड़वानी में 16 सितम्बर को हरी झण्डी दिखाने नीतीश कुमार आए थे। यह पहला अवसर था जब किसी समाजवादी विचार की पार्टी के अध्यक्ष और मुख्यमंत्री ने

किसी जनसंगठन के आन्दोलन के क्षेत्र में जाकर समर्थन किया। नीतीश जी ने मेधा पाटकर जी के नेतृत्व में 31 वर्षों से चल रहे नर्मदा बचाओं आन्दोलन के संघर्ष का न केवल समर्थन किया बल्कि पर्यावरण आधारित टिकाऊ विकास तथा खेती की सर्वोच्चता की वकालत की इसे समाजवादी एकजुटता की दिशा में बड़े कदम के तौर पर देखा जाना चाहिए।

नीतीश कुमार ने मुख्यमंत्री रहते हुए विशेष आर्थिक क्षेत्र कानून (ए.सी.जेड) भूमि अधिग्रहण कानून (नरेन्द्र मोदी द्वारा लाए गए अध्यादेश) जी.एम. ट्रायल का विरोध किया है। हाल ही में उन्होंने सरसों के जी.एम. ट्रायल का विरोध करके यह साबित किया है कि वे केन्द्र सरकार द्वारा किसानों के खिलाफ बनने वाली किसी भी नीति को स्वीकार नहीं करते, बेहतर होता कि इसी सोच के साथ उत्तरप्रदेश की सरकार भी कार्य करती, हांलाकि उत्तरप्रदेश सरकार ने स्वास्थ्य एवं जन कल्याण की तमाम योजनाओं को आगे बढ़ाया है। जब मुलायम सिंह यादव मुख्यमंत्री थे तब कृषि मंत्री अशोक वाजपेयी द्वारा जी.एम. ट्रायल का विरोध किया गया था। भूमि अधिग्रहण को लेकर उत्तरप्रदेश सरकार ने अपनी अलग रणनीति बनाई थीं, दादरी में हाईकोर्ट के निर्देश पर जब रिलाइंस पॉवर प्रोजेक्ट द्वारा किसान से अधिग्रहित की गई जमीन वापस लेने का निर्देश दिया गया तब सरकार ने प्रोजेक्ट पर आगे कार्य करने के जिद नहीं की तथा किसानों की जमीन उन्हें वापस दिलाने में सक्रिय भूमिका निभाई, कई बार गन्ना किसानों का करोड़ों रूपये का भुगतान भी कराया लेकिन समाजवादियों की कृषि नीति उत्तरप्रदेश सरकार द्वारा बनाई और लागू की गई हो, यह नहीं कहा जा सकता। समाजवाद और परिवारवाद एक साथ नहीं चल सकता, समाजवादी पार्टियों और संगठनों में कई बार फूट होती रही है, जिसका कारण सदा नीतिगत बताया जाता है। लेकिन सभी समाजवादी यह स्वीकार करेंगे की फूट का मुख्य कारण अहम, अतिमहत्वाकांक्षा, नेताओं की आपसी प्रतिद्वंद्विता, ईर्ष्या और जलन रहा है। हांलाकि टूट नीतिगत मतभेदों से शुरू हुई लेकिन संगठन के भीतर नेताओं के आपसी रिश्तों में तनाव तथा गुटबाजी इसका प्रमुख कारण रहा। समाजवादी पार्टी-मुलायमसिंह यादवजी ने यदि अखिलेश कुमार का चेहरा सामने रखकर विधानसभा चुनाव जीता था, तब उन्हें काम करने की छूट भी दी जानी चाहिए थी तथा समाजवादी नीतियों को लागू करने के लिए सतत् प्रयास होने थे। श्री शिवपाल यादव की समाजवादी पार्टी के संगठन

पर पकड़ है तथा मुलायम सिंह यादव के नाम और काम पर समाजवादी पार्टी को वोट मिलता है यह सर्वविदित तथ्य है। इस परिस्थिति में पार्टी में न्यायपूर्ण कार्य विभाजन किया जाना था लेकिन यह नहीं हो पाया जिसके चलते पार्टी तथा सरकार को जगहँसाई का सामना करना पड़ रहा है, इसके परिणाम पार्टी और सरकार को भुगतने के लिए तैयार रहना चाहिए। अहम मुद्दा यह है कि अगले वर्ष उत्तरप्रदेश में होने वाला चुनाव न केवल उत्तरप्रदेश की सरकार ऐर समाजवादी पार्टी का भविष्य तय करेगा बल्कि भारतीय राजनीति किस दिशा में जाएगी यह भी तय होगा। उत्तरप्रदेश में समाजवादी पार्टी की हार का मतलब है धर्मनिरपेक्ष ताकतों का कमजोर होना तथा साम्प्रदायिक ताकतों का मजबूत होना। उत्तरप्रदेश में यदि भा.ज.पा. सरकार बना लेती है तो आगामी लोकसभा चुनाव में भाजपा को दोबारा से सरकार बनाने से रोकना बहुत कठिन हो जाएगा इसलिए समाजवादियों को बहुत सोच समझकर उत्तरप्रदेश में चुनाव रणनीति बनानी चाहिए।

बिहार में जनतादल (यू) और राष्ट्रीय जनता दल के बीच सब कुछ ठीक नहीं है यह सर्वविदित है सरकार चलाने के लिए कोई भी नया समीकरण बनाना समाजवादियों के लिए आत्मघाती होगा। समाजवादियों के समक्ष सबसे बड़ा प्रश्न यह है कि वे गैर भाजपा वाद की नीति अपनाएंगे की नहीं ? अर्थात् कांग्रेस को साथ लेकर भावी रणनीति तय करेंगे कि नहीं ? नेतृत्व के अभाव में कांग्रेस पार्टी के सोनिया-राहुल गांधी परिवार से चिपके रहने के कारण तमाम राज्यों में कांग्रेस की स्थिति मृत प्राय हो चुकी है। कांग्रेस के नया नेतृत्व नहीं उभरने देने, पूंजीवादी साम्राज्यवादी शक्तियों की गिरफ्त में चली जाने तथा कट्टरवादी साम्प्रदायिक ताकतों से लचर तरीकों से निपटने (समझौतावादी रवैया) तथा भ्रष्टाचार में आकंठ डूबे रहने के कारण आगामी चुनाव में उठ खड़ी होगी यह संभव दिखाई नहीं देता। कांग्रेस देश में राज करने को अपना जन्मसिद्ध अधिकार मानती है, इस कारण कभी उसने गैर कांग्रेस तथा गैर भाजपाई सरकार केन्द्र सरकार को कभी टिकने नहीं दिया, ऐसी स्थिति में कांग्रेस नीतिगत और प्रायोगिक तौर पर विश्वास करने योग्य पार्टी नहीं है। कांग्रेस को नीतिगत बदलाव करने होंगे। सामूहिक नेतृत्व को स्वीकार करना होगा। अब तक की गई गलतियों के लिए माफी मांगते हुए आवश्यक सुधार करने होंगे। कांग्रेस के भीतर कांग्रेस सोशलिस्ट पार्टी के नाम से कार्य कर रहे समाजवादी नेताओं को पार्टी छोड़ने के लिए मजबूर करने की गलती स्वीकार करना होगा। वामपंथियों, समाजवादियों,

क्षेत्रीय पार्टियों के साथ विश्वासघात करने की गलतियों को स्वीकार कर तथा इमरजेंसी के लिए माफी मांग कर आगे बढ़ने का प्रयास करना होगा। कांग्रेस शासित प्रदेशों में कांग्रेस को खुद को नीतिगत स्तर पर साबित करना होगा। केवल बयानों से काम नहीं चलेगा। कांग्रेस और भारतीय जनता पार्टी ने देश को द्वि-ध्रुवीय स्थिति में ढकेल दिया है। ऐसी स्थिति में क्षेत्रीय पार्टियों और समाजवादी, वामपंथी मिलकर कोई विकल्प खड़ा कर सकते हैं। यह एक बड़ी चुनौती है। कांग्रेस के इर्द-गिर्द अगर रणनीति बनाई जाती है तब कांग्रेस की वापसी के लिए सिद्धांतों को ताक पर रखकर राजनीति करने का अपराध इतिहास में दर्ज होगा। जिस तरह तमाम विश्लेषक यह मानते हैं कि भाजपा को वर्तमान स्थिति तक पहुंचाने में समाजवादियों की अपरोक्ष भूमिका रही है। यह बात कांग्रेस के बारे में समाजवादियों को लेकर भी कही जायेगी।

पहले अन्ना आन्दोलन बाद में उसमें पैदा हुई आम आदमी पार्टी के प्रयोग को पूरा देश आशा भरी निगाहों से देख रहा था। लेकिन अरविन्द केजरीवाल के सुप्रीमों मॉडल तथा विचारहीनता के साथ काम करने की शैली अपनाकर उस पर तमाम प्रश्न चिन्ह लगा दिये हैं। आम आदमी पार्टी के योगेन्द्र यादव, प्रशांत भूषण, प्रो. आनन्द कुमार जैसे जो चेहरे सबसे प्रभावकारी थे उन्हें पार्टी से हटाकर, आप ने बड़ा आत्मघाती कदम उठाया है, जिसके परिणाम उसे भुगतने होंगे। आप से निकाले गए नेताओं ने स्वराज्य अभियान चलाने के बाद नई पार्टी स्वराज्य इंडिया बनाई हैं, उसे अपना चुनावी आधार बनाने में वक्त लगेगा, नई पार्टी खुद को समाजवादी विचार की पार्टी कहेगी यह नहीं कहा जा सकता। हालांकि स्वराज्य अभियान में समाजवादी विचार रखने वालों की बहुतायत है। देश में जन आन्दोलनों की आज बड़ी ताकत है जिसने आप का समर्थन किया था। जनसंगठन खुलकर स्वराज्य इंडिया का कितना समर्थन करेंगे यह देखना बाकी है। जन आन्दोलनों का राष्ट्रीय समन्वय इस ताकत का प्रतिनिधि समूह है। पूना सम्मेलन में एन.ए.पी.एम. ने अपने समूह को लोकतांत्रिक समाजवादी समूह घोषित किया है, लेकिन यह चुनावी हस्तक्षेप से दूर है, इस कारण उसकी चुनावी समीकरण में कोई दिलचस्पी दिखलाई नहीं देती। वह सीधे चुनाव में किसी पार्टी का समर्थन कर चुनाव को प्रभावित करने की दिशा में भी प्रयासरत् नहीं है। लेकिन तमाम जनसंगठन समाजवादी एकजुटता के पक्षधर हैं तथा देश जनसंगठनों की प्रगतिशील, लोकतांत्रिक, समाजवादी

ताकतों को एकजुट करना चाहते हैं। समाजवादी एकजुटता की दृष्टि से जनसंगठनों, समाजवादी विचार की पार्टियों, 92 लाख की सदस्यता वाले श्रमिक संगठन-हिन्दू मजदूर सभा का एवं 75 वर्ष पुराने छात्र-छात्राओं एवं युवाओं के बीच कार्य करने वाले राष्ट्रसेवा दल जैसे प्रामाणिक समाजवादी संगठनों का एकजुट होना समाजवादी आन्दोलन के लिए अतिमहत्वपूर्ण है। इस दिशा में राष्ट्रीय समाजवादी एकजुटता सम्मेलन मील का पत्थर साबित होगा।

21 वीं सदी के समाजवाद की सैद्धांतिक व्याख्या, वैश्वीकरण, नीजिकरण तथा उदारिकरण से निपटने के नीतिगत और आन्दोलनात्मक तरीके, साम्प्रदायिक शक्तियों को परास्त करने के तौर तरीके तथा वैकल्पिक समाजवादी नीतियों पर समाजवादी व्यक्तियों संगठनों और पार्टियों की एक राय होना जरूरी है। हम उम्मीद करते हैं कि इस दिशा में 21-22 अक्टूबर का समाजवादी एकजुटता सम्मेलन महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाएगा। समाजवादी समागम की जो प्रक्रिया 10-11 अगस्त 2014 में युसुफ मेहर अली सेन्टर तारा से शुरू हुई थी, वह एकजुटता के संदर्भ में तेजी से आगे बढ़ी है। वामपंथी पार्टियों की किसान सभाओं के साथ मिलकर बने भूमि अधिकार आन्दोलन ने भूमि अधिग्रहण अध्यादेश को रोकने में कामयाबी हासिल की है। क्षेत्रीय स्तर पर समाजवादी, वामपंथी, जनसंगठनों तथा अम्बेडकरवादी, संगठनों की एकजुटता लगातार बढ़ रही है। चाहे वह कन्हैया कुमार का मुद्दा हो या जिगनेश का, राष्ट्रद्रोह का सवाल या दलित प्रताड़ना का सवाल, सभी को लेकर देश में व्यापक एकजुटता बनी है। जिसमें तमाम संभावनाएं तलाशी जा सकती हैं। समाजवाद, सामाजिक न्याय, धर्मनिरपेक्षता जैसे संवैधानिक मूल्यों के इर्द-गिर्द राष्ट्रीय आन्दोलन खड़ा करने की चुनौती यदि सामुहिक तौर पर समाजवादी स्वीकार करें तब आने वाले समय में समाजवादी विचार मजबूती से देश में उभर सकता है- पुर्नस्थापित हो सकता है। एक तरफ हमें नीतिगत विकल्प देश के समक्ष पेश करना होगा दूसरी तरफ कट्टरपंथी सांप्रदायिक शक्तियों और कॉरपोरेट लूट की ताकतों को मैदान में चुनौती देनी होगी। इसके लिए हम राज्य के क्रूरतम दमन को सहने और त्याग करने के लिए हम कितना तैयार हैं इस पर ही हमारा भविष्य निर्भर करेगा। जमीनी स्तर पर अन्याय, अत्याचार, भ्रष्टाचार, भेदभाव, लूट तथा रोटी-कपड़ा-मकान, शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, रोजगार के सवालों पर चल रहें जनआंदोलनों से जुड़कर ही समाजवादी अपने विचार के भविष्य का निर्माण कर सकते हैं।

सबको घर देने का तोड़ा वादा, अब है घर तोड़ने का इरादा

बिलाल खान

एक बार फिर असवेदनशील, अत्याचारी, गरीब विरोधी व सांप्रदायिक महाराष्ट्र में भाजपा सरकार ने मुंबई की गरीब बस्तियों को उजाड़ने का फैसला लिया है “इस बार तर्क दिया जा रहा है कि मैन्ग्रोव के पेड़ों को बचाना है इसलिए गरीब बस्तियों के अतिक्रमण को हटायेंगे” कहा जा रहा है कि मैन्ग्रोव सेल अक्टूबर में 1000 घर तोड़ेगी.

आज घर बचाओ घर बनाओं आन्दोलन आदर्श घोटाले के उजागर किये हुए कई साल हो गए हैं, पर बिल्डिंग ज्यो की त्यो खड़ी है मा. हाई कोर्ट द्वारा तोड़े जाने के आदेश के बाद भी “आज कई सौ हेक्टर में बने बांद्रा कुर्ला काम्प्लेक्स (बी. के. सी.) मैन्ग्रोव के पेड़ों को काटवरु ही बनाया गया है.” हमारें द्वारा गए साल मा. कलेक्टर मुंबई सबअर्बन को एक रिपोर्ट दी गयी थी। “इस रिपोर्ट में मा. हाई कोर्ट के उल्लंघन वरुते हुए मैन्ग्रोव काट वरु जो बड़े-बड़े प्रोजेक्ट बनाये गए हैं, उनकी जानकारी है परन्तु उस पर आज तक कोई कारवाही नहीं हुई है। “कार्यवाही अगर हुई है तो बेसहारा व गरीबों के घरों को उजाड़ने की” पिछली साल मैन्ग्रोव सेल ने 4000 परिवारों के घर उजाड़े थे जो बस्तियों में रहते थे। भाजपा सरकार चाहे केंद्र में हो या राज्य में, “सबको घर” देने का वादा पूरा नहीं वरुते हुए “सबक घर उजाड़ने” का का इरादा बनाये हुए है।”

यह अत्याचार की हद है। “पहले से इन बस्तियों में रह रहे लोग जो असंगठित क्षेत्र में काम करते हैं जैसे कि रिक्शा व ताज़ी चालक, घरेलु कामगार, बांधकामगार, इलेक्ट्रीशियन, कारपेंटर, फल-सब्जी विक्रेता, घर बैठकर सिलाई इत्यादि का काम। “इन कामगारों की बढ़ती महगाई के कारण आमदनी से खर्चे पूरे नहीं होते और कर्जा बढ़ता चला जा रहा है” सरकारी स्कूल और अस्पतालों में सुविधा अच्छी नहीं होने पर प्राइवेट में जाना पड़ता है।” महीने की आधी से ज्यादा कमाई, पढाई और दावा-दारू में चली जाती है और बाकि का खर्चा कर्जे पे चलता है।” ऐसे लोगों के लिए केंद्र सरकार द्वारा 8 साल पहले “असंगठित” कामगार सामाजिक सुरक्षा कानून, 2008, लाया था जिस पर महाराष्ट्र सरकार ने अभी तक अमल नहीं किया है। “इस कानून के तहत हर असंगठित क्षेत्र में कम कर रहे लोगों का पंजीकरण करके उनको घर, इन्शुरेंस, शिक्षा आदि की सुविधा देना है परन्तु इस कानून को लागू नहीं करके महाराष्ट्र सरकार

గరిబోలొ కే హక మార రహీ హే। “బస్తయొలొ మేం రహనే వాలే లొగొలొ కొ మజదూర న కహకర జినకే కారణ ముంబई शहर चलता है, “अतिक्रमणधारक” बोलना उससे भी बड़ा अन्याय है। “उनका हक मारकर उनके सर से छत उजाड़ना, उनकी ज़िन्दगी को खतरे में डालना। “जीने के अधिकार” का हनन होने के साथ-साथ अत्याचार की हद पार करुना है। इस अत्याचार का अधिक प्रभाव पहले से झेलते आ रहे जातीय व आर्थिक भेद-भाव दलितों, अल्पसंख्यकों और महिलाओं पर पड़ता है जिसके कारण उनका स्थान समाज में और हाशिये और चला जाता है। इस अपमान और अत्याचार को जवाब देने का समय है। सब गरीबों को एक होने का समय है।

हम पर्यावरण के दुश्मन नहीं है बल्कि हम मानते है कि

पर्यावरण और मानव का सह-अस्तित्व हो जो पृथ्वी की संरचना का आधार भी माना जाता है। इसको व्यवहार में भी लाया जा सकता है अगर कुछ नवीनतम रस्ते अपनाकर जॉइंट फारेस्ट मैनेजमेंट की पदाधि और शहरी परिवेश को ध्यान में रखते हुए एक लोकल संयुक्त देख-रेख समिति का भी गठन किया जा सकता है जिसमें मैन्ग्रोव के पेड़ों के आस-पास की बस्तियों/बिल्डिंगों में रहने वाले इच्छुक व पर्यावरणवादी व्यक्तियों को समिति का सदस्य बनाया जाए, उसमें वन-विभाग व पुलिस के भी अधिकारी सदस्य रहे। लोकल सदस्यों को मैन्ग्रोव पर किसी भी प्रकार के खतरे की खबर मिलने पर पुलिस व समबन्धित अधिकारियों की मदद से खतरा तुरंत रोका जा सकता है।

2000 కోట్ల రూపాయల నిర్మాణ అంచనాలతో,
అసియాఖండానికే అతిపెద్ద గార్డెన్ ఎస్టేట్గా, ప్రతిష్ఠాత్మకంగా నిర్మాణమౌతున్న
అపూరావ విశ్వరూప వైభవ, అపూర్వ స్వస్థ ప్రపంచం - 'డ్రీమ్ సిటీ-2'లో
సాటిలేని సౌభాగ్యాలనందించే యూనిట్ను
మీ చిన్నారుల ఉజ్వల భవిష్యత్తుకు కానుకగా ఇవ్వండి!!!!

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वाढता सामाजिक विद्वेष सर्वसमावेशी विकासाला मारक

सुभाष वारे

‘हा शाहू-फुले-आंबेडकरांचा महाराष्ट्र आहे’ हे वाक्य ज्या महाराष्ट्रात नित्य नेमाने ऐकू येते, त्या महाराष्ट्राचे सध्याचे वर्तमान संवेदनशील मनांना अस्वस्थ करणारे आहे. महाराष्ट्रदेशी सध्या दररोज कुठल्या ना कुठल्या शहरात प्रचंड मोर्चा निघत आहे. कधी कधी तर एकाच दिवशी तीनचार शहरात मोर्चे निघत आहेत. मराठा क्रांती मूक मोर्चे अनेक शहरांत निघाले, अजून काही शहरात निघणार आहेत. ओ० बी० सी० आरक्षण बचाव मोर्चा नाशिकमध्ये निघाला. त्या मोर्चाला काहीजणांनी भ्रष्टाचाराच्या आरोपावरून तुरुंगात असलेल्या छगन भुजबळ यांच्या समर्थनाचे स्वरूप दिले. अँट्रॉसिटी कायद्याच्या समर्थनासाठी मोर्चे निघाले. शोषित जातिसमूहांचेही आणखी काही मोर्चे नियोजित आहेत. आरक्षणासाठी अधिक वरच्या प्रवर्गात समावेश करण्याचे आश्वासन सत्ताधाऱ्यांनी पाळावे म्हणून धनगर समाजाचे मोर्चे निघत आहेत. भगवानगडावर परंपरेने जमणाऱ्या गर्दीच्या आधारे आपले राजकारण पुढे नेण्याच्या चढाओढीत होणारी रस्सीखेच आणि तिथे होणाऱ्या मेळाव्यातून निर्माण झालेला तणाव व शाब्दिक विखारही महाराष्ट्राने अनुभवला. जाती आधारीत मेळावे दुर्दैवी आहेत, ही भाषाही प्रसंगी एकाच जातीच्या मेळाव्यातूनच ऐकावी लागली. अर्थातच संसदीय लोकशाहीमध्येसनदशीर पद्धतीने काम करणाऱ्या जनआंदोलनांना महत्त्वाचे स्थान असते. खरे तर आपले म्हणणे मांडण्यासाठी किंवा आपल्या मागण्या सरकारदरबारी आग्रहपूर्वक नोंदवण्यासाठी शांततेच्या मार्गाने लोक रस्त्यावर उतरत असतील तर ते लोकशाही जिवंत असल्याचेच लक्षण मानले पाहिजे. शांततेच्या मार्गाने, ठरलेल्या शिस्तीत, महिला नेतृत्वाला पुढे करत, महिला अत्याचाराचा मुद्दा समोर आणण्यासाठी लाखांचे मोर्चे निघत असतील तर त्यापाठीमागची प्रक्रिया आणि भावना समजून घेतली पाहिजे. त्याच पद्धतीने संरक्षक कायदा रद्द होऊ नये म्हणून निघणाऱ्या मोर्चाला किंवा बेरोजगारीचा प्रश्न फक्त आरक्षणाच्या माध्यमातूनच सुटेल अशा भ्रमातून वेगवेगळे जातीसमूह मोर्चा काढत असतील तर तेही समजून घेता येईल. समजून घेता येईल अशासाठी की, जोपर्यंत हे मोर्चे शांततेच्या मार्गाने निघत आहेत तोपर्यंत संवादाची शक्यता जिवंत असते. तुमचा प्रश्न बरोबर आहे पण तुम्ही उत्तर चुकीच्या जागी शोधत आहात किंवा तुमच्या प्रश्नाचे उत्तर नेमके कुठे सापडू शकते, हा संवाद मोर्चे काढणाऱ्यांशी होऊ शकतो. अर्थात हा संवाद सत्ताधाऱ्यांनी पुढाकार घेऊन करण्याची गरज आहे. त्यासाठी संवादाची गरज आणि

तातडी सत्ताधाऱ्यांच्या वेळीच लक्षात येणेही महत्त्वाचे असते.

अडचण अशी आहे की, हे मोर्चे सुट्या सुट्या प्रश्नांना घेऊन किंवा आपल्याच जातीपुरते किंवा आपल्याच जातिसमूहापुरते प्रश्न घेऊन निघत आहेत. देशासमोरील-समाजासमोरील गुंतागुंतीचे प्रश्न सोडवण्यासाठीच्या व्यापक भूमिकेचा यात अभाव दिसतो. तसाच आपल्या जातीच्या खऱ्या किंवा काही वेळा जाणीवपूर्वक जोपासलेल्या प्रश्नांची योग्यता ठसवण्यासाठी किंवा त्यांची न्यायोचितता दाखवण्यासाठी दुसऱ्या जातिसमूहाबद्दल होत असलेली विखारी मांडणी पण सोबत दिसत आहे. ही विखारी मांडणी मोर्चात जितकी जाणवत आहे त्यापेक्षा जास्त वेगवेगळ्या व्हॉट्सअप ग्रुपवर जाणवत आहे. विशिष्ट प्रश्नांसाठी निर्माण केलेल्या कितीतरी व्हॉट्सअप ग्रुपवर जन्माने वेगवेगळ्या जातींच्या असणाऱ्या व्यक्ती विविध प्रश्नांवर आजवर वाद-संवादातून सहमती घडवताना दिसत होत्या. त्याच व्यक्ती सध्याच्या काळात मात्र अचानक आपापल्या जातीचे प्रश्न मांडताना हमरीतुमरीवर, प्रसंगी एकेरीवर येताना दिसत आहेत. आपली भूमिका पटवून देण्यासाठी अतार्किक, प्रचारी मुद्द्यांचा आधार घेताना दिसत आहेत. आपल्या अडचणींना दुसरे जातिसमूहच कसे जबाबदार आहेत हे मांडताना दुसऱ्या जातीबद्दल/जातिसमूहाबद्दल प्रसंगी अनुदार, प्रसंगी असहिष्णू तर शेवटी अतिशय विखारी भाषेत टीका करताना दिसत आहेत. मला माझा अधिकार मिळाला पाहिजे हे मांडणारी व्यक्ती समोरच्या ज्या व्यक्तीबरोबर बोलत असते, ती व्यक्तीसुद्धा भारताचीच नागरिक असते हे विसरून जाते. मला शिक्षण मिळाले पाहिजे हे मी मांडणार, मला नोकरी मिळाली पाहिजे हे मी मांडणार, पण सर्व भारतीयांना चांगले शिक्षण आणि सर्व भारतीयांना सक्षम रोजगार मिळाला पाहिजे हे मांडणाऱ्यांचा आवाज या गदारोळात कुठूनच कां ऐकू येत नाही; हा अस्वस्थ करणारा मुद्दा आहे. स्वातंत्र्यलढ्यात विकसित झालेली जातिधर्मनिरपेक्ष राष्ट्रवादाची भूमिका, भारतीय संविधानाने अपेक्षिलेली भारतीय नागरिकत्वाची भूमिका या मोर्चाच्या वावटळीत उडून जाताना पाहून जाणती मने अस्वस्थ होणे स्वाभाविक आहे.

सांप्रतच्या मोर्चांमध्ये काहीजणांना नव्याने आरक्षण हवे आहे तर काहीजणांना मिळत असलेल्या आरक्षणाचा प्रवर्ग बदलून हवा आहे. पण त्या त्या प्रवर्गात आधीपासून असलेल्या जातिसमूहांना मात्र नवे स्पर्धक नको आहेत. ही सर्व चर्चा मनमोकळ्या संवादातून पुढे जात नाही, तर

एकमेकांच्या जातीबद्दल विद्वेषी भाषा वापरतच पुढे सरकते. ज्यांना नव्याने आरक्षण हवे आहे त्यांच्यातले काही जण आजवर, आरक्षणाचे लाभार्थी हे सरकारचे जावई आहेत इथपासून ते आरक्षणांमुळे गुणवत्ता खालावते इथपर्यंत प्रतिक्रिया देत होते. आजही आरक्षणासंदर्भात राज्यघटनेतील तरतुदी आणि नियमांचा दाखला देत एखाद्या जातिसमूहाला आरक्षण मिळण्यासाठी कोणते निकष पूर्ण करावे लागतात हे समजावून सांगताच त्यांच्यातले काही जण एकदम खरे बोलून जातात आणि मग आम्हांला नाही तर कोणालाच देऊ नका अशी भूमिका घेतात. मग ही आंदोलने आरक्षण मिळवण्यासाठी आहेत की आरक्षण संपवण्यासाठी आहेत अशी शंका मनात सहजपणे डोकावते. भारतीय समाजातील जातिव्यवस्था आणि त्याच जातिव्यवस्थेने हजारो वर्षांपासून एका मोठ्या जातिसमूहाला माणूसपणाचे अधिकार नाकारल्याने जे मागास सांस्कृतिक संचित तयार झाले आहे, ते लक्षात घेऊन सामाजिक न्यायासाठी आरक्षण असते ही व्यवस्था समजून घ्यायला अनेक जण अजूनही खळखळ करताना दिसत आहेत. ज्या जातिव्यवस्थेमुळे आरक्षण देण्याची स्थिती निर्माण झाली ती जातिव्यवस्था आणि तिचे दुष्परिणाम समजून घेण्याची निकड आजही कोणाला वाटत नाही. त्याचबरोबर भारत मागासलेला राहण्यास कारणीभूत ठरलेली ही जातिव्यवस्था ज्या धर्माच्या मान्यतेने उभी आहे, त्या धर्माचे विषमतावादी/अन्यायकारी स्वरूप पाहता आवश्यक असलेली विधायक धर्मचिकित्सा हा मुद्दा चर्चेत येता येता कधी मागे पडतो ते समजतही नाही. जातीचे सुटे सुटे मोर्चे तर विधायक धर्मचिकित्सेच्या या आवश्यक चर्चेला आणखी मागे ढकलणारे ठरतील. जातिप्रथेने केवळ शोषित समाजाचे नव्हे, तर सर्वच समाजाचे नुकसान झाले आहे. मळलेल्या पाऊलवाटा सोडून देत नवे रस्ते शोधण्यास मनाई, साहस/धाडस करण्यास मनाई, वेगळा विचार करण्यास मनाई, वेगळा व्यवसाय करण्यास मनाई अशी वैशिष्ट्ये असणाऱ्या जातिप्रथेमुळे आणि निरर्थक धार्मिक कर्मकांडांमुळे भारतीय समाजाची सर्जनशीलता मारली गेली, नव्याचा शोध घेण्याची प्रवृत्ती मारली गेली, धाडसाने वेगळ्या वाटा धुंडाळण्याची मानसिकता दाबली गेली आणि भारत दुनियेच्या मागे पडला. ही वस्तुस्थिती लक्षात घेऊन जातिप्रथेचा निषेध, निरर्थक कर्मकांडाला नकार, परमेश्वर आणि भक्तामधल्या मध्यस्थांची हद्दपारी आणि धर्माची विधायक चिकित्सा ही भूमिका घेतल्यानेच भविष्यात सर्वांच्या प्रगतीची दारे उघडतील असं म्हणणारे आवाज, या

गदारोळात क्षीणपणेच उमटताना दिसत आहेत. जातिअंताचे आवाहन या टोकाकडून नाही तर निदान त्या टोकाकडून तरी ऐकू यावे ही आशा, आशाच राहताना दिसत आहे.

सामाजिकदृष्ट्या मागासलेल्या ज्या जातिसमूहांना आरक्षण मिळालेले आहे, त्यातीलही काही उत्साही नेतेमंडळी आपल्याच जातिसमूहातील अधिक गरजू किंवा अधिक गरीबांच्यापर्यंत आरक्षणाचे फायदे पोहोचण्याच्या दृष्टीने कोणी काही बोलू लागले, तर अशा सर्वांनाच आरक्षणविरोधक समजून त्यांच्यावर तुटून पडताना दिसतात. आरक्षण म्हणजे सर्व प्रश्नावरचे एकमेव रामबाण उत्तर अशा समजुतीतून जे ते जातिसमूह आपले आपले किल्ले लढवत असताना आपण सर्वच भारतीय नागरिक आहोत; अंतिमतः या देशात जन्मलेल्या प्रत्येकाला चांगले शिक्षण आणि प्रत्येकाला सक्षम रोजगार मिळाला पाहिजे आणि त्यासाठी योग्य असे आर्थिक धोरण हाच मार्ग शेवटी सर्वांच्या भल्याचा ठरणार ही भूमिका इथेही अभावानेच दिसते आणि अशा आर्थिक धोरणासाठी चळवळी करणारे समाजात कायम अल्पसंख्येच राहताना दिसतात.

अॅट्रॉसिटी कायद्याची अंमलबजावणी प्रामाणिकपणे होत्येय का? अॅट्रॉसिटी कायद्यात खटल्याचा निकाल लागून आरोपींना शिक्षा होण्याचे प्रमाण किती आहे? अॅट्रॉसिटीची किती प्रकरणे प्रत्यक्षात पोलीस स्टेशनपर्यंत पोहोचतात? अॅट्रॉसिटी कायद्याचा गैरवापर होतो असा आवाज उठवताना असा गैरवापर करणाऱ्यांना प्रत्यक्षात दुसराच कुणीतरी वापरून तर घेत नाही ना? असा कुठलाही अभ्यास न करता अॅट्रॉसिटी कायदाच रद्द करण्याची मागणी करणारे जसे एका बाजूला दिसतात तसेच या कायद्याचा अजिबातच गैरवापर होत नाही अशी ठाम भूमिका घेणारेही दुसऱ्या बाजूला दिसतात. स्वतःला शोषितांचे नेते म्हणवणारे आणि शोषितांच्या चळवळीची ढाल वापरून वास्तवात मात्र स्वतःची दुकानदारी चालवणारे गावोगावचे काही उथळ नेतेसुद्धा वातावरण बिघडवण्यास कारणीभूत आहेत. ते संख्येने कमी असले तरी त्यांच्यामुळे शोषितांच्या चळवळीचेच नुकसान होत असते, हे लक्षात घेऊन अशा उटपटांग पुढाऱ्यांना आवरण्याची भूमिका कोणी घ्यायला लागले तर त्यांच्यावर सरसकट सवर्ण मानसिकतेचे असा शिक्का मारून काही जण मोकळे होतात. शोषित जातिसमूहांच्या न्याय्य अधिकारांची चळवळ सक्षमपणे पुढे न्यायची असेल तर शोषितांच्या मनात अधिकारांबद्दल जागृती आवश्यक आहेच. पण त्याचबरोबर

सवर्ण समाजात जन्म घेतलेलेही अनेक जण जातिव्यवस्थेचा निषेध करणारे आहेत किंवा शोषितांच्या न्याय्य अधिकारांना मनापासून मानणारे आहेत हे मानले पाहिजे. शोषित समूहांचे हे जे सवर्णसमर्थक आहेत किंवा समर्थक होऊ शकतात त्यांच्याबरोबरचा संवादही शोषितांच्या चळवळीसाठी आवश्यक आहे, या समंजसपणाचा अभाव काही जणांच्या वागण्याबोलण्यात दिसतो. डॉ० बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरांनी सवर्ण समाजातील अनेकांचे सहकार्य आपल्या आंदोलनांना पुढे नेण्यासाठी मिळवले होते, ही साधी बाबही शोषित समाजाचे काही उथळ पुढारी विसरतात. गावकुसाबाहेरचे पुरोगामी आणि गावकुसाच्या आतले पुरोगामी यांची एकजूट आवश्यक आहे असे आदरणीय दादासाहेब रुपवते म्हणायचे. आज हा आवाज दोन्ही बाजूंनी उठावा यासाठी विशेष प्रयत्नांची गरज आहे.

समाजासमोर अनेक गुंतागुंतीचे प्रश्न निर्माण झाले आहेत. दिवसेंदिवस त्यातील गुंतागुंत वाढतच आहे. अशा वेळी सम्यक आणि सर्वसमावेशक विचार करत प्रश्नांची दीर्घकालीन उत्तरे मिळवण्यासाठी समाजातील एकजिनसीपणा वाढावा, सामाजिक सलोखा वाढावा यासाठी प्रयत्न आवश्यक आहेत. समाजाच्या, व्यक्तींच्या आकांक्षा वाढत आहेत. नवी नवी स्वप्ने त्यांना खुणावत आहेत. यात वाईट काही नाही. हे प्रगतीचेच लक्षण आहे; पण वाढत्या आकांक्षा आणि कमी होत जाणाऱ्या सोईसुविधा ही परिस्थिती तणाव निर्माण करते. हा तणाव आपापसांत भांडणे लावतो. पण सोईसुविधांचा विस्तार कां होत नाही? याला जबाबदार कोण हा प्रश्न विचारायला हाच तणाव आपल्या सर्वांना प्रवृत्त कां करत नाही? आपण आपापल्या जातीतच जगू लागलो, जातीपुरताच विचार करायला लागलो, स्वतःच्या जातीचा/धर्माचा अतिरेकी अभिमान आणि दुसऱ्याच्या जातीचा/धर्माचा दुस्वास करू लागलो तर आपल्याला नव्याने पडत असलेली स्वप्ने तर पुरी होणारच नाहीत, शिवाय आज आपल्या हातात जे काही आहे तेही गमवावे लागेल हे आपण ओळखले पाहिजे. आपापसांतल्या भांडणांनी मिळत काहीच नाही, पण आपल्या दुर्गतीला जे खरे जबाबदार आहेत ते सहजपणे निसटून जातात. वाढता सामाजिक विद्वेष हा सर्वसमावेशक विकासाला मारक असतो. खाणारे दहा आणि भाकरी एकच अशा परिस्थितीत ही परिस्थिती कायम अशीच राहणार हे गृहीत धरून असलेली एक भाकरी कोण खाणार हाच चर्चेचा मुद्दा केला,

तर आपल्याआपल्यातच भांडणे लागणार हे स्पष्टच आहे. पण या गदारोळात खाणारे दहा आहेत तर भाकरी दहा कां थापल्या जात नाहीत हा प्रश्न विचारायचे राहून जाते आणि दहा भाकरी थापण्याची जबाबदारी ज्यांच्यावर सोपवली आहे त्यांना जाब विचारायचेही राहून जाते.

महाराष्ट्रात आणि भारतात जो वाढता सामाजिक विद्वेष दिसतो आहे, वेगवेगळे जातिसमूह एकमेकांबद्दल ज्या विषारीपणे बोलत आहेत याची कारणे काय असावीत? विशेषतः समाज माध्यमातून(सोशल मीडियातून)आपापल्या समाजाचा अभिनिवेश आणि दुसऱ्याच्या समाजाबद्दल असहिष्णू भाषा वाढते आहे याचे एक कारण, मागच्या निवडणुकीच्या प्रचारातील आश्वासनांची खैरात, त्यातून वाढलेल्या अपेक्षा आणि प्रत्यक्षात अपेक्षापूर्तीपेक्षा उलट दिशेने होत असलेली सत्ताधऱ्यांची वाटचाल यात असेल का, हेही शोधले पाहिजे.

देशात आणि महाराष्ट्रात सत्तांतर होऊन आता बराच कालावधी लोटला आहे. 2014पूर्वीच्या सत्ताधऱ्यांचा भ्रष्ट आणि सरंजामदारी कारभार जनतेला खुपत होताच. विकासाच्या लाख-कोटी रुपयांच्या योजना भ्रष्टाचाराच्या गटारंगेत वाहून जात होत्या आणि सरंजामदार राजकारणी व त्यांचे मूठभर बगलबच्चे यांची घरे भरली जात होती. त्यातूनच तालुका पातळीवरील नेते आणि त्यांच्या नातेवाईक-समर्थकांचा उद्दामपणा अधिकच वाढत होता. लोकशाहीचाच आधार घेत तालुक्यातालुक्यात उभे राहिलेल्या नव्या संस्थानिक राजकारण्यांचा जाच मतदारांना असह्य झाला होता. ज्या सहकारक्षेत्राने एकेकाळी ग्रामीण भागाची क्रयशक्ती वाढविण्याचे महत्त्वपूर्ण काम केले, ते सहकारक्षेत्रच मोडून खाण्याचे काम करणाऱ्या सहकार सम्राटांचा भ्रष्टाचार, नातलगशाही आणि गैरव्यवस्थापन लोक पाहत होते. शिक्षण प्रसाराच्या नावाखाली अन्य राज्यांतील धनवान विद्यार्थ्यांना प्राधान्य देताना गरीब शेतकऱ्यांच्या पोरांना शिक्षणसंस्थेच्या दारातही उभे राहू न देणारे सत्ताधारी शिक्षणसम्राट कोणाची घरे भरत होते हेही मतदारांच्या लक्षात येत होते. तथाकथित मुक्त अर्थकारणाने एका बाजूला मध्यमवर्गाच्या आकांक्षा गगनाला भिडवल्या होत्या. दुसऱ्या बाजूला याच मुक्त अर्थकारणाने कष्टकऱ्यांच्या मनात केवळ विकासाचे स्वप्न फुलवले नव्हते तर विकासाचा पाझर आज ना उद्या, पण याच प्रक्रियेतून आपल्यापर्यंत पोहोचेल हा भ्रमही निर्माण केला होता. नरेंद्र मोदी यांच्यासारख्या प्रसिद्धी आणि

कल्पना विक्री कौशल्यात तरबेज नेत्याने सर्व प्रकारच्या माध्यमांचा खुबीने उपयोग करत जनतेच्या विकासविषयक आकांक्षांचे रूपांतर तत्कालीन सत्ताधऱ्यांच्या विरोधातील असंतोषात केले. हे करण्यासाठी त्यांनी गुजरातमध्ये त्यांच्या मुख्यमंत्रीपदाच्या काळात झालेल्या आणि त्याचसोबत न झालेल्याही विकासाचे ढोल बडवले. शिवाय परदेशातला काळा पैसा परत आणून प्रत्येक भारतीयाच्या खात्यात जमा करू इथपासून ते शेतकऱ्यांना उत्पादनखर्चावर पन्नास टक्के नफा मिळेल एवढा भाव शेतमालाला देऊ अशी अनेक आश्वासने मतदारांना दिली. आरक्षणाचा प्रवर्ग बदलून हवा असलेल्या धनगर समाजाला मंत्रिमंडळाच्या पहिल्याच बैठकीत असा निर्णय घेऊ, असे आश्वासन इकडे महाराष्ट्रात देवेंद्र फडणवीसांनी दिले. याबाबत आदिवासी समाजाचे काय म्हणणे आहे हे त्यांना माहीत नव्हते असे नाही; कारण सत्तेत आल्याबरोबर त्यांच्याच पक्षाचे आदिवासी विकास मंत्री विष्णू सावरा यांनी धनगर समाजाची मागणी पूर्ण होऊ शकत नाही असे स्पष्ट विधान केले. पण तुम्ही फक्त आमच्या हातात सत्ता द्या; मग ज्याला जे हवे ते आम्ही आणि फक्त आम्हीच देऊ, अशी प्रचाराची दिशा भारतीय जनता पक्षाने समजून-उमजून ठेवली. परिणामी झालेल्या मतदानाच्या जवळपास 31 टक्के मते मिळवत भारतीय जनता पक्षाला लोकसभेत पूर्ण बहुमत मिळाले. अनेक वर्षांनंतर आघाडी सरकारचे युग संपवत एकाच पक्षाचे बहुमत असणारे सरकार दिले अस्तित्वात आले. सहा महिन्यांच्या आत महाराष्ट्रातही पारंपरिक सहयोगी भाजप-शिवसेनेचे सरकार अस्तित्वात आले. विकासाच्या संदर्भात मोठे मोठे दावे करणारे आता सत्ताधारी झाले आणि आघाडी सरकारच्या कुठल्याही मर्यादा त्यांच्यावर नसल्याने विकासाचा वारू आता चौफेर उधळू लागेल असा विश्वास अनेकांना वाटू लागला.

पूर्वीच्या सत्ताधऱ्यांच्या काळात जनतेला नोकरशाहीचा अनुभव काही फार चांगला येत नव्हता. अपवाद वगळता पांढरा हत्ती बनलेली नोकरशाही जनतेच्या अतिशय गंभीर प्रश्नावरसुद्धा बेमुर्वतखोरपणे आणि तितक्याच असंवेदनशीलतेने वागताना मतदार पाहत होते. नव्या सरकारने त्याही बाबतीत चांगले प्रशासन, जबाबदार प्रशासन, तत्पर प्रशासन, जनहिताचे निर्णय ठोसपणे राबवणारे प्रशासन आम्हीच आणणार असे दावे केले होते. एकूण काय तर आता सर्व आबादीआबाद होणार असा समज मतदारांचा, नागरिकांचा करून दिला गेला. गुंतागुंतीच्या प्रश्नांचे

सुलभीकरण करत अतिशय सोपी उत्तरे मांडत, तुम्ही फक्त आमच्या हातात सत्ता द्या आणि निर्धास्त राहा असा पवित्रा घेतला गेला.

समाजजीवनात आणि मतदारांच्या वैयक्तिक जीवनात असे आमूलाग्र परिवर्तन घडवून आणण्याचा दावा करणाऱ्या नव्या सत्ताध्याऱ्यांनी निवडून येण्यासाठीचे हातखंडे मात्र जुन्या सत्ताध्याऱ्यांचेच, पण त्यांच्यापेक्षाही अधिक प्रभावीपणे वापरले. त्यांच्या निवडणूक प्रचाराच्या खर्चाने कोटीच्या कोटी उड्डुणे घेतली. उमेदवारांच्या निवडणूक प्रचारखर्चावर असलेल्या बंधनातून सहज पळवाटा काढणाऱ्यांना पक्षाच्या वतीने होणाऱ्या निवडणूक प्रचारखर्चावर तर बंधन नव्हतेच. दुसऱ्या बाजूला आधीच्या सत्ताध्याऱ्यांच्या मधले असंतुष्ट शोधून शोधून आपल्यात सामील करून घेताना ते भ्रष्ट आहेत की नाहीत असा कुठलाही सारासार विचार केला गेला नाही. जुन्यांचेच भ्रष्ट हातखंडे वापरून आणि जुन्यांच्या पैकीच अनेकांना सामावून घेत, निवडून आलेल्या या नव्यांचे चरित्र आणि चारित्र्य नोकरशाहीने सर्वांत आधी ओळखले. हे नवे सत्ताधारी आपले काहीही बिघडवू शकणार नाहीत हे जाणून, त्यांनी आपला जुनाच म्हणजेच जनतेप्रती बेमुर्वत आणि असंवेदनशील कारभार बिनधास्तपणे पुन्हा सुरू केला. महाराष्ट्र सरकारने आधीच्या दफतर दिरंगाई कायद्याच्या अपयशाची कारणे न शोधता नवा सेवा हमी कायदा आणला. जनतेला हेलपाटे घालायला न लागता, अधिकार्यांचे हात ओले करावे न लागता दिलेल्या मुदतीत आपली कामे होतील असे आश्वासन दिले गेले. प्रत्यक्षात मात्र ते आश्वासनच राहिले. छोट्यामोठ्या सरकारी कार्यालयांत गेल्यानंतर नागरिकांना होणारा मनस्ताप, दिरंगाई आणि खिशाला चाट नव्या सरकारच्या काळातही तसाच चालू राहिला.

आर्थिक धोरणांच्या बाबतीतही नव्या सरकारची नीती आधीच्या सरकारच्यापेक्षा महत्त्वाच्या बाबतीत तरी वेगळी दिसत नाही.

~ शेती क्षेत्राकडे दुर्लक्ष.

~ निवडक उद्योगपतींची पाठराखण.

~ विकासाच्या बाबत अस्थिर अशा थेट परकीय गुंतवणुकीवरच भिस्त.

~ रोजगारनिर्मितीच्या महत्त्वपूर्ण उद्दिष्टाची उपेक्षा.

~ शेतकऱ्यांना अजिबात कर्जमाफी देणार नाही अशी ठाम भूमिका घेतानाच मोठ्या उद्योगपतींकडील राष्ट्रीयीकृत बँकांचे लाखो-करोडो रुपयांचे कर्ज वसूल करण्याबाबत मात्र अर्थपूर्ण उदासीनता आणि

~ सर्वांत महत्त्वाचे म्हणजे निर्यातप्रधान आर्थिक नीतीवर अतिरिक्त भर व घरेलू बाजार (डोमेस्टिक मार्केट) उभा करण्याकडे दुर्लक्ष.

ही नीती मागील पानावरून पुढे चालू राहिली. किंबहुना, अधिक सुसाट जात राहिली.

मग त्याचे दुष्परिणामही त्याच गतीने दिसायला लागले. शेतकऱ्यांना स्वामीनाथन समिती अहवालानुसार हमीभाव देणारी व्यवस्था उभी करण्याऐवजी सत्तेवर येताच आठ महिन्यांच्या आत असा भाव देणे योग्य नाही कारण त्याने बाजारात अनावश्यक हस्तक्षेप होईल अशी भूमिका सर्वोच्च न्यायालयात दिलेल्या शपथपत्रात याच सरकारने घेतली. या सरकारच्या काळात शेतकरी आत्महत्या वाढल्या, कंत्राटी कामगार धोरणाने संघटीत कामगार असंघटित होत राहून अस्वस्थता वाढली, असंघटित/असुरक्षित कष्टकरी सामाजिक सुरक्षेपासून वंचितच राहिले, निवडणूक प्रचारनिधीच्या खाल्ल्या मिठाला जागण्याकरता मर्जीतल्या बड्या उद्योगपतींना हवे ते देताना दुसऱ्या बाजूला सोईसुविधा-अभावी छोटे उद्योग मात्र अडचणीत आले, बांधकाम क्षेत्रातील मंदी तशीच चालू राहिली आणि उद्योगक्षेत्राने अपेक्षित उभारी न घेतल्याने रोजगारनिर्मिती थंडावली. परिणामी जनतेत अस्वस्थता दिसणे स्वाभाविक होतेच. नव्या सरकारची नव्याची नवलाई संपली असा निष्कर्ष काढण्यात घाई होणार असली, तरी वेगवेगळे समूह आपली नाराजी, असंतोष नोंदवू लागले.

या असंतोषाची गंभीर दखल घेत आर्थिक नीतीत सर्वांना सामावून घेणारी संवेदनशीलता आणि अंमलबजावणीच्या व्यवहारात पारदर्शीपणा आणून सकारात्मक प्रतिसाद देणे सरकारसाठी शक्य होते व आहे. मात्र सत्ताधारी पक्षाच्या आणि त्याच्याशी संबंधित विविध संघटनांच्या नेते-कार्यकर्त्यांचा प्रतिसाद मात्र समाजाला भलत्याच दिशेने घेऊन जाणारा दिसला/दिसतोय.

~ तथाकथित गोरक्षकांनी कायदा हातात घेत सुरू केलेली गुन्हेगारी कृत्ये.

~ महात्मा गांधीजींच्या खुन्याचे उदात्तीकरण.

~ राष्ट्रभक्तीची उथळ व्याख्या करत सुरू असलेली सांस्कृतिक दादागिरी.

~ भारताचे बहुसांस्कृतिक स्वरूप विसरून एकाच धर्माचे प्रतीक असणाऱ्या 'गीता' या धर्मग्रंथास राष्ट्रीय ग्रंथ म्हणावे यासाठीचा खटाटोप.

~ शोषित जातिसमूहांसाठी राज्यघटनेने दिलेल्या आरक्षणाबाबत उलट सुलट विधाने.

~ लोकसंख्या नियंत्रित ठेवण्यासाठी सर्वांसाठीच व्यापक धोरण ठरविण्याऐवजी एका विशिष्ट धर्मीयांविरोद्ध गरळ ओकत, स्वधर्मीयांना अधिक मुले जन्माला घालण्याचे आवाहन (महिला म्हणजे केवळ मुली-मुले जन्माला घालण्याचे यंत्र समजत) करण्याचा वावदूकपणा.

आणि असेच जे अन्य प्रकार सुरू आहेत त्याचा निष्कर्ष एवढाच निघतो की, विकासाच्या प्रश्नावर मिळालेल्या जनादेशाचा वापर सामाजिक विद्वेषाच्या कार्यक्रमासाठी करून हे सरकार त्या जनादेशाचाच अपमान करत आहे. याचा एक अर्थ असाही निघू शकतो की, निवडणुका जिंकण्यासाठी ज्याला जे पाहिजे ती आश्वासने देणाऱ्या या सरकारला आता ती आश्वासनेच डोईजड झाली आहेत म्हणून किंवा आर्थिक आघाडीवर भरीव काही करून दाखवता येत नाही म्हणून आर्थिक आघाडीवरील अपयश झाकण्यासाठी हे सरकारच समाजात दुही माजवण्याचे राजकारण करत आहे. लोकशाहीत सकारात्मक बदलासाठी भरभरून मतदान करूनही प्रत्यक्षात जेव्हा मतदारांचा अपेक्षाभंग होतो तेव्हा तो अपेक्षाभंग सामाजिक दुरावा आणि परस्पर अविश्वास वाढवतो. आणि सरकारच जेव्हा सामाजिक विद्वेषाला खतपाणी घालायला लागते तेव्हा तर समस्या अधिकच बिकट होते. अशा वेळी हे अपयश एका पक्षाचे अपयश राहत नाही तर त्याचे रूपांतर मतदारांचा लोकशाही राजकारणावरचा विश्वास कमी व्हायला कारणीभूत ठरते. मग याच काळात सर्व जाती-धर्मांच्या नागरिकांनी एकत्र येऊन रोजीरोटीच्या प्रश्नावर लढे उभारणे महत्त्वाचे ठरते. आज भारतीय समाजास अशा धर्मनिरपेक्ष लढ्यांची गरज आहे. धर्मनिरपेक्षतेच्या मुद्याची फार चर्चा न करता जे मुद्दे सर्वांना डाकतात, जे मुद्दे सर्वांसाठी समस्या बनून राहिले आहेत, ज्या मुद्यावर सर्व जातिधर्मांचे लोक एकत्र येऊ शकतात;

अशा मुद्यांवर सर्व लोकांनी एकजुटीने आवाज उठविणे हे धर्मनिरपेक्ष राजकारणच असते. जनतेचा लोकशाहीवरचा विश्वास टिकला पाहिजे. म्हणूनच विकासाच्या आघाडीवर जे सर्वांसाठी शक्य आहे, तेच एकेकट्यासाठी योग्य आहे ही भूमिका रुजवत अशा स्वप्नांच्या पूर्तीसाठी प्रत्येकाला योगदान देता येईल अशी परिस्थिती निर्माण केली पाहिजे. त्या स्वप्नाच्या दिशेने सर्व जण जोमाने कामाला लागतील हे पाहिले पाहिजे. मोठ्या आशेने निवडून दिलेल्या सरकारकडून अशी सर्वसमावेशक आणि व्यापक भूमिका अपेक्षित आहे. आणि सरकार जर अशी व्यापक भूमिका घ्यायला तयार नसेल तर जनतेने ती त्यांना घ्यायला लावली पाहिजे.

~ शेतीची उपेक्षा थांबवणाऱ्या, शेतीतील सार्वजनिक गुंतवणूक वाढवणाऱ्या आणि शेतमालाला रास्त हमीभाव देणाऱ्या,

~ नव्या क्षेत्रातील शेतमाल प्रक्रिया उद्योगाद्वारे ग्रामीण रोजगार आणि शेतमालाची मूल्यवृद्धी करण्यासाठी मदत करणाऱ्या,

~ असंघटित/असुरक्षित कष्टकऱ्यांना सामाजिक सुरक्षा देणाऱ्या,

~ लघुउद्योगांना प्रोत्साहन देणाऱ्या,

~ संपूर्ण रोजगाराचे उद्दिष्ट ठेवत प्रत्येकास राष्ट्रउभारणीत संधी व सहभाग देणाऱ्या,

~ देशांतर्गत संसाधने आणि बचत यांवर अर्थकारणाचा पाया उभा करून आवश्यक तिथेच थेट परकीय गुंतवणुकीस परवानगी देणारी,

~ आणि सर्वात महत्त्वाचे म्हणजे निर्यातप्रधान धोरणासोबतच घरेलू बाजार (डोमेस्टिक मार्केट) सक्षम करण्यासाठी प्राधान्य देणाऱ्या आर्थिक नीतीसाठी या सरकारवर दबाव वाढवला पाहिजे. आणि हे व्हायचे असेल तर एकेका जातीचे व सुट्या सुट्या प्रश्नावरील मोर्चे न निघता, सर्व भारतीयांचे मोर्चे सर्वांना चांगले शिक्षण व सर्वांना सक्षम रोजगार मिळण्यासाठीच्या प्रश्नावर निघाले पाहिजेत. महाराष्ट्रातील आणि देशातील सांप्रतच्या असंवेदनशील, विखारी वातावरणाने जे जे अस्वस्थ आहेत असे सर्व जण या दिशेने सक्रीय होणार की नाही, यावर पुढील काळात बरेच काही अवलंबून आहे.

जनआंदोलनं, विकासनीती आणि राजकारण

सुनीती सुलभा रघुनाथ

मुळात, आपल्या देशाला 1947 साली मिळालेलं स्वातंत्र्य आणि “प्रदेश” अथवा “राष्ट्र” म्हणून मिळालेली ओळख हे जनआंदोलनाचं फलित आहे. आपलं मुख्यप्रवाही स्वातंत्र्य आंदोलन हे राजकीय आंदोलनच होतं, पण त्याचं स्वरूप आंदोलनात्मक राहिल्यामुळे त्यामध्ये अनेक प्रवाह येऊन मिळत गेले व ते सशक्त, सर्वसमावेशक होत गेलं. साध्य-साधन विवेकापासून तर समतेचा आग्रह धरणाऱ्या असंख्य लहान-मोठ्या प्रवाहांनी हे आंदोलन घडत गेलं आणि एका सरंजामी व्यवस्थेकडून लोकशाहीकडे असा या देशाचा प्रवास त्यातून घडला. एरवी असंख्य छोट्या-छोट्या राज्यांमध्ये आणि संस्थानांमध्ये विखुरलेल्या आणि एकमेकांत काही राजकीय नातं न सांगणऱ्या (किंवा असलंच तर ते शत्रुत्वाचंच) या प्रचंड भूभागाला “देश” म्हणून (संघराज्यात्मक का असेना) अस्तित्वात आणणं हे किती प्रचंड आव्हान होतं हे आपण समजू शकतो. दुसऱ्या बाजूने याच काळात समतेच्या विविध चळवळी स्वतंत्रपणे तसेच स्वातंत्र्य आंदोलनाचा भाग म्हणूनही उभ्या राहिल्या आणि जात, धर्म, लिंग, भाषा अशा विषमतेच्या अनेक मुद्यांवर समाजात घुसळण होऊन, विषमतेच्या विरोधात त्या-त्या जनसमुहांचे विद्रोहही उभे राहून, स्वातंत्र्य मिळेपर्यंतच्या काळात समतेचं मूल्य किमान तात्त्विक पातळीवर स्वीकारलं गेलं आणि संविधानात नोंदवलं गेलं. तिसरीकडे, सरंजामी आणि त्यानंतरच्या औद्योगिक-भांडवलशाही अर्थव्यवस्थेकडून समताधारित अर्थव्यवस्थेचं किमान स्वप्न बघत अर्थव्यवस्थेची काहीएक पुनर्रचना झाली आणि चवथं म्हणजे, “सार्वजनिक हित”, “कल्याणकारी राज्य” यांद्वारे सामान्य-वंचित माणसाचे हक्क जपण्याचा प्रयत्नही झाला. मात्र या सर्वालाच, विशेषतः अंमलबजावणीच्या प्रचंड मर्यादा राहिल्या आणि त्यामुळे या सर्वच संकल्पनांचा झालेला विपर्यास आणि विकृतीकरण आपण क्षणोक्षणी पाहत आणि अनुभवत असलो, तरी हे सर्व परिवर्तन काही “आपोआप” घडलेलं नव्हतं तर त्यामागे दीर्घकाळची विचारप्रक्रिया, समाजात झालेली घुसळण, बदललेली मूल्यव्यवस्था हे सारं होतं, आणि त्या सर्वांचा परिपाक म्हणून ते संविधानात, संसदेत, न्यायव्यवस्थेत, प्रशासनात, म्हणजे थोडक्यात “राज्यव्यवस्थेत” उमटलं. हे सर्व ज्याद्वारे घडलं, ते जाणीवपूर्वक पुढे नेणारं “जनआंदोलन” होतं, हे आपण समजून घेतलं पाहिजे.

एवढं सगळं घडत होतं म्हणूनच संविधानाच्या मसुदा

समितीच्या अध्यक्षपदी डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरांनी असावं याचा आग्रह गांधीजींना धरता आला, आणि तरीही समतेचं एक-एक कलम संविधानात समाविष्ट करताना बाबासाहेबांना केवढा लढा द्यावा लागला ते आपण जाणतो. मात्र तेच संविधान राष्ट्राला अर्पण करताना बाबासाहेबांनाही हे परखडपणे सांगावं लागलं की “संविधानातल्या मूल्यांना जर जनशक्तीचा आधार राहिला नाही तर संविधानाचं केवळ कलेवरच शिल्लक राहील.

लोकशाही, किंवा कुठलंही राज्य हे तिथल्या जनतेच्या सतर्कतेवर आणि सक्रियतेवर चालत असतं, राज्यकर्त्यांच्या मनमानीवर नव्हे. राजकारण म्हणजे केवळ संसद किंवा विधानसभा नव्हे. राजकारण आकार घेतं ते समाजात, आणि प्रतिबिंबित होतं, अभिव्यक्त होतं ते संसदीय प्रणालीमधून. किमान, ते तसं झालं तरच लोकशाही टिकते, परिणामकारक बनते. राजकारण-संसदेत बसलेले लोकप्रतिनिधी नव्हे, तर त्यांना निवडून देणारे आणि त्यांच्यावर अंकुश ठेवणारे आपण चालवत असतो. पण त्यासाठी समाज म्हणून त्या राजकारणाला योग्य त्या दिशेने नेण्याची जबाबदारीही आपलीच असते आणि ती एकट्या-दुकट्याने पार पाडण्यासारखी नसल्यामुळे (शक्य तेवढी एकट्या-दुकट्यानेही पार पाडायचीच असते, तरीही) संघटितपणे, जनआंदोलनांद्वारे आपलं म्हणणं नोंदवत राहूनही पार पाडायची असते.

स्वतंत्र भारतातही अशी अनेक जनआंदोलनं उभी राहिली ज्यांतून देशाच्या संरचनेला आकार मिळाला, समाजाच्या धारणांना समतेचा आधार मिळाला आणि ख्या, जनहिताच्या विकासनीतीचा आग्रह उमटला. मग तो भाषावार प्रांतरचनेचा मुद्दा असो, वंचितांना मुख्य प्रवाहात सामील करून घेऊन विकासाची संधी मिळावी यासाठी राखीव जागांचे प्रावधान असो वा चिपको आंदोलनासारख्या आंदोलनामुळे देशातील पर्यावरणवादाला मिळालेला मातीचा स्पर्श-गंध असो. “मोठी धरणं म्हणजे विकासाची तीर्थक्षेत्रं” हे मिथक तोडण्याचं काम देखील एका जनआंदोलनानेच केलं. महाराष्ट्रातही एक गाव एक पाणवठा, दलित साहित्याच्या आणि पॅथरच्या डरकाळीने उमटलेला दलित समाजातला उद्रेक, मराठवाडा विद्यापीठ नामांतराच्या निमित्ताने झालेली सामाजिक घुसळण, स्वातंत्र्य आंदोलनात स्त्रिया मोठ्या संख्येने उतरल्या होत्याच, पण 1975 नंतर खऱ्या अर्थाने विकसित झालेली स्त्रीवादी चळवळ, देवदासी प्रथेविरोधी आंदोलन, नंतरच्या काळात

समाजाला विवेकाच्या वाटेवर नेण्यासाठी कटिबद्ध असलेलं अंधश्रद्धा निर्मूलनाचं आंदोलन, अशी कितीतरी जनआंदोलनं दाखवून देता येतील, ज्यांनी समाजात घुसळण घडवून आणली, समाजाला दिशा देण्याचा प्रयत्न केला. त्याचे पडसाद समाजात व राजकीय प्रक्रियांमध्ये, धोरणांमध्येही उमटलेले आपण पाहतो.

आमची पिढी ज्या जनआंदोलनातून कार्यकर्ते बनली त्या जेपींच्या “संपूर्ण क्रांती” आंदोलनातही हेच घडलेलं दिसतं. सजगतेने, जाणीवपूर्वक. त्या आंदोलनाच्या भूमिकेत व प्रक्रियेत मूल्यपरिवर्तनाची बीजंही होती. त्या आंदोलनात मुद्दे होते ते भ्रष्टाचार, कु-शिक्षण, जातीय विषमता, बेरोजगारी, हे. मुद्दे एका बाजूने सामाजिक परिवर्तनाचे होते आणि दुसऱ्या बाजूने राजकीय. त्यानंतरचा जनता प्रयोग (संसदीय राजकारणाच्या धावपळीत जनआंदोलन क्षीण होत गेल्यामुळे) फसला असं दिसत असलं तरी, या आंदोलनामुळे झालेलं जागरण, परिवर्तनाला मिळालेली गती (- जी पुढे मंडल आणि इतर राजकीय प्रक्रियांमधूनही परावर्तित झाली -), डाव्या, उजव्या आणि मध्यममार्गी अशा सर्वच राजकीय पक्षांना मिळालेली नवी कुमक आणि संसदीय राजकारणाच्या बाहेर राहून संसदबाह्य राजकारण (तसं म्हणत किंवा न म्हणताही) पुढे नेत असलेली कार्यकर्त्यांची, संघटना-संस्थांची असंख्य लहानमोठी बेटं (ती बेटं च राहिली हा त्यातला सर्वात निराशाजनक भाग) हे सारं त्या जनआंदोलनाचं संचित आहे. भारतीय लोकशाही परिपक्व करणारं ते आंदोलन होतं, हे निश्चित.

ज्या, “जनआंदोलनांचा राष्ट्रीय समन्वय” या प्रक्रियेशी मी तिच्या आरंभापासून, म्हणजे त्या संकल्पनेपासून संबंधित आहे, ती प्रक्रिया देखील व्यापक राजकारणाच्या एका अपरिहार्यतेतूनच जन्माला आली. 1980 च्या दशकाच्या उत्तरार्धात, जेव्हा मुख्यप्रवाही राजकीय पक्षांकडून पूर्ण भ्रमनिरास झाला होता आणि त्यांचा कल्याणकारी मुखवटा फाटला होता आणि त्याचा सर्वाधिक फटका कष्टकरी वर्गाला आणि विकासाच्या नावावर विस्थापित होणऱ्या जनसमुहांना बसत होता त्या काळात या विस्थापन-विषमता-विनाशकारी विकासनीतीविरुद्ध आवाज उठवणऱ्या जनआंदोलनांनी एकत्र येऊन हा मंच स्थापन केला. जागतिकीकरण (1991) आणि बाबरी मशीद उद्ध्वस्त करून आहमक झालेली सांप्रदायिकता (1992) या पार्श्वभूमीवर झालेली ही जनआंदोलनांची एकजूट होती. मागील जवळपास 20

वर्ष एका बाजूला त्या-त्या प्रश्नांची जनआंदोलनाद्वारे तड लावतानाच दुसऱ्या बाजूला समतेच्या सर्व मुद्यांवर भूमिका घेत, लावून धरत, ही आंदोलनं देशाच्या राजकारणाला दिशा देण्याचा प्रयत्न करताहेत. त्याचबरोबर, अतिशय प्रतिकूल अशा, राज्यसत्तेवर कापॅरिटीकरणाचा आणि नवभांडवलशाहीचा पूर्ण कब्जा असलेल्या या काळात गरीब-वंचितांची बाजू लावून धरत आहेत. नर्मदेपासून एनर्ॉ नपर्यंत, प्लाचिमाडापासून नंदीग्राम-सिंगूरपर्यंत, लवासापासून वेगवेगळ्या ठिकाणच्या सेझपर्यंतच्या लढाया लढता-लढताच, “लडेंगे - जीतेगे” म्हणत आणि लडेंगे, तो ही जीतेगे हे जाणत त्या-त्या प्रत्येक ठिकाणी अत्यंत ताकदवर अशा शक्तींना नमवत आहेत. त्याचबरोबर, ज्या जनसमुहांसोबत हे काम करायचं त्यांच्यातील अंतर्गत विषमता, स्वार्थ, हितसंबंध यामध्येही हस्तक्षेप करत त्यांमध्येही परिवर्तनाचं, नवनिर्माणाचं काम ही सर्वच जनआंदोलनं जाणीवपूर्वक करत आहेत. दुसरीकडे, या लढाया केवळ स्थानिक न राहता देशाच्या धोरणांमध्ये परिणामकारक हस्तक्षेप करत आहेत. माहिती अधिकारापासून वनअधिकारापर्यंत अनेक लोकाभिमुख कायदे जनआंदोलनांच्या रेट्यामुळेच झाले आहेत, हे इथे नोंदवायला हवं. अलीकडेच आलेला भूसंपादन कायदा न्यायपूर्ण व लोकशाहीला साजेसा व्हावा यासाठी जनआंदोलनांनी जिवाचं रान केलं आणि त्यानंतर तो कापॅरिटसना धार्जिणा करण्याचे सरकारचे प्रयत्न हाणून पाडण्यासाठीही.

सरकारच्या धोरणांवर आणि कायद्यांच्या बांधणीवर व अंमलबजावणीवर प्रभाव टाकण्याचं मोठं काम जनआंदोलनाद्वारे होऊ शकतं याचं ठसठशीतपणे पुढे आलेलं अलीकडचं उदाहरण म्हणजे जनलोकपाल विधेयकासाठीचं आंदोलन. एखादा कायदा व्हावा किंवा तो कसा असावा यासाठी समाजातून प्रस्ताव, मागणी, आग्रह होणं यामध्ये गैर किंवा लोकशाहीविरोधी असं काहीच नाही. शिवाय अशी मागणी लावून धरण्यासाठी संवैधानिक मार्ग आहेतच आणि त्यांचाच अवलंब या आंदोलनाने केला होता. याच काळात विविध घोटाळे समोर आले, त्यात गुंतलेल्या बड्या राजकारण्यांनाही पदच्युत व्हावं लागलं. काही तर दीर्घकाळासाठी किंवा कायमसाठीही राजकीय पटलाबाहेर गेले. हे काही केवळ त्या आंदोलनामुळे झालं असं नाही, परंतु त्यामुळे एक वातावरणनिर्मिती झाली, लोकांच्या असंतोषाला उदगार मिळाला. भ्रष्टाचारासंदर्भात

गंभीरपणे काही प्रतिक्रिया देणंही जिथे हास्यास्पद बनलं होतं, तिथे भ्रष्टाचार न करण्याचा माणसांचं आत्मबळ आणि आत्मविश्वास वाढणं आणि अगदी शहरी, मध्यमवर्गीय, तरुणांच्या पातळीवर का असेना, भ्रष्टाचारविरोधाची परिभाषा पोहोचणं, त्यांना व्यक्त व्हावंसं वाटणं हे देखील कमी महत्वाचं नाही. जनलोकपाल विधेयकाच्या निमित्ताने झालेलं जनआंदोलन, त्याच्या परिणामी 45 वर्षं प्रलंबित राहिलेला लोकपाल कायदा आणि त्याहूनही महत्वाचं म्हणजे उठलेला भ्रष्टाचाराचा मुद्दा, त्याला सर्वदूर मिळालेला पाठिंबा, त्याआधारे उदयाला आलेला “आम आदमी पार्टी” सारखा पारदर्शक राजकारणाचा आग्रह धरणारा पक्ष व त्याला दिल्ली विधानसभेत मिळालेलं यश, हे सर्व जनआंदोलनाच्या बहुआयामी प्रक्रियेचं फलित आहे. हे सर्व लोकशाहीला बळकटी आणण्याचं आणि ती अधिक समतावादी, अधिक लोकाभिमुख व लोकसहभागी व्हावी यासाठीचं व्यापक राजकारणच आहे. यामध्ये ज्याकाही त्रुटी, मर्यादा अथवा दोष राहिले त्याचं वेगळं विश्लेषण करायला हवंच. मात्र काहीएका मागणीसाठी मोठ्या प्रमाणावर जनता रस्त्यावर उतरू शकते हे या आंदोलनाने पुन्हा एकदा दाखवून दिलं एवढं श्रेय तर त्याला द्यायलाच पाहिजे.

दिल्लीतील अतिशय निर्धुण अशा सामुहिक बलात्काराच्या घटनेनंतर अशाच तऱ्हेने देश ढवळून निघाला. बघताबघता जनउद्रेक उभा राहिला. एका नव्या व्रहेचं जनआंदोलन आकार घेत होतं. नव्या पिढीचं जन आंदोलन. त्याला विशिष्ट नेता नव्हता, विशिष्ट विचारधारा नव्हती, विशिष्ट जनसंघटन नव्हतं. तरीही ते सुस्पष्ट विचाराधारित राहिलं. कुठेही न भरकटता, हिंसक वा प्रतिक्रियात्मक न होता, अत्यंत संयमाने परंतु ठामपणे उद्रेक व्यक्त झाला आणि परिणामी स्त्रियांच्या शोषणाला, असुरक्षिततेला, वस्तूकरणाला आवाज मिळाला. हे आंदोलन शहरी, मध्यमवर्गीय राहिलं अशी टीका त्यावर झाली जरूर, खेड्या-पाड्यात दलित स्त्री उच्चवर्णीय पुरुषी आक्रमणाला बळी पडते तेंव्हा असा आवाज उठतो का, हा सवालही विचारला गेला आणि तो योग्यच आहे. परंतु या एकूण घटनेमुळे व तिच्यावरील प्रतिक्रियेमुळे सर्वच समाजाला जाग आली, अनेक मूलभूत प्रश्नांची चर्चा झाली, बलात्कारासंबंधीचा कायदा व्यापक बनला आणि स्त्रियांच्या विशेषतः सुरक्षिततेच्या प्रश्नाला वाचा फुटली - हे नाकारता येणार नाही. आता समलैंगिकतेच्या प्रश्नाच्या निमित्ताने देखील या एका (केवळ फॅड नसलेल्या)

महत्वाच्या सामाजिक प्रश्नाला वाचा फुटली आहे. जे विषय मोठ्याने बोलण्याची पद्धत नव्हती त्यांवर खुली चर्चा होऊ लागली आहे. हे लोकशाही व एकूणच समाज परिपक्व होत असल्याचंच चिन्ह आहे.

अर्थात दुसऱ्या बाजूने प्रतिगामी शक्ती देखील काम करत असतातच. त्या जेव्हा प्रभावी बनतात तेव्हा बाबरी मस्जिद पाडण्यासारख्या असभ्य गोष्टी घडतात, जातीय आणि धार्मिक दंगली उसळतात, 370 कलमाने काश्मीरला मिळालेला विशेष दर्जा संपवण्यासाठी काश्मिरीयतलाच आव्हान दिलं जातं, महाराष्ट्रातही गणपतीपासून दुर्गेपर्यंत आणि गोकुळाष्टमीपासून होळीपर्यंतचे सण सांस्कृतिक न राहता त्यांना धार्मिक अस्मितेचं तरी रूप दिलं जातं किंवा देव-धर्माचा बटबटीतपणे बाजार मांडला जातो. हे सर्व थोपवून एक धर्मनिरपेक्ष समाज निर्माण करण्यासाठी प्रबोधन आणि सततचा संवाद ही एक चळवळच बनू शकते, पण तशी ती प्रभावी बनताना दिसत नाही. धार्मिक वा जातीय उन्माद निर्माण केले जातात त्या काळात पुरोगामी शक्ती क्षीण आणि निष्प्रभ झाल्याचं अनेकदा दिसून आलेलं आहे.

तसं पाहिलं तर हे काम काही जनआंदोलनांचं, किंबहुना एकट्या जनआंदोलनांचं नाही. संसदेत तर हे काम मुख्यतः सत्ताधारी आणि विरोधी राजकीय पक्षांचंच आहे. मात्र विषमता, भ्रष्टाचार, विस्थापनाचे मुद्दे हाताळतांना, त्यावर गंभीर चर्चा देखील करताना ते कधीच दिसत नाहीत. त्या-त्या मुद्यांवर बाहेर आंदोलनं किंवा असंतोष तीव्र झाला तरच त्यावर संसदेत काही घडतं. सामाजिक न्याय, लोकशाही, विकासाची संकल्पना, जीवनशैली, अशा सर्व मुद्यांवर समाजात जी काय घुसळण होताना दिसते ती या राजकीय पक्षांच्या द्वारे नव्हे तर विविध मुद्यांवर काम करणारी जनआंदोलनं, सामाजिक संस्था-संघटना, समूह यांच्या सुट्या-सुट्या कामांमुळे अथवा व्यापक बिरादरीमुळेच. आणि धर्मनिरपेक्षतेच्या मुद्यावरही भिडताना दिसतात ती देखील परिवर्तनवादी जनआंदोलनं आणि विशेषतः व्यक्तीच.

समाजपरिवर्तनाचं असं काही सिलॅबस असत नाही, ना ब्लू प्रिंट. समाजातल्या अनेक लहानमोठ्या घटनांतून, त्यांच्या साखळीतून ते परिवर्तन घडत असतं. म्हणूनच, मोठ्या, व्यापक आंदोलनासोबतच, छोट्या-मोठ्या कृतीतून सतत त्या दिशेने प्रवास चालू ठेवावाच लागेल. दुसरं

म्हणजे, सर्व लोक सर्व काळ आंदोलन करत राहतील असं नाहीच. कुठल्याही मोठ्या आंदोलनातही हे घडलेलं नाही. पण समाज सतत आंदोलित होणं महत्वाचं असतं. तरच समाज बदलेल, राजकारण बदलेल. समता, न्याय, शाश्वत विकासाचा आग्रह धरण्यांना त्या मूल्यांना मानणारं जनमत तयार करावं लागेल.

ज्या देशात, समाजात शोषित-वंचितांचीच बहुसंख्या आहे, तिथे हे खरंतर कठीण असू नये. आज तर शोषित-वंचित समाजांमध्ये - मग ते जातिआधारित असोत अथवा विकासचक्रात बळी जाणारे - एक जाग आहे, आतोंश आहे. मात्र तो संघटित होणं, सर्व शोषित-वंचितांची आणि समता मागण्या सर्वांचीच एकजूट होणं आणि ती अगदी निवडणुकीच्या राजकारणावर प्रभाव टाकेल इतकी सशक्त होणं हे गरजेचं आहे. यामध्ये एक पथ्य पाळणं आवश्यक आहे, की ही एकजूट विद्वेषावर नव्हे तर सामंजस्यावर व सद्भावनेवर आधारित असायला हवी. समाजांना तोडत न जाता समाजांना जोडत जायला हवी. हजारो वर्षांची जळमटं साफ व्हायला वेळ लागेल, ती साफ करायलाही हवीत. मात्र ती करत असताना केवळ जळमटंच दूर होत आहेत, माणसांनाच झटकून टाकलं जात नाहीय याचीही दक्षता घ्यायला हवी. त्यासाठी चळवळीअंतर्गतही खुला, निर्विष संवाद वाढायला हवा. कार्यकर्ते आणि राजकीय विचारवंत यांच्यातील संवादही वाढणं आवश्यक आहे, जो काही काळापूर्वी सहज घडत होता. वैचारिक मांडणी होणं, सुट्या घटना जोडून मांडल्या जाणं, आंदोलनांचे नवे फॉर्म विकसित होणं हे सर्व आवश्यक आहे. हे सर्व कार्यक्रम एकाच एका पद्धतीचे, एकाच मंचावरचे असणार नाहीत तर तेदेखील बहुआयामी, विकेंद्रित स्वरूपाचे असावे लागतील. अर्थात हा वेगळ्या चर्चेचा विषय!

आज जागतिकीकरण आणि नवभांडवलशाहीच्या युगात जगण्याचे सारेच प्रश्न बिकट झालेले असताना, आपल्या अत्यंत व्यामिश्र समाजात काहीही परिवर्तन आणणं ही अत्यंत अवघड कसरत आहे. परंतु मला तर अलिकडे असं वाटू लागलं आहे की हीच इष्टापत्ती आहे. गरीबांच्या, शोषित-वंचितांच्या, विकासाच्या बळींच्या एकजुटीला आज अत्यंत पोषक अशी भूमी आहे. त्यांचं राजकारण उभं राहण्याची हीच खरी वेळ आहे. गरज आहे ती आपल्या सामुहिक इच्छाशक्तीची.

डॉ. आंबेडकर - लोहिया समाजवाद !

मधु मोहीते

काँग्रेस सोशॅलिस्ट पार्टी स्थापनेला 82 वर्षे पूर्ण झाली. 'स्वतंत्र मजूर पक्ष' डॉ0 बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरांनी ऑगस्ट, 1936 साली स्थापन केला त्याला 80 वर्षे पूर्ण झाली. भारतीय स्वातंत्र्यलढा एका ऐतिहासिक वळणावर असताना, स्वातंत्र्य लवकरच मिळेल अशी परिस्थिती 1942च्या दुसऱ्या महायुद्धानंतर तयार झाली. डॉ0 आंबेडकर, डॉ0 लोहिया, जे0 पी0 आचार्य नरेंद्र देव यांना ब्रिटीश गेल्यानंतर काँग्रेस पक्ष सत्तेवर आला तरीही देशातील दीनदुबळ्यांना तो न्याय देऊ शकणार नाही. म्हणूनच त्या दोन पक्षांची स्वतंत्ररीत्या निर्मिती झाली. दोन्ही पक्षांना मानणारा वर्ग हा गरीब होता. जातींचा विचार करता बहुसंख्य दलित समाज हा 'मजूर पक्षाचा' आधार होता. दोन्ही पक्ष तत्त्वज्ञान म्हणून बंधुत्व-समता-न्याय ह्या तत्त्वांना मानणारे होते. लोकशाहीवादी तत्त्वज्ञान स्वीकारणारेही. भांडवलशाही आणि कम्युनिझम यांविषयी दोन्ही पक्ष टीकाकार होते. त्याकाळी त्यांच्या विचारांची दखल मान्यवर 'टाइम्स' सारख्या वृत्तपत्रातून होत होती. 1936मध्ये सार्वत्रिक निवडणुका जाहीर झाल्या असता डॉ0 आंबेडकरांची 'टाइम्स ऑफ इंडिया'मध्ये मुलाखत प्रसिद्ध झाली होती. त्यावेळी बाबासाहेब म्हणाले की, "काँग्रेस ही पिळवणूक करणाऱ्यांची आणि पिळल्या जाणाऱ्यांची झालेली एकजूट आहे. राजकीय स्वातंत्र्य मिळविण्यासाठी ह्या जुटीची आवश्यकता असेल. परंतु राष्ट्राच्या पुनर्रचनेच्या दृष्टीने ती अत्यंत निरुपयोगी आहे". काँग्रेस सोशॅलिस्ट पार्टी काँग्रेस अंतर्गत स्थापन करण्यामागील परिस्थिती डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकरांनी जी म्हटली आहे त्या मतांच्या जवळपासची भूमिका संस्थापक समाजवादी नेत्यांची होती. समकालीन ह्या दोनही पक्ष व त्यांचे धुरंधर नेते यांच्यांमध्ये त्यावेळी कां संवाद झाला नाही? त्यांनी एक दुसऱ्याचे नेमके काय वर्णन केले होते, हे समोर येत नाही. आजचे राजकीय चित्र पाहिल्यावर काळाच्या उदरात एक रम्य पहाट दडलेली होती जी त्यावेळी उजाडली नाही याची सल मनाला लागते, हे खरे.

जानेवारी 1952 साली लोकसभेच्या सार्वत्रिक निवडणुका झाल्या त्यावेळी अशोक मेहता यांच्या पुढाकाराने 'प्रजा समाजवादी पक्ष' बरोबर निवडणूक आघाडी केली होती. त्याआधी मुंबई प्रांतात 1937 च्या निवडणुका झाल्या. डॉ0 आंबेडकरांनी एकूण 17 उमेदवार उभे केले असता 13 उमेदवार यशस्वी झाले होते. 1927 साली चवदार तळ्याचा लढा दिला त्याचा न्यायालयाने 1937 साली 'अस्पृश्यांना चवदार चळ्याचे पाणी पिण्याचा हक्क' प्रस्थापित केला.

औद्योगिक कलह कायद्यात कामगारांना संप करण्यास मनाई केली असता त्याविरुद्ध मुंबईत आयटक पुढाऱ्यांसह मोठा संघर्ष करण्यात डॉ० आंबेडकर आघाडीवर होते. पुढे मजूरमंत्री म्हणून झाल्यावर कामगार हिताच्या अनेक गोष्टी डॉ० आंबेडकरानी पुढाकार घेऊन घडवून आणल्या. घटना मसुदा समितीचे अध्यक्ष म्हणून त्यांना एकट्यांनाच किती काम करावे लागले; त्यांनी विविधतेतून राष्ट्रीय एकात्मता टिकेल, दृढ होईल अशी राज्यघटना सादर केली. त्याचे सर्वांनीच कौतुक केले. अशा कितीतरी ऐतिहासिक घटना आहेत ज्याच्यामध्ये डॉ० बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर केवळ अस्पृश्य वर्गाचे नेते नाहीत, तर त्यांना एक वैश्विक दृष्टिकोन आहे. अर्थिक-सामाजिक परिस्थितीचे आकलन आणि उपाय याची उच्चतम समज आहे. अन्य राजकीय व्यवस्थेपेक्षा संसदीय राज्यप्रणालीचा त्यांचा अभ्यास सर्वांना आर्कषित करणारा असा आहे. आचार्य नरेंद्र देव, जय प्रकाश, डॉ. लोहिया आणि अन्य समाजवादी नेते यांचे विचार व चिंता ही डॉ. आंबेडकरांसारखीच होती. दोघांतील काँग्रेस विरोध हा समान धागा पकडून जानेवारी 1951च्या सार्वत्रिक निवडणुकांमध्ये काँग्रेसचा पाडाव स्वतंत्ररीत्या निवडणुका लढवून नव्हे तर एकत्रित आल्याने करता येईल ह्या राजकीय हितासाठी हे नेते एकत्र आले. कोणत्या जाती-वर्गासाठी आपला संघर्ष आहे; आपल्या तत्त्वज्ञानाचा पाया कुणाच्या हितासाठी आहे, याची स्पष्टता ह्या दोन्ही पक्षांच्या धुरंधरांना असताही 1951 साल आणि तेही निवडणुकांनिमित्त एकत्र येण्यास उजाडले. डॉ० आंबेडकर आणि डॉ० लोहिया समवेतच सर्व नेते यांची भूमिका-विचार व जनाधार यांमध्ये साम्य होते, तरीही दोन्ही पक्षांनी एकत्र येण्याची निकड त्यांना वाटली नाही. ही भारतीय राजकारणातील एक शोकांतिकाच म्हटली पाहिजे.

डॉ० राममनोहर लोहियांनी 10 डिसेंबर, 1955 साली डॉ० बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांना एक पत्र लिहिले होते. त्यामध्ये त्यांच्या 'मनकाइंड' ह्या अंकात भारतातील 'जातीव्यवस्था किती व्यापून आहे', याविषयी दीर्घ लिखाण करावे अशी विनंती केली होती. तुम्ही केवळ अस्पृशांचे पुढारी नाहीत तर सर्व भारतीयांचे पुढारी झाले पाहिजे. अशी भावना व्यक्त केली होती. मागील वाटचालीत एकमेकांपासून अंतर ठेवून चालणाऱ्या ह्या दोन पक्ष व नेत्यांमध्ये संवाद व तोही एकमेकांचे जे महत्त्व आहे, ते ओळखून होत असल्याची ही नांदी होती. डॉ० आंबेडकरांचे स्वास्थ बिघडलेले होते अशावेळी हा संवाद सुरू झाला होता व भारतीयांचे दुर्दैव

की, पुढे 6 डिसेंबर 1956 रोजी बाबासाहेबांचे महानिर्वाण झाले. तोलामोलाचे होऊ घातलेले सामाजिक, राजकीय ध्रुवीकरण थांबले. एका रम्य पहाटेचे उजाडणे काळाच्या उदरात दडून राहिले व ते आजही आहे.

आत्तापर्यंतचा इतिहास आढावा घ्यायचे म्हटले तर खूप लिहिता बोलता येईल. परंतु आज समाजवादी अनुयायी व त्यांचा पक्ष किंवा संघटना आणि डॉ० बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर यांचे अनुयायी आणि त्यांच्या पक्ष-संघटना या मध्ये किती दुरावलेपणा निर्माण झाला आहे, हे आपण समजून आहोत. एका अवस्थेत आहे की, त्याचा अर्थाअर्थी परस्परसंबंध काय याची नीटशी उकलच होत नाहीय. पोहता येत नसताना पाण्यात पडल्यावर स्वतःच्या जगण्यासाठी हातपाय मारणे एवढेच माहिती असते. तरलो तर तरलो नाही तर दुबणे हे क्रमप्राप्त आहे. तशीच अवस्था आहे, अशावेळी कुणी वाली नाही म्हणून गळ्यात तंबोरा अडकवून भटकत राहण्यापेक्षा साऱ्यांनी एकत्र येऊन यावरचा उपाय काय हे शोधणे हेच आपल्या हाती आहे. परिस्थितीची आव्हाने मोठी आहेत. तिला सामोरे जाण्याची आपली उमेदसुद्धा तशी मोठीच असली पाहिजे. इतिहासातील जाणते-अजाणतेपणी झालेल्या चुका कशा टाळायच्या, याचे भान आपल्याला आले पाहिजे!

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Rashtra Seva Dal (RSD)

Rashtra Seva Dal literally means an Organization to serve the Nation. Rashtra Seva Dal (RSD) was founded more than 70 years ago, to be precise in June 1941, by the then young Socialist leaders like S.M. Joshi, N.G. Goray, Shirubhau Limaye and others. India was under the British imperialist rule and the Indian people were fighting for freedom. RSD was an inseparable part of this struggle for freedom and we are proud of this inheritance.

The founding fathers and leaders of the RSD were very clear in their perception that mere achieving political freedom was not adequate.

Sane Guruji, a great figure in Maharashtra's literary and social field, believed that RSD was a powerful instrument of social revolution. Sane Guruji was the soul of the RSD. He said "Revolution does not mean just a change but a complete transformation of values. The most vital element in any revolutionary movement is the human element. Man must be at the centre of things and not on periphery." RSD strives for transformation by changing the human mind.

We hoist RSD Flag which has Red, Blue and White colours and a wheel, spade and pickaxe in the middle. We respectfully sing Jana Gana Mana and conclude our programmes with the shouts of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jay' (Victory to Mother India)

RSD is a school without walls. It is not only a youth organisation in a limited sense. The RSD embraces children, youth, and senior citizens irrespective of their caste, religion, gender, class, race etc.

RSD works on ideas of Nationalism,

Democracy, Socialism, Secularism and Scientific Attitude.

RSD tries to inculcate Equality, Rationalism in the minds of children and youth. It tells to build their character and develop moral fabric. It believes that with this primary training, after becoming citizens and voters of the Indian Republic, they will be ideal citizens and responsible voters.

RSD organizes camps at various places, during school and college vacations for children and youth to give them intensive training. The training is aimed at the physical, moral and intellectual development of the trainees. They are trained to be aware of the nature of Indian society and its problems. The plural and multi religious, multi lingual character of the Indian society is described and its awareness makes trainees tolerant, positive in thinking and responsible in action.

RSD, in addition to regular study circles and camps, has a number of programmes where the children and youths can participate and develop their personality. It has Kalapathaks i.e. cultural troupes where 'Sainiks' as well as other members, learn to sing, dance, stage dramas and enact street plays. RSD too spread message through entertainment.

It has Shramadan Pathak in the memory of Sane Guruji, where the members of the RSD join the villagers to construct an approach road, clean a pond or dig a well. It tries to prepare young generation for voluntary labour, for work for social development. Labour is worship, is the motto and 'service of the people is the service of God' is the creed. RSD actively take part in Literacy movement and tree plantation programmes. Some of the units have undertaken ambitious projects of water conservation and village upliftment. The rural bias of the RSD activities is for anybody to see to believe.

RSD firmly believes in gender equality. In all its activities, girls and young women are actively involved and they participate freely without any inhibitions.

RSD has a publication division. It publishes various books and pamphlets to spread its message. It publishes a monthly 'Dal Patrika' to report the activities of the RSD throughout the country. RSD believes and honestly practises internal democracy. All posts in the organisation are democratically elected for a limited tenure of two years. At the apex is the President (formerly known a Dal Pramukh) of the RSD and is elected by the Seva Dal Mandal.

Seva Dal Mandal members are elected by various Rajya Mandals. The working committee members also are elected by the Seva Dal Mandal.

For every State there is Working President and working Committee who are elected by Rajya Mandal members who in their turn are elected by District bodies. The District bodies are elected by bodies at Taluka and village level. The organisation functions through regular meetings at various levels. The membership of the RSD is open to all adults who believe in the values of the RSD. The institution of full time workers is unique in RSD.

Hind Mazdoor Sabha Free, Independent, Democratic Union (HMS)

Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) has its origin as a historical imperative. In the wake of India's independence after nearly two centuries of foreign subjugation, the few national trade unions centres were functioning as the labour wings of different political parties that gave rise to the growing realisation among workers of the imperative need for the country's working class movement to be free from the misuse by the Government, Employers or Political parties. It was this realisation that made the 600 delegates participating in the founding conference on December 24, 25 and 26, 1948, with the mandate of over 6,00,000 workers organised under 427 trade unions, to take the historic decision to form an independent and democratic labour movement under the banner of Hind Mazdoor Sabha.

Since then the HMS has been functioning as a truly independent and democratic trade union centre, free from the pulls and pressure of the political parties, employers and the government. HMS, however, is not to be construed as being apolitical. It stands for industrial democracy, workers' education, cooperative movement and for building

the trade union movement as an effective instrument of the country's socio-economic transformation with social justice. The national centre is inalienably committed to the values of democracy as it believes that the economic gains at the cost of liberty and democracy are in the long run counter-productive. At the same time, the survival of democracy is dependent on the betterment of the working and living conditions of the millions of economically active people who are the real producers of the nation's wealth.

HMS is against the concept of a market-driven economy and privatisation as the panacea for all the ills of human resource surplus developing economies like India with incomprehensible economic and social disparities and formidable poverty and unemployment. The free market is solely profit oriented and has no social concerns. For a country's balanced development with equity, the States should play a regulatory role.

HMS is non-sectarian in its policies and programmes. It is not merely demand and conflict oriented. The all round development of the workers and their families is its constant endeavour and towards this end, encourages and assists its affiliates to take up various non-traditional activities, such as elimination of child labour, gender awareness, environmental protection, combating HIV/AIDS, adult literacy and campaign against social evils.

Hind Mazdoor Sabha affiliates throughout the nation are making rank and file of the union along with general mass aware about the ill effects of bondage, gender discrimination the social security of unorganised workers, elimination of poverty, sexual harassment at

work place and in the society.

Hind Mazdoor Sabha has very strongly opposed the unilateral labour laws amendments in some labour friendly provisions of major labour laws by the union Government and also by some state Governments. It has also opposed corporatisation of Indian Railways which is the life line for common people and the cheapest mode of transport available to last man in row.

Hind Mazdoor Sabha has been demanding the inclusion on right to work as a fundamental right under the constitution. Its youth committee has been fighting for it since 1992.

Hind Mazdoor Sabha since its inception is committed to empowerment of women and optimum involvement of women activists up to the level of decision making. It is one of the few Central Trade Union which has a democratically elected women committee since 1994. It has 12 women in its National Working Committee.

HMS is of the firm view that all these objectives could be meaningfully achieved by a single, strong and united trade union movement and is constantly in pursuit of this goal. It is with this understanding that Hind Mazdoor Sabha, initiated and supported every effort for trade union solidarity in the country. The decade long efforts brought first in 2009, all major central trade unions could come on common platform, discussed common issues, finalize a common charter of demands, chalked out a common action plan and successfully executed the same. It was a historic event in the history of Indian Labour Movement and Comrade Umraomal Prurohit was the main source behind it.

National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM)

Struggle Against Injustice Inequity and Discrimination

Assertion of Rights and Reconstruction Towards Sustainability and Self- reliance

National Alliance of People's Movements (NAPM) is political process of coming together of people's movements, community groups, rights activists, intellectuals and others who while retaining their autonomy and identity, are working together to bring the struggle for people-oriented development to the centre-stage of politics and public life. We strive to create a society built on the values of samata(equality), saadgi(simplicity), swavalamban(self-reliance). The process started in 1992 in the aftermath of Babri Masjid demolition with assertion of religious secularism and in response to unfolding of neo-liberal reforms with an aim to bring systemic changes with focus on growth with equity and social justice. The alliance took a definite shape at Wardha in 1996 after a long national tour of 15 states by senior activists of many social movements, with formation of state level units and a national convener's team.

Ideological Roots

NAPM provides a forum for coming together of diverse views and experiences within a common framework of ideologies. We conceptualise alternative development perspectives and paradigm of sustainable, equitable and just development with people's participation at every level. We draw from the ideas of Gandhi, Ambedkar, Marx, Lohia, Jai Prakash, Phule, Periyar and others, a truly non violent, democratic view of people's rights, empowerment, struggle and reconstruction. We work towards establishing a world where the diversity of views, ethnicities, marginalities and sexualities are respected. We work to abolish discrimination based on caste, gender, religion and ethnicity and dream of a socialist society where everyone can earn a dignified livelihood and lead anhonourable life. We stand opposed to capitalism and predatory globalization process which appropriates natural resources, impoverishes communities dependent upon them, destroys small trade and businesses and

maximizes profit and establishes imperialist hegemonic cultures.

What do we do?

Striving for radical change, NAPM works to influence appropriate processes of democratic development planning, choice of technology, justice in the distribution of development benefits and political processes. NAPM promotes the use of alternative technology in water, energy, housing, farming and other sectors, towards building self-reliant lifestyles and communities. It cares for the environment to protect our livelihoods, climate and future generations. We strive towards evolving spaces, processes and initiatives where communities can take the initiative, harness and have control over the natural resources through local to national struggle as an endeavour beyond narrow electoral politics.

We question unjust and unjustifiable displacement. We demand equity among all working classes in social security. We fight to expose corruption at panchayat level to big infrastructure project related scams like Adarsh Housing Society, Lavasa Hill City, Hiranandani Garden or R&R in Sardar Sarovar Dam or in various government programmes. We organize to empower people and challenge the corrupt business and political nexus.

We also question global powers like the WTO and other multilateral trade agreements, IMF, World Bank and other IFIs; and national to global corporates changing national priorities and policies towards privatisation of services, forced acquisition and exploitation of agricultural lands, rivers, ground water, forests, minerals and other natural resources.

The dictum of 'There is No Alternative' continues to dominate the imagination of political classes but we have struggled at

various fronts to keep reaffirming our vision and plan for a just, appropriate and sustainable development, decentralized democratic actions to proclaim that 'Another World is Possible!'

The process of bringing together movements and supporting each other on issues, analyses, strategies, struggle and resource and evolution into a national movement has continued through nation-wide campaigns like DeshBachao, DeshBanao (Save the Nation - Build the Nation) in 2003 and Sangharshprocess in 2007 and Jan Sansad/ People's Parliament 2010, Lok Shakti Abhiyan 2012 amongst others. We are also part of various issue specific campaigns / networks like Right to Food Campaign (RTFC), National Campaign for People's Right to Information (NCPRI), Pension Parishad, Coalition for Nuclear Disarmament and Peace (CNDP), Pak-India People's Forum for Peace and democracy (PIPFD) and BhumiAdhikaarAndolan. We have worked closely with political parties and processes like Samajwadi Jan Parishad, Socialist Party, People's Political Front and LokRajneetiManch to establish people's sovereignty and right to development planning and self-governance, challenging corrupt, callous and criminal politics and establish clean and honest politics. We continue to fight the global imperialism and religious fundamentalism as the dual barriers impinging upon people's right to life and livelihood.

Our fundamental concerns today are

Paradigm of market oriented growth, development-induced displacement, privatization of public institutions, transfer and destruction of national and natural resources, depriving communities of livelihoods and taking away of their democratic rights; unprecedented rise and continued growth of communal and religious forces promoting divisive politics and an agenda of hatred and intolerance; the uncontrolled growth of obscene wealth on the

one hand, and the widening inequality, debt, unemployment, hunger, atrocities and suicides on the other; increased hold of unholy nexus of corporates and investors over development & economic policy and consequent loss of sovereignty of nation and its people; complete acceptance and unanimity among almost all mainstream political parties on neo liberal economic policy, and the need to promote a just alternative in every sector; abuse of people's mandate by diluting pro-people legislations and sound environmental laws and promoting big infrastructure projects like industrial corridors, nuclear projects, and signing of multilateral free trade / load / aid agreements bypassing the Parliament and other democratic processes and institutions vicious cycle of State violence and repression countered by militant violence in various parts of the country and consequent shrinking of democratic space; and systematic targeting of non-violent and democratic forces.

Constituents

The focus of NAPM is to develop linkages across the organisations of various sections of unprotected workers, farmers, dalits and other backward castes, minorities, adivasi, laboring urban and rural poor, youth and women groups as well as sensitive and supportive intellectuals and other professionals. We have

gain support and strength from the organisations of people affected by large dams, thermal & nuclear projects, industrial corridors and other destructive, elitist and anti community urban infrastructure projects. Our constituents are engaged in organizing of unorganized and unprotected workers engaged in NREGA programmes, construction, transport, agriculture sector or inside forests, small and informal industries and so on.

Get Involved.... Join Us!

We appeal to all likeminded organisations and individuals to join our struggle and constructive endeavour striving for a world of equity, peace and justice, informed by the vision of a casteless, participatory eco-socialist society.

You can join as an organisational or individual member by filling a form and contributing a small fee and also volunteer with us in various capacities. We require financial and resource support from Indian sources. We value and appreciate your contributions !Zindabaad !

Let's unite to build people's power and people's vision. We will save the nation, build the nation! DeshBachao! DeshBanao!

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It's Mandir again
Kuldip Nayar

**Kashmir issue and
India-Pakistan relations**
B. Vivekanandan

**Toward Democratic
Eco-socialism - II**
Hans A. Baer

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

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

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Schools refusing to comply with RTE must be nationalised

Sandeep Pandey

The Basic Shiksha Adhikari (BSA) of Lucknow has ordered admission of a number of children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections under the section 12(1)(c) of the Right to Education Act, 2009 in many un-aided (read private) schools. However the district administration or the state government are unable to get children admitted in City Montessori School (CMS), Navyug Radiance Senior Secondary School, City International School, Virendra Swaroop Public School, Saint Mary Convent, Saint Mary Inter College and Delhi Public School. In addition Exxon Montessori School in discriminating against the children who have been admitted under this Act. The biggest culprit is CMS which is resisting the admissions during second consecutive year. Its manager Jagdish Gandhi who was unable to prevent High Court from ordering admission of 13 such children in his school last year in spite of a legal battle that he fought against the order of BSA, is opposing the admissions of 58 children again this year. The state government is unable to force Jagdish Gandhi to admit the children and hence has proved to be ineffective.

Jagdish Gandhi talks of world unity and uses the names and photos of Mahatama Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave on his school buses but has proved to be actually anti-poor. There is an on-line signature campaign going on addressed to the U.P. government to take back the Yash Bharti award given to him. There is also another on-line campaign addressed to United Nations Secretary General to take back the Peace Prize given to him by UNESCO for promoting values of peace and tolerance in education.

Bhartiya Janata Party leader Sudhir Halwasiya has also refused to admit 22 children in his Navyug Radiance School. He expelled two children - Pakhi Rajput and Asna Farhad - whom he had earlier admitted. Similarly, Virendra Swaroop School expelled Shaan Mohammed and Mohammed Zaid after giving them admission. Socialist Party (India) has written a letter to Minister, Human Resources Development, Prakash Javdekar to recommend expulsion of Halwasiya from BJP for not complying with the national Act. There is on-line signature campaign addressed to BJP President requesting him to expel

Halwasiya from the party.

Jagdish Gandhi's daughter Sunita Gandhi is also not willing to admit 9 children in her school, City International. Also Saint Mary Convent, Janakipuram and Saint Mary Inter College, Matiyari are not willing to admit 6 and 5 children, respectively. Delhi Public School in Indira Nagar is not admitting two children.

Exxon Montessori School has admitted 8 students but is making them sit separately, thus subjecting them to discrimination, which is against the law.

The State Commission for Protection of Child Rights of the U.P. Government has put up billboards making an appeal to people to free child labour and put them into school so that they get back their childhood. Now, if one were to actually free a child labour where would one take the child? The school where the government may want the child to study may not admit the child. The U.P. Government is thus making a mockery of underprivileged children leaving their future uncertain. Akhilesh Yadav is a smaller version of Narendra Modi who heavily relies on his publicity, even for the work that he has not done or cannot do.

The U.P. Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav considers admissions under section 12(1)(c) in U.P. as his achievement. If all the unaided schools of U.P. were to offer at least 25 per cent of their seats in preliminary classes to children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections then about 6, 37,150 children would be able to study for free. However, only about 15,000 admissions have been

(Contd. on Page 21)

Between the Lines

It's Mandir again

Kuldip Nayar

It is Mandir again. The controversy over it comes to life whenever there are elections. The Babri Masjid was demolished in December, 1992. No doubt, the blame for the destruction is on the extremist Hindus, who did not even care for the Supreme Court's advice to let the status quo prevail. The controversy over it, however, was practically over.

The then prime minister Narasimha Rao connived at the whole thing and promised to demolish the small temple which had come at the site in the wake of destruction. But he knew that the temple which had been built could not be destroyed because of the sentiments prevailing among the Hindus.

Today, the talk is whether there should be a park which the UP government wants or the museum that has the backing of the centre. There is no mention of rebuilding the mosque even at the distance from the temple, the compromise formula mentioned at one time. The Muslims seem to be afraid to revive the issue in the atmosphere of soft Hindutava that has come to prevail in the country.

Yet, the fact remains that the secular India cannot rub off the mark of shame from the forehead till the Muslims see a mosque in the vicinity of the temple. However, it is difficult to imagine this in the rule of prime minister Narendra Modi, who has been a RSS *pracharak* and who believes in its ideology.

India has lived with the Babri Masjid topic, first as an issue in

the shape of controversy whether the Ram temple stood there once and then in the aftermath of the Masjid's demolition by some Hindu extremists. It was a dastardly blow to secularism which the country has claimed as its ethos even before independence. There were widespread riots in December 1992 and January 1993, fanatic Hindus leading mobs. The 1993 Mumbai bomb blasts were the Muslims' vengeance against the pulling down of the Masjid on December 6, 1992.

The Justice Liberhan Commission which took 17 years to submit its report at least put a judicial seal on what was known through mouth, print or electronic media. The report, rather late in the day tried to reconstruct the sequence of events. It brought to the fore the lesser known facts that it was the RSS which had planned the destruction at Faizabad, some 10 kilometers from Ayodhya, the site of dispute and it was not an outpouring of frenzy at the spur of the moment. It was a well planned scheme. The RSS gave the roadmap, the BJP provided the necessary help to the Bajrang Dal, a militant wing of the RSS, to execute the demolition plan to the shame of the Indian nation.

L. K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and the then UP Chief Minister Kalyan Singh were some of the witnesses. One picture which appeared in most newspapers was that of the gleeful Uma Bharti, then a BJP light, riding the shoulders of Joshi. Some BJP leaders shed crocodile tears when they found that the common people throughout the country had reacted with anger and disapproval.

The most reprehensible aspect of the episode is that a small temple came up on the demolished site overnight. I recall asking Narasimha Rao certain questions about it. He had invited a few senior journalists to his residence to seek help to quell the riots. I asked him how the Centre had allowed a small temple to be built after the UP government had been dismissed and the central rule imposed.

Narasimha Rao explained that the central forces were flown from Delhi but could not land at Lucknow because the airport was engulfed with fog. I told him that he did not have to fly in troops from Delhi because there was already a surfeit of them at Ayodhya and around it. Narasimha Rao had no answer but told me emphatically that the temple would not be there “for long.”

That was in December 1992. The temple is still there. Hundreds of pilgrims visit the place daily. The government has vast security arrangements to protect the small temple. No political party has ever raised the question of removing it from there. It can be said without

contradiction that if the BJP government in UP was responsible for the demolition of the Masjid, the Congress was responsible for the small temple to come up.

The Muslim psyche is hurt. The Liberhan Commission’s findings have put a balm which should have healed the wounds of Muslims. On the other hand, the government has not taken any action against leaders like Shiv Sena Chief Bal Thackrey, although the Justice Srikrishna Commission named him responsible for the Mumbai riots in December 1992-January 1993. Some BJP leaders mentioned by the Liberhan Commission for riots in the wake of the demolition are still in the forefront of the party.

The Congress did not initiate any action against those who took the law in their hands during the Emergency (1975-77) and committed the worst type of excesses. In fact, the party punished those who brought the perpetrators to justice. But there was a murder of values and institutions. Even the fundamental rights were suspended and the press gagged. The then Attorney General proudly told

the judges that if some policemen were to shoot any one of them dead, they would not be able to haul them up.

My worry is that without the awareness of what is right and a desire to act according to what is right, there may be no realisation of what is wrong. Over the years, the dividing line between right and wrong, moral and immoral, has ceased to exist. The tug of conscience, which was once there, has evaporated.

The Liberhan Commission provided an opportunity to set things right. The guilty, however high in office or politics, must be punished. Democracy is nothing but the independence of institutions. They must be restored to the position that the constitution has given them. The demolition of the Babri Masjid was a consequence of bigotry that took over most people in the north at that time and still lingers at some places and in some organizations. The idea of India cannot exist for long without pluralism. The institutions have to rise to the occasion.

Our rulers and the Coca Cola company!

Earlier Manmohan Government rescued Coca Cola from paying the damages to Plachimada people in Kerala. Later Modi sarkar had saved Coke in the same issue. Former Home Minister Chidambaram and the present Home Minister Rajnath Singh are the Coke saviours by returning the Bill passed by Kerala Assembly.

Filmmaker Jharna Jhaveri produced a documentary titled ‘Charlie and the Coca Cola Company’ that exposed the environmental damages inflicted by the Cola company in their units

in various states of India. When this film was sent to the Central Board for clearance, Modi’s men again came to the rescue of Coke. On September 16, the CBFC decided that the film ‘Charlie and the Coca Cola Company’ was unfit for public viewing. The board told Jhaveri that her film did not qualify as educational, and instead, was “misleading” and appeared to be ‘politically motivated’. She has now to move the court to get the gag order of censor board overturned.

In the meanwhile, the internet comes to the rescue of documentary

on Coca-Cola that the censor board blocked. One half of Jharna Jhaveri’s ‘Charlie and the Coca Cola Company’, denied a censor certificate, is out on YouTube.

Please go to the link and see how is it “misleading” and “politically motivated” as alleged by the shameless censor board:

<https://youtu.be/2rqtKm7SN68>

Yankee Mata ki Jai!!

–Sankara Narayanan

Kashmir issue and India-Pakistan relations

B. Vivekanandan

Dr S. Jaishankar, India's Foreign Secretary and an alumnus of the School of International Studies (SIS), Jawaharlal Nehru University, is a clear-headed person. He has recently defined his agenda for his, not yet slated, meeting with his counterpart in Pakistan, that they could meet to discuss the cross border terrorism, and the issue of Pakistan's vacating the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir. As a product of the SIS, and a specialist on International Relations by discipline, Jaishankar knows the nitty-gritty of the Kashmir issue, the untenable claim of Pakistan over that integral part of the Indian Union, and what remains to be negotiated with Pakistan on it.

Genesis of Kashmir issue

In order to appreciate what Jaishankar has stated in proper perspective, it is essential to get back to the genesis of the Kashmir issue, which is generally found missing in many analyses which have appeared in the media recently. A critical issue which needs a clear understanding is: with whom vests the sovereign right over the Jammu and Kashmir State - with India or with Pakistan?

For an answer, it is pertinent to recall the fact that, following the release of all princely states of the British India from the British Crown's Paramountcy, as per the Indian Independence Act, 1947, as a prelude to grant India Independence, all Princely States in India, except three States, had decided to accede either to India or to Pakistan before independence on 15 August 1947. The principle and the methodology

uniformly followed for such State accession was that, if the ruling Maharaja of the Princely State, the State Government, and the largest political party in the State had agreed to accede the state either to India or to Pakistan, that accession would be final. That was how more than 600 Princely States had joined the Indian Union or Pakistan before independence. Jammu and Kashmir State was one of the three Princely States which had not taken a decision on the matter before 15 August 1947. And, therefore, on the day of independence, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) remained as an independent entity.

Accession and after

Taking advantage of that situation, on 20 October 1947, about 5000 tribesmen from the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan invaded J&K, and indulged in plunder and loot, and reached to a point about 35 miles away from the State capital, Srinagar. For obtaining military assistance from India, to drive out the invaders, it became imperative for J&K to take a decision on the question of the State's accession, adopting the same principle and the methodology which other Princely States had adopted. As a result, the J&K King, Maharaja Hari Singh, the Government of J&K, and the largest political party of the State, the National Conference, led by Sheikh Abdullah, had unanimously decided to accede J&K with the Indian Union, and signed together the instrument of accession on 26 October 1947. India duly accepted it. And, the J&K became part of the

Indian Union. Thus J&K merged with the Indian Union strictly as per the procedure followed by other Princely States which merged with the Indian Union. Therefore, Kashmir's accession with India is final and irrevocable, and legally binding on all contracting parties. The international community has also accepted this accession, which conferred the sovereign right over J&K exclusively for India. Therefore, unquestionably, the legal territorial right over the whole of J&K, including of POK, is vested with the Indian Union. Therefore, clearly, Pakistan has no legal right over any part of the J&K, including POK, which makes Pakistan's occupation of POK illegal.

It is also imperative to understand the sequence of developments which followed J&K's accession to the Indian Union. Soon after the accession, the Indian Army was sent to J&K and the mopping up operation against the tribal intruders was launched in right earnest. The Indian army drove out the intruders from several towns of the State. The ground situation there was that when the intruders saw the Indian army's operations against them, they ran out of Kashmir and went to the Western side of Pakistan's international boundary with India, to escape their capture by the Indian army from inside India's international boundary. As the Indian army was successfully engaged in clearing of the invading tribesmen from the whole of Kashmir, including from the present POK, in May 1948, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru

actively intervened, and asked the Indian army to halt its operations in Kashmir, and stopped it from completing the task of regaining the possession of the entire Kashmir.

It is noteworthy that Nehru had insisted on halting the army operations while Major General Kalwant Singh, Commander of Indian forces in Kashmir, was reportedly pleading with the Prime Minister to allow him to advance, and give him five more days to complete the task, and bring the entire territory of Kashmir under India's possession. This was in the 4th week of May 1948. Reportedly, Kalwant Singh informed Nehru of the ground situation that there was no resistance to the Indian army's advance from anybody. But, since that part of Kashmir had difficult terrain, the army would need at least five days to climb up to reach Pakistan's international border. But, Nehru remained firm. The fact remains that if Nehru had granted Kalwant Singh the requested permission, at that decisive phase, to continue his mopping up operation for five more days, there would not have been a Kashmir problem for India at all. It would have saved India from a lot of future troubles over Kashmir. In an interesting account of the Indian army's operations in Kashmir during its most decisive phase in May 1948, Russel Brines writes: "The flank attack under the colourful General Thimmayya was so successful that he captured Tithwal on May 23 and looked down on Muzaffarabad, only eighteen miles away. Muzffarabad, now capital of Azad Kashmir, was the political key to the campaign.... The threat to Muzaffarabad forced a Pakistan withdrawal from the entire northern sector, but the Indians stopped, apparently on their own volition, and Pakistani brigade

stabilised the situation". Had the Indian army been allowed to advance and capture Muzaffarabad the Indian army could have gone to reclaim the whole of Kashmir. However, on Nehru's orders "to stand where they are", the Indian army lined up in the middle of Kashmir, which is now known as the Cease-fire Line or the Line of Control (LOC). When the Pakistani forces saw the Indian army lining up on their own in the middle of Kashmir, they re-entered Kashmir and formed a parallel line inside Kashmir. After this act of the Pakistan army personnel in May 1948 only, Pakistan, for the first time, admitted, in August 1948, its army's presence in Kashmir.

At the UN

Meanwhile, Nehru took the Kashmir issue to the United Nations, on 1 January 1948, which was uncalled for at that point of time. Since the issue pertained purely to the security of an Indian State, and since Pakistan had repeatedly said that it had no role in the tribesmen's invasion of Kashmir, clearing of all intruders from the whole state would have been accomplished by the Indian army alone. But, Nehru seems to have been obsessed with the idea of implicating Pakistan in the responsible for tribesmen's invasion of Kashmir. But, in the UN Security Council, on 15th January 1948, Pakistan declared that it had no role in the tribesmen's invasion of Kashmir. In addition, Nehru had overestimated the UN's capacity to find objective solutions to such problems, and underestimated the scope of manoeuvrings and manipulations of big powers in the UN Security Council. Though Nehru lodged a complaint on 1 January 1948 against Pakistan's complicity with the tribesmen's invasion of Jammu and Kashmir, under the heading

"Jammu and Kashmir Question", following a sinister manoeuvring, the US and UK representatives in the UN Security Council - Warren Austin and Gladwyn Jebb - had succeeded in rephrasing the heading of the agenda of the UN Security Council from "Jammu-Kashmir Question" to "India-Pakistan Question", to confuse the issue and to widen its scope by mixing the Jammu Kashmir Issue with other Indo-Pakistan issues. It helped Pakistan not to vacate from POK immediately, though Pakistan had no legal right over that part of the territory. Notably, these big powers did it while they did accept also India's sovereignty over J&K. Nehru was disappointed over this kind of covert activities of big powers in UN Security Council. According to Philip Ziegler, Mountbatten's biographer, Nehru realised the grave mistake he had committed in pinning his hopes on the efficacy of the UN to do justice in Kashmir. In February 1948, Nehru told Mountbatten that he was disillusioned with the United Nations. The change of the original heading of the Agenda had put the Kashmir issue on a different track, and helped to prolong Pakistan's illegal occupation of a part of Kashmir.

Therefore, Foreign Secretary Dr. Jaishankar's position that the issue to be discussed with Pakistan on the Kashmir Question is the modalities of how to end Pakistan's illegal occupation of POK peacefully, and the time schedule for it, is legally and technically the correct one. But, basically, it required political decisions at highest levels in Islamabad. It would save a lot of energy and resources of Pakistan for the welfare of the people of Pakistan on the one hand, and free itself from the position of an ally of anti-Indian

forces in the world, like China for example.

Missed opportunities

In the past, India got a few opportunities to solve the Kashmir issue amicably. One was in 1972, in the aftermath of the Indo-Pak war on Bangladesh, in December 1971, which ended up with the surrender of the Pakistan Army in East Pakistan on 16 December 1971. It made 96,000 Pakistani military personnel as Prisoners of War in India. In order to secure the release of these prisoners of war, which was composed of thousands of men in uniform hailing from elite families of Pakistan, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to India, in July 1972, to meet and negotiate their release with the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The two prime ministers met at Simla and negotiated the terms that included a solution to the Kashmir issue, which had resulted in a stalemate in the negotiations. It led to a formal initial statement of failure of negotiations, which had indicated one more round of meeting between them later, after Bhutto went back to Islamabad to consult his colleagues in Islamabad, on the solution of the Kashmir issue, and returned to the negotiating table. But, in an unexpected turn of events, at an one-to-one meeting between Bhutto and Indira Gandhi, prior to their departure from Simla, Indira Gandhi gave in to a bluff of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on the Kashmir solution, and she instantly agreed to release 96,000 Pakistani prisoners of war without solving the Kashmir issue. Certainly, another round of talks with Bhutto later, while keeping the Pakistani POWs in Indian custody, would have solved the Kashmir problem for ever. But Indira Gandhi had thoughtlessly wasted that unique opportunity.

Bhutto did not keep his words with Indira Gandhi.

The second opportunity was during the administration of the Janata Party Government, headed by Prime Minister Morarji Desai. Morarji Desai once narrated to me an inside story. He said that once he got an Intelligence Report that the Pakistan President, General Zia-ul-Haq, was planning to increase the size of the Pakistan Army. He did not wait for the usual diplomatic channels to deal with the matter. He picked up the telephone and dialled to Zia-ul-Haq and asked him directly: "General, why you want a large army for Pakistan? If Pakistan is in trouble, you tell me. My army will be at your disposal." Zia was thrilled. He could not believe that he was listening to the voice of the Indian Prime Minister who was promising him with the Indian Army's support to defend Pakistan! The spirit with which Morarji conveyed the Indian army's support to defend Pakistan, moved Zia-ul-Haq beyond description. That day, the Pakistan President became a great admirer of Morarji Desai. He trusted Morarji's words and gave up his plan to expand the size of the Pakistan army. This striking incident also reveals why President Zia-ul-Haq conferred "*Nishan-e-Pakistan*", an equivalent of "*Bharat Ratna*", on Morarji Desai. It is my conviction that had the Morarji Desai Government continued in power for its full-term of five years, the Kashmir problem would have been settled most amicably. But, the process was not allowed to mature since the Desai Government was pulled down by Indira Gandhi, following the decision of that Government to re-investigate the L.N. Mishra's murder case.

Despite these missed opportunities to amicably solve the Kashmir issue, and the recent troubles in the Kashmir Valley, engineered partly by some short-sighted anti-Indian elements in the present Pakistani establishment, and the ruckus it has entailed, which has bedevilled the current relationship between India and Pakistan, I am optimistic about an amicable solution to this problem, and the restoration of close friendship between the two countries and their peoples.

India-Pakistan relations

If policy makers in both New Delhi and Islamabad make a hard assessment of the future course of Indo-Pak relations in the long run, they will find that its present adversarial features are unsustainable and disastrous. If they make also an equally hard assessment of what India means for Pakistan, and what Pakistan means for India, in the long-run it would make them realise how intertwined are their destinies. Indeed, it would be a grave mistake to frame their relationship as enemies or potential enemies. Their people-to-people relationship tells a different story. Their natural affinity for each other is a fact of life.

A dispassionate look at the peoples of India and Pakistan will show that they are one people in two states. Wagha border does not give any natural separating features. Geography, language and culture, food habits, dress, and innumerable other common features glue their affinity for each other. It is natural for an Indian or Pakistani to reach out with a spontaneous expression of solidarity with one another when they are in distress. What else could be a credible explanation when the President of Pakistan, General Ayub Khan could not refrain from coming

forward as a pallbearer of the dead body of the Indian Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, and carried it to the aircraft for sending it to India, when Shastri passed away in Tashkent in January 1966. That is the deeply laid sentiment that runs through the veins of Indians and Pakistanis, which we have to recognise. And, that attachment survives all hate campaigns of vested interests in both countries over the years. Therefore, the pursuit of adversarial relationship between the two countries by any administrator - political or military - for petty personal/political advantages, is against the psyche of the people of both countries..

Compared to this, what is the nature and level of commonality between Pakistanis and the Chinese, who pretend to be friends? Little. However, before Islamabad gets too close to Beijing, it is better for the Pakistani leaders to study the Chinese classic, *The Art of War*, authored by Sun Tsu, which guides the Chinese even in organising their personal relationships! It would do some good for the Pakistanis in the long-run.

However, whatever Pakistan does today out of its shortsightedness, India should treat Pakistan as a potential friend and apply restraint in its responses. The Gujral Doctrine should guide New Delhi in this matter. There are valid reasons for treating Pakistan as a potential friend. It may be recalled that when free India was faced with the Chinese aggression in 1962, Pakistan had adopted an attitude helpful to India. On a request from Jawaharlal Nehru, the British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan and the US President John F. Kennedy, urged the Pakistan President, General Ayub Khan, not to create any problem for India in

the Western border to enable India to shift the Indian army from there to the Himalayas to fight the invading Chinese. Ayub Khan complied, and kept his words which he gave to Macmillan and Kennedy. It enabled India to shift its forces from the Western border to the Himalayas to fight the Chinese.

Taking all aspects into consideration, in my view, despite Pakistan's current bonhomie with China and soliciting Beijing's support against India, Pakistan is still a potential friend, and should be treated as such. We should generate and keep an environment, which made the Pakistan President Zia-ul-Haq to trust Prime Minister Morarji Desai, natural and permanent in Indo-Pak relationship. In concrete terms, it means that Pakistan's security should be a matter of India's concern too, and that both countries should adopt policies which are based on higher considerations and larger framework, which should leave off making the Kashmir a contentious issue between India and Pakistan. Whether that could be achieved through the formation of a confederation between India and Pakistan, as suggested by Jayaprakash Narayan, is a proposition which both countries should consider in their larger interests and for freeing the sub-continent from manipulations of big powers by fermenting hostilities between India and Pakistan.

In 1984, at an International Conference on Indian Ocean Studies in Perth, Australia, I made a proposal to build up a most friendly relationship between India and Pakistan. The proposal was to pool the destinies of India and Pakistan and establish a confederal structure for India, Pakistan and

Bangladesh. But, in 1985, we saw the establishment of the SAARC, a weak structure for integrated functioning. However, as far as ties between India and Pakistan are concerned, I still hold that the best way is to pool their destinies through the establishment of a confederation between them and make them caring for each other. It would instantly make the Kashmir problem redundant as well. Multiple benefits which can flow from it is immeasurable.

Since 1947, Indo-Pak relationship has been bedeviled by the Kashmir issue. The issue is basically phoney - and contrived by circumstances, as explained in the beginning - as the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir had acceded to India, and not to Pakistan, the sovereign right over J&K vests squarely with India. No amount of diplomatic manoeuvring can erase this hard fact. Therefore, it is a futile exercise for Pakistan to establish any claim on that state and India is unlikely to concede any such claim on Kashmir, even remotely. Igniting wars and conflicts over the issue in the past have not changed that basic fact. Any repetition of it is unlikely to alter it either. Therefore, in the light of what took place during the last 60 years, Pakistan must recognise this reality, and detach the Kashmir issue from fretting Indo-Pak relations, which has also become a constant cause of drain on national resources, and unnecessary loss of lives. Indeed, we must sit back and count the amount of money and resources which both countries have spent during the last 60 years to ensure diplomatic support for their respective positions in international fora, and for acquiring war material from abroad to fight wars, and ask the question: were these exercises worth? The answer is obvious.

Therefore, for the future wellbeing of the people of India and Pakistan, their political leaderships should put an end to this phase of their acrimony drenched relationship, and open up a new chapter on it, conducive to the welfare of their people. It would mean that both countries should look towards each other for solace and support, instead of running after distant powers to browbeat the other. 60 years ago, France and Germany took such a historic decision which has laid the foundation of the present peaceful and prosperous Europe. India and Pakistan can do the same in the Indian sub-continent, and initiate a fresh start of cooperation and development between them which would place them high in the human development index in the world. Economists of both countries should jointly make an assessment of benefits which would entail such a good-neighbourly relationship between them. This relationship should be insulated from becoming a source of sorrow for any of them. Rather, it should be made a source of joy for the region. If partition caused pain and agony 70 years ago, their coming together again voluntarily, under whatever framework, will be a great event to celebrate.

In 1984, while participating at an International Conference on Indian Ocean Studies in Perth, Australia, I made a proposal to build up the most friendly partnership between India and Pakistan. I proposed a pooling of destinies of the two countries and establish a confederal structure for them and Bangladesh, which would also instantly make the Kashmir issue redundant. My proposal was well received by other participants from the sub-continent. Many years ago, Jayaprakash Narayan also had envisioned such a positive political

framework for countries of the sub-continent to grow and prosper together. However, a year after I spoke in Perth, in 1985 we saw the birth of SAARC - an inadequate fragile structure for integrated functioning. Though 32 years have passed after I spoke in favour of pooling of destinies between India and Pakistan, I still consider it as the most valid proposal which would insulate the sub-continent from wars and conflicts, and make it to face the future together and earn a lofty position in the world.

Emotional and sentimental expressions are generally discounted as factors of diplomacy. But, it also becomes a factor when its underpinnings are so widespread, and expressed spontaneously off and on in the conduct of relationship between neighbouring countries, as it happened to the people in two Germanys after 1945, who got integrated with opposing ideological and military blocs. But, those exterior measures could hardly dry up their sentimental attachments for each other. After 45 years of such contrived physical separation, their sentiments for each other surged out and asserted and led to the pulling down of the Berlin Wall, and other barriers which had kept them divided for so long, and became one German people again in 1990.

If we look at the people-to-people attitudes in India and Pakistan for each other, such sentimental attachment exists widely between them at the submerged level. As Indians and Pakistanis constitute basically one people in two states, like Germans between 1945 and 1990, the pursuit of an adversarial relationship between them by any administration - civil or military - for petty personal/political advantages,

is against the basic psyche of the people of both countries, and therefore unsustainable. We see expressions of mutual attachment in abundance when we meet in a 3rd country in any part of the world. I have experienced this during my innumerable visits across the world during the last 45 years. The spontaneity of it is amazing. How people of India throng to see and meet Pakistani notables like Noorjahan, Imran Khan, and innumerable others, for example, and make their visits occasions for welcome celebrations, is an index of the underlying warmth of the people of India for the people of Pakistan, and *vice versa*.

Such expressions of sentimental attachment have been noticed even among those who held positions of supreme power, as already detailed earlier. That deeply laid element in our relationship should be kept in view when we deal with Pakistan and its people. The spirit and environment which made the Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq to trust the Indian Prime Minister Morarji Desai should be made a permanent feature of India -Pakistan relations. In concrete terms, it means that Pakistan's security should also be a matter of India's concern, and that both countries should adopt policies based on larger vision and higher considerations, which should bypass Kashmir as an issue of discord between India and Pakistan. Whether that could be achieved through the formation of a confederation between India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, is a proposition which both countries should consider seriously in their larger interests.

If we make a hard assessment of the future course of Indo-Pak

relationship, despite its present nuclear development and apparent Paki bonhomie with China, it would be a grave mistake to view or treat Pakistan as India's enemy or potential enemy. On the other hand, a hard assessment would show that Pakistan is a potential friend of India, and its future lies on its friendship with India rather than with anybody else. India should keep in mind the helpful attitude Pakistan had adopted towards India, as explained earlier, during the Chinese invasion of India in 1962. Therefore, taking all aspects into account, it is my conviction that, sooner or later, India and Pakistan will pool their destinies together, and march forward together hand-in-hand, by giving more content to their symbiotic existence. The subterranean warmth and affection which exists between the peoples of both countries, which becomes exuberant when people visit their brethren on the other side of the border, or when they meet abroad in a third country, which I have experienced myself on many occasions, is a pointer to the new close friendship that beckons the two countries in the coming decades. Therefore, despite their unpleasant posturings and occasional skirmishes, India and Pakistan do not pose any long-term security threat to each other. That India has no territorial ambition has been repeatedly manifested in the past through its deeds. In order to fortify that record, India should follow the Gujral Doctrine to build up of our relationship with all our neighbours, including Pakistan. It will certainly yield rich dividends for India, including our neighbours' distancing themselves from the attempt of any outside power, like China for example, to use them as

cat-paws against India.

Clinton's advice to Pakistan

Meanwhile, what Pakistan should do to build a robust relationship with India has been elaborated by US President, Bill Clinton, when he visited Islamabad 16 years ago, in March 2000. He candidly conveyed to Pakistan leaders that "Pakistan would have to choose between peace and Kashmir". He told them to give up their obsession with Kashmir, and their belligerent attitude against India, and to become a good neighbor by establishing closer economic relations with India. He ruled out any military solution to the Kashmir issue, and stated that more than half-a-century old UN resolution on Kashmir has become obsolete and is of little relevance in today's ground realities. It implied that propositions like holding of a plebiscite in Kashmir is not the right course now. He stated categorically: "We cannot and will not mediate or resolve the Kashmir issue. It is for you and India to do so through dialogue." Reminding how unsustainable it would be for Pakistan to enter into an arms race with India, Clinton told Pakistan: "Embarking an arms race [with India] was an expensive way to squander the country's wealth.... You cannot redraw borders in blood." More or less the same is the present British view on the issue.

The most poignant advice of Bill Clinton to Pakistan is to become a 'good neighbour' of India. How to become a 'good neighbor' of India? For that Pakistan should refuse to assist China's anti-India activities in India's neighbourhood. A Chinese corridor through POK to Gwadar port is inimical to the neighbourhood.

The Uri attack and the counter attack

India-Pakistan relationship is passing through a turbulent phase following the Uri terrorist attack and the counter attack. We have seen similar phases in the past too - in 1948, 1965, 1971, and in 1999 - followed by futile wars. The recent Uri massacre has stirred up a lot of emotions in India. In immature hands, it can ignite even a war. However, we are aware that in Pakistan, unlike in India, the civilian authority is not in full command in decision making. Behind the back of the civilian authority, the army command too takes the liberty of taking decisions of political nature, and impose them on the civilian authority as a *fait accompli* to shoulder the responsibility. That was how the Kargil War took place in 1999. The Kargil War was schemed and engineered by then Pakistan Army Chief, Parvez Musharaf, without the knowledge of Prime Minister Nawaz Sherif. Sherif himself had shared this fact with India's then Defence Minister, George Fernandes. George Fernandes told me that Nawaz told him that if he knew about it earlier, he would not have allowed that war between India and Pakistan. George Fernandes found Nawaz Sherif a good man, who wanted a friendly relationship with India. Keeping in view such possibilities, New Delhi should apply utmost restraint in its responses. War is not the only option and one should not rush for it. There are other ways too to convey strong disapprovals. What is the great achievement of 20 dead bodies this side and 38 dead bodies that side! That approach is ordinary. However, even in such situations, our response should be guided by the spirit of

(Contd. on Page 14)

Visit to Kashmir Valley

An all India team of the PUCL visited the Kashmir valley after the 100th day of people's protests beginning 9th July and the government clampdown that were taking place there. The team was led by Dr. V Suresh, General Secretary of the PUCL and included Kavita Srivastava (National Secretary), Ramdas Rao (National Council Member) and Pragnya Joshi (National Council Member). PUCL member Prof. Jean Dreze was with the team briefly. Also accompanying the team were two independent persons: Parul Abrol (independent writer and journalist) and advocate Mustafa. The team stayed in the valley between 14th to 22nd October, with maximum members staying between 17th to 22nd October 2016. The team visited and met the injured and families of the deceased in Batamaloo and Idgah area of Srinagar, Batingu and Veesu in Anantnag district, Churhat in Kulgam district, Khrew in Pulwama, and Shopian town.

The team members, had lengthy interactions with families of people booked under Public safety Act, (PSA), families of the deceased who had had lost their lives in firing or other use of force by the security forces, survivors of violence, doctors of Shri Motilal Hari Singh (SMHS) hospital, some of the injured people, either admitted in the hospital or outside, Human rights workers of the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS) along with independent activists including RTI activists, academics and student leaders. The FFT also met several ordinary people including young protestors. The team met the office bearers and senior lawyers of the

thousand member strong J & K Bar, several press and electronic media persons, young entrepreneurs and big businessmen, retired bureaucrats and Government personnel, Anganwadi workers and daily wage earners.

The team also met with a few Kashmiri Pandit families and a prominent leader of Pandits in the valley. The team members interacted with policemen of the police station of Pampore and visited the office of the IG Kashmir but could only talk to him over telephone. The team was not allowed to meet with Syed Ali Shah Gilani, the Hurriyat leader under house arrest, by the police guarding his house nor by the Inspector General of Police whose permission was formally sought. The team could not also get an appointment with the Chief Minister of J & K, Ms. Mehbooba Mufti, despite attempts to do so.

Some of the important facts of the last hundred days are as follows:

Following the alleged extra judicial killing of Burhan Wani on the 8th of July, protests characterized mostly by stone pelting demonstrations broke out throughout the valley. The government responded by heavy and forceful military clampdown which resulted in a continuing spate of killings, injuries and arrests of people which continues unabated almost every day till the present. In fact, the PUCL team was devastated by the scale of all round human suffering it witnessed in Kashmir.

The team learnt from JKCCS reports, the media, through lawyers and doctors, that from the 9th of July to the 15th of October, the total number of civilians killed by the

police and the security forces was 101 with the largest numbers of those killed coming from Anantnag district. It was reported that 12 people died due to pellets fired by the forces. It was also learnt that 1 policeman too was killed in mob violence.

Reportedly, a total of 15,000 persons were injured in this period with 12, 344 being admitted in various hospitals. About a thousand persons were injured in the eye due to pellets resulting in 300 cases of blinding, which included a large proportion of school going children. According to the same list, 4500 persons suffered injuries in other body parts due to pellets and shelling and 4664 were injured by bullets. Over 8000 people have been reportedly arrested, including 1000 from Srinagar city itself. More than 2300 FIRs were registered by the police against the people; in contrast complaints lodged by civilians against security persons numbered only about 7.

It was learnt that 382 individual petitioners have challenged their detention under Public Safety Act, 1978 in the J & K High Court. It is estimated that about 434 people were detained under PSA, including human rights activist Khurram Pervez and lawyer Zahid Ali. The FFT was informed that 12 J & K government employees were sacked for allegedly supporting the protests.

Reports of vandalism and violence during raids by the police, security forces and the army were reported by many. Beating of residents, firing at transformers and making them dysfunctional, cutting of water

supply as for example in district Bandipora, setting ablaze fields and burning of a school by the security forces were also reported by the people.

Raids were conducted in the offices of newspaper Greater Kashmir which resulted in all Kashmiri newspapers stopping publication for five days. The Kashmir Reader has been banned since the 2nd of October. Immediately after the 9th of July, all Pakistani news channels were taken off the air and initially the Government also blocked 5 Indian news channels for their reportage on Kashmir, which was later withdrawn. According to complaints by media persons, curfew passes of journalists were not honored by the forces including the army. Many journalists complained of beatings. Two journalists were reportedly targeted with pellets firing guns while doing their professional duty. Senior photo Journalist Danish Ismail's house was allegedly damaged. A crackdown was conducted on voluntary organisations who were organizing relief work in the premises of SMHS Hospital including providing free medicines, ambulance services and free food and tea. All email and internet services remained closed for most time throughout this period from 8th July till 17th October, 2016.

Some of the key observations:

- The anger against the security forces was simmering since 2008 and 2010, when 67 and 144 killings had happened in a government clampdown. The killing of Burhan Wani, who was a popular militant leader amongst the youth, acted as a vent and triggered this phase of protest.

- Demand for Azadi, clearly expressing alienation from India with people very vocal about their lack of faith in the Indian State, was an all pervasive voice across villages and cities, professionals and the ordinary, young and old and men and women. This was reiterated by the people the team met in the valley in the light of the continuing brutalities committed by the Indian Forces against unarmed civilians, in which even women and children were not spared.
- The common people have lost faith in the ordinary democratic modes of redressal as they believe that they are heavily biased against them. For instance no FIRs are registered against offences committed by the armed forces or the police, and even if registered there is never a fair investigation, much less prosecution. They were of the view the view that in the face of overwhelming failure of all the democratic institutions in responding to their political grievances and aspirations, stone throwing has become the only method of expressing their sense of anger and frustration, especially among the youth.
- There was a majority participation in the *hartal* announced through the Hurriyat weekly calendar. This hartal is a complete shutdown of all private establishments including public and private transport from 7am to 5pm every day but for 24 hours on Fridays with schools, colleges and other academic institutions completely closed. Courts had partially reopened when we visited. Hospitals,

Anganwadis, Pharmacies, PDS shops, media houses were kept out of the hartal, with tea and bread shops being partially open. It was also stated by most that even if the hartal fizzles out in a few days or weeks this time, the agitation which has started will not end but will continue with bigger and more violent eruptions in the future.

- A difference between the protests and collective action in 2016 and previous protests was said to be over the overwhelming support of ordinary citizens, cutting across class, education, professional and urban / rural lines to the hartal call in 2016 as contrasted to previous protests. Even while the bulk of ordinary Kashmiris supported the protest action, there however remained a small section of people who were getting inconvenienced by the continuation of the hartal.
- There was acute anger against the loss of lives of people (particularly children, youth and women) and injuries caused by pellets, bullets and shells fired by the security forces, including the Army, Rashtriya Rifles (RR), Central Reserve Police Force and the J & K Police. Most of the firing, according to people, was unprovoked and targeted. The use of pellets as a means to curb protests was looked upon as an instrument of blinding and maiming the young. It was argued as to why in situations of equally violent protests in Haryana and Karnataka, pellets were not used as they were against the Kashmiris. This was cited as an instance of discrimination against the Kashmiris.

- For the first time in Kashmir as many as six women were killed and several injured. Perhaps for the first time all women public protests (*juloos*) and the participation of women in *Janazas* (funeral processions) in large numbers was observed. Young women were very vocal and said that too much bloodshed had happened and that there could be no compromise this time. While older women could not believe that there could be a Government who could repeatedly kill masses of its own people. There was the fear of house raids by the forces and women being violated.
- It was shocking to learn that security forces did not spare *janazas* (funeral procession) and the casualty wards / sections of the hospital. Videos were displayed showing shelling on funeral processions. Doctors talked of shelling inside the casualty area of SMHS hospital, of attacks on ambulances and private vehicles carrying the injured and causing delays which led to patients succumbing to death. It was also unbelievable that many security men were profiling the seriously injured instead of ensuring quick treatment.
- The loss of livelihood leading to a situation of hunger amongst the poor was being handled by *Baitul Maal*, the local mosque committees which provided money and food. Some people gathered here for relief did complain of the distress caused by the long hartal that had jeopardized the poor people's food security.
- There was a general feeling, with the young being more vociferous, that lodging an FIR or demanding compensation with respect to the killings or injuries of their loved ones was of no consequence as there were no cases where the army or police or CRPF personnel were convicted for their crimes in the past. Some who went to lodge FIRs were threatened with dire consequences and therefore refrained from lodging cases. The paramount vocal opinion regarding engaging with the Indian state apparatus was that we have no trust in them, then why waste time with them. They also felt that in any case Martyrs were above prosecution. Despite this, we met some of the families who had lodged FIRs but were not hopeful of a tangible outcome in view of the SC judgment in the Tengpora case.
- For the first time human rights activists have been targeted and the arrest of Khurram Pervez of JKCCS shows that they want to silence all dissent and support that human rights activism provides to the victims of human rights abuse.
- The banning of Kashmir Reader shows the undemocratic functioning of the State which is uncomfortable with free speech, a basic human right and foundation of democracy. It is difficult to avoid the impression that the Indian State seems at war with the people of a region it claims as its integral part. Repression by the armed and other security forces is very visible in the state.
- The Team observed that the humanitarian crisis was aggravated because the hospitals did not get any support from the Government of India by way of sending in medical specialists, especially Ophthalmologists, nursing personnel and medicines to the Valley. The lack of support from the Government was despite the observations made by the team of AIIMS doctors who visited in July, 2016 who described the situation as "war like".

Interim recommendations:

1. The GOI should ensure the release of Human rights defender Khurram Pervez immediately and withdraw all criminal cases against him.

2. The GOI and J & K Government should release all Hurriyat leaders and hold unconditional talks with them and representatives of the other sections of the people, including the youth, in order to break this impasse and move towards a permanent resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

3. All political leaders, activists and young protestors detained under the Public Safety Act, 1978 (PSA) and other criminal charges should be released immediately and all cases against them should be withdrawn or revoked.

4. The Government and security forces should lift curfew and other restrictions throughout the Valley and cease all hostilities against the civilian population. There should be demilitarization of the Valley including withdrawal of security forces from civilian areas.

5. PSA, 1978 and AFSPA must be repealed from the statute books.

6. Facilitate the filing of cases against members of the security forces who indiscriminately killed and injured and committed other atrocities on the people.

7. Set up a judicial commission headed by a sitting judge of the SC to look into the alleged extra judicial killing of Burhan Wani and other similar cases.

8. The ban on Kashmir Reader should be immediately withdrawn and the publication be allowed to function normally. The government must also stop all persecution of media, including by means of denying giving advertisements by the State and Central Government as a means of pressurizing the media to toe the government line.

9. There should be no curtailment of the right to freedom and speech expression of the media and also of civil society organisations and people. All peaceful protests should be permitted.

10. The Government of India and J & K Government should immediately approve all files related to granting 'Sanction to Prosecute' government, police, security and army personnel found guilty of having committed offences based on criminal investigation in cases pending in criminal courts and which have not been cleared for long periods of time.

11. The Government of India should immediately ban the use of pellets guns on protests and demonstrations.

12. The current approach of the State is premised on the fact that they can militarily subjugate the

(Contd. on Page 22)

A fight for Kashmir - a fight for life

Anandi

(Class XI student, Lucknow)

My friend, have you been reading the newspaper?

Yes? Then you must know what we are doing, right?

Killing thousands of Kashmiri civilians who just want to be free? Some would argue and blame Pakistan for occupying Kashmir. Some would do the same for India. But we're forgetting Kashmiris are neither Indian nor Pakistani. They are Kashmiris. They want to be just that. Nothing less, nothing more.

But we? We are humans and we must do what humans do the best. We must be selfish. We must kill innocents. We must take away whatever integrity they have. We must not even consider them 'humans'. Right now for us this is a war between India and Pakistan. Not a war for the freedom of Kashmir as a whole, but between India and Pakistan. Everything else is just... a technicality. Ignore it.

You get that right? Apparently we need to ignore the small 11 year-old boy, Nasir being killed by pellets. We need to ignore that he was killed. We need to ignore that his body was stepped on by hundreds, leaving footprints, even on his face. We need to ignore that his ears had turned blue. Or that his fists couldn't open because his fingers were so terribly broken. Also, that when his sister touched the back his head, her hand was covered with blood. We need to ignore that his back was marred in such a way that it looked like a

bubble wrap sheet and not actually human skin?

And by the way, our government tells us pellets are harmless. That they cannot murder.

He was just an 11 year-old boy for God's sake! What had he done to deserve this? He must have killed. Oh no! Wait, that's us. He must have destroyed lives. No, no wait again, that's still us. He must have at least brutally hit another human being? Wait a minute, that is still US!

What is even more unfortunate is that it isn't just 11 year-old Nasir. (Somehow even that word undermines the situation.) Thousands of innocent Kashmiri civilians, from infants to ill 90-year olds; from pregnant women to people with disabilities are targeted. From brilliant kids who could have had a bright future, to men and women whose lives have been transformed. From children like you and I, to adults like our parents. They all are there. Innocent but dying. If not physically, then mentally dying.

Can you imagine yourself in that situation for just a second? Can you imagine not being able to go out of your homes without the fear of being hit by pellets? Or killed? Can you imagine only seeing army men with guns wherever you turn? Can you imagine going to bed not knowing if you'll be alive tomorrow? Can you imagine living constantly in fear? A fear that could kill you from the inside, rotting your brain till it has

no life left.

It makes you shudder and shiver with paranoia, fear, disgust and what not, doesn't it? Me too my friend, me too.

Now, know that this isn't a situation, but a reality. A reality happening a few thousand miles away from you. While we are sitting in our warm cosy blankets, drinking coffee and watching television, they are dropping dead like mosquitos, like after we apply a mosquito repellent.

Sad. Really sad. And we call ourselves humans.

It is something to think about. Something to do something about. Why are we not doing anything? We read about Kashmir in the newspaper. We call it the 'Kashmir issue'. We read about what is happening as facts.

'A person was killed.' How tragic.

'Indian military took an action.' Way to go.

'Pakistani military took action.' Okay, expected.

'A curfew was imposed onto the people's life.' Alright. Understandable.

NO! It's not just understandable. We are talking about actual human lives aren't we? We are talking about civilians being injured, killed, and beaten aren't we? We are talking about living beings aren't we?

How can we just dismiss this as a 'fact'? Or just another 'event'? They deserve better. Much better.

Be empathetic at least, you can

do that, right?

Do anything.

But, I beg of you, do not dismiss it.

Even if you think about it, talk about it, it could help. You never know.

We read and then think, this will be over eventually. Honestly, I don't think this will ever be over. This will be engraved in the minds of thousands of Kashmiris for as long as they live. That is, if they survive.

When we will recount our childhood to our kids or our grandkids, we'll most probably be telling them of what toys we played with or how we lied to our parents. Things that are normal to us.

Them? They'd be speechless. Because to them what's normal is blood, bullets, dead bodies and fear. No child deserves to even listen to such a nightmare, let alone live it.

However, it is not a nightmare in a dream. It is a hell on earth, my friend. As real as you are.

You breathe air, it breathes death. You eat food, it eats humans. You bathe in water, it bathes in blood.

But we are still stuck in this heaven where Indians create their own version, Pakistanis create their own version, and the media sells it to its readers. Readers like you and I. Readers who need to understand, it's not India versus Pakistan. It's innocent Kashmiris against all of us, fighting for life. Human beings fighting for another second to breathe.

This is what we call democracy? Liberalism? Socialism? Right to life?

Shame on us.

Please, I beg, stop killing. Even if you are silently killing by dismissing their reality.

Just think, not as an Indian or a Pakistani or a citizen from any other nation, but as a human. Think.

They deserve better. Much better.

(Contd. from Page 9)

Gujral Doctrine. It will yield good dividends in the long-run. In my view, Prime Minister Nawaz Sherif is still the best bet for India to lay a new path of India-Pakistan relations based on cooperation and solidarity.

It is imperative that India-Pakistan relationship should be freed from its present confrontationist mould, and reset its direction towards provision of higher welfare of the people, instead of wasting their money and resources for ceaseless procurement of military hardware which, in a few years, usually end up as obsolete junks. Pakistan should re-draw the pathway of its basic approach to India, and formulate a policy of strong cooperation, and free itself from sticking on to its untenable claim on Kashmir. A dear student of mine in SIS from the Kashmir Valley, who later joined the All India Services, once told me that Kashmir's interest in Pakistan is its trade interests and easy access. India should safeguard that interest by keeping a soft border between India and Pakistan. That is not an impossible task in a cooperative and solidarity framework of India-Pakistan relations.

Toward Democratic Eco-socialism - II

Hans A. Baer

Socialism is committed to the notion of unalienated, fulfilling, or meaningful work. Satisfying work contributes to positive self-esteem and a sense that one is contributing to society and one's fellow human beings. For most people, unemployment can be psychologically devastating. Even for people over the traditional retirement age of sixty to sixty-five, depending upon the country in question, work or employment can be a fulfilling and meaningful activity. A shorter work week would permit everyone to be employed and thus eliminate the "industrial reserve army," which is an inherent feature of capitalist economies but should not occur in a socialist system. What Juliet Schor describes in *The Overworked American* applies more or less equally to Australian culture, despite the stereotype of Aussies being a laid-back people.¹⁵ Even though Australian workers pioneered the eight-hour work day, albeit in the mid-nineteenth century when the work week was six days rather than five days, many full-time employed Australians today are working over eight hours a day.

It is difficult or impossible to say what would be the optimal work week. To some degree this would vary from individual to individual. Marx characterized humans as *Homo Faber* or "Man the worker," but he was thinking of unalienated labor where work and play are intricately interwoven, as is often the case in foraging societies. In *The German Ideology*, Marx and

Engels envisioned a society where one would be able "to hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, rear cattle in the evening, criticize after dinner."¹⁶ In a sense, working life would never totally end as long as a person had the mental and physical capacity, and the desire to engage in it. Thus, people should be given that option of phasing into "retirement" rather than simply going from full-time employment to full-time retirement. Work under socialism and particularly under communism will, in essence, contribute to human development and allow people to achieve their full potential.

A steady-state economy

A growing number of neo-Marxian scholars, as well as non-Marxian scholars, have been questioning the economic growth paradigm. For too long many socialists have, like mainstream economists and business people, bought into the growth paradigm. As a result, many socialists remained out of touch with serious ecological considerations. A serious redistribution of the world's resources would ensure an adequate living standard for everyone on the face of the planet. But this would require a serious discussion about how much is enough and, with the elimination of poverty, the recognition that global population would begin to dwindle, thus placing less strain on the eco-system.

In order to improve the socioeconomic status of the poor, more often affluent people, including what is referred to in developed societies as the "middle class,"

would have to reduce their current material standard of living.

Obviously, there are large sectors of developed societies and smaller sectors of developing societies that need to undergo de-growth, except for the abjectly poor of developing societies and developed countries. Those, such as homeless people or indigenous peoples living on reservations in North America and Australia, need to undergo some sort of development in terms of access to nutritious food, decent housing and sanitation, health care, and education. Ultimately issues of growth, de-growth, development, and underdevelopment are intricately interwoven with the redistribution of resources. Following in part the thinking of Herman Daly and John B. Cobb, Jr. in *For the Common Good*, I make a distinction between growth and development.¹⁷ Growth entails utilizing more and more resources as part and parcel of the capitalist treadmill of production and consumption. Development entails providing all people with adequate food, clothing, shelter, health care, education, and recreation. Under such a scenario, in order to improve the socioeconomic status of the poor, more often affluent people, including what is referred to in developed societies as the "middle class," would have to reduce their current material standard of living.

Beyond a certain point, more food, clothing, and shelter are superfluous and certainly environmentally unsustainable. How much health care is necessary would depend

upon each individual's physical and mental state, both of which are not only interwoven but highly variable. Health can be defined as access to and control over the basic material and nonmaterial resources that sustain and promote life at a high level of individual and group satisfaction. In a socialist society or a society seeking to construct socialism, there would be greater emphasis placed upon preventive health care than curative health care.

Systems for sustainability

A crucial question is how much energy, regardless of the source, does humanity need. Given the demands of global capitalism to continually expand, under a business-as-usual scenario, humanity will need more and more energy in order to feed the treadmill of production, consumption, and population growth. In a steady-state economy, energy requirements could theoretically level out or even eventually decline. Energy efficiency is often hailed as a mechanism for transition to a green-energy economy, but in reality due to the Jevons Paradox, or the "rebound effect," increased efficiency in capitalist countries is associated with increased economic growth and consumption, thus in essence canceling out the benefits of energy savings. This is not to say that energy efficiency is not a desirable goal, but in order to ensure environmental sustainability it has to be coupled with a steady-state or zero-growth economy, which would be part and parcel of a democratic eco-socialist world system.

A serious redistribution of the world's resources would ensure an adequate standard of living for everyone on the face of the planet.

A shift to renewable energy

sources—particularly solar, wind, geothermal, and possibly ocean wave energy—constitutes a significant component of climate change mitigation. A planned centralized economy has the potential to facilitate the transition to renewable energy sources. Solar photovoltaic cells and panels operate the best in sunny locations and have the potential to provide local power in remote areas, such as much of sub-Saharan Africa or even a developed society such as Australia. Large wind farms operate very efficiently in offshore locations, such as the Baltic Sea in Europe or the Bass Strait and Southern Ocean of Australia. Geothermal energy as a renewable energy source already exists in several volcanic regions, such as Iceland, El Salvador, Kenya, the Philippines, and Costa Rica.

While acknowledging their potential usefulness, various scholars have observed that renewable energy sources are not a panacea for mitigating climate change. Ultimately, the deeper question that renewable energy enthusiasts seldom ask is "how much energy is needed in the first place?" particularly in developed countries. A large-scale transition to solar, wind, and other renewable energy sources will need to be coupled with a decline in per capita levels of consumption among the affluent of the world, while allowing the poor to draw on these new energy sources to achieve access to basic resources. Obviously some people in the world, particularly the poor in the developing world, desperately need access to more energy but many of the affluent, in both the developed and developing worlds, need to reduce their energy consumption, often drastically, in order to achieve environmental sustainability and a safe climate. A shift to renewable

energy sources will require an integrated approach in order to grapple, for example, with the issue of intermittency in particular with solar and wind energy.

Aside from the matter of renewable energy sources, eco-socialism needs to grapple with developing a "socialist technology." The component parts of a socialist technology, to some extent, already exist in capitalist societies but are not actively promoted by capitalism because they are not as profitable. The technology already exists to make products that endure for a long time rather than products manufactured in such a way that they will break down fairly quickly, a case of built-in obsolescence. Bicycles, smaller cars, trains, trams, and buses, as opposed to large cars, all could be part of a socialist or an appropriate technology.

A shift to democratic eco-socialism will entail creating *green jobs*, ones that are not only environmentally sustainable but also cater to people's social, educational, recreational, and health care needs. The creation of green jobs must be accompanied by a "just transition," which means retraining displaced workers from obsolescent and environmentally destructive industries and enterprises to environmentally sustainable ones.

Sustainable transportation and travel

In *Ecotopia*, Ernest Callenbach describes a fictional place situated in northern California, Oregon, and Washington State that has transcended cars.¹⁸ Aside from the question of whether such a place could exist in the modern world, the negative environmental impacts of private motor vehicles require a drastic shift to sustainable public

transportation. A new urbanism that seeks to make cities more liveable and environmentally sustainable has emerged around the world and has begun to permeate urban planning. Various cities—including Singapore, Hong Kong, Zurich, Copenhagen, Freiburg (Germany), Vancouver, Toronto, and Boston—are encouraging residents to rely more on public transportation, including trains, trams, and buses. A global movement to make inner cities car-free has emerged in recent years. Sustainable transportation would entail many other measures, such as limiting the use of cars as much as possible, making them smaller and more energy efficient, and even banning four-wheel-drive or sports utility vehicles (SUVs), except in special circumstances (such as in rugged areas) and drastically limiting air travel.

A new urbanism that seeks to make cities more liveable and environmentally sustainable has emerged around the world and has begun to permeate urban planning.

While shifting from cars to public transit—particularly intercity trains, suburban trains, trams, or light-rail systems—would serve to diminish greenhouse gas emissions, these modes of transportation are not a panacea. Much thought is being given to the best form of public transportation, such as train, tram, or bus, in urban areas, depending on the situation. Furthermore, there is the issue of connecting small towns and rural areas with cities. Measures will need to be taken to connect rural to urban communities and to provide public transportation, perhaps in the form of regularly scheduled minibuses in rural areas. Furthermore, it would be possible to reinstate passenger

rail service that serviced rural communities in both North America and Australia at a time in the past when their respective populations were considerably smaller than today.

In capitalist societies, “time is money,” and this dictates rapid movement between places. Conversely, in a more leisurely-paced world based on eco-socialist principles, people might find slower train travel—although faster than presently exists in most parts of North America and Australia—to be a time to slow down by reading, chatting with fellow passengers, enjoying the passing countryside, reflecting, and even sleeping. A more sustainable form of vacationing or holidaying would entail trips much closer to home, by train or bus, if possible rather than to distant places either by plane or car. Cheap package holidays by airplane could become a thing of the past. A simpler way would also entail a disposal of or minimizing the use of private motor vehicles and reliance on alternative modes of transportation, including simply walking and cycling. Airships would constitute a form of slow travel given that they travel at speeds of 150 to 200 kilometres per hour. Transoceanic ships could make considerable use of wind power through the use of kites or solid sails. Teleconferencing also has the potential to eliminate or reduce much air travel for the purpose of conducting business or attending conferences.

Sustainable food production and forestry

A shift in food production away from heavy reliance on meat, particularly livestock, to organic farming, vegetarianism, and

even veganism would be more environmentally sustainable and an important form of climate change mitigation. Drastic reduction of current forms of meat consumption and dairy production would greatly decrease emissions from food production, as well as health problems. Small-scale organic farming tends to be more fuel efficient than industrial agriculture, which relies heavily on petroleum, chemical fertilizers, and pesticides. All farming requires water, but livestock production requires much more water than does growing crops. There is a strong need to shift toward agro-ecology, which relies upon farmers’ extensive knowledge of local ecosystems and seeks to transcend dependence on chemical, oil-based agriculture. Crops such as maize, wheat, sorghum, millet, and vegetables can be grown in forested areas that provide shade, improve water availability, prevent soil erosion, and add nitrogen to soils.

Agro-forestry blends trees and shrubs with perennial crops and the production of cattle, poultry and other animals. The Coalition for Rainforest Nations campaigns for cash incentives to be offered to developing countries if they agree to conserve their forests. Permaculture, which is a contraction for “permanent agriculture,” a term coined by Australians Bill Mollison and David Holmgren, seeks to integrate concepts from organic farming, sustainable forestry, no-till management, and the village design techniques of indigenous peoples. A shift toward vegetarianism could reverse deforestation for cattle production in the Amazon Basin with most of the meat being consumed not by Latin Americans but by Europeans and North Americans.

In reality, most people in developed societies and the more affluent sectors in developing societies will need to scale back their consumption of material goods as well as restrict the number of holidays to far-a-away destinations that they take.

There is an urgent need to expand upon the urban farming that already exists in many parts of the world, particularly the developing world. Laws that prohibit farming in cities need to be repealed. Much urban farming can be done on rooftops, perhaps coupled with strategic placement of solar panels. Despite the horror stories associated with the enforced collectivization of agriculture in the Soviet Union during the Stalinist era, Saral Sarkar in *Eco-Socialism or Eco-Capitalism?* asserts that the notion of collective agriculture needs to be revisited for a number of reasons, including economies of scale, particularly if it were based on decentralized planning rather than centralized planning that would not account for regional variation within a country.¹⁹

Resisting the culture of consumption

Obviously, all humans need to consume a certain amount of food, clothing, and shelter in order to sustain themselves. Capitalism, however, converts “needs” into “wants” through voluminous and alluring advertisement and as a compensation for alienation in the workplace and everyday social life. From an eco-socialist perspective, Fred Magdoff and John Bellamy Foster in *What Every Environmentalist Needs to Know about Capitalism* argue that a democratic and egalitarian economic system will have to limit

consumption levels to significantly less than they generally are for most middle-class people in developed societies.²⁰ Unfortunately, at least in developed societies, resistance to the culture of consumption remains confined to niche groups. Jonathan Neale in *Stop Global Warming: Change the World* warns climate activists not to talk about sacrifice by ordinary people.²¹ My comments of resisting the culture of consumption are directed primarily to the affluent, even the affluent in the working class, who turn to consumerism as a compensation for alienation in the workplace and in everyday life in developed societies. In reality, most people in developed societies and the more affluent sectors in developing societies will need to scale back their consumption of material goods as well as restrict the number of holidays to far-a-away destinations that they take.

Sustainable trade

Over the past two centuries, global production has resulted in a tremendous cross-border trade of goods and services. While increased international trade has been enhanced by free trade agreements and lower transport costs, it relies heavily upon oil and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions in moving goods around the world by ship or airplane, as well as trucks and trains. Furthermore, while developing countries, in particular China, are often criticized for their increasing greenhouse gas emissions, an appreciable amount of this is due to the fact that developed countries are importing cheap resources and manufactured goods from developing countries. International aviation and marine fuels are exempt from international taxation schemes.

The global food system has undergone a tremendous rise in “food miles”—a measurement of the distance that sustenance travels from the site of production to the site of consumption. Vandana Shiva in *Soil Not Oil* maintains that humanity can reduce food miles by eating diverse, local, and fresh foods, rather than increasing greenhouse gas emissions through the spread of corporate industrial farming, nonlocal supplies, and processed and packaged food.²² There is the need for the greening of shipping, which would rely upon solar and hydrogen energy-powered ships, sailing ships, and kite sails. Also given that large quantities of products are now shipped by airplane and truck, there is a strong need to revisit railroads and waterways as less energy-intensive modes of shipping.

Sustainable settlement patterns

Modern cities have evolved following, in large part, the dictates of capital with its need for manufacturing, financial, commercial, distribution, and communication centers, as well as the administrative demands of government bureaucracies. As they have grown, cities have gobbled up precious farmland and natural areas. Overall, cities are energy-intensive places on a number of counts, including in the operation of office buildings, industries, residences, shopping centers, recreational facilities, restaurants, educational institutions, hospitals, residences, highways, parking lots, airports, and so on.

While advocates of green cities often argue that urban density can serve to foster environmental sustainability, in reality the ecological and carbon footprints of cities varies considerably between

metropolises in developed and developing countries as well as within cities, depending upon their residential patterns (e.g., McMansions versus slum dwellings) and modes of transportation (e.g., a municipality with an excellent public transportation system versus a highly car-dependent one). The ecological and carbon footprints of cities extend far beyond their boundaries because they rely upon resources from a large hinterland that literally encompasses much of the world. Various proponents of “sustainable cities” who maintain that increasing urban density contributes to environmental sustainability downplay the historical connections between density and economic growth.

Theoretically, cities have the potential of becoming much greener than they presently are. During the early twentieth century, various socialists and anarchists pioneered efforts, such as the Karl Marx-Hof in Red Vienna and the Bauhaus housing experiments in Germany, to make metropolises more liveable, both socially and environmentally. A new urbanism that seeks to make cities more habitable and environmentally sustainable has emerged around the world. It needs to make a much stronger effort to be socially inclusive and counteract gentrification, which marginalizes low-income people. Conversely, in a democratic eco-socialist world, there would be no poor people and differences in income and wealth would not be nearly great as they are in capitalist societies.

A green or sustainable city should include medium-density housing, easy access to public transport, and minimize reliance on automThe development of green cities

constitutes a highly imaginative endeavor, one that will require drawing insights from numerous disciplines and fields, including architecture, building construction, urban planning, transportation development, and last but not least the social sciences. There has been quite a bit of discussion on how to make buildings more environmentally sustainable through the use of green roofs and walls, fritted glazing, solar panels, and more efficient lighting. A green or sustainable city should include medium-density housing, easy access to public transport, and minimize reliance on automobiles. Walkability should be part and parcel of the green city, which would allow people to walk as much as possible to their work sites, parks, recreational centers, theaters, shops, and eating places and contribute to a democratized streetscape. Some psychologists have developed the notion of *eco-psychology*, which stresses the need for people, including urban dwellers, to have contact with the natural environment. Eco-villages, which are increasingly found in urban and rural parts of developed and developing societies, constitute pre-figurative social experiments that potentially are part and parcel of developing more sustainable settlement patterns. Urban eco-villages can reduce car dependence or eliminate it completely if they are closely situated to good public transportation.

Cities should be easily interconnected with others via trains rather than automobile or plane transportation. Also, there is the question as to the optimal maximum population of a metropolis. Some municipalities have become so incredibly large that it almost defies the imagination. The world now

has some twenty-eight megacities each with populations of more than ten million people: Tokyo has 37.8 million, Delhi 24.9 million, Shanghai 22.9 million, São Paulo 20.8 million, Mexico City 20.8 million, and Mumbai 20.7 million people. Obviously, there is no easy answer to this question because it depends upon the national context and notions of population density.

Conclusion

The transitional steps that I have delineated constitute loose guidelines for shifting human societies or countries toward democratic eco-socialism. I do not purport that my suggested guidelines are comprehensive because undoubtedly others could be added to the list. As humanity enters an era of increasingly dangerous climate change accompanied by tumultuous environmental and social consequences, we will have to consider alternatives that hopefully will circumvent dystopian scenarios caused by ongoing socioeconomic, ecological, and climate crises if business continues more or less as usual. This essay proposes the imagining and creating of a democratic eco-socialist world system as a real utopia, not just as a vehicle for creating a safe climate, but a more socially just, democratic, and generally environmentally sustainable world society, as well.

As noted earlier, democratic eco-socialism rejects the capitalist treadmill of production and consumption, and its associated growth model. Instead, it recognizes that humans live on an ecologically fragile planet with limited resources that must be sustained and renewed as much as possible for future generations. While at the present time or for the foreseeable future, the

notion that democratic eco-socialism may eventually be implemented in any society, developed or developing, or in a number of societies, may appear absurd. However, history tells us that social changes can occur very quickly once social, structural, and environmental conditions have reached a tipping point.

As humanity proceeds ever forward into the twenty-first century, our survival as a species appears to be more and more precarious, particularly given that the impact of climate change looms on the horizon in a multiplicity of ways.

As humanity proceeds ever forward into the twenty-first century, our survival as a species appears to be more and more precarious, particularly given that the impact of climate change looms on the horizon in a multiplicity of ways. I often hear climate activists in Australia say that we do not have enough time to transcend global capitalism to be able to create a safe climate for humanity. Thus, they argue that climate activists need to collaborate with more supposedly progressive corporate leaders and politicians in tackling the climate crisis within the parameters of the existing global political economy. In my view, combatting climate change and global capitalism go hand-in-hand. While the more enlightened corporate elites and their political allies may permit some measures that contribute to climate change mitigation, they will certainly not consciously permit the eventual demise of global capitalism and the emergence of a democratic eco-socialist world system. As I argue in *Global Capitalism and Climate Change*, green capitalism and existing climate regimes are not sufficient to mitigate climate change

in any serious vein.²³ How can we expect the system that created the problem to solve the problem?

My own sense is that overall things will get worse, before they get better, and there is no guarantee that they will get better. Nevertheless, while the capitalist world system appears to be well entrenched, there are numerous cracks in the system. In his Commentary No. 205 of March 15, 2007, Immanuel Wallerstein argues that in terms of the foreseeable future:

*I do not believe that our historical system is going to last much longer; for I consider it to be in a terminal structural crisis, a chaotic transition to some other system (or systems), a transition that will last twenty-five to fifty years. I therefore believe it could be possible to overcome the self-destructive patterns of global environmental change into which the world has fallen and establish alternative patterns. I emphasize however my firm assessment that the outcome of this transition is inherently uncertain and unpredictable.*²⁴

Presenting a precise timeline of transition from the existing capitalist world system to a democratic eco-socialist world system is extremely difficult, probably impossible. It seems to me, however, that stabilization of the Earth's climate system needs to occur within the next two or three decades lest large swathes of land become uninhabitable for human beings as well as nonhuman species.

Despite the daunting difficulties that much of humanity currently faces and will continue to face over the course of this century, I think it is important that progressive people

keep plugging away at challenging the system in their conversations, teachings, and writings while staying involved in anti-systemic movements by: struggling to create new left parties, pointing out alternative ways of organizing the world along democratic eco-socialist principles, and listening to critical input from other progressive perspectives, including eco-anarchism, eco-feminism, and indigenous voices, to mention only a few. Hopefully, as humanity finds itself in an increasingly critical situation, counter-hegemonic voices will receive a greater reception than they do now and will inspire ordinary people to become more politically involved in creating a much-needed new world.

Humanity is obviously at a crossroads, or perhaps more aptly put, at several cross-roads: one being business-as-usual; another a shift to some variant of green capitalism that has gained much support among people somewhere left-of-center; and, finally, an eco-socialist vision that while muted at this point in time will become stronger as the need for it becomes more apparent to the masses of humanity.

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—TRANSCEND Media Service

(Contd. from Page 2)

ordered by the BSAs of different districts all over U.P. Given the experience in Lucknow the actual figure of admissions secured would be much lower. Hence only about 2% admissions have taken place in U.P., as against the possible 25%. If the CM considers this as his achievement then we can only pity him.

If Akhilesh Yadav cannot get a simple task as getting some children admitted to adamant private schools, then how will he be able to accomplish more difficult things like freeing up encroached lands or maintaining law and order. U.P. has probably not seen a weaker CM than him, who is afraid of acting against some influential and moneyed private school owners.

The new Lucknow District Magistrate Satyendra Singh runs his own private school, New Millenium. When the DM himself has a vested interest in protecting private schools how may we expect him to work for compliance of his own order under the RTE Act and ensure admission of children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections in elite schools of the city? The time for admissions is almost over in the ongoing academic year. Is the DM not interested in seeing the children

of rich and poor study together, the main objective of the Act? He did not clear the applications of close to couple of hundred children whose admissions were approved by the BSA and Chief Development Officer for over a month for no apparent reason. This is not just sheer negligence of duty but also a violation of the right of children under the Act.

All the above mentioned schools are guilty of violation of the RTE Act. Why are the hands of administration and government tied? Would they have taken things so casually if these children belonged to the rich class or were their own children?

The No Objection Certificate given by the district administration in order for these schools to obtain recognition from some boards could be withdrawn for the schools which are not complying with the RTE Act. Otherwise the schools should be nationalised. The first step in this direction would be to implement the High Court order of Justice Sudhir Agarwal making it compulsory for people receiving government salaries to send their children to government schools. Only when the 1968 recommendation of Kothari Commission in favour of Common Schools Systems is implemented do

all the children stand a chance to get equitable quality of education.

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Mend fences

On 14th October, 2016, terrorists struck an Army base situated six km from Shrinagar, the capital of the State of J & K. One of our jawans was killed, and eight injured - four of them seriously.

Some time back, Pathankot Air Force base had experienced similar attack. While on a visit to that camp, the Prime Minister had raised the question - how could they reach there? That base is situated within the boundary of Punjab State. The distance from the official Indo-Pak boundary is about 40 km. Even if it is presumed that those terrorists had come from PoK, by crossing the LoC, how could they traverse that distance unhindered and unchallenged? What answer the P.M. received from the officials was not reported.

In between, the nation as also the whole world has witnessed a number of incursions by the terrorists across the border, including the shocking one at Uri followed by the much-talked about 'surgical strike'. And still our border continues to remain porous. Strange, nay shocking! One-fourth of our armed forces are deployed in J&K. Defence Ministers, one after the other, have been telling us that our jawans are standing on the border patrolling day and night, i.e. all the 24 hours. And yet, every now and then, the terrorists succeed in crossing the border and assault targets at 30, 40 or 50 km away. What kind of security is this?

Two explanations are possible. Our jawans are not having required equipment and materials. If that be so, who is responsible for that?

Shortage of funds cannot be the reason. Every Finance Minister, supported by the whole nation, has been saying that adequate budgetary provisions are made. If there be any red-tape bottlenecks, cannot they be removed during the long period of say 70 or at least 30 years (that is, since the insurgency inside and mobilisation of terrorists from across the border)?

Or is it that, as is suspected by some analysts, some of the jawans on duty are lured by the bribes

extended by the smugglers? It is a well-known fact that there is going on substantial illicit trade across the border. Is our Central Government incapable of curbing it effectively?

It is a fact that our western neighbor is indulging in export of terror. But we should concentrate in doing what is within our control. Plugging all the loopholes on the border is certainly within our control. Let our Government mend the fences literally, and effectively.

—Pannalal Surana

(Contd. from Page 13)

Kashmiris by causing suffering and crushing them economically and politically. The ground situation, as observed by the FFT, reveals that far from silencing the ordinary Kashmiri people, such brutal military methods have only resulted in alienating the local population by increasing their sense of anger and injustice on one hand and on the other hand making them, especially the youth, more resolute and determined to continue the struggle for political resolution, irrespective of the price they may pay. There is thus an urgent need for the Government of India to revise this militaristic policy and for Indian leaders to demonstrate greater statesmanship in dealing with the Kashmir issue by recognising the political aspirations of the people of Kashmir and charting a policy which ensures the welfare, well being, rights and dignity of the Kashmiri people. As a first step, the government should initiate confidence building measures to build a sense of trust and confidence in ordinary residents of Kashmir

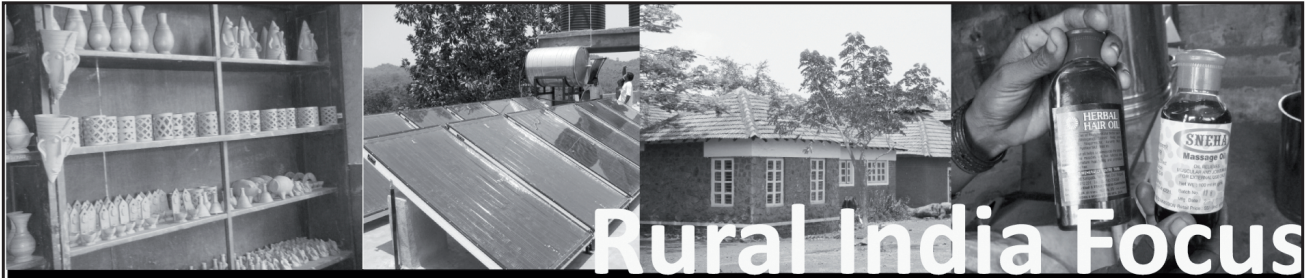
The PUCL will continue to dialogue with the people of Kashmir through visits and other means. It will also raise awareness regarding Kashmir in other parts of the country. It will also campaign for the release of Pervez Khurram. The full report will be released in November, 2016.

— Dr. V. Suresh, Kavita
Srivastava, Ramdas Rao,
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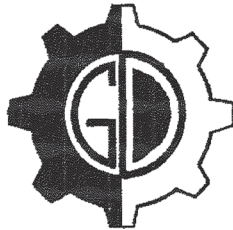
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Renewed interest in nuclear disarmament

Time to reject dynastic politics
Sandeep Pandey

Curse of triple talaq
Kuldip Nayar

Giving power unto yourselves
Jawaharlal Jasthi

**Challenges before socialism and
socialists in 21st century India**
Anand Kumar

**Communal Violence in
Chhapra and Maker**

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

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

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

In a resolution on 27 October, 2016, United Nations General Assembly decided 'to convene in 2017 a UN Conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.' 123 nations voted in favour, 38 against and 16 decided to abstain. Mexico, Austria, Brazil, Argentina, Ireland, Nigeria, South Africa, Indonesia, Philippines, Jamaica, New Zealand were among the leading countries which took the initiative to revive an effort to fulfil the initial commitment of United Nations when it came into existence and received overwhelming support. The preamble of the UN Charter begins with 'to save succeeding generations from scourge of war...' As expected most nuclear weapons possessing countries – United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, Israel – voted against the resolution while China, India and Pakistan abstained. North Korea, which also possesses the weapons, sprung a welcome surprise by voting in favour.

This resolution is very timely because of two reasons. First, real possibility of a direct confrontation between two nuclear weapons possessing nations in a war for the first time in the history between India

and Pakistan is haunting us, in which a side on the verge of losing may desperately use the nuclear weapons which will provoke the other to use it as well, resulting in wide scale mass destruction on both sides. Second, Donald Trump has indulged in loose talk of employing nuclear weapons which has scared people. The looming threat has stirred people into action. If we need a guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons then a complete ban on them and possible elimination is required.

The only time these weapons have been used was in 1945 by US over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. 1.5 lakhs people died immediately in Hiroshima and slightly less in Nagasaki. Many more died due to long term effects, especially due to radiation related causes. The common diseases which afflicted people were leukemia, thyroid cancer, breast cancer and lung cancer. In addition radiation caused birth defects resulting in physically or mentally challenged children being born.

M.V. Ramana, who works with the Nuclear Futures Laboratory and Programme on Science and Global Security at Princeton University, has estimated the number of casualties,

in an imagined attack on Mumbai, in his book 'Bombing Bombay – Effects of Nuclear Weapons and a Case Study of a Hypothetical Explosion' as between 1.6 lakhs and 8.66 lakhs for a bomb of the size and type that was dropped on Hiroshima. However, a typical more modern hydrogen bomb, may kill between 7.36 lakhs to 86.6 lakhs people immediately. Subsequent deaths and disease will follow due to radiation.

India and Pakistan have enough bombs in their arsenal that virtually all cities in Pakistan and north India could become a victim of such large scale destruction. The area would become inhabitable for centuries to come because of the effects of radiation. Agriculture, a basic activity for survival would not be possible on contaminated soil and water will be too poisonous to drink.

The only way to ensure that such a scenario doesn't become a reality is to eliminate all nuclear weapons from South Asia and the whole world. It is encouraging to note that five areas in the world comprising of more than hundred countries have committed themselves to not to manufacture a nuclear weapon or allow another county to install one on their soil. They are Latin America and the Caribbean, South Pacific, Southeast Asia, Africa and Central Asia. In addition Mongolia is a self-declared nuclear weapon free country.

It is sad that while Barack Obama has publicly expressed his commitment to support the cause of a nuclear weapons free world, the US government was involved in fierce mobilisation to oppose the UN resolution. The US thinks that banning the nuclear weapons will undermine its security even though Obama said in Hiroshima, the first incumbent US President to make a visit here, 'we must have the courage to escape the logic of fear and pursue a world without them.' It was primarily due to US efforts that as many as 38 countries voted against the resolution and 16 abstained from voting. Most surprising among these are Australia which has voted against the resolution and Guyana, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Nicaragua, Sudan, Uzbekistan and Vanuatu, which abstained. These are all countries which have earlier committed themselves to being part of nuclear weapons free zones.

Another surprise voter against the resolution is Germany which officially supports the idea of a nuclear weapons free world but of late its commitment seems to be wavering. In the past Germany, along with other North Atlantic Treaty Organisation members, had requested US to remove its nuclear weapons stationed in European NATO member states. In any case there is a societal consensus in Germany against nuclear weapons. Canada voted against the resolution but supports the Fissile Material

Cut-off Treaty which seeks a ban on bomb making material.

Another society which supports non-nuclearism is Japan because of the suffering it has been directly subjected to. Japan has adopted three non-nuclear principles of non-possession, non-production and non-introduction of nuclear weapons. Even then it voted against the resolution.

India took a vague position. India's permanent representative to the Conference on Disarmament D.B. Venkatesh Varma said India has been constrained to abstain on the resolution and it is not convinced that the proposed conference in 2017 can address the longstanding expectation of the international community for a comprehensive instrument on nuclear disarmament. While India's frustration with the big nuclear powers in blocking every attempt towards total disarmament can be understood, it should be on board any attempt in that direction. It is a saving grace that it did not vote against the resolution under US pressure. Varma stated that it has chosen to pursue the path of nuclear disarmament through negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

As we approach 2017 the various countries will have to take a clear decision about how they would like the posterior generations to view them – as opponents or supporters of nuclear weapons.

Time to reject dynastic politics

Samajwadi Party considers Dr. Rammanohar Lohia as its main ideologue-icon. Dr. Lohia was severely critical of Jawaharlal Nehru for promoting dynastic

politics. But Mulayam Singh seems to have conveniently overlooked this abhorrence of Dr. Lohia. Until recently most Samajwadi Party hoardings would have pictures of

only family members – mostly Mulayam Singh, Akhilesh, Shivpal and Ram Gopal Yadav. For any member of the SP with an iota of self-respect it must have been

embarrassing to acknowledge that the party did not have any credible leader outside the family. It was almost as if one was not from the family his loyalty to the party was doubtful. Quite obviously the model that Yadav family was following was that of Nehru-Gandhi family. The first family to practice dynastic politics in India has now inspired a number of other political families within the country like those of Sheikh Abdullah, Jagjivan Ram, Vijayaraje Scindia, Devi Lal, Chaudhary Charan Singh, Rajesh Pilot, Jitendra Kumar, Sharad Pawar, M. Karunanidhi, Lalu Prasad Yadav, N.T. Rama Rao, Mufti Mohammed Sayeed and many others whose next generations have also emerged as leaders holding important positions. The Nehru-Gandhi influence was also seen in the sub-continent on Bhutto, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Hussain Muhammad Ershad and Bandaranaike families. In fact, now it is becoming more of a norm in India than exception that wife, sons and daughters also try their hands at politics, especially if any position held by a politician is vacated due to any reason. It is as if the family considers it their right to have another family member replace their kin in position of power. This essentially reflects the feudal mentality of our society. It is not just the family members of a politician who take advantage of their family's political status but even the common people return the family members to power legitimising their claim. In fact, the family members of a politician justify their claim on the basis of mandate they receive from the people in elections. However, some of these family members have no political inclination or understanding of social-political-economic issues and thus prevent

more capable candidates from serving people from positions they capture. The Indian political system has been heavily infiltrated by dynastic politics which has seriously damaged its democratic character.

However, Mulayam Singh's family had taken the dynastic politics to an extreme. Not only all the important leaders came from a family but the family in due course of time has now acquired fourteen positions of elected representatives at some level or the other and new aspirants like Aparna Yadav, married to Mulayam Singh's second wife's son, are knocking at the door.

But the total capture of power at the top by family members is now becoming Mulayam Singh's undoing. It almost reminds of feuds in royal families. Mulayam Singh will have to pay the price for having killed any inner party democracy and for having run the party like a fiefdom. There are no independent thinking tall leaders left in the party who could guide the party in times of crisis. It is only Mulayam Singh who can call the shots and he has to take the difficult decision of choosing between his son and his brother. He is himself to be blamed for this situation. If he had any other senior leaders they could have found a solution going beyond the family. It is a pity that even now all the options that are being considered are from within the family. Why can Mulayam, Akhilesh or Shivpal be the only possible candidates for CM's post? Azam Khan or Beni Prasad Verma are senior enough to be considered for this position. In fact, a good way to resolve the dispute in the family would be to have somebody from outside the family made the candidate for CM's post. This will also prove that the

party leadership is not synonymous with the family and this is not a royal family but a family as a part of a democratic political party. Is Mulayam Singh socialist enough to give up his love for the family?

If the Yadav family does not resolve its disputes then it is most likely doomed. Even if they keep together the scars left by ongoing scuffle will continue to fester. It will never be the same again. How will be Yadav family members able to work together with bruised egos is unclear. On the other hand if they break up, it is even more uncertain. Mulayam Singh is the only one who can assure mass votes for the party. It will be expecting too much from Mulayam to carry the party through towards the fag end of his career. Shivpal has always remained in his shadow and is not a leader in his own right. Akhilesh is still immature and does not have a connection with the grassroots or an understanding of issues. Some of his decisions may have to be reversed by any future government. For example, he has started giving a monthly pension of Rs. 50,000 to recipients of state government's Yash Bharti award which carries a cash prize of Rs. 11 lakhs. Such thing is unheard of anywhere in the world. He has revelled in splurging public money.

The infighting has badly damaged the Samajwadi Party. If the family is not able to salvage the party and remain in the electoral fray then it may also signal the beginning of the end of feudal-dynastic politics in India. It'll be a good lesson for all families practicing dynastic politics. Maybe, this feud was needed to reverse the trend of one of the major ills afflicting Indian politics now which makes a mockery of democracy.

—Sandeep Pandey

Curse of triple talaq

Kuldip Nayar

The *Radiance* is a weekly journal of the Jamaat-i-Islamia, a fundamentalist organization. It carries on its front page an article which says: First, you give us account. Apparently, it means the Hindus. The article is on the triple talaq. The Hindu Personal Law came into being after first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's intervention. Marriages used to be a sacrament for life and the Sikh or the disabled had to go through the rigours of marriage with no relief.

It was Nehru who introduced divorce in the Hindu religion for the first time. He was strongly opposed by Dr Rajindra Prasad, who was the chairman of the constituent assembly and widely respected leader throughout the country. Nehru had his way because he controlled the government machinery.

The Muslims have faced a similar challenge for a long time. The triple talaq has no Quranic sanction but it has been there for a long time. Some women challenged it in the Supreme Court which has said that there should be an equality of gender. The government thought of issuing a questionnaire to find out the consensus but refrained from doing so.

The Muslim Personal Law Board vehemently opposed this move. It has no woman member and continues to dictate terms without any consultation with women. This has been resented by the women themselves but the Muslim Personal

Law Board continues to follow a policy which doesn't even entertain their opinion.

The question is bound to come up before parliament because the different sections of the Muslims community and even others are agitated over the situation. Muslim men continue to dominate and even though they grant that the Prophet wanted both men and women to be equal. However, when it comes to codify this idea, the Board doesn't care.

Most Muslim countries in the world, including Pakistan and Bangladesh, have banned triple talaq. But the male chauvinism in India is so strong that even a debate on the subject is not possible. Even a semblance of discussion is outrightly rejected. The triple talaq continues to be invoked and the male dominance remains undiminished.

Instead of debating on the problem, the *Radiance* article tries to divert the focus on triple talaq. When it says that let them first give the account, it apparently makes the problem as Hindu and Muslim. This is unfortunate. The constitution has included in the Directive Principles a Uniform Civil Code, hoping that it would be followed one day.

How can a debate take place when the Muslim Personal Law Board is straightaway opposed to the questionnaire seeking people's opinion? Women hailing from different parts of the country have

protested and demanded that they should be consulted. The Narendra Modi government is reluctant to take any step lest it should be misunderstood. But things cannot be left at that point.

Parliament should step in first to debate on the issue in both houses and then find out how the community, particularly the women, feel on this question. Political parties understandably want to maintain silence because of electoral considerations. Five states, including Uttar Pradesh, are going to the polls early next year and the Muslims are the king makers.

Samajwadi Party leader Mulayam Singh Yadav was able to garner Muslim votes because he was respected among the Muslims who felt alienated towards the Congress. This time the anti-incumbency factor will come into play. Chief minister Akhilesh Yadav appears to be acceptable even though Azim Kham, his cabinet minister, continues to give out as if he is the custodian of Muslims.

Congress vice president Rahul Gandhi, indiscreet in his speeches, is trying to get Muslims on his side. But he doesn't sell and it would be probably better for Sonia Gandhi herself to lead the party. There is no Italian-tag attached to her any longer. And she attracts the crowd in her own name more than her son does. This is a challenge for the Congress which has staked its future with Rahul but feels increasingly

convinced that he does not go down well with the masses. In fact, his sister Priyanka Vadra has a better popular touch than him.

It is a shame that a secular democratic country has been living with the practice like triple talaq fearing the annoyance of the community. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi bungled by bringing in legislation to ensure a stipend for the Muslim widow. It unnecessarily fuelled the anti-Babri Masjid agitation and during the P.V. Narasimha Rao government the mosque was demolished. The rest is history.

In the same way, triple talaq cannot continue because it goes against the grain of what is enshrined in the constitution. In fact, it is surprising that it has lasted so long despite the directive principles to have a common civil code. The successive governments since independence have evaded the question. The Modi government may also do the same. But this is not the solution. The triple talaq will have to go, sooner or later.

The *Radiance* article has erroneously made the question as *they* and *we*, Muslims and Hindus. This is a matter which the Muslim community has to sort it out. But it cannot stay hanging as it has been the case since independence. Whatever the Muslim Personal Law Board's objection, the questionnaire must be issued to find out how the community and the rest of people feel about.

Probably, the winter session of parliament will witness a discussion on the subject. But even if it is not slated, it should take place. No

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Giving power unto yourselves

Jawaharlal Jasthi

When the Supreme Court promulgated the formation of collegium in 1993 some people were afraid that it will lead to a stalemate if not direct confrontation with the executive. In fact, the members of the constituent assembly were also apprehensive of the possibility of the judiciary becoming so independent that it may become "an imperium in imperio". They took reasonable precautions to prevent such a possibility. In spite of it the judiciary unhesitatingly and deliberately overstepped the constitutional provisions and declared itself supreme. It has now taken the confrontational attitude trying to dictate the executive to behave as if the judiciary is the boss of executive. Fortunately, executive is showing restraint and taking it cool. But how long can this tension continue?

Judiciary is trying to push the executive out of the area of selecting and appointing judges to the higher judiciary. The executive is after all trying to apply the powers given to it under the constitution. They cannot be deprived of that right (or responsibility, strictly speaking) in the name of fictitious unbounded independence of judiciary. They forget that both the executive and judiciary are the creatures of the constitution and neither of them is the boss of the other. They have their own areas of operation defined under the constitution. Greed for money is justified in capitalism; but greed for power is not accepted in a democracy, particularly when there is a written constitution. Both the executive and

the judiciary have pledged allegiance to the constitution and promised to uphold it. You cannot devise a theory for your own satisfaction and declare that the constitution is not up to the mark and so can be overridden. That is not the way to understand the constitution. Judicial theories and doctrines are devised to enable better understanding of the constitutional provisions but not to find fault with it. That is against the accepted principles of interpreting constitutional law. Judicial review demands restraint as well. Judiciary cannot earn respect by seeking rights that are not given by the constitution and usurping rights that are given to other branches by the constitution.

In order to see a worthy example we may have to go back by two centuries and see what John Marshall, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States has done in 1803. One of the major cases that were decided by him was *Marbury Vs. Madison* that has established certain golden principles in interpretation of constitution. There was a change of Presidency in 1801 when Marshall took over as the Chief Justice. He was appointed by John Adams, a Federalist and he was succeeded by Thomas Jefferson, a Republican. They were at loggerheads. It was easy to create a confrontation between the two and there was a legal opportunity to do so. But Marshall carefully avoided that situation by sheer legal acumen and genuine judicial temperament. Before stepping down as President John Adams appointed many of his party men to judicial posts. He was

so anxious to make the appointments that he was sitting to the midnight on 3 March, 1801 to sign the commissions of appointments as the next day is scheduled for Jefferson to take office as President. Many of the commissions were delivered but some remained undelivered. Some of those persons, led by William Marbury approached Supreme Court with a request to issue writ of mandamus to the executive to issue the commissions which were already signed by the outgoing President. Justice Marshall conceded that Marbury had the right to get the commission in the ordinary course. If he delivers judgment to that effect, there was every possibility that the executive may dishonor the same. The court has “neither sword nor purse” to get its order executed. It has to depend on the executive only for the purpose. Then it would undermine the authority and respect of the court. It may expose the defiant attitude of the executive. But it would not add to the credibility of the court. The purpose was to solve the problem in a judicious way. He looked around law for the authority under which he could take a decision. He found that the constitution did not give original jurisdiction to the Supreme Court and there was no authority to issue writs also. He could reject the appeal on that ground. But the petitioner was ready to point out that the Judiciary Act, 1789 extended the jurisdiction of Supreme Court to original appeals and also gave right to issue writs. If the Justice exercised those rights nobody could find fault with him. It would be perfectly legal. But it will necessarily lead to confrontation with the executive and may undermine the credibility of the court itself. So he refused to accept the rights given to him by the Act stating that the provisions

of the Act are invalid to that extent as they are unconstitutional. What is not given by the constitution cannot be given by the Act of Congress, he said. Power did not tempt him. His judicious outlook prevailed and the case was amicably settled. It became the corner stone in interpretation of constitutional law.

But what has happened with the Indian constitution is different. In the G.P.Gupta case (I Judges Case) the court found unambiguously that the discretion of the executive prevails in the selection and appointment of judges for the higher judiciary according to the constitutional provisions. It has irritated the legal luminaries and some of the justices as if the executive was given place of superiority over the judiciary. It is obviously a wrong understanding. It only means that the constitution has given certain discretionary powers to the executive. The discretion carries certain rights and responsibilities as well. There was vigorous search for ways and means to overcome this insult to judiciary and to establish its supremacy. Some of the senior advocates approached the court seeking declaration of the judgment as null and void as it subordinated the judiciary to the executive which is against the concept of independence of judiciary. A theory was devised that the independence of judiciary was the corner stone of the constitution and the independence will not be complete unless the word “consult” used in Art.124 of the constitution is interpreted as “consent”. By that they tried to attain constitutional base for their theory of independence. But the fact that the constituent assembly has discussed both the terms and deliberately chose ‘Consult’ was pushed aside. It facilitated declaration of judiciary supreme. In order to execute the

supreme powers they constituted the collegium forbidding the executive any hand in selecting and appointing persons for judiciary. But the executive could not afford to ignore its responsibilities as given under the constitution. They allowed the collegium to suggest names for consideration and tried to apply their constitutional discretion in finalizing the selection. That has become a point of confrontation for judiciary. Threats were made of dire consequences unless the executive follows the directives of the judiciary to full extent. It is unequivocally asserted that executive shall have no say in selecting judges for higher judiciary. If it is accepted it amounts to the executive absolving itself of its constitutional responsibilities. It is doubtful whether there are any countries, democratic or dictatorial, where the judiciary tried to dictate terms to the executive. After all, a judicial theory cannot change the constitution. As long as the provision of Art.124 is there in the constitution the executive has to apply its discretion in selecting persons for appointment as judges. Otherwise, it amounts to dereliction of duty. The judiciary that has declared allegiance to the constitution and took oath to uphold the constitution is now trying to exercise powers beyond the constitution and insisting that executive flout the provisions of constitution to honor its self-serving theory of supremacy.

This is exactly the situation that the constituent assembly wanted to forestall, but it is precipitated by greed for power. In fact the executive surrendered its powers by constituting the National Judicial Appointments Commission. But the judiciary struck it down on the

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Challenges before socialism and socialists in 21st century India

Anand Kumar

The vision of socialism is an ever-attractive proposition for the depressed, deprived and dehumanised sections of humanity. Why? Because it presents before them a beautiful tomorrow with a rainbow out of the desired togetherness of freedom, justice, dignity, equality, prosperity, peace and harmony. Economically, it has emerged an alternative to capitalism since 19th century. In terms of political order, since the early 20th Century it has posed a challenge to monarchy, feudalism, authoritarianism, colonialism, imperialism, communist dictatorship and fascism. Socio-culturally, socialism provides ways to go beyond sexism, racism, casteism, communalism and xenophobic nationalism. It encompasses individuals, collectives, culture, ethnicities, nationhood, religion, party, market, State, democracy, freedoms and human rights in the journey from non-socialist systems to a socialist society. Therefore, in the last four centuries, every society and civilisation has created its own trajectories of socialism through the tumultuous times of the French Revolution (1789-1799), The Industrial Revolution (1760-1820), the American Revolution (1775-1783), and India's First War of Independence (1857-60). Socialism is not a surefire way to success as there have been more stories of failures and deviations from 'socialists in power' so far. At the same time, it has to be appreciated that every failure in the quest for 'a

socialist tomorrow' has paved the way for a better alternative set of ideas, programmes and movements due to the eternal value of giving priority to society over self, justice over exploitation, peace over war, universality over sectarianism.

Two features of the 21st century

If the 19th century looked like an invitation for socialism, the 21st century so far has been a period of disenchantment with idea of equality and collective togetherness - with individualism, inequality and ethnicity in ascent. The post-Soviet Union world order has been marked with hegemony of globalisation - centrality of corporate capital, spread of consumerism, ecological crisis, ethnicisation of societies under the banner of exclusive nationalism, and steep rise of inequalities and chronic poverty. There has also been decline of freedom and new challenges to unity in diversity. The institutional crisis in the power systems of representative democracies is reflected with swing to the right, spread of xenophobia, identity politics and social violence. Socialists of the industrialised societies have been found to cooperate with pro-capitalist parties to remain electorally relevant and this has marginalized them before the rising waves of intolerance and terror.

People are restive around the world due to loss of jobs, crisis of identity and fear of "the other". There is escalation in protests as they are seeking alternatives.

But they are not interested in 'the socialist alternative' as available today. Socialist programmes and politics are viewed as part of the problem, and not a solution.

The disenchantment with the Soviet Communist model is total. And this is creating the grounds for consolidation of non-socialist (and to some extent non-democratic) tendencies across the European Union, the UK and the US. Of course, there is the Nordic pocket of successful social democracies including Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland. Austria, Germany, France and the United Kingdom have been also oscillating between liberal capitalism and social democracy for last several decades. They have been shining examples of 'sane' society so far. But the waves of ethnicisation and xenophobia fuelled by financial crisis are creating cracks in these countries also.

The Indian setting

In India, the situation is no better because of paradigm shift in favour of market mediated globalisation in 1990s. The last three decades have been exposed to the consequences of three Ms - Market economics, Mandalism, and Mandir mobilisation. They have politicised the fault lines in the economy (public sector vs private sector), society (backward classes vs the others) and culture (Hindus vs non-Hindus). There is dominance of 'identity politics' in the name of representative democracy. The

socialists are suffering from a crisis of identity due to their softness on 'electoral compulsions'. Whether they promoted social justice in the real sense of the term by changing the life of millions affected by the caste system, particularly the Mahadalits, Most Backwards Castes, Pasamanda Muslims, Non-Hindu Dalits, and De-notified tribes, is a matter of debate. Because the advantages of identity politics have been cornered by the neo-rich and 'forward' sections of the Backward castes and classes. The prime movers of this political project around 'social justice' and 'Hindutva' have been success stories from the 1990s till today.

But there is no organic growth of the socialist ideology and its economic, political and social components. Socialists of today have no idea or interest about the new grammar of global economics and economic, political and cultural consequences of consumerist globalisation. There is no alternative agenda for promoting triple justice - social, economic and political - beyond demanding reservations in the private sector and going beyond the limit of 50 per cent in the public sector. There is no interest in deepening of democracy and ensuring that citizens play a significant role in the affairs of the state and society. No one seems to be interested in the politics beyond the next elections and an election is always round the corner - be it Lok Sabha, or Vidhan Sabha, or Zila Parishad, City Municipality and the Gram Panchayats. The desire of getting onto these elected bodies and craving to get one's kith and kin as political successor is working like a sweet poison for the socialists and socialism since 1980s.

At least two generations have been wasted because of the unconscious surrender to the symbolic supremacy of parliamentary politics and electoral compulsions. It has created two categories among the socialists or followers who claim lineage of Gandhi-Lohia-Jayaprakash. There are successful socialists and unsuccessful socialist groups in electoral terms. The 'successful socialists' are trapped in promoting nepotism rather than socialism. They leave governance to a nexus of money managers, crony capitalists and bureaucrats. The unsuccessful socialists have lost the 'will to power'. They are seen to be associated with either 'political opportunism' or non-party civil society activities. Both ways there has been dissolution of the socialist politics. It has to be further added, that it is ironical that the successful socialist groups and the political opportunists have created infertile spaces where nothing is happening for the advancement of society towards a socialist future. But the unsuccessful socialists have proved to be fertilisers for protest politics all over the country. Intellectually, socialists used to be among the most competent theoreticians since the time of Gandhi and Nehru. Today there is poverty of ideas, information and understanding even after mastering the art of creating and sustaining 'vote banks' in large states of India. They look like political illiterates who are perpetually dependent upon the Left parties' ideologues to finding words and sentences to present their viewpoint or 'party line' about any national or global question. They feel no shame in it as it helps them claim space in 'anti-communal politics'. They have been also found to walk together with Bharatiya Janata Party overtly and covertly

for share in power in the name of 'anti-Congressism'.

The second 'fall'

In realistic terms, it is the second 'fall' of socialists since independence. There has been sizable success in the electoral arena with viable size of vote banks in some of the major theatres of national politics in north India. But to an extent it is power without principles. The centrality of parliamentary power has made them prisoners of political pragmatism beyond all proportions. These regimes led by 'socialists' are seen to be captive of crony capitalists. They are found to be promoting economic agenda of liberal capitalism in agriculture, industry and service sector. Their political programmes were without any push for further decentralisation beyond the 73rd-74th Amendment introduced by Congress PM Rajiv Gandhi in 1980s or states' reorganization since the formation of three states in 2000 by NDA under PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Lack of commitment for democratic institutions including the cooperatives, District Boards, City Municipalities, and Gram Panchayats invariably created situations of lawlessness by Robinhoods which invited charges of Jungle Raj and Gunda Raj. There was no genuine empowerment of women and other victims of segregations in society and culture even after nearly a quarter of century of being the principal political force in and out of power at the state and central levels.

From 1930s to 1980s, the socialists were known for their sound understanding of the Indian society and culture which had helped them in creating a growing social base among the weaker sections of the society in 1950s and 1960s.

They had courage of conviction. But the post-1980 politics of vote banks around 'identity politics' made them look like architects of 'dominant castes democracy'. It created three consequences for socialist politics – 1. There was drift of the most backward sections including the Dalits and Mahadalits; 2. Growth of internal power conflicts between the dominant castes; and 3. Politics of power of the dominant castes promoted regional parties as these were their spheres of influence. It left no basis for capability building for establishing an all India political instrument or vehicle for carrying forward socialist policies and programmes.

There is another serious issue before the Indian socialists of today in the 21st century. Politics of electoral pragmatism around identity politics has caused a much deeper damage to the idea of socialism and image of socialists in Indian politics in recent decades. Originally, the socialists in India were identified with ethical politics. Their life was synonymous with selfless dedication for the cause of teeming millions. They did not have power till 1960s and were more known for losing electoral battles against Congress minions. But they were icons of virtues and moral authority in public life. From Narendra Dev, Lohia and JP to S M Joshi, N G Goray, Madhu Limaye, Raj Narain, Mama Baleshwar Dayal, Rabi Ray, Mrinal Gore, Pramila Dandavate, Karpuri Thakur, Madhu Dandavate, Arjun Singh Bhadauria, Sarla Bhadauria, Satya Narayan Reddy, Golap Barbora, Surendra Mohan and Kishen Pattanayak there was a galaxy of shining examples of uncompromising socialist icons. But there was no continuity after the 1980s.

A new generation of populist and pragmatic parliamentary socialists became successors of this socialist heritage. That became the beginning of unprincipled compromises including loss of national perspective, promoting superno syndrome in the party organization, accumulation of assets beyond known means of income, patronizing crime-politics nexus, indifference about probity and ethics in public life, and active engagement in nepotism. The first fall of the socialists took place under the influence of the infamous thesis of 'compulsion of a backward economy' in 1960s. It argued for surrendering to the political power of Congress party which may create opportunities for influencing the policies and programmes of the newly created democratic state from inside. It is another matter that most of such proponents of the thesis of 'compulsions' were found to be involved in splitting the Congress party between 1967-77 and landed together with the non-compromising socialists in the Jail during the Emergency Raj in 1975-77. In any case, the first time, it was resisted by Lohia and his followers which guaranteed continuity of socialist stream of political alternatives to the hegemonic Congress system. But this time, the second 'fall' has been justified in the name of Lohia's thesis of 'preferential opportunities for the backwards' which included five categories of society - women, Dalits, Adivasis, Backward castes, and Pasmada Muslims. It makes no difference to the proponents of the post-Lohia variety of social justice that there is huge deficit of most of these categories in the prevailing formulations of electoral politics of socialists claiming to be connected with Gandhi-Lohia-JP tradition of politics.

Consequences of parliamentary pragmatism

Socialist politics has degenerated to personality politics. There are no ideological instruments like training camps, research cells, party literature or policy workshops. The idea of 'party' has become synonymous with electoral machine. The links and networks with mass organizations and fraternal groups, bodies and movements are non-existent. There is no attention for leadership building beyond distribution of electoral 'tickets'. It is a decline from party system to personality system.

It is not that everything got destroyed all over India due to preoccupation of parliamentary success and getting into governance through unprincipled alliances since 1980s. But there has been continuously 'diminishing return' of the socialist initiatives. The work of National Alliance of Peoples' Movements, Rashtra Seva Dal, Samajwadi Jan Parisad, Hind Majdoor Sabha, Hind Majdoor Kisan Panchayat, Mahila Dakshata Samiti, Yusuf Meharally Centre, Acharya Narendra Dev Samajwadi Kendra, Lohia Samta Vidyalay Nyas, Lohia Adhyayan Kendra, Vanvasi Panchayat, Janata Weekly, Samayik Varta, Samanya Jan, Lohia Academy, Institute of Social Sciences, Centre for Social Research, Bharat Tibet Maitri Sangh, Lokshakti Abhiyan, and Socialist Party of India can be underlined in this context. There is also a galaxy of inspiring social activists, writers, and reformers who have made their own modest contribution with consistency. They have made it possible for the continuity of craving for socialism beyond party politics and parliamentary institutions. But

it needs more than such lamps of light in such a dark night caused by globalisation accompanied by chronic poverty, widening of inequalities and ethnicisation.

Today, we have 'party-less' socialists due to devaluation of political worker into a 'ticket seeker' in a web of patron-client system. It is quite a parody of JP's vision of partyless democracy. Similarly, Lohia wanted the socialists not be either Marxist or Gandhian as to be a socialist needed a non-personality perspective. The present setting needs only cultivation of personal loyalty to neither a vision nor a programme or organisation but to a powerful person. It has happened in conjunction with two other mega events : 1. Loss of credibility of one of the most efficient democratic instruments of the people of India since 1920s, Indian national Congress. It is melting away due to designs of dynastic politics and patronizing crony capitalism and corruption at high places. 2. Decline of Marxist left after 35 years of un-broken rule in Bengal and Tripura and critical significance in Kerala politics due to its deviation from the path of alternative economic policies and programmes. It was disappointing to find them in collaboration with Congress Raj in promoting the LPG (Liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation) paradigm since 1990s. These developments together have caused a nationwide vacuum which has promoted consolidation of Hindutva vote bank with open patronage of crony capitalism. They have appropriated not only 'Hindu religion' but also a) the idea of India by claiming monopoly over nation, b) legacy of patriotism, and c) the responsibility of protection of 'Indian culture'.

What are the immediate consequences? Socially, we are experiencing casteist, communal and ethnic segregations. There is increasing lumpenization of the public sphere and stigmatization of civil society activists. Secular, leftists, and progressive have become questionable words. Economically, there is continuity of jobless growth, regional imbalance and decline of agriculture and stagnation in manufacturing. No one is convinced about the promise of 'Acche Din Ayenge' as there is continuity of the dominance of black money in our economy and politics and no check on crime-politics nexus in everyday life. There is open door policy for crony capitalists and foreign investors despite doubtful credentials. Politically, there is thrust for centralization of power and erosion of autonomy of institutions of substance including judiciary, banks, universities, and research bodies. Six pre-existing deficits have increased further - development deficit, legitimacy deficit, governance deficit, democracy deficit, nation-building deficit, and citizenship deficit.

Who needs socialism today?

In such a situation there are two inter-related changes in the orientation of Indian people. First of all, people are becoming more depressed about the possibility of reforming our system of economy and government and improving the status of citizens in the affairs of state and economy. Practicing liberal capitalism and promoting globalisation for ten long years by Manmohan Singh-Sonia Gandhi made us look for a better alternative. But we are confronted with a bad situation as the new regime is recasting our society into a silence zone and economy is more firmly in

the clutches of crony capitalism. From price rise to unemployment, there is a growing list of disappointments among all citizens. The weaker sections are feeling greater degree of vulnerability. The cries from Kisans all over the country, national strike by the un-organised sector workers for increased minimum wages, Dalits of Gujarat, Muslims of Kashmir, UP, Maharashtra and Haryana, Adivasi of Chattisgarh and ethnic minorities of the North-Eastern states for saving from injustices of the dominant groups and the state apparatus deserve everybody's attention and response. The emergence of self-appointed culture protectors who are taking law into their own hands with impunity and ignoring even the appeal of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi creates a sense of anxiety among all those who value rule of law and dignity of ordinary citizens. These straws in the wind can be put together in one sentence for our attention and considerations – is this Swaraj anymore? Or we have to learn to live with crony capitalism which is contingent upon patron-client system in polity and economy irrespective of the Constitution of India? Are we doomed to be silent sufferers of the lumpenism of self-appointed "Rakshaks" in the name of culture and nation who do not care for the rule of law and sanctity of our Constitution? This thinking creates a new window for socialists to come up with better alternatives in economy and society by reinventing themselves in terms of ideas, programmes, organization and activities.

Secondly, there is growing respect and support among the people, from the middle classes to the masses, for those persons, groups and organizations who can stand up

for justice and fairness against the pathology of the LPG paradigm. It is being realized that the LPG approach is creating crisis of Swaraj, which was incomplete in any case. Suicide of farmers has been one big issue for all to see the farce of LPG related policies which were introduced in 1990s with the promise of prosperity in agriculture. Invasion of the Indian market by foreign companies created loss of economic opportunities for the native entrepreneurs and traders. Consequences of commercialization of health and education have pauperized the lower middle classes and rural households without any substantial difference in their life chances. Crisis of education is manifested in every state of India. It forced the Congress regime to accept the need of 'right to education' for children upto 8th standard. The new regime also felt compelled to appoint a national commission for educational reforms and the Subramanyam Committee Report is a relevant document for socialists to make use for nationwide consensus building for Shiksha Swaraj. Similarly, the failures of market mediated health policies have created a new convergence to demand 'right to health' for Swasthya Swaraj as the way out of the present disappointments. From Hyderabad Central University and Jawaharlal Nehru University episodes to the Dalit upsurge in Gujarat after shameful Una episode, it is getting clear that suffering in silence is not an acceptable option for people who have not forgotten the dark days of the Emergency Raj. The need of check and balances was also demonstrated by the citizens when they gave approval to untested group of anti-corruption activists in Delhi Vidhan Sabha and a strange coming together of long term adversaries – JD(U), RJD and Congress - in Bihar

as a more acceptable choice vis-a-vis the NDA. This makes the Indian socialists, among others, again more relevant than the present set of activists of the partners of the NDA.

In short, there is scope for revisiting the socialist alternatives due to increasing disenchantments among the masses, particularly the youth about globalization and crony capitalism. They are looking beyond liberal capitalism for a better economic model. The truth of growing corruption in representative democracy in post-colonial India from Panchayat to Parliament is making them think about deepening of democracy with more participation and less representation. Challenges to patriarchy and casteism and other forms of dominations across religions and regions in the social order is no ordinary source of furthering social transformation beyond the schemes of 'reservations' and statutory commissions for women, SCs, STs, OBCs, and the minorities. The mindless drive for industrialization and urbanization has created dangerous problems like pollution of water, air and soil in most parts of the advanced cities and progressive states of our country. It has created a new relevance for the need of prioritising the basic needs of all citizens against socially dangerous consumerism being practiced by the neo-rich and super rich sections of our society. If we look at the socialist solutions offered between 1930s and 1960s for our economic, political, social and ecological problems, it will be not surprising to find many of those ideas as part of the emerging consensus for a more sustainable and humane way of nation building. From clean drinking water and healthy accommodation for all to Freedom from Hunger, Jal-

Jungle-Zameen under community control, eliminating discriminations against women, SCs, STs, the OBCs, the minorities and the other marginal groups, Right to Education, Right to Health, Rural Employment Guarantee schemes, use of appropriate technology in agriculture and industry - there is a new wave of entitlements which were originally part of the Indian socialist agenda. But most of the socialists are not aware of it as we have lost our way. How many of us are living a life of a socialist in our personal capacity? Where are the living examples of socialists organized around three dimensional system of spade, jail and vote? It is due to the crisis of purpose caused by unnecessary fascination with parliamentary power which took hold of our collective imagination between 1967 and 1977. There is problem with the direction of efforts which have become mostly election-centric since 1980s.

What next?

What is the guarantee that socialists can rise to the occasion? Because it needs re-connecting of the ideas of socialism with the evolution of self-consciousness at personal level and dynamics of Indian social formation in the context of the modern world system in terms of not only economy and politics but also ecology and culture. We are living in an age where there is growing cry for Azadi Bachao in total sense of the term – from personal and spiritual to economic, social and political.

It is relevant to remind that the socialist journey began with the dream of personal transformation, social reforms, national freedom, democracy and socialism – *Rashtriyata aur Samajwad* - in

1930s under the inspiring guidance of Acharya Narendra Deva (1889-1956). Then the socialists got inspired by the re-conceptualisation of socialism as togetherness of seven revolutions – *Saptakranti* in the Lohia era (1910-1967). We got re-juvenated and expanded with the message of Total Revolution in mid-1970s - *Sampurna Kranti* as propounded by Jayaprakash Narayan (1902-1979). There is need of a similar synthesising initiative which can make us capable of taking the nation beyond the limits imposed by the togetherness of dominant caste democracy and the LPG paradigm. The new initiative has to be anchored in the hunger for Swaraj through individual, collective, constructive, mobilizational and legislative drive for a humane social order. It means getting together with the movements for gender justice, dignity for the Dalits, Adivasi rights, protection of Minorities, empowerment of the Most Backward classes, restoring ecological harmony and decisive engagement against chronic poverty and regional disparities. Socialists for Swaraj can be a meaningful banner.

It is hard task in the face of continuity of superficial successes in electoral games of today due to the logic of dominant caste democracy and trappings of crony capitalism. BJP is in power with a broad alliance of contradictory social forces on the basis of pragmatic power sharing. It has no solution of the problems of Indian economy as it is indifferent about black money and friendly with crony capitalism. Furthermore, it is anchored in the ideas and programmes of self-defeating Hindutva which is another name for majoritarianism and religious hegemony. It is colliding with the Indian ethos of unity in diversity

and *Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam*. It has been gripped by ‘politics of othering’ which is legitimising fringe elements and their misguided campaigns. There is no sign of moderation in the NDA approach despite the much publicized promise of inclusivity and cooperative federalism: ‘Sabka Saath- Sabka Vikaas’.

Congress has no capacity due to a long list of missed opportunities and the burden of mistakes in the recent past and limits of the dynastic future. The Marxist Left has failed to do it even after being better equipped and informed about the issues of 21st century avatar of capitalism due to their continuity with trade unions and politics of masses in the countries of Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America. Most of the regional parties have announced priority of province over the nation-state. They are often run like family enterprises without any commitment for furthering democratic nation-building. They are functional vehicles of power for provincial and local elites of the regional dominant castes. But they have no vision beyond their electoral basis for the larger nation and humanity.

New political sociology

The time has come to understand new interrelatedness of economy and ecology on the one hand and culture and politics on the other. This fresh understanding has to be translated into a set of programmes for revitalising agriculture, industries and services beyond the grip of corporate and black money based market and corrupt elite commanded state. There is pressure from below for re-centering citizens and communities together to take command of democratic governance for realizing sustainable

development. Low energy, high efficiency, cost effective, eco-friendly and people-centric system of production, exchange, distribution and consumption with universal benefits is the need of the hour. National and global capitalists have failed in giving a suitable and sustainable response around the world. This global failure has forced the United Nations to adopt a new 19 Point Charter for Sustainable Development. The Indian socialists will have to upgrade their socio economic understanding and come to terms with the new imperatives at least to the level of the United Nations Development Program.

Indian socialists wanted to overcome the ideological limitations of Euro-centric Marxism and engage with the down to earth factors of inequalities and exploitation like gender, caste, race, religion, language, and nationality. They developed better theories of caste, gender, religion, language, democracy, nation-state and world system through the writings of great masters including Marx, Gandhi, Narendra Dev, Jayaprakash, Ambedkar and Lohia. It made them equipped with the Lohia line of ‘preferential opportunities’. But they got too focused on dominant caste dynamics after Lohia passed away in 1967 which made them victim of the designs of the dominant castes. They got lured by their votes and lost the capacity to be front runners of social transformers of our society into a casteless and classless society. They have become myopic about ‘reservation’ as a passage to socialism and casteless society.

The 21st century Indian power matrix is influenced by at least following 12 changes which have taken place since the passing away

of Gandhi-Lohia-JP and their immediate followers. They are the following:

1. Declining significance of state power and increased role of market forces
2. Increasing significance of politicization of castes, ethnicities and religious identities and communities
3. Enlargement of women movements for gender justice
4. Politics of dignity and self respect prevailing among the SCs and STs
5. Enlargement of the middle classes in all castes, communities and region from an national average of around 5 per cent in 1950s to nearly 25 per cent
6. De-colonization of cultural spaces and identities all over the country
7. Significance of land policies and water politics
8. LPG related new power relations in the village India
9. Increased opportunities of education through affirmative action and educational expansion
10. Increased migration due to agrarian crisis and proliferation of modern occupations
11. Urban explosion and decay
12. LPG induced globalisation of economy and consequential peoples' movements.

They together need a new focus. But most of the socialist oriented politicians and political formations are largely engaged in state-centric caste conflicts through manipulation of reservation policies for the SCs, STs and OBCs. Even there it needs a comprehensive programme for addressing the problems inherent in the intersectionality of castes with classes, education and gender. It will take them forward from flat 'Mandalism' which has mostly

served the 'forward backward castes'. They have to attend to the emerging opportunities of engaging with a) all women and their movements, including the OBCs, SCs and STs, and Muslims, b) all MBCs (Most Backward Classes and castes across religions) and their needs, c) Mahadalit castes and occupational communities and their grievances, and d) agenda of the denotified tribes and communities for a better strategy of inclusive socialist reconstruction with enlarged social basis.

Socialists were symbols of courage and suffering as they continued the legacy of civil disobedience for social causes in the post-colonial India. It made them outstanding warriors in the struggles for economic, political and social justice. But now there is new century with a new generation which needs new politics of voice, mobilization, resistance and reforms. Right to Information activists are a significant representative of the new political culture and its practitioners. There is increasing allergy to politics of personalities, mass rallies. And a preference for persons of substance, organizations with transparency and internal democracy and activists with clarity of issues and solutions of the problems. Of course, there is a large segment of population which will demand the old ways of political action as they have been depoliticized in the last three decades of personality politics and liberal capitalism to treat politics as carnival and Tamasha and elections as the only opportunity of bargaining with the candidates and parties. This will demand gradual and incremental change in the strategies at the time of elections. But the days of simple slogans are over. There is a new language of politics and new grammar of power where

commitment for political reforms, including party system reform and electoral reforms are being demanded by the concerned citizens. Socialism is about fundamental reforms in the relation between economy, politics and society by bringing citizen-society nexus at the centre of all schemes of power and authority. Therefore, the socialists in India today will have to come forward with an unambiguous and practical plan of comprehensive political reforms to take India beyond the counter-productive aspects of electoral competitions and representative institutions including our Panchayat, Assembly and Parliament.

It is also urgent to recognize that revival of interest in socialism and faith in the socialists is going to be associated with their capacity to get integrated with common causes and distanced from the concept of giving supreme value to electoral politics. India continues to need political parties and competitive politics through elections. But today the elections are losing their centrality with increasing role of three Ms – money, media, and mafia. They have become coupled with three pre-existing fault lines - Caste groupings, Communal cleavages, and Dominant families with traditional power and appeal in ex-Princely pockets and areas. These six factors have increasingly perverted our parties and the party system. They have also created an institutional crisis in Indian democracy.

The socialists cannot afford to participate in the political system to perpetuate it. It is obvious that the present system of elections and the prevalence of patrimonial parties are not going to become irrelevant in the near future. But

there will be declining legitimacy of electoral parties and parliamentary politics unless there are reforms in it as they are found to be promoting Netawad-Paisavad-Jativad at the cost of citizenship, nation-building and Swaraj. No scope is going to be available in the present setting for Samajwad – socialist reconstruction. They need radical reforms. There can be better parties by practicing internal democracy, transparency, accountability and probity. There has to be a more pro-people election system through more participatory citizenship and supervisory mechanisms. From bringing the political parties under Right to Information to including right to recall has to be in the new socialist agenda. They have to lead the society to create spaces and instruments for continuous social audit of the elected representatives to put an end to ‘new aristocracy through electoral legitimacy’, because socialist politics of tomorrow has to go beyond ‘electoral opportunism’. It is a sure way to get back into people’s estimation and peoples’ politics of social transformation for Swaraj – personal, political, economic, social and spiritual - which was the original mission of the Indian freedom movement.

(Contd. from Page 5)

doubt, the community has to decide but it hasn’t happened so far. And it looks odd that a secular democratic country feels helpless to do away with an anomaly that has been prevalent for over six decades.

However reluctant the Modi government may feel, it has to face the reality and find a solution. It is not Hindus versus Muslims; it is some outdated thinking which does not fit into the letter and spirit of the constitution.

Bhopal “Encounter”

NAPM expresses shock and condemnation at the brutal killing of 8 undertrials near Bhopal by Madhya Pradesh police. Video footage of the incident that has emerged strongly suggests that the ‘encounter’ was staged. The footage shows unarmed men waving their bare hands; it shows no firearms on or near the bodies of the 8 men; it shows police shooting at men lying on the ground inert and prone. The initial statements of the Madhya Pradesh Home Minister admitted that the 8 men were armed with nothing but sharpened spoons, while the police later claimed that the 8 men had firearms and had fired at the police. These mutually contradictory statements also add to conviction that the killing was a fake encounter.

The alleged escape of the 8 undertrials from the high-security Bhopal Central Jail after killing a policeman also call for an enquiry. Is it really possible for undertrials to escape from a high-security prison with crude tools, killing a policeman without being caught on surveillance cameras? The 8 men were locked up in different blocks at farther distance which raises the doubts against their escape together. We demand the public release of video footage of the whole day of all surveillance cameras installed in the jail and video footage of the confrontation

between police and 8 men.

The 8 men were allegedly members of SIMI – a banned organization – charged with various terror crimes. They were yet to be convicted, however. The Supreme Court has held that mere membership of a banned organization is no crime. We have seen time and again how men charged with terror crimes have been proven innocent and acquitted, with Courts commenting on the police foisting false cases on innocent men.

These 8 men cannot be declared ‘terrorists’ without being established in the court of law. If these 8 men were indeed ‘terrorists’ as is being alleged, then their crimes should have been proven in Court so that they could be duly punished. Extra-judicial killings of alleged ‘terrorists’ absolves the state from establishing their ‘guilt’ while giving the state and its pliant media machinery a free hand to proclaim that ‘terrorists’ have been killed, strengthening a larger narrative of communal profiling.

Are we once again seeing a replay of the Gujarat model of ‘encounters’? NAPM demands an impartial, time-bound judicial probe monitored by the Supreme Court, to investigate the facts of the alleged jail break as well as the killing of the 8 men.

–**Medha Patkar, Prafulla Samantara, - Lingraj Azad, Dr. Sunilam, Aradhna Bhargava, Meera, Suniti SR, Suhas Kolhekar, Prasad Bagwe, Gabriele Dietrich, Geetha Ramakrishnan, C R Neelkandan, P Chennaiah, Ramakrishnan Raju, Arundhati Dhuru, Richa Singh, Sister Celia, Rukmini V P, Vimal Bhai, Jabar Singh, Anand Mazgaonkar, Krishnakant, Kamayani Swami, Ashish Ranjan, Mahendra Yadav, Faisal Khan, J S Walia, Kailash Meena, Amitava Mitra, Avik Saha, B S Rawat, Rajendra Ravi, Madhuresh Kumar**

National Alliance of People’s Movements

Communal Violence in Chhapra and Maker

The news of outbreak of communal violence on 5th and 6th August 2016 in Maker village and Chhapra town, both in Saran District (Bihar), was disturbing. One Muslim youth by the name Mubarak posted a derogatory image that could have outraged the religious feelings of Hindus in a small WhatsApp group. Members of the Muslim Community of Maker Village (where Mubarak belonged to) condemned Mubarak for posting the derogatory image. In response to the derogatory image, there was a massive mobilization of Hindus and communal riots broke out in Maker Village on 5th August 2016 and on 6th August in Chhapra town. Mubarak's house was completely damaged by Hindus who were mobilized and so were other houses and shops belonging to Muslims and a mosque.

If the scale of the violence was not very large as no lives were lost, the fact that riots could occur in Bihar which in recent State Assembly elections had defeated hegemonic-communal forces was worrying enough. The news reports were sketchy and did not give detailed coverage of the riots. Centre for Study of Society and Secularism therefore thought it necessary to visit the area with a team of prominent citizens to interact with the survivors and other stake holders and report to all interested in knowing the truth. The Team members were as follows: Vibhuti Narain Rai, former DGP, UP and Ex-Vice-Chancellor, Mahatma Gandhi Anatarashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalay; Vijay Pratap, Director, SADED; Irfan Engineer, Director, CSSS; Shahid Kamaal, President, Bihar Rashtriya Sewa Dal, Vinod Ranjan Gandhi Smarak

Nidhi, Uday, Convenor, Bihar All India Secular Forum; Chok Tsering

Saran district

The district of Saran is in Saran Division of north Bihar. Chhapra is the principal town of the district and is also headquarters of the district. Hindus constitute 89.45% of the population of Saran district, whereas Muslims are 10.28% of the total population. This can be compared to the state-wide composition of 82.69% Hindus and 16.87% Muslims. The Scheduled Castes population of the Saran District is 5.84%. Chhapra is the most populous town in the district. The total number of households in Chhapra is 37,800. Chhapra is a very important trade centre in Bihar. In the manufacturing sector the chief employers are factories and small scale industries. 10.38% of the total population of Chhapra lives in slums.

Maker is a rural area with total number of households of 14,398. Its total population is 76,251 that has shown 11.1% increase over the last 10 years. Though majority of the population i.e. 55% are agricultural labourers, there is a growing awareness about education. Due to limited livelihood opportunities, there is substantial migration out of Maker and Chhapra.

Maker village is spread out and divided into various hamlets or *tolas*. The *tolas* are more or less organized according to caste and communities. The Muslim hamlet is in midst and surrounded by other *tolas*. There is a High school in the village. The first mosque was built about 30 years ago and the second mosque was built about 20 years ago. Before the two

mosques were built, people had to go to Dakhin Tola, an adjoining village to pray. Due to natural growth of population, Muslim villagers felt need of a mosque in the village. Thus the above mentioned mosques were constructed to facilitate old people and others to offer their prayers. Muslims are poorer compared to the Hindus. Their land ownership is marginal. A few of them are farm labourers and others undertake unskilled labour jobs. A very small section has been doing a little better off compared to others, Mubarak's family amongst them. Mubarak's family runs a small hotel which fetched them enough income to construct a pucca house with several rooms, steel cupboards and other furniture and amenities. Mubarak's elder brother was earning his livelihood in Bhopal. The family invested in Mubarak's education and sent him to Bengaluru. Migration within and outside the country, particularly to the Gulf countries for livelihood and employment had also enabled the community to marginally improve their condition. Another strategy for better livelihood was focus on education and thus a small section of the community was able to marginally improve their conditions compared to the past. However, others reacted to this perspective and said they are still worse off compared to other communities.

Since last about 15 years, Muslims have been celebrating Eid-e-Miladun Nabi by taking out a procession with Islamic flags. The flags are mistaken to be flag of Pakistan. There is display of swords, as is traditional in such processions. The procession converges on the *mazaar* (grave) of Auliya Baba. As the procession

passes through the village it evokes sense of competition among a section of upper caste villagers, particularly those from Vaishya caste. They started taking out Ram Navami procession since last two years. Some leaders of Hindus participate in the Eid-e-Miladun Nabi procession and likewise some Muslim leaders/elders participate in Ram Navami procession. The competitive celebration of festivals leads to creation of loyalties to the respective communities and a solidarity bond within as opposed to common bonds across the communities between villagers. These events are seen as sectarian events and promote segregation and even a sense of rivalry.

Visit to Maker: Talking to Muslims in a mosque on 2nd September, the summary of discussion was as under:

Ashutosh Kumar posted a video that was derogatory to Islam on a WhatsApp group that consisted of Hindus and Muslims. In reply, Mubarak, who is a resident of Maker Village but presently studying in Bengaluru, posted a video derogatory to Hindu Goddess. The members of the community were strongly condemning the post of Mubarak even though according to them it was in response to a post derogatory to Islam. The derogatory post of Mubarak was made viral by Hindu nationalists and they started mobilizing popular opinion. Several meetings were held to mobilize people and incite them against Muslims. On 4th August, some members of the Hindu community went to Maker Police Station to file a complaint. Members of Muslim community were supporting the Hindus in filing FIR against the offensive post. They encouraged Jaishankar Shah to file the FIR.

The SHO, Sanjay Gupta, of Maker Police Station however, refused to register the FIR of the incident as, according to him, the complaint did not pertain to Maker and that the complainant should go to Parsa. SHO Sanjay Gupta did not appreciate the seriousness of situation and may have tried to shirk from taking on additional workload. Gupta took refuge in ruse that crime was not committed within his jurisdiction as the offensive image was posted from Bengaluru. The SHO should have at least informed the SP about the incident but he did not do so. The refusal to register FIR became an additional ground to mobilize the Hindus to attack the Muslims.

On 5th August, mob was mobilized in Rajendra Vidyalay in Maker early morning at about 6.00 am. Some 5,000 people gathered and the BJP MLA Satwant Tiwari, also known as Chokar Baba, was also present. Before the Muslims could comprehend their response, the mob reached Chowk by 6.30 am and started attacking Mubarak's house. Whatever could be looted and carried away was carried, including jewellery. Except for the brick walls, everything else was destroyed in the house which included 3 steel cupboards, furniture etc. and thrown outside. They also tried to torch his house. According to the brother of Mubarak, the total loss they suffered was to the tune of Rs. 15 lakhs. After attacking Mubarak's house, they initially dispersed but returned again after 15 minutes and attacked a mosque and a few houses belonging to other Muslims. Likewise they returned three times attacking three dozen Muslim houses and two shops. Mohammed Siraj's tempo was attacked and its wind screen, side glasses and rear view mirrors were smashed. His godown was

attacked.

Role of police

As the mob was marching from Rajendra Vidyalay to attack Mubarak's house, the police also accompanied them. However, they were outnumbered and ill-equipped. Muslims felt that the police were silent spectators by design and allowed the rioters free hand. According to Siraj, when he pleaded with Sanjay Gupta to control the mob attacking his godown and tempo, Gupta pulled out his gun and pointed towards him and threatened him. Muslims we talked to alleged that the SHO, Sanjay Gupta, as well as that of SP Pankaj Kumar Roy was partisan.

The District Magistrate, Deepak Anand we talked to, said that he received a message at about 10.00 am on 5th August regarding the road blockade by villagers on the issue of the derogatory WhatsApp post. The SP and the DM immediately left to reach the spot and camped there till 4.00 pm till peace was restored. The SP and the DM promised the mob that they would arrest Mubarak who had posted the derogatory post. They imposed Section. 144 of Indian Penal Code and closed down the access to internet in order to check spread of rumours. In the evening they called a meeting of the peace committee.

On 6th August, Bajrang Dal had called for a *bandh*. The DM took the politicians into confidence to ensure that the *bandh* would be peaceful. There was a small procession of about 100 persons in Chhapra Town. Between 9.30 am to 10 am, riots started in Karim Chowk in Chhapra town. The DM reached the spot in about 2 minutes. Muslim shops were being stoned and tyres were burning

at various nooks and corners. The SP and the DM managed to disperse the crowd. Within 2 hours, they cleaned the city. On 7th and 8th August, minor incidences of pulling down loudspeakers from the mosque continued but otherwise peace was restored. According to the DM, 7 to 8 shops were damaged and wares of about 51-52 hawkers were set afire. The police force, according to the Magistrate succeeded in saving about 20 shops from being damaged by the rioters. In Marhaura block and Panapur too some minor incidents of pushing each other between the two communities took place.

The magistrate claimed that the administration distributed Rs. 18 lakhs to 36 shops as compensation according to the State Government policy. The owners of the shops, which were damaged in the riots, were paid compensation upto Rs. 2 lakhs depending on the damage suffered.

Findings and conclusions

1) The Act of posting derogatory image outraging the religious feelings of Hindus must be condemned at the outset and the guilty person must be punished in accordance with law.

2) What we found disturbing was that even in state of Bihar where the RJD-JD(U)-Congress alliance Government is in power, communal violence can be orchestrated with ease by members of Sangh Parivar. The riots did not happen overnight. They were planned and mobilization was undertaken for days if not months. Though the Muslims firmly believed that Mubarak had posted derogatory image outraging the feelings of Hindu community within a closed WhatsApp group of the area consisting of mixed religions, that was in response to a another

derogatory post outraging the feelings of Muslims. However, the derogatory post could not be verified by us and the DM too did not verify existence of any such message. However, the Muslims were strongly condemning the act of Mubarak posting any derogatory image and were supporting the demand of strictest action within the law.

3) Mubarak's post was extensively circulated by the members of Sangh Parivar with the intention of outraging the religious feelings of Hindus and mobilizing them into their fold. A Hindu would not want the post to be circulated. S/he would straight head to police station to lodge a complaint and get the guilty punished and the image deleted. Ashutosh Kumar, a member of the WhatsApp group has been arrested for circulating the derogatory post of Mubarak. The post was getting viral and the administration could (or should) not have been unaware. Be as it may, the post was made viral and misused to mobilize Hindus. In the mob of about 5,000 that gathered on 5th August in Maker was not spontaneous in response to something that happened on the night of 4th August or the morning of 5th August. This indicates that they had been mobilized on an appointed day and time. Some people who had gathered in Rajendra Vidyaly returned as they did not want to indulge in violence. The mob marched towards Mubarak's house accompanied by scanty police force. The mob was led by BJP MLA Satwant Tiwari also known as Chokar Baba. Nandu Tiwari of Bajrang Dal too was there. The DM told us in his narrative that on 6th August, *bandh* call was given by the Bajrang Dal. In spite of assurance of peaceful *bandh* on 6th, the mobs started attacking Muslim shops. The

hand of the Hindu Nationalists in the communal violence is evident.

4) Social media is being extensively misused to promote hatred against other communities and for communal mobilization. Communal riots need elaborate planning and mobilization of resources – lethal weapons and massive mobs. Social media has made mobilization of people easier. Though the Indian state has extensively misused S. 66 of IT Act to muzzle any criticism of the Government and any opposition denying freedom of expression, the section is nevertheless underutilized as far as hate propaganda, particularly against minorities is concerned. Social media is increasingly being misused to make a post (propagating hate) viral and to spread rumours of an impending attack by the members of “other” community.

5) Inaction of the officials of the State of Bihar is evident in this particular case. The culture of police officials behaving as lords and rule unto themselves doesn't go well with the rule of law promised by the *Mahagathbandhan*. How the intelligence officials missed the mobilization that was going on using the objectionable post is difficult to understand. Even more difficult to understand is the gross delay in communicating with the DM regarding the outbreak of communal violence in Maker. Timely intervention and deployment of security forces could have deterred subsequent attacks and greater damage. Timely arrest of Mubarak for the post would have pre-empted the excuse available to the rioters in Chhapra and Maker.

6) Strictest action should be taken against Sanjay Gupta, SHO of Maker,

for his failure to register an FIR of the offensive post and not making adequate security arrangements in Maker where the family of Mubarak resided and the community therein was the likely target. The DM said they received information of the riots only at 10.00 am whereas the mob had gathered in Rajendra Vidyalay at 6.00 am and by 6.30 am riots had started in Maker. The mob attacked Mubarak's house and dispersed, was emboldened to return after sometime to attack other houses and mosques and Sanjay Gupta informs the DM only at 10.00 am!

7) The SP and DM called peace committee meeting in Chhapra on the evening of 5th August and despite knowing that the situation was volatile permitted the *bandh* and rally on 6th August. The DM was either naïve to believe in the assurance of the Sangh Parivar members that the rally would be peaceful when the atmosphere was communally volatile or intimidated by the overbearing threats of communal elements within the peace committee!

8) The DM also had his own biases against the minorities. When we informed him that the minorities were still feeling insecure, he promptly replied that minorities in Pakistan too were insecure! We reminded him that Pakistan was not secular and had limited democracy intermittently whereas India was secular and democratic wherein all the citizens of the country had been guaranteed equality and security by the Constitution. Such prejudices may have influenced the decisions taken and coloured the judgment of the officials concerned. Anti-minority bias among the bureaucracy needs to be addressed and responded to. Otherwise it will affect the efficacy of the rule of law and

ultimately the secular character of the state – the plank on which the *Mahagathbandhan* won the state elections.

9) The political response to the communal violence in Chhapra and Maker, to the increasing insecurity among the minority, communal

discourse and polarization has been very weak. The secular civil society did not act promptly and effectively. We feel that countering the communal discourse and polarization is ardent and long drawn task which should be undertaken if we do not want our democracy to be undermined.

(Contd. from Page 6)

sole ground that it does not uphold the supremacy of judiciary which has no constitutional base. When a non-governmental organization raised the question of constitutional validity of the collegium, the court summarily rejected it stating that they have no locus standi. But when the Supreme Court Advocates on

Record approached with a request to nullify the judgment of I Judges Case, they did not raise that question of locus standi.

It is not difficult to solve this problem if only there is a genuine will on the part of judiciary.

jjasthi@yahoo.com

Spectre of Fascism

By

Neeraj Jain

Fascism comes to power on the basis of democracy, then subverts it: negates freedom and equality, replaces democracy by majority authoritarianism, mobilises the majority to attack minorities and intellectuals in the name of a false nationalism.

Pages 80

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Saran district

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passes through the village it evokes sense of competition among a section of upper caste villagers, particularly those from Vaishya caste. They started taking out Ram Navami procession since last two years. Some leaders of Hindus participate in the Eid-e-Miladun Nabi procession and likewise some Muslim leaders/elders participate in Ram Navami procession. The competitive celebration of festivals leads to creation of loyalties to the respective communities and a solidarity bond within as opposed to common bonds across the communities between villagers. These events are seen as sectarian events and promote segregation and even a sense of rivalry.

Visit to Maker: Talking to Muslims in a mosque on 2nd September, the summary of discussion was as under:

Ashutosh Kumar posted a video that was derogatory to Islam on a WhatsApp group that consisted of Hindus and Muslims. In reply, Mubarak, who is a resident of Maker Village but presently studying in Bengaluru, posted a video derogatory to Hindu Goddess. The members of the community were strongly condemning the post of Mubarak even though according to them it was in response to a post derogatory to Islam. The derogatory post of Mubarak was made viral by Hindu nationalists and they started mobilizing popular opinion. Several meetings were held to mobilize people and incite them against Muslims. On 4th August, some members of the Hindu community went to Maker Police Station to file a complaint. Members of Muslim community were supporting the Hindus in filing FIR against the offensive post. They encouraged Jaishankar Shah to file the FIR.

The SHO, Sanjay Gupta, of Maker Police Station however, refused to register the FIR of the incident as, according to him, the complaint did not pertain to Maker and that the complainant should go to Parsa. SHO Sanjay Gupta did not appreciate the seriousness of situation and may have tried to shirk from taking on additional workload. Gupta took refuge in ruse that crime was not committed within his jurisdiction as the offensive image was posted from Bengaluru. The SHO should have at least informed the SP about the incident but he did not do so. The refusal to register FIR became an additional ground to mobilize the Hindus to attack the Muslims.

On 5th August, mob was mobilized in Rajendra Vidyalay in Maker early morning at about 6.00 am. Some 5,000 people gathered and the BJP MLA Satwant Tiwari, also known as Chokar Baba, was also present. Before the Muslims could comprehend their response, the mob reached Chowk by 6.30 am and started attacking Mubarak's house. Whatever could be looted and carried away was carried, including jewellery. Except for the brick walls, everything else was destroyed in the house which included 3 steel cupboards, furniture etc. and thrown outside. They also tried to torch his house. According to the brother of Mubarak, the total loss they suffered was to the tune of Rs. 15 lakhs. After attacking Mubarak's house, they initially dispersed but returned again after 15 minutes and attacked a mosque and a few houses belonging to other Muslims. Likewise they returned three times attacking three dozen Muslim houses and two shops. Mohammed Siraj's tempo was attacked and its wind screen,

side glasses and rear view mirrors were smashed. His godown was attacked.

Role of police

As the mob was marching from Rajendra Vidyalay to attack Mubarak's house, the police also accompanied them. However, they were outnumbered and ill-equipped. Muslims felt that the police were silent spectators by design and allowed the rioters free hand. According to Siraj, when he pleaded with Sanjay Gupta to control the mob attacking his godown and tempo, Gupta pulled out his gun and pointed towards him and threatened him. Muslims we talked to alleged that the SHO, Sanjay Gupta, as well as that of SP Pankaj Kumar Roy was partisan.

The District Magistrate, Deepak Anand we talked to, said that he received a message at about 10.00 am on 5th August regarding the road blockade by villagers on the issue of the derogatory WhatsApp post. The SP and the DM immediately left to reach the spot and camped there till 4.00 pm till peace was restored. The SP and the DM promised the mob that they would arrest Mubarak who had posted the derogatory post. They imposed Section. 144 of Indian Penal Code and closed down the access to internet in order to check spread of rumours. In the evening they called a meeting of the peace committee.

On 6th August, Bajrang Dal had called for a *bandh*. The DM took the politicians into confidence to ensure that the *bandh* would be peaceful. There was a small procession of about 100 persons in Chhapra Town. Between 9.30 am to 10 am, riots started in Karim Chowk in Chhapra town. The DM reached the spot in

about 2 minutes. Muslim shops were being stoned and tyres were burning at various nooks and corners. The SP and the DM managed to disperse the crowd. Within 2 hours, they cleaned the city. On 7th and 8th August, minor incidences of pulling down loudspeakers from the mosque continued but otherwise peace was restored. According to the DM, 7 to 8 shops were damaged and wares of about 51-52 hawkers were set afire. The police force, according to the Magistrate succeeded in saving about 20 shops from being damaged by the rioters. In Marhaura block and Panapur too some minor incidents of pushing each other between the two communities took place.

The magistrate claimed that the administration distributed Rs. 18 lakhs to 36 shops as compensation according to the State Government policy. The owners of the shops, which were damaged in the riots, were paid compensation upto Rs. 2 lakhs depending on the damage suffered.

Findings and conclusions

- 1) The Act of posting derogatory image outraging the religious feelings of Hindus must be condemned at the outset and the guilty person must be punished in accordance with law.
- 2) What we found disturbing was that even in state of Bihar where the RJD-JD(U)-Congress alliance Government is in power, communal violence can be orchestrated with ease by members of Sangh Parivar. The riots did not happen overnight. They were planned and mobilization was undertaken for days if not months. Though the Muslims firmly believed that Mubarak

had posted derogatory image outraging the feelings of Hindu community within a closed WhatsApp group of the area consisting of mixed religions, that was in response to a another derogatory post outraging the feelings of Muslims. However, the derogatory post could not be verified by us and the DM too did not verify existence of any such message. However, the Muslims were strongly condemning the act of Mubarak posting any derogatory image and were supporting the demand of strictest action within the law.

- 3) Mubarak's post was extensively circulated by the members of Sangh Parivar with the intention of outraging the religious feelings of Hindus and mobilizing them into their fold. A Hindu would not want the post to be circulated. S/he would straight head to police station to lodge a complaint and get the guilty punished and the image deleted. Ashutosh Kumar, a member of the WhatsApp group has been arrested for circulating the derogatory post of Mubarak. The post was getting viral and the administration could (or should) not have been unaware. Be as it may, the post was made viral and misused to mobilize Hindus. In the mob of about 5,000 that gathered on 5th August in Maker was not spontaneous in response to something that happened on the night of 4th August or the morning of 5th August. This indicates that they had been mobilized on an appointed day and time. Some people who had gathered in Rajendra Vidyalay returned as they did not want to indulge in violence. The mob marched towards

Mubarak's house accompanied by scanty police force. The mob was led by BJP MLA Satwant Tiwari also known as Chokar Baba. Nandu Tiwari of Bajrang Dal too was there. The DM told us in his narrative that on 6th August, *bandh* call was given by the Bajrang Dal. In spite of assurance of peaceful *bandh* on 6th, the mobs started attacking Muslim shops. The hand of the Hindu Nationalists in the communal violence is evident.

- 4) Social media is being extensively misused to promote hatred against other communities and for communal mobilization. Communal riots need elaborate planning and mobilization of resources – lethal weapons and massive mobs. Social media has made mobilization of people easier. Though the Indian state has extensively misused S. 66 of IT Act to muzzle any criticism of the Government and any opposition denying freedom of expression, the section is nevertheless underutilized as far as hate propaganda, particularly against minorities is concerned. Social media is increasingly being misused to make a post (propagating hate) viral and to spread rumours of an impending attack by the members of "other" community.
- 5) Inaction of the officials of the State of Bihar is evident in this particular case. The culture of police officials behaving as lords and rule unto themselves doesn't go well with the rule of law promised by the *Mahagathbandhan*. How the intelligence officials missed the mobilization that was going on using the

- objectionable post is difficult to understand. Even more difficult to understand is the gross delay in communicating with the DM regarding the outbreak of communal violence in Maker. Timely intervention and deployment of security forces could have deterred subsequent attacks and greater damage. Timely arrest of Mubarak for the post would have pre-empted the excuse available to the rioters in Chhapra and Maker.
- 6) Strictest action should be taken against Sanjay Gupta, SHO of Maker, for his failure to register an FIR of the offensive post and not making adequate security arrangements in Maker where the family of Mubarak resided and the community therein was the likely target. The DM said they received information of the riots only at 10.00 am whereas the mob had gathered in Rajendra Vidyalay at 6.00 am and by 6.30 am riots had started in Maker. The mob attacked Mubarak's house and dispersed, was emboldened to return after sometime to attack other houses and mosques and Sanjay Gupta informs the DM only at 10.00 am!
 - 7) The SP and DM called peace committee meeting in Chhapra on the evening of 5th August and despite knowing that the situation was volatile permitted the *bandh* and rally on 6th August. The DM was either naïve to believe in the assurance of the Sangh Parivar members that the rally would be peaceful when the atmosphere was communally volatile or intimidated by the overbearing threats of communal elements within the peace committee!
 - 8) The DM also had his own biases against the minorities. When we informed him that the minorities were still feeling insecure, he promptly replied that minorities in Pakistan too were insecure! We reminded him that Pakistan was not secular and had limited democracy intermittently whereas India was secular and democratic wherein all the citizens of the country had been guaranteed equality and security by the Constitution. Such prejudices may have influenced the decisions taken and coloured the judgment of the officials concerned. Anti-minority bias among the bureaucracy needs to be addressed and responded to. Otherwise it will affect the efficacy of the rule of law and ultimately the secular character of the state – the plank on which the *Mahagathbandhan* won the state elections.
 - 9) The political response to the communal violence in Chhapra and Maker, to the increasing insecurity among the minority, communal discourse and polarization has been very weak. The secular civil society did not act promptly and effectively. We feel that countering the communal discourse and polarization is ardent and long drawn task which should be undertaken if we do not want our democracy to be undermined.

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Trump's victory

Kuldip Nayar

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Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

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

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

When the country's mood is the right, you cannot expect it to vote for Hillary Clinton who represents the left-of-the-centre if not the left. Donald Trump's victory is an assertion of the whites who constitute nearly 63 per cent and still have the phobia of being a minority. It is an unfortunate thinking but one cannot write it off because that is what America is today.

Once again, the thesis of isolation is coming to the fore. There have been a substantial number of people in America who believe that they should go it alone and not bother about what the rest of the world feels about them. But this thought has not captured America at the White House. The outgoing President, Barack Obama, had two terms although he represented the non-whites.

The policy of isolation has been tried before in the country but the people have come back to a secular policy, which has recognized the constitution more than the minority or the majority. President Abraham Lincoln was a Republican but he has gone down in the history as the most acceptable personality by the minority as well.

Donald Trump has, no doubt, outlandish views on Muslims but he is

bound to be influenced by the realities of the world. America cannot afford to have an anti-Muslim policy and still expect trade with the middle-east and other Muslim countries. The realities of economics are bound to guide the person at the White House.

In a country where unemployment is the main problem, the promise to give jobs has an appeal. The young voters have been very much influenced by this call because they are in the market to seek job. They have heeded to Donald Trump because he, compared to Hillary Clinton, represents that sentiment.

She is seen to support continuity. If Hillary Clinton had won and had to deal with a Republican Congress, she would have moved towards the middle as her husband did after the Republican Revolution of 1994. Hillary is regarded as more liberal than Bill Clinton on economic issues. On foreign policy, it is likely that a Democratic victory would have led to more international cooperation than a Republican victory. Democrats are generally more interested in promoting multilateral solutions and diplomacy than Republicans, illustrated by the Obama Administration's agreement with Iran, which the Republican candidates denounce.

Indo-Pak goodwill – The road to mutual prosperity

Rajindar Sachar

But in more ways than one, the presidential election of 2016 was a referendum on the eight years of President Obama. When he launched his campaign in 2007, Obama was an untried candidate who hoped to be a transformative president the way Franklin Roosevelt and Ronald Reagan had been, arguably the two most significant presidents of the 1900s.

However, there are diverging views on his achievement, particularly after his final State of the Union Address. President Obama tried arguing why his presidency had been successful. He pointed out that 14 million new jobs were created during his presidency. These included 900,000 jobs in manufacturing that have been added during the last six years. The budget deficit was reduced by three-fourths, according to a transcript of his speech. No doubt, Obama had helped turn the economy around by regulating the financial sector in order to help prevent a new financial crisis.

However, the major disappointment of his regime was his own admission of not succeeding in bridging the divide between the parties. He had hoped to be the person to unite the country, but the nation had ended up even more divided than under President George W. Bush. In addition, the economic inequality had remained a major challenge.

A president is both a head of state and cabinet leader. President Obama can point to significant legislative success and economic progress as a cabinet leader, but not everyone sees him as a great head of state. As for Hillary Clinton, their view was more or less similar because she was

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The collapse of the government machinery, disgrace abounding, permanent stain on India's boast of secularism and rationalism were some of the instant thoughts that came to me when I learnt of the surrender terms of release of Karan Johar film "Yeh Dil Hai Muskil".

It is self-evident that this boosting of Raj Thackeray by the Chief Minister of Maharashtra (who though is technically in partnership with Uddhay Thackeray-Shiv Sena) was a politically expedient self-interest tactic.

Proudly the Chief Minister announces that he has telephoned Raj and a mutual settlement has been arrived at under which Karan would donate Rs. 5 Crores to the army fund and has promised not to engage Pakistani actors in future.

At this dark hour of cravenness, a small message from a army veteran shot up condemning the involvement of the army in this petty politics and making it clear that the army will not accept this money. The pulse of a common person in India is sounder and more honest than that of politician. In the cynical words of George Bernard Shaw, "Politics is the last resort for a scoundrel" or even in the more cynical ones of Samuel Johnson, "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel".

The undertaking given not to engage Pak actors in future is an act of disgrace of surrendering to ruffian politics. Will Karan and others at

least now show their "penance" by donating Rs. 5 Crores if not more to the distressed farmers who are committing suicide in Maharashtra.

It was then cynically suggested that Pakistani actors can be engaged if they condemn Pakistani attack – is such a suggestion not only disgraceful but is rather a self-inflicted wound, because then the question may well be asked why Indo-Pak trade which shows that over the last 12 years it has grown eight times from just 345 million dollars to 2.6 billion dollars - India exports four times Pakistani imports. This is true even in the matter of entertainment. A blow up by this pseudo patriotism has resulted in enforcing a complete ban by Pakistan on Indian TV and Radio. This fake patriotism will ruin both the neighbours.

In my view in creating anti-Pak feelings, Prime Minister and Defence Minister cannot escape their responsibility. I say this because in the wake of strategic strike controversy (In which of course Rahul's intervention made the Congress squirm) we witnessed an even more embarrassing antics of Parrikar, when he "enlightened" the country by declaring that he feels that army has been motivated because of his training even though as a small time RSS volunteer. Of course, the Minister, gave main credit to Modi's leadership due to his longer training in RSS Shakhas. How laughable - what of 1965 war with Pakistan which is legendary.

The Prime Minister then was Lal Bahadur Shastri, whose antipathy to RSS is well documented.

PM's comment that, "earlier one had heard about Israel doing such things – now the country has seen that Indian Army is no less", was an ignorant bloomer - I am sorry Modi made such a statement without consulting the foreign office who would have told him that Israeli Army receives universal condemnation for its barbarous attacks on Palestine at every year at meeting the U.N. General Assembly meetings since over last 30 years.

This laughable matter of RSS parade being the inspiration of PM/others of training at RSS rally is equivalent to the similar idle and laughably parallel boast of English aristocracy that, "Battle of Waterloo against Napoleon was won at the playing fields of public school Eaton".

It is unfortunate that in this jingoism of hysteria being spread by RSS pupils - Parrikar and Modi, Congress party should try to outdo this jingoism as was openly done by the Congress leader Anand Sharma demanding that government should declare the terror attack against the security forces at Udhampur Pathankot, and Uri as "Acts of War".

I am deeply sad that Rishi Kapur should have said that "Indian industry will not work with any Pakistani actor in the future". Has Rishi forgotten one of his best earliest film "Henna" made in 1991 where the heroine was Pakistani film actress Zeba Bakhtiar and which shot in areas of Pakistan – the story of Pakistanis helping him to cross Jhelum river in Pakistan safely back to India by protecting

him from Pakistani ruffians. It is worth emphasizing that at that time militancy in Kashmir (supported by Pakistan) was at the highest level.

Such is the fear being spread that it reminds me of somewhat similar situation after the Second World War in U.S.A. when Senator McCarthy spread his anti-communist hatred so viciously that he succeeded in creating an atmosphere of terror amongst established writers, cinema actors, and there was a deadening silence at any protest from the public. But fortunately for free speech, he overacted and tried the same vilifying accusations against U.S. Army. And then he met his nemesis. The nation was jolted, people picked up courage. As US Army reacted in protest like our army, McCarthy was thrown out of public life and his career ended in dumps. Can we not stop this mudslinging by small time politicians at creating a terror atmosphere for those who want better relations with Pakistani people and enjoying their talent in films, Sufi Music and quawalis, which is common heritage of both

our countries.

But unfortunately this mutual boast at border killing by both Pakistan and India are being treated, as if it is a number of how many goals in hockey match have been scored against each other. What a shame.

I am fond of seeing films (though not a cinema buff). But as a penance I will deny myself the pleasure of seeing this film either in Cinema Hall or even on T.V. because having spent my first 25 years of life in Lahore (Pakistan), I at least owe that much to both the countries.

It is somewhat heartening to read the statement issued by Hina Jilani (Pakistan) Chairperson of SAHR – a human right organization representing India, Pakistan, Lanka, Nepal, namely; "SAHR appeals to the governments of India and Pakistan to respect the sanctity of LoC and IB. It also strongly urges both governments to immediately implement the Ceasefire Agreement of 2003 in letter and spirit".

NDTV ban

The group of ministers has banned NDTV for one day. It seems that the channel had exposed sensitive information during the terrorist attack on Pathankhot military camp. The government has contended that it has compromised the security of the country and put the brave soldiers at risk. It will be important to know if NDTV news was the only channel to show this sensitive news. Also, does this unilateral decision of the ministers not make regulating bodies constituted by the same government redundant? It is quite possible that NDTV was

not the only one to broadcast this irresponsible content. Then why was only this channel singled out for punishment. The accusation of vendetta by the people in power will not be totally misplaced. Further, should not the agencies which are supposed to regulate the behavior of media be asked to investigate and give opinion on this before lynching in the manner of a kangaroo court! If the action of the channel amounts to almost treachery against our brave jawans, what will you call the action of the government which invites and welcomes inspectors from Pakistan

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Freedom, not just individual but collective

Arun Kumar

The PM, on the Seventieth Independence day said, "It is our duty to make this country as the best nation. We have to make continuous efforts to realise our dream ...". He said that there are high expectations from the government. Nothing wrong with people having high expectations from their government unless it is because the basic problems plaguing the people persist and because of that, the meaning of Independence is diluted for the majority in the country.

Nehru, in his 'Tryst with Destiny' speech in 1947 laid out certain lofty goals when he said, "We end today a period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again. The achievement we celebrate today is but a step, an opening of opportunity, to the greater triumphs.... Are we brave enough and wise enough to grasp this opportunity and accept the challenge of the future?"

"That future is not one of ease or resting but of incessant striving.... The service of India means the service of the millions who suffer. It means the ending of poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity."

Today we need to ask, have we redeemed "our pledge, not wholly or in full measure, but very substantially?"

The Seventieth Independence day is special because it provides the opportunity to reflect on the past and assess the present so that correctives maybe applied. It may also be asked, whether Independence

has bestowed all people the same freedom or has meant the same thing for all citizens? Will the goals of our Independence movement that led to the overthrowing of the yoke of colonisation be achieved in the near future or have we strayed from the path set out by the freedom fighters?

The national movement during its struggle against colonisation understood that problems of "poverty and ignorance and disease and inequality of opportunity" were social and not individual. Individuals were not to blame; it was their "ill fortune". So, socio-economic problems had to be dealt with collectively and not individually. The state was given a large role and the edifice of post-independence India was accordingly set up in the 1950s.

Whether we think of per capita income, consumption levels, industrialisation, literacy, longevity, etc, there has been huge progress since 1947. The rate of growth of the economy jumped from 0.5 per cent during the colonial rule to 3.7 per cent between 1950 and 1980. It jumped to 5.3 per cent over the next two decades and then to an average of 7.5 per cent. Now, India is officially supposed to be the fastest growing economy in the world.

But, the nation presents a picture of contradictions. There are many billionaires but it is home to the largest number of people below the poverty line, largest number of illiterates, homeless... Inequality is high and increasing. Standards of education are poor with 50 per cent

of children in the 8th class unable to read 3rd level text. These children will never be able to do any skilled job and will remain poverty stricken so that high and extreme poverty will persist for the next 50 years. The black economy, signifying illegality, has grown rapidly, leading to policy failure and setting back development. Unemployment among youth leading to frustration: for 368 jobs of peon in UP, 23 lakh applied and among them were Ph.D., M.Tech. and M.Com graduates.

Our development paradigm since 1947, based on trickle down and top down approach has been flawed. Our rulers ignored Gandhi's dictum of 'last person first' and bottom up approach - from the village upwards. So, we have not yet redeemed our pledge to our people even partially, let alone substantially, in spite of the material progress made since 1947.

The trust placed by the people in the ruling elite in 1947 has been shattered. Even elite sections like, the Marathas, Patidars and Jats are agitating for a larger share of the national pie. The Dalits and Tribals have increasingly expressed dissatisfaction with the state of affairs. The Maoist movement persists in many parts of the country and the separatist movements in Kashmir and the North East refuse to die down in spite of heavy army deployment and massive expenditures by the Indian state. The threat of IS is growing in India. All this is a sign of the unemployed and unemployable youth revolting. The poor standards of education in the country and

emphasis on rote learning result in a lack of understanding of the future or of the current state of our society. Consequently, with crisis of unfulfilled expectations in their lives, the future appears bleak to a large mass of the youth and makes them susceptible to irrationalities.

Material progress is important but so is the political, social and cultural aspect of life. Equity and equality of opportunity are crucial to exercise freedom. Large expenditure in Kashmir (much of it wasted by corruption) has not convinced a section of Kashmir to accept accession to India. The dilemma is that those who believe in freedom have implicitly become the oppressors. Today, India faces a major threat from within and not just from outside its borders.

In 1962 at the time of Chinese aggression, Lata Mangeshkar sang:
 “mat bhulo sima par, viron ne hai
 pran ganvaaye
 Kuchh yaad unhe bhi kar lo”

The border is now within the nation - in our minds and hearts. The freedom fighters were fighting at this invisible border - to convince people that we can build a great India. They believed that in the larger cause, the social divides would dissolve. But the divide between Marathas and Madrasis is exploited in Mumbai or created between the Hindus and Muslims in UP or aggravated between the upper castes and the lower castes in Gujarat. Lata sang,

*“Koyi sikh koyi jaat Maratha
 koyi gurakha koyi madaraasi
 Sarahad pe maranewala, har veer
 tha bhaaratavaasi”*

In spite of repeated exhortations, we have forgotten this ‘kahani’ of

our freedom. Leaders (political or others) seen as greedy and self-serving have lost the respect of the people. Their exhortations largely fall on deaf ears. So, freedom has taken on hues of the individual - defined in individual terms and especially by the powerful - while the collectivity has taken a beating. It works selectively for the powerful and rarely for the weak. Nehru said in his speech,

“Peace has been said to be indivisible; so is freedom, so is prosperity now, and so also is disaster in this one world that can no longer be split into isolated fragments.”

Today atomization is writ large, greed has been raised to a new high pedestal and social concerns are marginalized. These emanate from the philosophy underlying marketization which now pervades every social institution. Its underlying principles are ‘dollar vote’, ‘more is better’, ‘rational individual’ maximizing welfare and so on. The stress is on the economic person to the exclusion of the political and social; the homo-economicus is the reality.

The dollar vote leads to the ‘marginalization of the marginal’. That undermines democratic institutions and leaves the poor to the mercy of the markets which cannot cater to their needs. What is freedom, if one’s child dies because one does not have Rs 20 to pay for an injection? More is better has led to growing consumerism and unprecedented environmental destruction impacting our climate and leading to our flooded cities or massive destruction in Uttarakhand. Demand is created where need did not exist. How is one better off if

the environment is being destroyed which results in ‘cancer special’ running from Punjab to Ganganagar? What is globalization worth, if the new international division of labour leads to production based on dirty technologies increasingly relocating in the developing world?

Welfare maximization is based on minimization of costs. Today, increasingly, social conscience is considered to be a cost to be minimized. So, one need not feel guilty about one’s greed or anti-social actions. The rich need not feel bad about the social waste they indulge in or men need not feel bad about the aggression against women. The distinction between an ‘essential’ and a ‘luxury’ good has been obliterated. One can buy a Bentley even if people cannot buy food – this is ‘efficiency’ of the market. Consumerism has become the ‘opium of the masses’, diverting their attention from their real issues. Consequently, people have become cogs in a big machine mechanically consuming without being satisfied. Individuals are increasingly cut off from the social as reflected in horrific crimes against women, young and the weak which stare at us from the columns of newspapers daily.

Freedom that came with independence is increasingly only economic and, therefore, for the powerful, losing its political and social context. The contradiction between the limited economic freedom for the individual and the disintegrating collectivity that could provide it the social mooring for freedom in its wider sense, is growing. This trend over the last few decades has resulted in greater anarchy and strife and we need to recognize it and strive to reverse it.

Encounter deaths

Ravi Nair

There is a willing suspension of disbelief in India – both in society and in the courts – when it comes to putting an end to extrajudicial executions, euphemistically known as encounter deaths. The contradictory statements from official sources on both the Bhopal and the Malkangiri killings make it “curiouser and curiouser,” just as Alice exclaimed in Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland & Through the Looking-Glass.

The Supreme Court stayed a judgment of a five-judge bench of the Andhra Pradesh high court in 2009, and since then the apex court has not been able to take up the matter for further hearing even when the life and liberty of citizens are at stake.

The Andhra Pradesh high court had stated that FIRs must be registered against police officers if they cause a death of a person in an encounter. More importantly, the court stated that the police were not authorised to file closure reports without judicial scrutiny.

Justice J.S. Verma, the former chief justice of India and the former chairperson of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), while delivering the 24th Dr. Ramanadham Memorial lecture in 2009, expressed his surprise at the Supreme Court’s ex-parte stay on the court’s order, which came in response to a petition filed by the Andhra Pradesh Police Association.

He pointed that the interim ex-parte stay violated Articles 20, 21 and 14 of the constitution and went against Article 359 (emergency

provisions), which clearly lays down that Articles 20-21 are non-derogable). He further stated that “difficult” circumstances such as terrorism or insurgency could not be a justification for encounters.

International human rights law prohibits the arbitrary deprivation of life under any circumstances. Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.” Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) holds that “Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life” and Article 4 of the ICCPR states that this right cannot be waived “even in times of public emergency threatening the life of the nation.”

Moreover, under Article 2(3)(a) and (b) of the ICCPR, state parties are obliged to ensure that remedies are available to the victims of human rights violations and that those remedies are effective. Extrajudicial killings clearly contravene the right to life.

The government ratified the ICCPR in 1979, and by ratifying an international treaty which enshrines the right to life, India is obliged not only to respect the right to life in principle, but also to take effective measures to ensure that extrajudicial killings do not occur in practice. Although the right to life is enshrined under Article 21 of the Indian constitution, the

prevalence of extrajudicial killings demonstrates that the government and the courts have failed to take effective measures to ensure that the right to life is respected in practice.

Extrajudicial killings have long been a part of India’s socio-political landscape. In the 1960s the euphemism ‘encounter killings’ began to be used to describe extrajudicial killings because of the frequency with which officials would claim that the deceased had been killed in an encounter with the police.

As an interest in the protection of human rights increased during the 1970s, a number of unofficial inquiries into ‘encounter’ killings were conducted. The Tarkunde inquiry in Andhra Pradesh investigated 19 cases of people who were officially recorded as being killed in ‘encounters’ in 1975 and 1976.

The inquiry concluded that the police had shot all 19 people in cold blood. In Punjab, the Punjab Civil Rights Committee investigated the ‘encounter killing’ of eight members of an armed opposition group between 1970 and 1976. The committee concluded that each of the eight men had been “murdered by the police.” The committee also commented on the lack of an official investigation into the deaths and noted that both the state and central governments had turned down the requests of relatives and associates of the deceased to hold judicial inquiries into the killings.

Extrajudicial killings, however, are not a historical phenomenon and are not restricted to particular areas of the country. As seen in both Bhopal and Malkangiri, they continue to the present day and occur throughout India.

A number of factors compel the conclusion that the government has adopted a policy that effectively sanctions the commission of extrajudicial killings by its police officers, the army and other security personnel.

Firstly, the government has failed to ensure an adequate investigation of all complaints and reports of extrajudicial killings. Proper investigation is, of course, a critical factor in the prevention of extrajudicial killings, and without the adequate investigation of complaints, there exists little hope for prosecuting and convicting the perpetrators.

The government has, however, not demonstrated a commitment towards ensuring that all such complaints are adequately investigated. More importantly, there is no independent body in India that is empowered to investigate such complaints. The NHRC has not proven to be an effective body in combating extrajudicial killings. Its ineffectiveness is further exacerbated by the government's failure to give adequate consideration and attention to the body's recommendations in relation to human rights violations generally, including recommendations in relation to extrajudicial killings.

For example, although the NHRC has issued guidelines to be followed by police in all cases of encounter killings, it is clear that the guidelines are generally not put into practice.

The government has also done little to ensure that the guidelines are followed.

Secondly, the government has failed to ensure the prosecution of those who commit extrajudicial executions. The government's failure in this regard extends beyond the mere failure to prosecute as the Indian law, through the doctrines of sovereign and official immunity, actually protects officials who commit human rights violations.

Moreover, under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 a sanction from the central or the state government is required to arrest or institute criminal prosecutions against public servants, including police officers and members of the civil or armed forces. The government has ignored repeated calls to amend the law to ensure that public officers who violate human rights are no longer protected from prosecution.

Thirdly, entrenched problems within the judicial system contribute to the climate of impunity that allows extrajudicial killings to occur. The reality of the Indian judicial system is that long delays are the rule rather than the exception, and such delays are measured in years rather than months. Such delays impede the process of bringing to justice those who commit extrajudicial killings, in many cases making conviction impossible due to the length of time that has passed. The failure to ensure that cases of extrajudicial killings are concluded within a reasonable period of time contributes to the climate of impunity that allows extrajudicial killings to continue to occur throughout India.

Fourthly, successive governments have failed to establish an adequate

compensation system in India. The families of victims of extrajudicial killings have no statutory right to compensation. An effective compensation system would operate to deter government officials from committing or authorising extrajudicial killings, and encourage the families of the victims to bring their cases to court. In failing to provide an adequate compensation, the government is failing to meet its obligations under international law.

Fifthly, it is well documented that the armed and security forces are rarely held accountable for the commission of extrajudicial killings. Moreover, a perpetrator is more likely to be held accountable by way of an internal disciplinary hearing than under the general law. Although it is very difficult to obtain accurate information about such hearings, it seems clear that the punishments awarded – if at all – for serious human rights violations are grossly inadequate. If a member of the army or security forces commits a serious human rights violation, it constitutes a serious criminal offence and that person should be charged under the general law and tried in a public court.

Finally, the government has failed to satisfactorily demonstrate its opposition to extrajudicial killings. Indeed, there is evidence that both the central and state governments actively encourage the practice. For example, there is evidence that the central and state governments have funded non-state actors in Punjab, Kashmir and Chhattisgarh who commit extrajudicial killings and have also rewarded police officers who do the same.

Such actions strengthen the conclusion that the government

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Withdraw the ban of telecast by NDTV India

The PUCL strongly condemns the decision of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to punish Hindi news channel, NDTV India, for revealing “strategically sensitive” information while covering the Pathankot attack in January, 2016 by ordering that the Channel close down telecast for a day between 9-10th November, 2016. The decision is reminiscent of the Emergency period when the media was muzzled and is a chilling reminder that the present BJP-led NDA government will not hesitate to crush freedom of the media, and with it the right to freedom of speech and expression of the people, if it suits their political interest to prevent dissent and democratic criticism of its policies.

The Ministry based its decision on an Inter-Ministerial Committee which rejected the reply of NDTV India. The Government had accused NDTV India of compromising national security by providing details about the location of terrorists, civilian dwellings, fuel and ammunitions dump during the Pathankot coverage in January, 2016; NDTV, in its defence, had pointed out with facts and evidence that the allegation was unsustainable and unjustified as the information had already been made public and published by print media and electronic media before its telecast. The Committee however not only rejected this as a “mitigating factor” but also recommended that NDTV India needed to be punished.

On the face of it, the decision of the Inter-ministerial Committee and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is legally untenable,

Prabhakar Sinha
National President,

ethically unacceptable and factually fallacious. It is not denied by the Ministry that several print and visual media had already made public details which NDTV India was accused of *before NDTV India's coverage*. While so the punitive action against NDTV India smacks of arbitrariness, discrimination and clearly exhibits the true intent of the NDA Government to crush anyone from critically questioning the Government's policies, programmes and actions. The vindictive action against NDTV India is thus a warning to other media agencies of the fate that awaits them if they challenged the government's line.

The Editors Guild succinctly outlined the threat posed by the government's action pointing out that by, “imposing a ban without resorting to judicial intervention or oversight violates the fundamental principles of freedom and justice.... This first-of-its-kind order to impose a blackout has seen the Central government entrust itself with the power to intervene in the functioning of the media and take arbitrary punitive action as and when it does not agree with the coverage”.

We cannot miss sight of the fact that amongst the very first decisions of the Modi-led Central Government soon after being elected to power in May, 2014 was to take vindictive action against NGOs, especially environmental NGOs and other rights organisations which had challenged different private industrial and development projects as being anti-people and environmentally destructive, as threatening “National economic security” by banning them. Since then, the government has

politically sought to crush all dissent groups and critics of the regime by dubbing them as threats to “national security” and criminalising dissent, falsely prosecuting rights defenders under the dreaded and anti-people Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), National Security Act, sec. 124A (anti-sedition law) and so on. The latest decision is now the unparalleled action to ban telecast for a day between 9-10th November, 2016.

PUCL has always believed in the indivisibility of the media's freedom of speech and expression and that a free and independent media is a vital prerequisite of democracy. PUCL has always fought for the media's right to freedom of speech and expression whenever governments sought to silence and curb media freedom, anywhere in the country.

The PUCL therefore calls upon all democratic sections of society to immediately raise their voices demanding a revocation of the Government of India's decision imposing ban on telecasting by NDTV India between 9-10th November, 2016. PUCL also calls upon all other media professionals and organisations to stand unitedly and collectively express its opposition to the one-day ban on telecasting by NDTV India.

The PUCL also calls upon all citizens to continuously remain vigilant and oppose all anti-democratic and anti-human rights actions and decisions of the Government (both Central and State) so that our precious fundamental rights and freedoms are not crushed, emasculated and denied.

V. Suresh,
National General Secretary,

People's Union for Civil Liberties

Confusions around “Hindutva”

Ram Puniyani

On October 25 (2016) the seven member Supreme Court Bench started hearing to revisit ‘Hindutva’ cases. These are group of cases where the use of term Hindutva-Hinduism to be used during elections is to be opined. One such case was that of Manohar Joshi who in his election speech said that if he is voted to power he will work for making Maharashtra as the first Hindu state in the country. In another incident Bal Thackeray, Shiv Sena founder and supremo of BJP associate Shiv Sena, said in November 1987, declared that his party is contesting elections “for the protection of Hinduism, we do not care for the votes of the Muslims. The country belongs to Hindus”. And “[The Muslims] should bear in mind that this country is of Hindus, the same shall remain of Hindus... if Shiv Sena comes to power... everybody will have to take *diksha* (initiation) into Hindu religion.”

The 1995 Judgment, where Justice Varma opined that the word ‘Hindutva’, “is used and understood as a synonym of ‘Indianisation’, i.e. development of uniform culture by obliterating the differences between all the cultures coexisting in the country.” This came to be known as ‘Hindutva as a way of life’, judgment and became popular as ‘Hindutva judgment’, was used by RSS combine to reinforce their Hindu rashtra agenda. In Guruvayoor temple case again similar opinion was given. Also one recalls that way back in 1966 in a case involving Satsangis, who were asking for status of a separate

religion, the court had given the similar opinion, that Hinduism is a way of life, so where is the question of Satsangis being given the status of a separate religion? This does not exhaust the list of such judgments in this category.

Teesta Setalvad, eminent social activist, has intervened in the court in the matter with an application stating that religion and politics should not be mixed and a direction be passed to de-link religion from politics. The hearing of the case is on. This is a great opportunity for the court to clear the air about the terms Hinduism and Hindutva. So far many opinions have been given that since Hinduism has so much diversity, so it is not a religion and that it includes all the communities so ‘it’s a ‘way of life’ The words Hinduism and Hindutva have been used interchangeably many a times.

The confusion and nature of the word Hinduism and Hindutva emerge as Hinduism is not a prophet based religion; with a clear cut single Holy book the teachings of the prophet or a single God. Its nature is different from prophet based religions like Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism for that matter. It has been identified with Vedas, where the life and norms of Aryans is expressed. In matters of faith starting from animism to atheism may come under its umbrella. The term Hinduism itself came into usage from eighth Century onwards. The term was coined by those coming here from Central Asia and they coined the word Hindu

as a derivative of the word Sindhu which they had to cross to this part of the sub continent. Essentially what were prevalent here were multiple religious traditions, Brahmanism, Nath, Tantra, Siddha, Shiava Siddhanta and later Bhakti also. The first construction of Hinduism takes place to refer to these diverse tendencies. Later Hinduism as religion starts being referred to for the people around these sects. Jainism and Buddhism were also present in good measure. With British coming the construction of Hinduism became well delineated. With seeds of communalism coming up Hinduism started being contrasted against Islam and Christianity in particular.

In late early twentieth century ideologue of Hindu nationalism, Savarkar put forward the concept of Hindutva in a sharper way to present it as ‘whole of Hinduness’, i.e. it includes Hindu religion as conceived by them and also it includes the politics of Hindu nationalism. So inherent in the term was religion, Hinduism, which had the dominant part of Brahmanism, and it was blended with the Hindu nationalism. Hindu nationalism was being projected by the upper caste, landlord-kings sections of Hindus who were weary of the emerging “India as a nation in the making and accompanying ideas of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The Hindu nationalists upheld the scriptures like Manu Smiriti, while the majority of Hindus led by Gandhi were aspiring for secular democratic ethos.

Hinduism is the most complex umbrella where interpretations are dominated by the caste factors. Ambedkar does point out that Hinduism is a Brahmanic theology. Other streams of Hinduism. Nath, Tantra, Bhakti, etc. have been marginalized and undermined and it's around Brahmanical hierarchy that Hindutva movement has emerged. It's clear that Hinduism is not the religion of all the Indians. Also that Hinduism has been built around Brahmanical stream of Hinduism. This complex understanding needs to be unraveled before opining on the Representation of People's Act. In S. R. Bommai case the court the Supreme Court recognized the value of this understanding of terms Hinduism-Hindutva. Justice B.P. Jeevan Reddy wrote, "To fight elections on a plank of religion, was tantamount to eroding the country's secular fabric." But, barely a year later, this was subverted when India's secular credentials came to be undermined with the rulings known as 'Hindutva cases'.

The foundation of this understanding is already there in what Dr. Ambedkar writes, B.R. Ambedkar, who played a sterling role in the RPA's drafting; his aim was to ensure that the statute conformed to secular principles. "I think that elections ought to be conducted on issues which have nothing to do with... religion or culture." Further that "A political party should not be permitted to appeal to any emotion which is aroused by reason of something which has nothing to do with the daily affairs of the people." This is the spirit of Indian Constitution which wants to separate religion from politics

It is a Historic opportunity for the Court to set the matters straight and put the norms back to the basic structure of Indian Constitution, the

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bound to pursue her predecessor's policy. On the other hand, many voters saw Trump as a patriotic person with gravitas who could be a great head of state, in spite of his arrogant behavior at times and big ego.

Widespread anger at the federal government is another key factor that helps explain Trump's support. Trump generally received a lot of support because he is an outsider who is not a politician. For instance, the entrance polls showed that a majority were angry and dissatisfied with Democrats. Trump is skeptical of free trade and China's currency manipulation, and he wants to bring jobs back to America. Trump is a fighter and a successful businessman who understands the economy, many voters feel.

Trump, a billionaire, gets credit for using his own money instead of relying on rich donors and private political action committees formed to back presidential candidates. Many people like that Trump is not beholden to anyone and that the Trump campaign has not spent large amounts of money on negative advertisements.

In an incisive and persuasive New York Times commentary, Steve Inskeep compares the New York real estate magnate to President Andrew Jackson of the 1820s and 1830s. Trump attracts a particularly large group of supporters in the disadvantaged Appalachia region, as Jackson did. Jackson was a populist who did well among a diverse group of people and was tough on Indians

values of secularism. And finally Hindutva is revolving around Hinduism which is religion to be sure.

the way Trump wants to punish illegal immigrants.

However, the unfortunate fallout is that America would cease to have active interest in what happens in the world. For example, the complete withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan would give a free run to the ISIS which represents a radical form of Islam. Even the Taliban are not relevant. Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is conscious of this but he has to move according to the wishes of the army which believes that the Taliban are required to fight the radicals.

This is probably the time when both India and Pakistan can have a joint front to fight for the people in the region. This would be good for the two countries and also for the world.

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has adopted an official policy sanctioning the commission of extrajudicial killings.

It is clear that the government has failed to establish effective mechanisms to ensure the accountability of the police, security forces and the army. Moreover, the government steadfastly refuses to change laws that have been rightly condemned as operating to protect those who commit extrajudicial killings. The government must be reminded of its obligations under the national and international law. The right to life is the most fundamental right and its continued abuse in India through the commission of extrajudicial killings must not be tolerated.

The RSS assault on our education system

Neeraj Jain

The early 1990s mark a watershed in the country's post-independence political scenario. On the one hand, the country's worsening economic crisis led to the Rao–Manmohan Singh economic reforms that heralded the globalisation of the Indian economy. On the other hand, it has also led to a gradual growth of extreme right wing or fascist forces in the country, that is, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, and the innumerable front organisations it has spawned. The Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), the political arm of the RSS, in fact formed a coalition government at the Centre in 1998 that lasted for six years, and now has come to power again in 2014, this time with an absolute majority.

Since the BJP is a political party that contests elections, it has to function within the overall frame provided by the Constitution. Therefore, even though it proposes several changes in the Constitution, it swears by constitutionalism, rule of the law, and claims to believe in democracy.

In contrast, its parent, the RSS, is a semi-secret organisation. While it calls itself a 'cultural' and 'non-political' organisation, its declared intention is to transform India culturally, politically and socially into a *Hindu Rashtra*. Indian population comprises of thousands of distinct communities, marked by differences in customs, language, caste, religious beliefs, cuisine, location, and what have you.¹ The RSS believes that despite these diversities, 80 percent of the Indian people are Hindus. And so the RSS has created a network of thousands

of front organisations—together called the Sangh Parivar—to cater to as many of these different diversities as possible, with the aim of creating a cultural homogeneity out of this ocean of diversities. This is the essence of *Hindutva*, the political ideology of the RSS—welding the overwhelming majority of the Indian people together as Hindus, so that they can be mobilised towards transforming secular and democratic India into a *Hindu Rashtra*. Note that Hinduism and *Hindutva* are not identical, the former is a religion, the latter a political ideology. *Hindutva* speaks of a defined territory, a single culture and ethnic origin, a single religion and language. It seeks to replace Indian history with Hindu mythology, and Indian philosophy with Hindu theology. Hindus must have the same *pitribhumi* and *punyabhumi*, ancestors and religion; all others are foreigners.²

The most important formula used by the RSS for its cultural unification project is borrowed from the Nazis: just like the Nazis sought to unite the German nation against the Jews, the RSS is seeking to unite the Hindus against an imagined enemy, the Muslims and Christians. In case it succeeds in this, then this demographic majority can be converted into a permanent political majority, and the RSS can permanently rule the country by winning state and central elections, and transform India as per its ideological leanings.

The RSS, from the time of its founding in 1925, has been an admirer of Hitler and Mussolini and their fascist ideology. On the lines of

this ideology, it has built a centralised, authoritarian organisation for itself. Several aspects of its ideology have been copied from Nazism and fascism, such as: defining nationalism on the basis of religion and race, in opposition to the definition of nationhood descended from the French Revolution that is based on the idea of equal citizenship for all regardless of race, religion, etc.; preaching hate for the minorities, calling them foreigners, and demanding that they be deprived of all civil and human rights; and contempt for democracy and democratic norms, and strategic use of force and violence to achieve its aims.³

As we have shown in several of our writings,⁴ there is no difference in the economic agendas of the BJP/RSS and the Congress; on the contrary, the BJP is implementing neo-liberalism more ruthlessly and at an accelerated pace. The difference between the two is in their political and cultural agendas—the BJP is seeking to use its political power at the Centre to additionally implement the RSS agenda of transforming the country into a *Hindu Rashtra*. One of the key stratagems adopted by the BJP for this is taking over all the institutions of liberal democracy, and while keeping these institutions intact, transforming them from within by filling them with people belonging to or sympathetic to the RSS. One of the important components of this strategy is the saffronisation of the country's education system, and using it as a tool to propagate *Hindutva*.

The Hate Network of RSS Schools

The RSS is deeply aware that the propagation of its communal ideology of Hindutva among the common people, especially the youth, is the key to the success of its project of transforming India into a *Hindu Rashtra*. Hence it is in the ideological sphere that it has focused its maximum efforts. What better place to start than by indoctrinating the tender formative minds of young children with its fascist ideology through the education system.

The Nehruvian education system, for all its limitations discussed in the previous chapters, did try to promote secularism, respect for all religions, scientific temper, democratic values and humanism—all fundamental values of our freedom struggle that were later enshrined in our Constitution by our country's founding fathers. The values the RSS wants to foster in children are in exact opposition to these constitutional values. In the initial decades after independence, the RSS and its political arm, the Jan Sangh (that was later reconstituted as the BJP in 1980) were very weak, and in no position to undermine the Nehruvian education system. Therefore, soon after independence, the RSS began efforts to create its own network of schools to promote its Brahmanical or *Hindutvawadi* ideology among children and poison their minds with hatred and distrust about minorities, especially the Christians and Muslims, in the guise of education.

The RSS inaugurated up its first school, that it calls Saraswati Shishu Mandir, way back in 1952, in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, in the presence of RSS chief Golwalkar. The number of schools steadily grew, and by 1977, there were about 500 RSS schools with 20,000 students

on their rolls. The RSS now set up an all-India coordinating body for these schools, the Vidya Bharti. The Vidya Bharati educational mission is founded on the objective of training children to see themselves as protectors of a Hindu nation.

In the early 1990s, BJP formed governments in several states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. This gave the RSS the opportunity to use state patronage to rapidly spread its school network, as well as saffronise the government education system too. These governments encouraged the growth of Vidya Bharti schools and even permitted them to set their own syllabus and conduct examinations for the lower classes and run teacher training programmes. (In 2001, Goa's BJP chief minister, Manohar Parrikar, even handed over management of fifty-one government primary schools in rural areas to Vidya Bharati.) By 1993–94 the total number of schools run by Vidya Bharti was claimed to be 6,000 with 40,000 teachers and 1,200,000 students.⁵ In 1998, the BJP came to power at the Centre. This gave a further fillip to the RSS school network, as the Central government now began providing government funds and other facilities to Vidya Bharti and other RSS educational institutions in a big way.⁶ Consequently the number of RSS-run schools took a quantum leap.

Today, Vidya Bharti runs one of the largest private school networks across the country, catering mainly to lower middle class students. According to its website,⁷ as of 2012–13, Vidya Bharti had 13,465 schools (mostly primary and middle schools, with a few higher secondary schools too), 31.2 lakh students, 1.3 lakh teachers, 49 colleges and training schools, and 9,806 schools

for providing informal education to children unable to attend formal schools (called Sanskar Kendras and Single Teacher Schools) with 2.4 lakh students and 8,900 teachers. Becoming a teacher in a Vidya Bharti school generally requires a prior commitment to the RSS agenda, which is further reinforced by the training they receive.⁸

Other RSS fronts providing education include the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (VKA), which specialises in hostels for Adivasi children among other activities; Sewa Bharati (for Dalits), and the Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation (EVF) which runs single teacher pre-school centres where children are taught basic reading, writing, Sanskrit and *sanskars* or good behaviour. The EVF alone runs more than 52,000 schools with 14.6 lakh students. The RSS has indeed created a mindboggling network of educational institutions to spread its ideology among the young.

In these schools, run by the RSS directly, in order to indoctrinate students in Hindutva ideological values, much attention is focused on everyday rituals that punctuate the school day. Thus, Sanskrit terms are used to address teachers (*Acharya*); students are taught to touch their feet as mark of respect; classrooms are named after Hindu sages; birthdays of Shivaji and Jijabai, Vivekanand, Deen Dayal Upadhyay, and Savarkar are celebrated as special days; during the morning prayers and at the end of the school day, children chant Brahmanical *shlokas* in Sanskrit such as the *Gayatri Mantra*; and so on.⁹

The systematic rewriting of history is a critical component of Hindu nationalist ideology. The fascists blatantly manipulate and often even fabricate historical evidence to spread their version of history

that renders India as an exclusively Hindu nation and Indian culture as Hindu culture, totally denying the pluralistic nature of India. For propagating this falsehood, two of their pet themes are:

- i) Indian civilisation is synonymous with Hinduism, which in turn is synonymous with 'Vedic civilisation'; this Vedic civilisation is portrayed as the fount of all things great in the world.
- ii) Christians and Muslims are foreigners; the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal Empire represented foreign rule and were anti-Hindu regimes; all the evils that beset India are traced to these Muslim invaders and Christian missionaries.

The key component of the school curriculum in RSS schools is to indoctrinate students with this distorted, communalised history.

We give here a brief snapshot of the history being manufactured by Sangh Parivar 'scholars', some of which has already found its way into Vidya Bharati textbooks. It is now being claimed that humankind evolved and diffused from "the upper Sarasvati region", that is, northern Haryana. RSS oracles denounce the view of professional historians that Aryans migrated to India from outside, probably from the Indo-Iranian borderlands and the Oxus plain, and instead claim that they originated in India and went out from here to civilise the world. But this requires that the Rig Vedic age be pushed back into remote antiquity, and so *Rig Veda* is now supposed to have been composed around 5000 BC (and not 1500 BC as established by professional historians). Everything of value was first discovered by 'indigenous'

Indians; thus, bronze was being cast in India as early as 3700 BC—a first in the world, writing too had been invented here, Indians taught Egyptians to build pyramids, and so on. This is followed by claims about *Vedic Mathematics*, *Vedic Astronomy* and *Vedic Astrology*, all supposedly created 4,000 years and more ago. This period therefore represented a 'golden age' of Hindu civilisation. The RSS believes in a unitary Hindu identity having its origin in the Vedas, and so it does not recognise cultural or philosophical or religious strands that have their origins outside the Vedic corpus. Therefore, it does not recognise the contributions of Buddhism and Jainism, more so because they were critical of Brahmin priesthood and emphasised Prakrit more than Sanskrit; RSS textbooks do not acclaim Emperor Ashok for his religious tolerance; they deny India's cultural diversity, and do not acknowledge the contributions of Dravidians or Adivasis or Dalits to the development of a composite Indian culture; and they are also dismissive of movements like the Bhakti movement, as they are severely critical of Brahmanical religious practices and superstitions.

Hindu-Muslim antagonism has provided the main ground on which the RSS has flourished since its birth in 1925. Portrayal of Muslims as the biggest enemies is also the justification given by the RSS for remaining out of the freedom struggle and instead supporting the British. Therefore, the most important component of RSS's history writing is portrayal of Muslims as foreigners. RSS historians have fabricated an extremely distorted history of medieval India, portraying it as a Muslim period, as a period of foreign rule, in which two nations (Hindus and Muslims) were always at war, one brutally assaulting,

other nobly defending. To create hatred for Muslims and portray them as destructive barbarians and immoral degenerates, this period is described as a dark age, wherein Muslims exploited the wealth and surplus of Hindus, carried out large scale massacres of Hindus, abducted Hindu women, indulged in forcible conversions, and Muslim kings revelled in temple destruction orgies. It is even being claimed that all buildings built by Muslim kings, such as the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort, had actually been built earlier by Hindus, and were simply misappropriated by the Muslims. In this monochromatic version of history, all evidence of syncretism, of the enormous contribution of Muslims and Islam to Indian culture, is excised from historical memory.¹⁰

A third crucial component of the RSS distortion of history is their attempt to erase their past as collaborators of the British colonial rule, their opposition to the Constitution and the national flag at the time of independence, and their role in the partition of the country. And so, today, they are proclaiming themselves as the truest 'nationalists'; in the books written by RSS 'historians' on modern India for schools, very few pages are devoted to the freedom struggle, and even in these pages, the RSS is shown to have played a key role in India's freedom struggle and Keshavrao B. Hegdewar (the founder of RSS) is portrayed as a one of its tallest leaders. The truth is the exact opposite. The RSS and its leaders played absolutely no role in the freedom struggle, and RSS documents make it clear that the RSS was actually opposed to the freedom movement, did not consider colonial domination as injustice, and the nationalism it espoused had no anti-British or anti-imperialist content. On the other hand, its

shakhas systematically preached hatred against Muslims, and its members engaged in anti-Muslim riots. RSS sponsored history books place the entire blame for partition on Jinnah and the Muslim League, whereas the truth is that the RSS too upheld the Two-Nation Theory of the Muslim fundamentalists, and its sole agenda during the freedom struggle was to disrupt the unity of the Indian people's struggle against colonial domination through its slogan of *Hindu Rashtra*.¹¹ The RSS critiqued the Constitution when it was drafted, lamenting that India's Constitution makers had ignored the Manusmriti; today, it is trying to appropriate the man who guided the drafting of the Indian Constitution and publicly burnt the Manusmriti, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, and claiming ideological similarities with him. After independence, the RSS refused to accept the tricolour as the National Flag, denigrated it, and the RSS organ *Organizer* (dated August 14, 1947) had demanded hoisting of saffron flag at the ramparts of Red Fort in Delhi. Today, it is attempting to appropriate and jingoise this national symbol; its HRD Minister has ordered all universities to hoist large-sized national flags on appropriately high flagpoles to instil the feeling of patriotism on university campuses.¹²

Way back in 1993–94, a National Steering Committee on Textbook Evaluation set up by the NCERT, consisting of widely respected eminent scholars, conducted an evaluation of school textbooks prescribed in Vidya Bharti schools, and made the alarming diagnosis that many of the Vidya Bharati textbooks were “designed to promote bigotry and religious fanaticism in the name of inculcating knowledge of culture in the young generation”.¹³ We give below a few examples of the kind of communal falsehoods

being preached in RSS-run schools. These extracts are from just one of the textbooks of Saraswati Shishu Mandir schools, *Gaurav Gatha*, the textbook for Class IV:

- “Our land has always been seen with greedy eyes by the marauders, barbarous invaders and oppressive rulers. This story of invasion and resistance is our 3000 year long Gaurav Gatha. When this proud tradition actually began is difficult to say because no books were written at that time . . . but we believe that the first man was born in this land. . . . To our ancestors these marauders were like mosquitoes and flies who were crushed. . . . Bacchus and Dionysis, among the earliest invaders, suffered such a defeat that feelings of terror ran in Greece. . . . Darius had to face such a defeat that never could Iran raise its eyes towards India.” (pp. 8–9)
- “About 2200 years ago India's trade was spread far and wide; foreign markets were filled with goods made in India. Heaps of gems and jewels and gold and silver filled the treasures. People of the entire world used to look to India with greedy eyes. . . . Mahapadma Nanda had so much wealth that if divided among the population, every person would get Rs 50 lakh each.” (pp. 12–13)
- Because of Emperor Ashoka's advocacy of ahimsa (non-violence) and the growing influence of Buddhism, “cowardice slowly spread throughout the kingdom. . . . Victory through arms began to be viewed as bad. Soldiers guarding the borders were demoralized. . . . The preaching of Ahimsa had weakened north India.” (pp. 30–31)

- “Arabs (barbarians) came to convert people to their religion. Wherever they went, they had a sword in their hand. Their army went like a storm in all the four directions. Any country that came in their way was destroyed. Houses of prayers and universities were destroyed. Libraries were burnt. Religious books were destroyed. Mothers and sisters were humiliated. Mercy and justice were unknown to them.” (pp. 52–53)
- “Delhi's Qutb Minar is even today famous in his (Qutbuddin Aibak's) name. This had not been built by him. He could not have been able to build it. It was actually built by emperor Samudragupta. Its real name was Vishnu Stambha. . . . This Sultan actually got some parts of it demolished and its name was changed.” (p. 73)

Many of the Vidya Bharati booklets have a section on ‘Sri Ramjanma-bhumi’. They present RSS–VHP propaganda in the form of questions and answers to be memorised:¹⁴

Q. Who got the first temple built on the birth place of Shri Ram in Ayodhya?

A. Shri Ram's son Maharaja Kush.

Q. Who was the first foreign invader who destroyed Shri Ram temple?

A. Menander of Greece (150 BC).

Q. Who got the present Rama Temple built?

A. Maharaja Chandragupta Vikramaditya (AD 380–413).

Q. Which Muslim plunderer invaded the temples in Ayodhya in AD 1033?

A. Mahmud Ghaznavi's nephew Salar Masud.

Q. Which Mughal invader destroyed the Rama Temple in AD 1528?

A. Babur.

Q. How many devotees of Rama laid down their life to liberate Rama temple from A.D. 1528 to A.D. 1914?

A. *Three lakh fifty thousand.*

Clearly, by the time the students pass their higher secondary examinations from RSS-run schools, they will have become thoroughly communalised, filled with hatred towards minorities, ideal material for recruitment as storm-troopers of the RSS.

On Women

The RSS upholds the values in the *Manusmriti* more than the Constitutional values, and the Laws of Manu clearly enjoin that: “A woman is never fit for independence”, and that “Day and night woman must be kept in dependence by the males (of) their (families).” In keeping with this patriarchal attitude towards women, the school texts prescribed in the Sishu Mandirs and Vidya Bharti schools glorify motherhood, and stress that the woman’s primary responsibility is towards her home and in ‘turning out good Hindu citizens’. They extol the images of Sita and Savitri to preach that a woman should selflessly serve her husband and his family. They carry stories projecting that ideal wives are those who silently serve their husbands in a way that will not disturb their pursuits. They glorify *jauhar* as courageous, and claim that women adopted it to defend their religion and chastity, and say that the practices of sati and child marriage were due to fear of the Muslims. And so on . . .¹⁵

Communalisation of the Government School System

With the coming to power of the BJP at the Centre in 1998, the RSS got a golden opportunity to spread its ideology within the government school network. And it seized it with both hands. It immediately launched a systematic attempt to promote its backward looking and communal historiography in schools through government institutions at the national level.

As the first step, it replaced heads and key personnel of all institutions that had anything to do with education, such as the National Council of Research and Training (NCERT), University Grants Commission (UGC), Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) and the Indian Council for Historical Research (ICHR), with people who were willing to implement the saffron agenda. With its henchmen in key positions, the BJP Education Minister, Murli Manohar Joshi, now began a systematic campaign to saffronise the education system.¹⁶

The next important step was the trashing of National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of 1988. The concept of the NCF had first been mooted in the National Policy of Education 1986, that visualised it as a part of building a National System of Education: “The concept of a National System of Education implies that, up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, have access to education of a comparable quality.” Building a common educational structure across the country required the framing of a National Curriculum Framework, which “contains a common core along with other components that are flexible.” And so the NCERT drew up a National

Curriculum Framework in 1988, which was thereafter implemented throughout the country. By the early 1990s, almost every state and Union Territory in the country had prepared new syllabi and textbooks for elementary and secondary education in accordance with NCF-1988.¹⁷

(to be concluded)

Reference at the conclusion of the article.

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to the same scene of attack? No doubt, it was on real time attack but could the Pak contingent not have people who will give information to the terrorists about the layout of the facility thus inviting future attacks? Who will judge this action of the government?

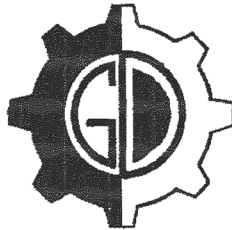
It is hardly ironic that this has taken place at almost the same day when Prime Minister while lauding Ramnath Goenkaji had exhorted the media to be ever vigilant and be brave courageous like Goenkaji!

The media has shown half-hearted displeasure at this blatant attempt by the government to muzzle any kind of dissent or criticism of the rulers. Will they be brave enough to carry blank space in the editorials, and protest on the TV screens even if not a total blank out?

The reality is that the media has already got the message and even if they have not yet started crawling you can clearly see the drooping heads and the bent spine. Who says we need an emergency to keep the population in check? After all the definition of patriotism has been totally changed and there is a whole lot of non-state actors to pass judgement on it!

—Anil Bagarka

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education system -II**
Neeraj Jain

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

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

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Controlling black via demonetization

Arun Kumar

The PM's announcement that high denomination currency notes will soon be worthless paper caught everyone unawares. Even the government departments did not know of it and would have to prepare for its implementation after the TV announcement. It is an attack against the black economy no doubt but questions will be asked about how effective it would be and at what cost to the economy? There will be an immediate impact and also over time as many unforeseen consequences emerge. It is so complex that analysts in the government or outside will be discovering new aspects of it for some time.

Do we have any experience of such a move in the past from which we can learn? In 1978, the Rs 5,000 and Rs 10,000 currency notes were demonetized. Of the Rs 165 crores of such notes that had been issued, Rs 135 crores were returned with little impact on the black economy. Not only that, the black economy continued to grow after that. The move did not touch the lives of the average citizens. The economy was small and the income of the average citizen was tiny compared to now. People carried mostly Rs.10 notes and hardly any Rs 100 notes. So, trade was not affected. So, it did not touch the lives of the average person.

There were no queues at the banks.

The high denomination notes now constitute around 80% of the Rs. 16 lakh crore currency in circulation. Most of this is with business and not individuals. Even if it is held mostly by the well off with black incomes, say, the top 3% of the population, it would not amount to more than Rs.3 lakh per person and if businesses hold most of it then the average amount may not be more than Rs 1 lakh per person. Only a part of this would be black money saved out of the black incomes which cannot be accounted for. These are averages but some may hold crores in black money. But, black savings in cash may not be more than a few lakh crores.

Of the current size of the black economy of about Rs.90 lakh crores this may be only a few per cent. But clever rich and businessmen will find ways to circumvent the new regulations and convert a part of their black into white. The black economy in India is not parallel but intertwined with the white economy. So, just as in 1978, a very tiny part of the black economy would be demolished. The real worry ought to be that the mechanisms of generation of black incomes in different sectors would be unaffected by this move

and black income generation would continue as before.

At what cost to the economy? Household, business and industry would be adversely affected as transactions would become difficult in the coming months. Large part of the economy does not use plastic money or cheques. Small businesses will be hit hard and that is the BJP's core constituency. There would be long queues at banks and a black market may emerge in the currency notes for exchange and for smaller currency notes. There would be premium for gold and foreign currency – this was the case in the 1980s with the Bearer Bonds. Jan Dhan accounts are likely to be used for converting black into white. Havalas may become more active. Demand for discretionary items would drop sharply in the coming months. But sales in Malls and from e-commerce based on plastic money may rise. However, in the net, dislocation of trade and commerce is likely leading to a hit for industry which has hardly been growing recently.

Our poorly performing and leaky bureaucracy would be unable to handle such a complex operation at such a short notice. Remember the wheat trade nationalization in early 1970s which had to be reversed in a few months' time because of the havoc it created. But the present move cannot now be reversed even if it fails. The government has taken a big risk. Why? Recent steps to control it via the foreign money bill and the Income Declaration Schemes failed. It wants to show that it is serious about the black economy after its promises during the 2014 election. In conclusion, it is unclear that the likely impact on the black economy would justify the costs that the economy would have to pay.

Demonetization of currency

Kuldip Nayar

The debate over demonetization of currency reveals that real estate dealers have transacted business only to the extent of five per cent cash and 95 per cent on promise. The gap is huge but it reflects the honesty and understanding of both sides.

The Modi government fails, however, to convey the impression of integrity. The motive is being questioned and the purpose doubted. And the debate, unfortunately, has got derailed because of too much emphasis on the inconvenience, not on the step itself.

There is no doubt that the money stacked abroad or lying with the anti-national elements goes out of currency. But the baby has been thrown out with the bath tub. Many honest businessmen abroad will be put to hard and arduous task of converting the currency lying with them. Some may go out of business. But if it serves the overall purpose, the step is worth taking.

Why the opposition parties have got together is understandable. The unaccounted money with which they operate will not be simply there. The BJP is also being blamed for having told its own people about the demonetization before hand to enable them to send their money to the bank.

Karnataka is an example where some currency rupees were deposited on the eve of demonetization. Good or bad, the step has been taken and it is in the national interest to get together to make the step a success.

There are very few top civil servants or leading politician without the blemish of having a foreign bank account. But the pressure in India to bring back the black money stashed

abroad has been relentless and this demand has become part of a movement to eliminate corruption.

Instead of taking any concrete step, the government seems to be trying its best not to let the gamut of black money come to light. That is the reason why New Delhi is seeking clarifications on the Supreme Court's indictment: "The issue of unaccounted monies held by nationals and other legal entities in foreign banks is of primordial importance to the welfare of the citizens."

This is not the first time that the Supreme Court has taken the government to task for dragging its feet on corruption. Earlier, the Supreme Court expressed unhappiness over the way in which the government was investigating the cases connected with black money. The Court had warned the government not to presume that the money hidden in Switzerland was from the tax evasion. It could be laundering of the money earned through, drugs, terrorism or some other criminal act. The government is yet to give justification for preferring the way of entering into double taxation pacts with foreign countries for having access to the names of evaders.

Indian black money in Swiss banks, according to Swiss Banking Association report in 2006, was the highest—as much as \$1,456 billion. The amount is reportedly more than the deposits by all other countries put together. Amount wise the figure is about 13 times larger than the country's foreign debts. With this amount, it is estimated, some 45 crore people in India can get Rs 1 lakh each.

After clearing the entire foreign debts, it is calculated that we would be left with a surplus, almost 12 times larger than the total foreign debts. If this surplus is invested, the amount of interest will be more than the annual budget of the central government. So even if all the taxes are abolished, even then the central government will be able to abolish most of them and still have a cushion.

Expressing lack of faith in probe the Supreme Court constituted a Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by two retired Supreme Court judges to chase all black money related cases. The court itself is supervising the pace of investigation. While pronouncing the verdict, the Supreme Court observed: politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen are known to park their funds abroad and then try to get them into the country through foreign institutional investors' route.

Very pinching remarks but every word is true. I wonder if there would be any effect on the government which has shown little agility to pursue the cases of black money abroad. It is obvious that the Congress-headed government does not want certain names to come in the public domain because the disclosures would embarrass it.

Now the government has been caught on the wrong foot. It received some time ago as many as 26 names from Germany under the double taxation treaty. Berlin had got hold of names of hundreds of beneficiaries and had offered them to all the countries for their asking. New Delhi could not afford to say no. But why the then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee said that the names of beneficiaries could not be disclosed? If they are under obligation not to disclose them, the fault is that of New Delhi. The Supreme Court has

(Contd. on Page 7)

Raise in salaries, allowances and perks of MPs

Chandra Bhal Tripathi

The Joint Select Committee of Parliament headed by Yogi (?) Adityanath from Gorakhpur, the notorious preacher of communal hatred, is reported to have recommended a raise of 100 per cent in the salaries and allowances of the Members of Parliament, the President of India and the Governors. As is common knowledge, the MPs get a variety of allowances and perks which together aggregate to Rs.2,91,833 per month with the following break-up:

We cannot compare their salaries and allowances with those of the British MPs or the members of the US Congress considering the cost of living and other factors. Compare their qualities as well. Some of the following characteristics of the

Indian MPs cannot be ignored:

(a) A number of Indian MPs are scarcely educated. Some Ministers or even Prime Ministers have been accused of filing false claims about their educational qualifications while filing their nomination papers before the Returning Officer.

(b) A good number of them have criminal records. Even those who have stayed in jails on criminal charges are not only elected to the Lok Sabha and the State Vidhan Sabhas but also become important Ministers both at the Centre and in the States, thanks to the unique and reprehensible institution of caste, and the muscle power. In one State a notorious criminal, on the support of caste and muscle power, was

(i)	Monthly fixed salary	50,000
(ii)	Constituency Allowance	45,000
(iii)	Secretarial assistance & office expense	45,000
	16,80,000	
(iv)	Daily Allowance @Rs.2,000 assuming for 190 days	3,80,000
(v)	Return tickets 34, assuming average one way ticket cost Rs.3,000 and accompanied by one person	4,08,000
(vi)	Rail travel lump sum	5,000
(vii)	Water	4,000
(viii)	Electricity (50,000 units free)	4,00,000
(ix)	Furniture minimum assumption	75,000
(x)	Telephone	90,000
(xi)	House Rent	4,20,000
(xi)	Medical including for family	40,000
	Total Allowances per annum	18,22,00,000
	Total fixed amount & Allowances	Rs. 35,02,00,000 per annum
	Total fixed amount & Allowances	Rs. 2,91,833 per month

elected as an MLA by popularising one message in his constituency: "If you want to protect your life and property send me to the Assembly." It had obvious double meanings. One generous interpretation was that the fellow, enjoying political power and influence over the bureaucracy, would ensure that the life and property of the people in his constituency was safe. The darker (and the actual) meaning was that if the voters did not elect him nobody's life and property (and possibly the honour of their womenfolk) was safe.

(c) There have been instances where the candidates have allegedly bought the party tickets.

I plead for two solutions to end or reduce political corruption:

(A) Introduction of the proportional representation system of election in the country. Originally a proposal was moved by Minoor Masani as a Private Member's Bill in Lok Sabha in 1957 but was defeated. If the political parties are honest and want to curb the influence of black money or money power as such in Indian politics, at least 50 per cent of the seats in Lok Sabha and State Vidhan Sabhas should be filled on the basis of proportional representation.

(B) The Parliament itself may appoint a High Power Ombudsman or at least a Joint High Power Ethics Committee of Parliament to investigate, on the basis of a complaint or suo motu, into the malpractices indulged in by the MPs some of which are enumerated below:

(a) Whether the household expenses of an MP are allegedly met

by a liaison man of a business tycoon which can be examined by checking the bank accounts of the MP.

(b) Whether an MP has charged money for raising a Parliament Question (this has happened in India as well as Britain).

(c) Whether an MP has been bribed for floor crossing.

(d) Whether an MP has been found guilty of moral turpitude

(e) Whether an MP has sublet his flat, a part of his bungalow or the outhouse. According to my personal knowledge it was a wide-ranging practice a few decades ago and I find it difficult to believe that the moral standards of the current crop of MPs have remarkably improved since. Subletting of one room in the bungalow or the flat or a part or whole of the outhouse was very common. In some cases, if the MP was generous, he would allow a Dhobi family to occupy a servant's quarter free of rent on the condition that the Dhobi would wash and iron the clothes of the MP and his family and some special guests. In one case an MP had let out the outhouses and, to further satisfy his greed, constructed unauthorisedly two rooms in the outhouse block. When the Directorate of Estates or the concerned authority of the Parliament held an enquiry he asserted that he had constructed the two rooms for his cows. The cows were Ph.D. students of JNU. I remember that when I was working at Chandigarh in early 1960s Sardar Pratap Singh Kairon, the much-maligned but a very able administrator CM of Punjab, had banned the presence of cows or buffaloes within the city limits (Chandigarh became a 'C' grade city

only in 1963). I wonder if Lutyen's Delhi observes any such rule. A Government Babu subletting his official accommodation is evicted and debarred from any Government accommodation for some years. Why should the same principle not be applied to the so-called law makers? An MP subletting his flat, bungalow or outhouse may be deprived of Government accommodation for the remainder of his term and paid house rent allowance at the market rent of a Type V or Type VI accommodation as the case may be and not at the rate of a five-star hotel suite.

The Central Election Commission has the power to declare the election of an MP as null and void by following the prescribed legal procedure on the submission of an election petition. But there are no effective or adequate laws to sternly deal with the kind of cases cited in the preceding paragraph. I submit that while action with regard to (e) has been suggested above, the malpractices enumerated at (a) to (d) warrant an MP being debarred from the membership of the House or awarded other punishments under the general law of the land within a fixed time frame by the Ombudsman or the internal High Power Joint Ethics Committee of Parliament.

In such a grim situation and when many parts of the country are facing serious problems like farmers' suicides, drought, starvation, alienation from land, unemployment and under-employment it is utterly heartless and insensitive on the part of the MPs of the ilk of the so-called Yogi to ask for doubling their salaries and allowances. It is staggering to find the number of crorepatris in the Parliament today. It will be an insult to the poor as well as the thinking people of India

to add further fat to the belly of these crorepatis.

It is gratifying to note that Sitaram Yechury has opposed the idea of the MPs raising their salaries and allowances themselves. But Yogis want to prove that their *achchhe din* (good days) have arrived. In view of the above discussion is there any justification for the bulk of the MPs clamouring to raise their own salaries and allowances in the coming winter session of Parliament?

There have been instances in the past when some selfless MPs opposed proposals to increase the salary and allowances of MPs. There have also been instances of old freedom fighters who refused any civilian honour like Padmashri or Padma Bhushan or even Padma Vibhushan and any freedom fighter's pension. Unfortunately they belong to a vanishing tribe, making the field open to crooks and a part of the bureaucracy of the Ministry of Home Affairs to award freedom fighters' pensions to those who were 7-8 year old during the 1942 movement. Earlier such bogus freedom fighters hailed from a particular State in eastern India and now a new crop of freedom fighters belonging to RSS, who supported the British rulers, has cropped up. What a distortion of history!

On another note, the Adityanath Committee has also recommended raising the salary of the President of India from Rs. 1.5 lakh to Rs. 5 lakh per month. This has to be viewed in terms of social equity. President Rajendra Prasad got a salary of Rs. 10,000 per month but enjoyed so many perks and at that time the Rashtrapati Bhawan employed more than 300 workers. Dr. Rammanohar

(Contd. on Page 12)

Stop the witch hunt

The People's Union of Civil Liberties strongly condemns the action of the Chhattisgarh police in registering an FIR (Cr. No. 27/2016 PS Tongpal dated 5.11.2016) against DU Professor Nandini Sundar, JNU Professor Archana Prasad (also of AIDWA), Vineet Tiwari of the Joshi-Adhikar Institute and of the CPI, and Sanjay Parate of the CPI(M), villagers Mangla of Soutenar Namapara and Manju Kawasi of Gadiras in the case of the murder of a villager Samnath Baghel, from Soutenar Namapara village in Sukma on 4th November, 2016. While the death of this villager is deeply regretted and deserves to be diligently investigated, the FIR itself indicates that there is absolutely no connection between his murder and these human rights defenders. PUCL strongly denounces the Chhattisgarh police for concocting a frivolous and malafide FIR, and demands that charges against them be dropped immediately.

PUCL specially denounces the reported threats issued by the IG of Bastar Range, SRP Kalluri to send special teams to Delhi to arrest these academics. Apart from being a sheer abuse of the law laid down by the SC in *Joginder Kumar vs. State of UP* case (1994) and *Lalitha Kumari* case (2014) in which the SC has said arrest is not required in all cases and summons is sufficient requirement of law to ensure investigation, such brazen threats and intimidation are meant to silence others from daring to challenge police lawlessness.

The PUCL notes that in the above FIR, the wife of the deceased has claimed that her husband was killed by Maoists, who said that he was being punished for not following the directives of a fact-finding

team lead by Dr. Sundar which had visited the village in May 2016. Even if we are to believe that an unlettered village woman can clearly remember and repeat the six unfamiliar names above, which she heard during this incident under very dire circumstances, and even accepting this unlikely story in its entirety, it is evident that no crime can be made out in the FIR against the members of the fact finding team and they certainly cannot be held accountable and implicated for murder on the basis of this statement. However, in a move characteristic of the malicious and vindictive nature of the Chhattisgarh police, all six members of the fact-finding team have been booked under serious charges including IPC sections 302 (punishment for murder), 450 (house trespass), 147, 148, 149 (rioting and participation in unlawful assembly), 120(B) criminal conspiracy, sections 25, 27 of Arms Act, and now also, sections 23, 38(2) and 39(2) of the draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act. The allegation about the involvement of Prof. Nandini Sundar and other academics, on the face of it, appears artificial, contrived and fanciful and manufactured to somehow rope in the academics and rights defenders from outside the area using the charge of conspiracy.

The hostile actions of the Chhattisgarh police against these academics and activists, especially pushed forward by SR Kalluri, IG of Bastar, have to be seen against a long history of persecution of anyone who attempts to highlight the state of police lawlessness that prevails in the adivasi region. Some of the events involving these academics and activists are described below:

1. In May 2016, the FF team of the above named academics and rights defenders had gone to village Soutenar and Kummakoleng where they documented how some villagers were being forced into police and CRPF camps on the pretext of “surrenders”, while others were fleeing the villages for the fear of backlash from Maoists.

Instead of responding to the suggestions of the team for a political dialogue between all stakeholders, including the government and the Maoists, the Bastar police and the Chhattisgarh political establishment launched a vicious campaign against the members accusing them of instigating villagers against the government and calling them “anti-nationals”. At that time, the police also got a few villagers to write a complaint against the visiting fact-finding team, which the District Collector promptly displayed on his personal facebook page – a clear breach of criminal law and legal propriety. The move also indicated the hostility of the District Administration, police and Chhattisgarh government to any expose of the police and government’s role in creating lawlessness and breakdown of the criminal justice system in the adivasi dominated Bastar region.

Prof. Nandini Sundar was one of the petitioners in the notable ‘Salwa Judum’ case (WPC 250 of 2007, pending before the Supreme Court), in which the apex court had held government policies of arming vigilante groups to be unconstitutional. The government’s role in arming vigilante groups came in for adverse comment and was also deprecated by the apex court.

In one of the interim orders of the Salwa Judum case, the apex court ordered the CBI to investigate the

incidents in Morpalli, Tadmethla and Timapuram villages of Chhattisgarh resulting in the killing of 3 men, rape of 3 women and burning down of over 250 houses between 11th to 16th March, 2011; and also the attack on Swami Agnivesh when he went to deliver relief supplies on 26th March, 2011.

Confirming the state complicity in lawlessness of security forces and the false staging of encounters and actual commission of violence against uninvolved villagers, in October, 2016 the CBI filed a chargesheet in this case implicating 323 Special Police Officers (SPOs) / policemen as well as 114 personnel of COBRA and 30 personnel of CRPF as having participated in these operations of arson, killings and rape. The police and Chhattisgarh government had in 2011 strongly refuted involvement of security forces in violence on villagers and instead continuously alleged that it was the Maoists and villagers themselves who had burnt down the houses.

The contempt for rule of law and their disdain for the Supreme Court’s orders was exhibited by the state police in their response to the SC’s October, 2016 order. The Chhattisgarh police publicly burnt effigies of Nandini Sundar and other human rights activists who have been questioning police tactics – including Manish Kunjam, Soni Sori, Himanshu Kumar, Bela Bhatia and journalist Malini Subramaniam – and chanting slogans “*Goli maron salon ko*” (“shoot them with bullets”). That this public burning of effigies took place in a coordinated manner at the same time on the same day, in front of the district police offices of all seven districts of Bastar under the command of IG Mr. SRP Kalluri clearly indicates that this illegal action had obtained sanctions from the highest levels.

It will be useful to note that the CBI investigating team itself met serious threats and intimidation from the state police while completing investigations.

PUCL strongly condemns the Bastar police and Bastar IG SRP Kalluri for subverting law and vitiating the environment with terror and hostility to such an extent that it has now become impossible for anyone – journalists, academics, lawyers, adivasi rights leaders or human rights workers – to carry on with their work.

It should be noted that 5-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, in ‘*Lalita Kumari v the State of UP*’, (2014) has held that “*the police can foreclose an FIR before investigation when it is evident that there is no ground to investigate the same,*” which is certainly the case in the current FIR.

Keeping in mind the vindictive nature of Chhattisgarh police and their long history of repeatedly persecuting Prof Sundar and human rights workers over fictitious matters, PUCL demands:

The Chhattisgarh Police should immediately stop any coercive action and desist from arresting Prof. Nandini Sundar, Professor Archana Prasad, Vineet Tiwari, Sanjay Parate, and other persons who were part of the Fact Finding Team in May, 2016 based on the trumped up FIR, (Cr. No. 27/2016 PS Tongpal dated 5.11.2016).

Investigation of the murder case in (Cr. No.27/2016 PS Tongpal dated 5.11.2016) be immediately handed over to a central, independent investigating agency, such as the CBI.

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Lesson of USA election results

In recent years elections in several countries considered to be more mature democracies have brought to power authoritarian, right-wing leaders and governments. The culmination of this trend can be seen in the recent USA elections. This trend may be further accentuated as authoritarian, racist and extreme right forces are gathering strength in several European countries as well.

One significant impact of such trends is clearly that the cause of equality and justice will suffer severe damage at a time when there is increasing need for advancing it. In addition most of these right wing forces are also less committed to environment protection while the need for environment protection is certainly now much more than ever before in human history. As a result remedial and protective action even for survival issues like climate change is likely to suffer and this is likely to have truly catastrophic consequences for future generations.

The most important lesson emerging from all this is that the ideals of democracy and the ideals of socialism should be brought closer to each other. For too long it has been assumed by too many people and propagated by powerful interests that capitalism and democracy are natural allies. Actually the inequality, ecological ruin, dominance and greed rooted in capitalism cannot co-exist easily, naturally and happily with the precepts of equality and freedom which are most important for democracy. Sooner or later capitalism starts destroying basic ideals and precepts of democracy as can be seen all over the world and certainly now very clearly in what are generally considered to be the more mature democracies. Hence trying to protect democracy

while remaining firmly in the grip of capitalism cannot be a realistic longer-term possibility.

Therefore those who believe sincerely in the ideals of democracy should also move closer to socialist ideals as both these ideals and precepts can be better protected when these are closely linked to each other. This challenge of linking and taking forward the ideals of socialism and democracy together should be

accepted very sincerely by more and more people. Unfortunately in some cases this sincerity is missing and there are some thinly veiled capitalist interests who merely take the name of socialist ideals to mislead people while remaining tied to capitalism. We should warn against such interests. The real task ahead is to seek sincerely a very creative linkage of ideals and principles of socialism and democracy.

–Bharat Dogra

(Contd. from Page 3)

overruled the contention and has asked the government to make the names public. Still the government is not agreeable to do so.

The BJP and its allies in the National Democratic Alliance have said that they have no money abroad. This statement should act as a pressure on the Congress and its allies. Some of the allies may begin to keep distance from the government. It has no option except to make the 26 names public. Then the fat will be on fire.

I have never seen India so deeply

immersed in corruption as it is today. At the same time, I have not heard so much criticism of government before. What I miss is the resistance and someone from the society getting up and calling a spade a spade.

Scrutiny by due process is understandable, but the process is so slow and so manoeuvred through corruption itself that it is not possible to catch or punish the guilty for years. The government must devise a machinery whereby allegation of corruption is sifted for a prima facie case within days.

Prem Singh

Dr. Prem Singh was unanimously elected president of the Socialist Party (India) for a two-year term in its 4th national convention held in Lucknow on 14-15 November 2016. Formerly general secretary and spokesperson of the party Dr. Singh has been active in the socialist movement from his student days. He has presented a unique critique of neoliberal-communal nexus through his writings and actions. He continuously works in the interest of the deprived masses of the country and protests against, along with other like-minded people and organizations, violation of civil and human rights. Dr. Singh works among the youth to make them understand that socialism is the only alternative of capitalism.

Bhai Vaidya

Out-going president, Socialist Party (India)

Samajwadi Jan Parishad

National Council of the SJP adopted the following resolution at its national camp in Sangamner, Ahmednagar, Maharashtra, held on October 21 to 22, 2016

India, which is a pluralistic society, has witnessed massive upheaval in recent times. This upheaval is rather leading to negativity, regressiveness and backwardness in our perspective.

Oppression of Dalit community and atrocities on them in this country is not new. That's why our democratic and justice based Constitution provides for extensive remedies to this evil. But it is clear from the recent events that such tyranny is accelerating rather than reducing. In Una, Gujarat, some youth of Dalit community, who were engaged in their traditional work of taking off the dead animal skins were attacked and brutally beaten up in the name of Gauraksha. When Dalits got together and resolved not to undertake their traditional profession of skinning dead animals, they again had to suffer violence. It all happened at a time when we have a government which claims itself as defenders of Hindus and projects itself very keen to deliver justice. Earlier, in our political resolution of the last National Executive held at Satna, we discussed suicides (institutional murder) of Hyderabad Central University dalit student Rohith Vemula. Subsequently, Una and similar many atrocities on Dalits have been taking place. For all these deplorable incidences, SJP holds so-called Hindu party BJP and its alma mater RSS responsible.

It is noticed that the campaigns being run in the name of Gauraksha are mainly targeting Dalits and backward Muslims, living in

underdog conditions. While the self proclaimed Gaurakshaks were beating Dalits involved in skinning dead cows, and were creating pressure on Muslims to give up eating beef, Modi government withdrew restrictions on beef tallow export (which was in force since last 32 years) to encourage beef export. It may be pertinent to mention here that India is the second/ third largest beef exporting nation in the world. Fact of the matter is that conservative and feudal forces of society are hell bent upon restricting progress of suppressed and Dalit groups. The emergence of backwards and dalits as a formidable force in our democratic system is not palatable to the RSS and its affiliates. They use Hindu interests, Gauraksha, love jihad, etc. as their weapon from time to time to perpetuate oppression. SJP hereby makes its stand very clear on cow-protection and cow-slaughter, that in a agriculture dominated economy, useful animals should not be killed for commercial purposes. The abattoirs being run by multinational companies and other commercial firms should be immediately closed and beef export should be stopped. SJP also agrees with principles of Gandhi and Lohia that the cow should be protected but not at the cost of Gopal (humans). Beef consuming Muslim or Christian communities should be persuaded. But they should not be stopped by force if they are not convinced. Many states in the country have banned cow slaughter and same is legally classified as a

crime. Under these circumstances, SJP strongly opposes delegation of responsibility of cow protection or any enforcement to any group or gang or organization other than the law enforcing agencies.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also criticized the crime being committed in the name of cow protection and also gone to the extent of branding such persons as fly by night criminals, but his statements have been superficial and to lure the innocent masses. Organised crime in this field is being indulged by his people even after his statement. PM should categorically state his government's policy of meat export of cow and other animals. The Prime Minister is the head of the country's executive. So, he must take firm steps and not indulge in mere rhetoric. Conversely, during the chief minister ship of Gujarat, Narendra Modi allotted in large amounts, scheduled village panchayat lands meant for cow grazing to industrialists. Grazing lands in Haryana is also not being recovered by its BJP Government from illegal occupation. More or less similar situation remains in entire country as far as public property and cow grazing lands are concerned. SJP demands that the government should take immediate steps to evacuate these illegal encroachments and promote cattle raising.

Efforts of the central government to resolve Kashmir dispute is yet another issue in the direction of establishing communal harmony.

The political situation of Kashmir and related conflicts are well known since independence and partition of India. Due to mistakes of Indian Government and provocations of Pakistan, many times this problem has aggravated. Since the greater part of Kashmir is with India, it becomes our responsibility to create and develop political, social and economic structures of Kashmir. Unfortunately, in the last seventy years this initiative has not been taken wholeheartedly. India in particular has to answer, why such Muslims who remained with India during partition and supported Gandhi in place of Jinnah and ignored religious frenzy have gradually driven away from Indian sentiments. In Kashmir, situation has changed now. Communal divide is entrenched in this state as well as in the rest of the country. There is no emotional attachment amongst Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir Valley. India's policies will be considered responsible for it. Overall, Kashmir is a complex problem which requires a political solution. At the same time educational, economic and social framework needs to be built and strengthened. SJP believes that current PDP-BJP government in the state and BJP-led NDA government in the centre has no political will to solve the problem. On the contrary, throughout the country, the BJP-RSS is spreading communal frenzy and taking political mileage. SJP deeply condemns this trend. At the same time SJP believes that Kashmir issue should be handled with utmost sensitivity with the involvement of larger Indian polity and through diplomatic options. This will enable long lasting peace and harmony in the larger part of south Asia including Pakistan, Bangladesh and Kashmir. Such initiative will lead to a long lasting

peace for Kashmir as well.

Ours is a secular country. This clearly means that the state will not favor or work in the interest of any religion. All religions will be treated with equanimity. But last week the chief minister of Telangana, Chandrasekhar Rao, has shaken this value system by donating Rs 3 crore worth of crown to a Kali Temple from state exchequer. This is an atrocious act in a secular state and SJP condemns it in the strongest terms. FRI should be immediately lodged against the chief minister and he should be severely punished for this anti-Constitution indulgence. We are also aware of the fact that in today's world religion has become an integral part of the market and business in the name of religion is running rampant. We also demand that all religions be treated by the state alike. The way Waqf Boards take care of Muslim religious property and Bihar, Rajasthan have constituted Sthanam Boards, institutions should be created all over the country to minimise misuse of religious properties. This sensitive issue needs to be dealt with maturity and care.

The current government's irresponsible chest thumping of surgical strike is to take petty electoral advantage. In the states of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab, which are going for elections, BJP is cashing on sentiments by putting photos of BJP leaders on posters and is creating frenzy. We are strongly condemning this attempt. We demand that government should not limit its valor to Pakistan and recover our thousands of kilometer of land from China including sacred Kailash Mansarovar and Tibet from Chinese occupation. Then only our neighbourhood will be secured in real sense.

Capitalism is evolving in a new shape in India and abroad during last several years. During the last general elections capitalists openly supported BJP and its prime ministerial candidate Mr Modi. After the formation of government these groups are getting disproportionate benefits at the cost of needy farmers and workers.

Banarasi sari weavers employment ended as a craftsman who was weaving a sari in seven days has been forced to compete with Surat based mills that are making three saris in a day. In the process weavers have become jobless. The process of elimination of such skill based employment had started during Rajiv Gandhi regime itself when Ambani group was permitted to import synthetic yarn. Laws were changed frequently in favor of big business and the goods reserved for small and medium enterprises were opened for big business houses. Due to cheap goods made from sophisticated machines, small and medium enterprises have slowly become unviable. The question of unorganized workers is similar. There should have a comprehensive policy to benefit them by combining with government welfare schemes and they should be brought at par with the organized sector labor. Huge but scattered skills-based industries in the country are being destroyed by Modi government while coining slogan of Skill India in a false and fraudulent manner. In the same sequence is issue of capturing mines and minerals in the name development, which we oppose in totality and call for bringing the process to a halt.

The current Modi government is distracting public attention from core issues such as the economic dislocation and failures on all fronts

and creating communal tension in the country. By raising issue of uniform civil code they want cheap popularity in ensuing state elections. The thrust of the BJP-led government on the issue of social justice is to tease Muslims rather than reducing inequality. The government is indirectly encouraging unjust Sharia law to unilateral divorce by the husband by pronouncing talaq thrice. Rather than taking up the issue of equality among genders, they only want to vex Muslim community. SJP wishes to reiterate its cautious reaction to this issue. Socialist movement, from the beginning has been in favor of equality of every kind, including gender equality. Equality in the ancestral property and to ensure freedom of every individual are the key points in this regard. Socialists were the first to demand a uniform civil code in the country and awareness campaign was carried out for this throughout the country. SJP proposes that a comprehensive study of private civil laws and customs of all religions and communities of the country be carried out and discriminatory elements should be culled out. An egalitarian Common Civil Code may thus be brought out which should protect diversity of our society. With this step forward, towards freedom of the individual, marriage and divorce laws should also be reviewed, Thus a simple and smooth process may be created where every person is able to live with or separate from a relation in accordance with his wish. Here we insist that men and women living with or breaking up should be a process - simple, rational and transparent. In addition to defining marital relations of different religions, the modern ways of live-in-relations, etc must also be defined and structured. The whole

process should be kept separate from lies and frauds. The entire process should actively involve the progressive sections of different communities and their views should be paramount.

At its own level, SJP resolves to review all related laws and propose a common civil code to establish our egalitarian philosophy before society and governments to counter the divisive ploys of communal forces. We also believe that in a sovereign nation every male and female citizen is entitled to live the life of an independent and respectable individual and under no circumstances derogatory epithets like abandoned or separated should be used

Although the issue of agriculture is linked to economic relations, in the agro-dominated country like India, prominence and focus is required. Noose of multinational companies is tightening around gradually but surely around necks of farmers. Communalism and nationalism are being hyped to grab land of farmers. After throwing control of all food grains and agricultural products to market forces government is now targeting pulses for crony capitalists. The government has just entered into an agreement with African country Mozambique for importing pulses for the next 21 years. While these imported pulses will lead to lower payment to farmers, big business houses will reap huge profits. We have already experienced the effects this year when pulses imported at Rs. 50 per kg were lying in port warehouses in Gujarat whereas ordinary citizens were compelled to purchase this commodity at Rs 200 per kg.

Multinational companies are competing with each other to capture

cultivated lands especially in Asia and Africa, under a well planned long strategy. These multinational companies eventually wish to evict farmers from their livelihood. Our government is also proactively supporting such conspiracy. The country's agricultural lands are being occupied under the lure of expressway, freight corridor, rail corridors, airports, highways, Industrial Corridor etc. We strongly oppose any such futile use of agricultural land and refute such elusive development.

We also wholeheartedly oppose the new trend of GM crops since it is against traditional seeds and sustainable farming. Recently GM mustard has been much talk about in the country. This is the situation when GM crops are being opposed in Europe and the US, because this is anti-farmer, anti-environment and, ultimately, anti-human beings. SJP demands a comprehensive peasants' policy in the country and vows to make efforts in this direction on its own. SJP has decided to work with farmers coordination committee constituted for the purpose on all India level. It will wholeheartedly further the cause of farmers-agitation for this objective.

Growing unemployment in the country is a breeding ground for discomfort and insecurity and in many parts of country demand for reservation by Jats, Marathas, Patels and other caste based groups is emerging fast and with immensity. These are land-based castes who have always been exploited at every level. In fact, these agitations are fatal side effects of globalization dominated lopsided agricultural policy. Small farmers around the world are victims of this policy. Also need to look at these movements. These movements can become

a major tool for system-reform provided they could find the right direction. Currently these caste based movements have their own limitations. These are purely caste based or combination of several caste outfits. Some of these have been violent in nature as well. Many caste based rallies being taken out in Maharashtra these days are seeking repealing of laws protecting Dalits and women from harassment. Also when assessing these agitations, we should take a look at the past experiences of such movements. Movements led by Chaudhary Charan Singh in Uttar Pradesh and later led by Mahendra Singh Tikait of Jat farmers were much of the same nature. These trends were grossly racial and anti-Dalit and anti-reforms. For these reasons in a few years these movements could not sustain. SJP and Samata Sangathan have been associated with movement led by Tikait. In this background we should assess these caste based movements in line with our core philosophy before establish a dialogue with them. If these caste-based farmer groups rise above ethnicity and broadly oppose globalization, liberalization of economic policies, including agricultural policy, and agree with agricultural policy of SJP, then we can support them.

Assembly elections in five States are in the offing. Goa, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, and SJP has its presence only in UP. SJP's Uttar Pradesh unit will consider the possible role in the election and may participate in elections directly or during the elections promote their policies.

—**Chandrabhushan Choudhari**

Anti-national role of RSS

Sandeep Pandey

If there is one individual with whom people associate India's identity all over the world it is Gandhi. Gandhi is a source of inspiration for many struggles globally where the marginalised fight against the oppressor and lately the environmental movements.

The most despicable action which resulted as the growth of Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh's ideology was the killing of Mahatma Gandhi. RSS will never be able to wash away this sin irrespective of howsoever Narendra Modi may try to use him as mascot for his sanitation campaign or may travel on the train in South Africa from which Gandhi was thrown out. It is also a fact that some people inspired by RSS ideology want to build a temple for Nathuram Godse. What can be more horrific than this – a temple for the murderer of the father of nation?

Not only did RSS, main plank of which is nationalism, keep away from the freedom movement but they also try to find fault with the martyrdom of revolutionaries like Bhagat Singh and Chandrashekhar Azad.

Muslim League passed its resolution in favour of Pakistan in 1940. Sarvarkar had already advocated the two nation theory in 1937. Thus Muslim League as well as RSS was responsible for the partition. In 1947 geographical partition took place but today RSS is creating division in the minds of people. The politics of communalism is gnawing at the inner strength of

our society - communal harmony among common people.

The first serial bomb blasts in the country took place in Mumbai as a reaction to the demolition of Babri mosque. Since then terrorism has become a phenomenon. It is not just Muslim organizations which are behind it. People associated with Hindutva ideology have been found to have been involved in at least five bomb blasts incidents – twice in Malegaon, Hyderabad, Ajmer and Samjhauta Express. Hence RSS is responsible for inviting the problem of terrorism to India. If Babri mosque was not demolished it is quite likely that many incidents may not have taken place. It is inexplicable how people professing to be nationalists, including former army persons, carry out bomb blasts within the country. What kind of nationalism is this?

Violence is a part of RSS's strategy. Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, violence related to Babri mosque demolition, 2002 Gujarat genocide, abovementioned five bomb blasts, communal violence in Muzaffarnagar, killing of rationalists Dabholkar, Pansare and Kalburgi, killing of Mohammed Akhlaq on suspicion of having consumed beef, public beating of four dalit youths in Una suspected to have killed a cow, beating and disappearance of Najeeb Ahmed, the Jawaharlal Nehru University student, are incidents which have vitiated the atmosphere of country. RSS which takes a moral position against violence related to terrorism

and naxalism not only justifies the violence perpetrated by its cadres but also glorifies it. The Hindutva cadre has created an atmosphere of insecurity for minorities, dalits, tribals, women and anyone dissenting with them. A culture of hooliganism, with state patronage, prevails today. Bhartiya Janata Party leaders give sermons to Pakistani leaders to not harbour demons but do the exact same thing in our country.

The chest thumping after India declared the successful testing of nuclear weapons during Vajpayee regime which resulted in a renewed arms race with Pakistan and creation of strife with neighbouring countries by Narendra Modi government has enhanced the external risk to India. It was claimed after the surgical strike in response to the Uri terrorist attack that India has given a fitting reply to Pakistan. But our soldiers continue to sacrifice their lives on border. RSS is taking full political mileage out of our soldiers' martyrdom. On one hand soldiers die and BJP activists take out motorcycle campaigns raising Bharat Mata ki Jai Na Vande Mataram slogans.

At one time ideological supporter of Swadeshi, today the RSS has permitted Narendra Modi to open the defence sector for foreign investment.

RSS has gone against each and every slogan of its. It talks of security but makes the country insecure internally as well as externally, it talks of making the country strong but weakens it by their communal politics, it talks of Swadeshi but promotes foreign investment and mega corporate, it talks of merit in education but its own intellectuals possess dubious academic credentials, resulting in

lack of availability of intelligent people in their set-up, it talks of culture but anybody dissenting faces the threat of being beaten up or even murdered, it talks of protecting cows but beef export goes up during BJP governments in power, it talks of Hindu unity but because it believes in perpetuation of caste system it treats dalits contemptuously.

The biggest damage that RSS has done to this country is it has shifted focus from the main issues facing the common citizens of this country, poverty, illiteracy, illness, unemployment, malnourishment of children, farmers' suicides, corruption to emotional issues. Today the main issues for the country have become security and investment.

(Contd. from Page 5)

Lohia was known for revealing startling facts in a simple language. He observed that the ratio between the lowest and the highest salary in India in the public sector (a peon and the President) was 1:100 whereas maximum social equity prevailed in Israel where this ratio was 1:3. The social democratic Scandinavian countries had a ratio of 1:7 and even the so-called communist USSR had a ratio of 1:40. Besides the economic egalitarianism the then Israel, like many countries in the West, practised social equality, e.g., the son-in-law of its President was a bus driver.

I wish the economists of today explained to our people concepts of socio-economic egalitarianism in such simplistic terms instead of producing tomes sitting in air-conditioned rooms of the Niti Ayog (an innovation of Narendra Modi to do away with the Planning Commission just as the airlines pilot

upon whom Prime Ministership was thrust abolished the Ministry of Education and renamed it as the Ministry of HRD on the advice of his IT buddy from Chicago - a land where the Department of Education is still called by that name.

(Contd. from Page 5)

In view of the seriousness of the issue and the possibility of arrest of the academicians, the NHRC should immediately intervene and direct the police to follow the law and not arrest the academics and activists.

The NHRC should also take note of the repeated subversions of the criminal justice system by the Chhattisgarh Police, to implicate innocent persons for political ends and their continued violation of fundamental rights and human rights of tribals and others in Bastar area in particular and order a Full fledged Enquiry.

Finally, the PUCL demands that disciplinary and criminal action should be initiated against all police officials, from the SHO to the senior-most IG, who have been involved in contriving this FIR and malevolently subverting the law of the land in order to incriminate Prof Sundar and other members of her team.

—Prabhakar Sinha

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The RSS assault on our education system -II

Neeraj Jain

To implement the RSS agenda of communalising education, the new Sangh Parivar appointees to the NCERT now began drafting a new NCF. In November 2000, the Union Minister of HRD released a new curriculum framework prepared by the new authorities of NCERT—the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE), more popularly known as NCF-2000. In a significant departure from NCF-1988, which stressed democratic values, social justice, and national integration through appreciation of the commonalities of different subcultures, NCF-2000 had a strong inject of the texts taught in Vidya Bharati schools that propagate hatred towards minorities. Defending the new NCFSE in an affidavit before the Supreme Court, the NCERT Director J.S. Rajput affirmed that the previous curricular framework had erred by overstressing secular outlook and neglecting the spiritual heritage of the country, and this was sought to be corrected in NCF-2000 by introducing value education. And in this name, it shamelessly introduced Brahmanical religious education.¹⁸ This is quite contrary to the spirit of the Constitution, one of whose central tenets is secularism. The NCERT even sought to downgrade the natural sciences by introducing *Vedic mathematics* in the school curriculum, which, as several eminent scholars have pointed out, is neither Vedic, nor mathematics.¹⁹

The NCERT arrived at this new curriculum in an entirely arbitrary manner, without any consultation with the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), a body which includes among its members the education ministers of all states and

Union Territories. Education being a concurrent subject (involving partnership between Centre and states), this was a clear violation of federal norms as well as tradition; the tradition followed since independence has been to first discuss any major initiative in education at the national level in CABE.²⁰

This was followed by deletion of passages from the existing NCERT history books written by eminent secular historians of the country such as Romila Thapar, R.S. Sharma and Satish Chandra. The deletions were not done on the basis of recommendations of any recognised body of historians, but were done secretly—the Director of NCERT refused to reveal the names of historians / persons on whose suggestions these deletions were made. Obviously, the deletions must have been made on the recommendations of RSS ideologues. The passages axed are based on historical evidence. One of them relates to the eating of beef in ancient times, which is drawn from well-known sources such as the *Shatapatha Brahmana*, the *Vasishtha Dharmasutra* and the *Brihadaranyaka Upanisad*. Another deleted passage is on varna and caste from the book *Ancient India* by R.S. Sharma, wherein he discusses which social groups formulated it and what were their interests in doing so, and why did the lower orders accept these divisions.²¹

To make matters worse, the NCERT Director also asserted that he would consult religious experts before including references to any religion in the textbooks,

to avoid hurting the sentiments of the community concerned. This circumscribing of critical enquiry to the whims of religious leaders will not only adversely affect teaching of history and other disciplines, will not only make it impossible to do scientific research, but is in fact violative of the Indian Constitution that urges citizens to develop scientific temper and a spirit of critical enquiry.

These changes in the education system led to widespread protests in the secular media and by intellectuals across the country against the communalisation of education. The BJP–RSS retaliated by attacking secular historians. The RSS Sarasanghachalak K.S. Sudershan called those who were resisting the revisions of the NCERT textbooks as “anti-Hindu Euro–Indians”. Ironically, the historiography of the RSS is essentially a colonial construct, first propagated by the British historian James Mill, who divided the history of India into Hindu period, Muslim period and British period, and had argued that Hindus had suffered under Muslim despotism and thus projected the British rule as having freed them from this tyranny. M.M. Joshi, the Education Minister, went to the extent of branding the history written by these scholars as “intellectual terrorism unleashed by the left” which was “more dangerous than cross border terrorism”.

Despite nationwide protests, the *Talibanisation* of education continued. A new syllabus based on NCF-2000 was adopted. New textbooks based on this syllabus were introduced in the 2002–03

academic session. (The HRD Ministry was in such a tearing hurry to introduce the new communalised textbooks that it refused to allow the use of earlier textbooks, even though some of these new textbooks became available only after half the academic year was over.)²³ Most notably, the existing history books written by some of India's best known and internationally acclaimed historians were withdrawn altogether, and replaced by books written by people whose chief qualification was their closeness to the Sangh ideology. The BJP ruled states too moved quickly to implement the new NCF-2000, and revised their textbooks to incorporate the Hindu nationalist framework.

The Indian History Congress, the national organization of professional historians, alarmed at this virulent poison being dished out to children, published a 130–page report critically analysing the presentation of history made in the new NCERT textbooks. It sums up the changes in the following words:²⁴

1. India is held to be the original home of the Aryans. No concern at all is shown with the origins of peoples speaking Dravidian and Austro-Asiatic languages.
2. The Indian civilisation is supposed to have its sole fountainhead in the 'Vedic Civilisation' which is given much greater antiquity than historians have been willing to assign it so far. The latter is claimed to have embraced the Indus Civilization, now to be called 'Indus Saraswati' civilisation, which is thus entirely credited to the Aryans.
3. All substantive, scientific discoveries (from zero to decimal placement of numerals to heliocentric astronomy) are supposed to have been made in the 'Vedic Civilisation'.
4. The Hindu religion is held superior to other religions. The Upanishads are proclaimed as 'the most profound works of philosophy in any religion'. Both Buddhism and Jainism are held to have emerged out of them. Hindus had no sense of constraints about chronology, unlike the Christians. Hindus, moreover, had been by their faith true patriots. In the modern freedom struggle too, they alone are held to have been sincere, while the Muslims only dreamt of a Muslim empire or a separate nation. Medieval Muslims and modern Christians are also held to have been deeply influenced by racism.
5. The caste system was all right in the beginning; only 'rigidities' (not inequities or oppression of Dalits) are seen in its later stages and very lightly touched upon. The Dalits in effect are excluded from history.
6. A neutral or even admiring stance is maintained about practices such as sati or jauhar in ancient and medieval India. Abductions of women are described as a legitimate form of marriage, not apparently inconsistent with women being held in honour.
7. Foreigners have taught little or nothing to Indians, while India has given so much to the world in all realms of culture.
8. Muslims brought little new to India, except oppression and temple destruction. All the dark corners are thoroughly presented in the narrative of medieval India, as regards Muslims, while they are coolly overlooked in that of ancient India.
9. The rise of a composite culture is ignored or downplayed. Kabir gets with difficulty a sentence in the medieval India textbook (where, on the other hand, Guru Gobind Singh appears as a 'devotee of Goddess Chandi').
10. In modern India, 'Muslim separatism' is the great bugbear, while Hindu communalism is not even mentioned, and the Hindu Mahasabha leaders appear uniformly as great patriots.
11. The growth of the great modern values of democracy, gender equality, secularism, welfare state, etc., is neglected, or passed over in silence.
12. There is little or nothing on Indian social reformers like Ram Mohan Roy, Keshav Chandra Sen, Jotiba Phule, and even B.R. Ambedkar—since apparently traditional Hindu society is not thought to have been in need of reform.
13. The mainstream secular and democratic elements in the National Movement are presented as unimportant or mere obstacles to the growth of (Hindu) 'Cultural Nationalism'. Harsh words are used for the Moderates; there is a deliberate effort to either ignore or present in unfavourable light Jawaharlal Nehru, and also the Left, especially the Communists.

UPA and NCF-2000

Soon after the BJP introduced these new textbooks in schools, the 2004 Parliamentary elections were held. Communalisation of education became a major issue in these elections, and the UPA's Common Minimum Programme promised to

“take immediate steps to reverse the trend of communalisation of education, which had set in the past five years.” Fortunately for the country, the BJP lost these elections, and the Congress-led UPA came to power in May 2004. It appointed Prof. Krishna Kumar, one of the most renowned educationists of the country, as the new director of NCERT. At the initiative of the new HRD Minister, the NCERT now initiated a process of drafting a new national curriculum framework. For this, it set up 21 “focus groups”—made up of educationists, academics and council officials—to prepare “position papers”, on the basis of which a steering committee headed by Prof. Yashpal finalised the National Curriculum Framework-2005.²⁵

However, the BJP ruled states refused to implement the new NCF-2005, and continued to use their own communal textbooks.²⁶ Not only that, they have also introduced additional textbooks written by RSS ideologues as supplementary reading in schools. Thus, in Gujarat, where the BJP has been in power since 1998, the state government has prescribed nine textbooks on the importance of *Bharatiya Sanskriti* (Indian culture) and the ‘Hindu’ code of conduct as supplementary reading for primary and secondary schools in the state. Eight of these books have been written by Dinanath Batra, a long-time RSS activist. Even more disturbing, yet not surprising, is that all eight books have been endorsed by the then Chief Minister and now Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, who writes a message in each of the texts. These books contain anecdotes like the story of a king who was unable to have children and was advised to worship cows, after which he was blessed with several children. One of the books advises that one of the ways of creating an ideal society is for the youth to visit an RSS shakha daily, while another blames

the communists and Orientalists for the “bad” education system that is prevalent in India. Some of his gems on science are: Pushpak Viman, a flying chariot used by Rama, was the first aeroplane in the world; Vedic Maths is the real mathematics and must be compulsorily taught in schools; Rishis (sages) were scientists whose inventions in the fields of technology, medicine and science have been appropriated by the West. The ninth book, *Tejomay Bharat*, is equally bizarre. It claims that stem cell research originated in India thousands of years ago, and as proof for this, gives the story of Rishi Dwaipayana Vyas, who preserved the aborted flesh from Gandhari in a cold tank with specific medicines, and then divided it into one hundred parts and kept them separately in a hundred tanks full of clarified butter (ghee), from which, after two years, one hundred Kauravas were born. The book also claims that what we know as the motor car existed during the Vedic period.²⁷

BJP Back in Power in 2014: Saffron Agenda Back Again

In 2013, during the last months of the UPA Government, the NCERT began a process of revising the NCF-2005. It selected 21 expert panels to guide the revision. But soon after, in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP swept to power once again, this time with a thumping majority. Even before the new government was sworn in, Dinanath Batra, a prominent RSS ‘educationist’, who was an important driving force behind Murli Manohar Joshi’s educational reforms during 1998–2004, announced to the media, “I am meeting Narendra Modiji after the swearing-in. We have already sent our demands. Political change has taken place, now there should be total revamp of education.”²⁸ Soon after the new HRD Minister, Smriti Irani, took charge, Batra publicly declared that he had met Irani and

she has assured him of an overhaul of the NCERT curriculum.²⁹

To abort the revision of the NCF, it was necessary to force out the upright and independent-minded director of the NCERT, Parvin Sinclair. For this, the new HRD Minister adopted the time-honoured tactic of instituting an inquiry against Parvin Sinclair on absolutely frivolous charges; Sinclair, a mathematician of repute and an educationist, resigned in disgust.³⁰ Soon after, in September 2014, Irani asked the NCERT to put the revision of the school curriculum on hold.³¹

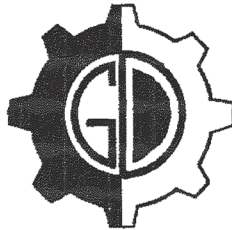
Saffronising Educational, Cultural and Research Institutions

The aim of the fascists is not just communalising school education; they want to communalise the entire educational and cultural atmosphere of the country. And so, the RSS is systematically and brazenly replacing the heads of all important academic, cultural and research institutions with individuals from the parochial Hindutva stable. It does not matter if these individuals are not suitably qualified to head these important institutions, the RSS is not concerned about the fact that the academic quality of these institutions is going to be seriously compromised by such appointments; all that matters is that they must be capable enough to transform them into vehicles for saffron propaganda. It’s a repeat of what they did in 1998 when they first came to power at the Centre; the only difference is, this time they are doing it more thoroughly. According to newsreports, the RSS has drawn up a list of 680 top academic, cultural and research posts in the country that need to be filled with saffron supporters; by mid-2015, 160 appointments had been made.³²

(to be concluded)

Reference at the conclusion of the article.

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Offices : Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai & New Delhi.

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Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi
D-15, Ganesh Prasad,
Naushir Bharucha Marg,
Mumbai - 400 007.

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Why not place a limit on maximum income?

Sandeep Pandey

If the purpose of withdrawing bigger denomination notes of Rs. 500 and 1000 was to make it difficult for people to store and use black money why have new big denomination notes of Rs. 2000 been reintroduced? The idea of withdrawal of big denomination notes was that it'll become difficult for people to store and use black money easily. It raises question on the motive of the government. Soon black money will be generated in new currency notes. It is unimaginable that all the corruption in government system will come to an end and political parties will stop using black money to contest elections. There seems to be some truth in the allegation that the Bhartiya Janata Party converted all its black money prior to the withdrawal announcement to gain an advantageous position in forthcoming Uttar Pradesh elections vis-a-vis its opponents.

It is a well known fact that a common use of black money is to contest elections. During the last assembly elections in U.P. a Hindi daily *Hindustan* predicted that each of the candidates of four big parties - Bahujan Samaj Party, Samajwadi Party, BJP and Congress

- would spend on an average Rs. 1,25 crores for their election campaigning when the limit imposed by Election Commission was only Rs. 16 lakhs. This implies that every candidate of major parties was spending on an average Rs. 1 crore of black money. It is an open secret that politicians keep black money. So far in the drive to get black money deposited we have not heard of a single politician or a party president or treasurer having gone to any Bank to deposit their money. It is important to know what the parties are doing. Because, unless there is curb on usage of black money in elections the existence of it will not end. While the government is very tough with citizens found with more than merely Rs. 2.5 lakhs, it didn't take any action against Maharashtra Cooperative Minister Subhash Deshmukh whose vehicle was found with Rs. 91.5 lakhs in old currency notes.

The common people have been harassed while the politicians must have figured out ways to convert their black money and also how to use it in future. The government is guilty of having wasted so much public time on unnecessarily forcing people to stand in long queues.

Between the Lines

New dawn in Pakistan

Kuldip Nayar

The government has announced various kinds of limits. There was a limit of Rs. 10,000 on withdrawal at a time from savings bank accounts with maximum limit for a week being Rs. 20,000. This limit, both for one time and the week has now been raised to Rs. 24,000. The limit for withdrawal from current account is Rs. 50,000. First it was announced that limit on withdrawal from Automatic Teller Machines would be Rs. 4,000 one time and Rs. 8,000 over a week, then it was reduced to Rs. 2,000 per card per day which has been increased to Rs. 2,500 now. Limit on exchange of old currency notes from bank is now Rs. 2,000. If there is a marriage in family a withdrawal of upto Rs. 2.5 lakhs can be made but this provision has not been implemented so far. A number of families in which marriages were to take place were put to great inconvenience and embarrassment after November 8th. Some select petrol pumps allow Rs. 2,000 cash on debit cards. Farmers can withdraw upto Rs. 25,000 per week against loans. Government employees upto Group C level can be given Rs. 10,000 cash from their November's salary. Deposits made above Rs. 2.5 lakhs will require PAN card.

Because of imposing limits of all kinds the people are really at a loss, especially the ones who don't have bank accounts or any of the various cards mentioned above. People have struggled to get not their black money but legitimate income converted to new notes. If one needs bigger amounts now one will have to plan in advance and pay number of visits to bank to ensure that one has the required amount by the deadline. But a medical emergency comes unannounced. How are people to deal with this kind of situation?

(Contd. on Page 4)

The Dawn is a fairly respected newspaper in the subcontinent. It was founded by Qaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah at Darya Ganji in New Delhi to propagate his cause of Pakistan. When Pakistan was founded The Dawn started appearing from Karachi. Since then, the newspaper has continued its publication from there.

It recently carried a story on the growing differences between the military and the civil government. The perturbed Nawaz Sharif government wanted the paper to disclose the source of the story. But it refused to do so. However, the government approached the Press Council of Pakistan, which has upheld the rights of the paper not to reveal the source.

A fairly countrywide debate has begun in Pakistan on whether or not the source should be disclosed. The overwhelming public opinion is in favour of The Dawn and supported the newspaper's right to withhold the source.

For the newspaper to confront the army, which governs the country in the real sense, is a courageous step. But it also shows the tenacity of the Pakistan press and the weak-kneed policy of the Sharif government. One doesn't know how the matter will ultimately be resolved but at present the Pakistan media has won the bout.

The lesson that the Indian media can draw from the newspaper's example is that however powerful the government maybe, the media can raise its voice as long as they

hold the ground. They do not have to wilt against the government's pressure. If the story The Dawn has broken is correct or the comment it has made is without rancour or prejudice, there is no need to afraid of the powers that be.

This is a far cry from what happened to the Pakistani media some years ago. It would look towards Islamabad and mould its policy which mostly suited the government of the day. The misadventure of General Pervez Musharraf at Kargil, when he was the chief of army staff, was accepted without demur. Even there were instances of journalists were being pilloried for stories which did not show the government in good light.

Unfortunately, the Indian media of today does not measure up to The Dawn example. The one-day ban by the Information and Broadcasting Ministry on NDTV for the Pathankot coverage was defended by the channel itself. Others stood apart until the Editors' Guild voiced its protest. Subsequently, the channel also filed a case in the Supreme Court.

Meanwhile, the pressure applied by other political parties, too, mounted. The NDTV owner, Pronnoy Roy, was told to appear before the Information and Broadcasting Minister where the channel was offered a compromise formula. But it goes to his credit that Roy did not rescind from his stand.

Information Minister Venkaiah Naidu looked small when he said

that a one-day ban on NDTV was in the interest of the nation. Who is he to determine what is in the national interest and who gave him the authority. Apparently, the minister realized the mistake and did not pursue the matter further.

Indeed, the media scene has changed. I recall what the then editor of The Times of India, Shyam Lal, telling that Shanti Prasad Jain, the owner, did not even indirectly tell him what the paper should or should not carry. I knew Shanti Prasad Jain and he really thought that the owner was only a trustee as Mahatma Gandhi had defined the role of newspaper owners.

The role of Ramnath Goenka, the owner of The Indian Express was equally commendable. I was working with the newspaper and I know Goenka was at the end of the road facing financial crisis because of the Indira Gandhi government's ban on advertisements. But Goenka did not budge even an inch and gave his editors full freedom which they used to express their anti-government views freely.

In the face of the Emergency, The Indian Express bore the wrath of the establishment and yet continued its lonely battle against it. There were several instances of the newspaper defying the censorship. The language papers were bolder than the English ones.

Today's Indian media, by and large, does not appear to be anti-establishment. The journalists themselves prefer to go in the direction of the wind that blows. Even the integrity of most is questioned unlike in the past.

There could be several reasons attributed for this change in attitude. One, the owners of the media houses have come to consider newspapers

(Contd. on Page 4)

Medieval wars were not fought on religious lines

Bharat Dogra

Communal Harmony Week is being observed from November 19 to November 25; its various events culminating in celebration of Communal Harmony Flag Day on November 25. As communal harmony has come under stress in recent years due to propagation of myths about hostility in historical times, the communal harmony week is a particularly good time to get rid of these myths so that the foundation of social harmony and inter-faith harmony in our country can be strengthened.

The long battle between Rana Pratap and Akbar is well known, but it is also important to recall that after both Pratap and Akbar had left for heavenly abode, their sons decided to stop fighting, Amar Singh and Jahangir reached a most honourable agreement which appears to have satisfied both sides. At this stage the communal minded historians get caught in their own trap. Because in the earlier phase they have shown nothing but hatred for Mughal rulers, they are now forced to make at least mild criticism of Amar, while on a fair appraisal he comes out as a valiant warrior and a fine statesman, not afraid of struggle, yet not held back by sheer pride when the interests of his people demand this.

In the 1857 uprising against the British rule the Mughal king Bahadur Shah Zafar, despite his old age and weakness, became a symbol of freedom for Hindu and Muslim freedom fighters alike.

Most of the famous battles fought during the years of the Mughal rule have become embedded in public mind as battles between Hindus and Muslims and people are surprised when told that Shivaji's army had a significant number of Muslims and that all through Aurangzeb's prolonged fight with Shivaji several Maratha nobles continued to occupy an important place in the Mughal court and army. The names of these Maratha nobles in Aurangzeb's court are available in historical documents and in fact historians have compiled a list of such names. It is surprising but true that the number of Maratha nobles in Aurangzeb's court was higher than in the court of any other Mughal ruler before him. It was also common for several Hindu kings and chiefs to have Muslim nobles.

Earlier at Haldighati Hakim Sur and his Afghan soldiers had fought valiantly on the side of Rana Pratap. On the Mughal side there were a large number of Rajput soldiers led by Raja Man Singh. Still earlier at the battle of Khanwa, Mahmood Lodi and Hasan Khan Mewati had fought on the side of Rana Sanga against the army of Babar.

From these examples it should be clearly known that the famous battles of the days of the Mughal rule were not battles between the Hindus and the Muslims- instead the armies which fought each other were of a mixed composition. In fact there are even instances when Muslim fundamentalists had ganged up against Muslim rulers, and then the Mughal rulers had sent an army

under the leadership of Hindu Rajas to quell such rebellions.

Describing this rebellion Prof. Satish Chandra writes, “The rebellion kept the empire distracted for almost two years (1580-81) and Akbar was faced with a very difficult and delicate situation. Due to the mishandling of the situation by local officials, Bengal and almost the whole of Bihar passed into the hands of the rebels who proclaimed Mirza Hakim as their ruler. They even got a religious divine to issue a Fatwa, calling on the faithful to take the field against Akbar. Akbar did not lose his nerve. He despatched a force under Todar Mal against Bengal and Bihar and another under Raja Man Singh to check the expected attack by Mirza Hakim.”

When the Hindu king of Bikaner was defeated by the King of Marwar, his family sought refuge in the court of Shershah Suri. When Humayun was defeated by Shershah Suri, he sought refuge with the (Hindu) King of Amarkot. Akbar was born here. Later in Ayodhya, Nawal Rai died fighting for Nawab Safdarjung.

It is clear from the above examples that the history of Mughal India is not a history of fights between the Hindus and Muslims. Kings fought each other time and again, but generally there were mixed armies on both sides. Further heroes and villains did not exist in any one religion. On some occasions, the persons who showed great valour and large heartedness happened to be Hindus, on some other occasions they happened to be Muslims. In fact the biggest heroes of this age were those who rose above all sectarian considerations to spread the message of universal love and brotherhood – men like Sant Kabir and Gur Nanak.

(Contd. from Page 2)

Even others will hesitate to help now as they will worry about their own cash situation. The influential people are getting their notes converted without standing in the queues. Doors of banks open for them outside the office hours and probably the manager gets their transactions done from his office itself.

If the government has decided to place limits on the withdrawal of amount from banks they should also place a limit on other ways of money transactions. By placing these limits in a way Narendra Modi has placed a cap on our expenditure. He has similarly placed a cap on how much one can spend on a wedding, in which people in our country have a tendency to overspend beyond their earning capacity. In fact, it is a good time, while the size of economy has temporarily shrunk because of unavailability of money to also place a limit on people's incomes. Dr. Rammanohar Lohia had famously said that the difference between the income of poor and rich should not be more than ten times. That is a good standard. There are professions in which there is unlimited possibility of making money. After huge amounts have been made the earner tries to evade tax and thus creates black money. The minimum wages are already decided. The government should fix the maximum income as ten times of that. If the prices of essential items are kept under check and privatization in education and health care ends, the people may learn to live in limited income. But the real question is will the political parties change their ways of using black money in elections? Or, will the culture of commissions and cuts end which generates black money? Are the politicians and bureaucrats ready for it?

(Contd. from Page 3)

or the television channels as commercial ventures. Profit, not principle, is their motive. It also leaves no room for the handful of honest journalists to pursue their profession with full freedom.

However, Bangladesh continues to be an exception. The two leading-most papers, The Star in English and Prothom Alo in Bengali daunt Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina who is dictatorial in her methods and does not brook any criticism. It's tragic to find that the daughter of Sheikh Mujib-ur Rahman, who fought for the independence of Bangladesh, has muzzled dissent and falsified all principles of her father.

The Dawn example should give heart to the Bangladeshi media and the rest of those in the subcontinent. The freedom of the press is inviolable in a democratic setup. It cannot be compromised in any circumstances. People themselves take vengeance from the rulers who restrict their freedom.

Indira Gandhi, whose centenary birth anniversary is being celebrated, is an example. Her Congress party was swept out of power in the 1977. So much so even she lost her own seat in the election held when the Emergency was relaxed. In any democratic setup the sovereignty lies with the people. And they have shown again and again that they are the masters to give verdicts on political rulers.

By defying the government, The Dawn has reminded the people of Pakistan that they can confront the military rulers and restore democracy in the real sense. Political parties have a vested interest in power. People's interest is in the betterment and development. The latter should prevail.

Letter to President of India

2016 November 13,

Respected Rastreapatiji

Subject: Representation against appointment of Shri Avinash Rai Khanna, Vice-President, Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) as a member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

The People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) is an organization, which has been consistently working for protection and promotion of human rights and civil liberties in the country. It was established by Shri Jayaprakash Narain, Acharya Kripalani, Shri Krishna Kant and others. Justice V.M Tarkunde, Prof. Rajni Kothari, Justice Rajindar Sachar (former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court) and Shri K.G. Kannabiran have been associated with PUCL as its President. The important judgments by the Supreme Court on the issues taken up by PUCL are: Telephone tapping case (1997) 1 SCC 301; Fake encounter in Manipur (1997) 3 SCC 463; Disclosure of criminal background and assets by candidates contesting for Parliament and the State Legislature (2003) 9 SCC 490; Challenge to POTA (2004) 9 SCC 980; and Right to food which is still pending before the Supreme Court.

We are seriously concerned about the proposal to appoint Shri Avinash Rai Khanna, Vice-President of BJP as a member of the National Human Rights Commission. We wish to make it clear that our objection is not personally against him, but is based on the principle that a politician should not be appointed to an important and high level institution

like the NHRC, which is constituted for protection and promotion of human rights of the people of India -a function, which can be performed only by persons who are non-partisan and above temptation of future personal promotion and prospect. Shri Khanna was earlier appointed as a member of the State Human Rights Commission, Punjab, but resigned to become a member of the Rajya Sabha and is not eligible for other similar political appointment in the future. Besides, a member of a political party is expected to promote the interest of his party and is not trained to act with impartiality and judiciousness required of a member of the NHRC. Additionally, a member of the NHRC, besides having knowledge and practical experience in matters relating to human rights should also enjoy the trust of the people that he would stand to protect their human rights from violation by the governments. As a politician and a Vice-President of BJP, which is a ruling party at the centre and a number of states, Shri Khanna cannot enjoy the trust of the people whose rights he would be expected to promote and protect against the governments of his own party if he is appointed to the NHRC.

The Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 was enacted pursuant to the commitment of India towards binding covenants, that is Universal Declaration of Human Rights, ICCPR AND ICESCR. It was realized that due to changing social realities, emerging trends in the nature of violence, greater accountability and transparency are required in the implementation of existing laws, procedures and system of administration of justice.

Keeping the growing concern about protection of issues relating to human rights that the said law was enacted. Relevant parts of Section 3 and Section 4 of the Act of 1993 are quoted below:

“ 3. Constitution of a National Human Rights Commission:

(1) The Central Government shall constitute a body to be known as the National Human Rights Commission to exercise the powers conferred upon, and to perform the functions assigned to it, under this Act.

(2) The Commission shall consist of:

- (a) a Chairperson who has been a Chief Justice of the Supreme Court;
- (b) one Member who is or has been, a Judge of the Supreme Court;
- (c) one Member who is, or has been, the Chief Justice of a High Court;
- (d) two Members to be appointed from amongst persons having knowledge of, or practical experience in, matters relating to human rights.

4. Appointment of Chairperson and other Members:

(1) The Chairperson and [the Members] shall be appointed by the President by warrant under his hand and seal;

Provided that every appointment under this sub-section shall be made after obtaining the recommendations of a Committee consisting of—

- (a) The Prime Minister — Chairperson
- (b) Speaker of the House of the People — Member
- (c) Minister in-charge of the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Government of India — Member
- (d) Leader of the Opposition in the House of the People — Member
- (e) Leader of the Opposition in the Council of States — Member
- (f) Deputy Chairman of the Council of States — Member

Provided further that no sitting Judge of the Supreme Court or sitting Chief Justice of a High Court shall be appointed except after consultation with the Chief Justice of India.”

As mentioned above, a person who is going to be appointed as a member should have knowledge and practical experience in the matters relating to human rights. His stature and qualifications has to be compared with the other members, who consist of judge of the Supreme Court or the Chief Justice of a High Court. Under Section 4 of the Act of 1993, the appointment of chairperson and the members shall be made by the President by warrant under his hand and seal, after obtaining the recommendations of the Committee consisting of Prime Minister, Speaker of the House of People, Minister in-charge of the Ministry of Home Affairs in the Government of India, Leader of the Opposition in the House of People, Leader of Opposition in the Council of States and Deputy Chairman of the Council of States. PUCL

submits that the recommendations made by the Committee are recommendations under the Act. These recommendations are not binding on the Hon’ble President as is the recommendation of the Council of Ministers under Art. 74 of the Constitution. The President is therefore free to not accept a recommendation of the committee in the interest of the people ,who are the real stakeholders and of the institution for which the appointment is to be made . Under s 4 of the Protection of Human Rights Act, the President is obliged to make an appointment to the NHRC only after obtaining the recommendation of the Committee constituted for the purpose but is not bound to accept the recommendation of the committee.

We submit that appointment of a political person would not only be against the interest of the people and incompatible with the aims and objects of the highest institution, which is constituted for the protection of human rights, but would send wrong signals to the international community and to the United Nations where the national representatives have to periodically submit the status of implementation of human rights in the country.

We humbly request that keeping in view the interest of the people of India and the status and dignity of NHRC, no member of a political party should be appointed as a member to the NHRC, especially, if he is an important functionary of the ruling party.

—Prabhakar Sinha,
National President, PUCL

37th Bhimsen Sachar Memorial Lecture

by

Hon’ble Justice T.S.Thakur,
Chief Justice of India

on

‘Independent Judiciary -Bastion of Democracy’

on Thursday 1st December, 2016 at 6 PM

at India International Centre

(Kamla Devi Multipurpose Hall)

40, Max Mueller Marg, New Delhi-110003

Kuldip Nayar to preside.

R.S.V.P.

Rajindar Sachar, Sanjiv Sachar, Sudhir Nayar

Servants of People Society

Shri Bhim Sen Sachar Memorial Committee

Treatment of Native Americans vis-a-vis Indian tribes

Chandra Bhal Tripathi

On October 13, 2016 teleSUREnglish circulated a video describing how the US dealt with Native Americans. By forcing their children into boarding schools so they could become "civilized." Dennis Banks, founder of the American Indian Movement, shared his personal experiences with Abby Martin in The Empire Files.

A similar 'civilising' mission I came across on the border of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam about three decades ago. As Lt. Governor Raja of Arunachal Pradesh (earlier known as NEFA) took strict action against proselytisation of the tribals living in remote areas of this State (earlier a Union Territory and still earlier a protected territory where no Indian could go without a permit - even Dr. Rammanohar Lohia was prevented - that was the period when the former English missionary Verrier Elwin was the only window to the tribal world for Prime Minister Nehru). Camouflaging themselves as Hindu sanyasins with Rudraaksha maala the Christian missionaries used to lure poor tribals of this picturesque State with the promise of providing free board and lodging and all other expenses of their children if they admitted them in the residential primary schools that dotted the other side of the border in Assam. Once admitted, these tribal children were not allowed to speak their mother tongues, sing or dance in their traditional way and, the worst was that their parents were not allowed to visit them nor were the children allowed to visit their parents. As a measure to counteract the Christian influence the then authorities encouraged setting up of an elite public school known as Donyo Polo at Itanagar that was controlled by the Vivekananda Kendra of the distant

Kanyakumari that in turn was a creation of the RSS. The present National Security Adviser to the Government of India, Ajit Doval (pronounced Dobhal) is a retired Director of the Intelligence Bureau and after retirement he became the Director of the Vivekananda Institute in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi, where now official functions of the Government of India are held. Evangelical programmes of Christian missionaries and saffronisation programmes of the RSS are two opposite sides of the same coin so far as the tribals are concerned whose traditional language, culture, religious beliefs and customs are different from those of the neighbouring dominant communities of India. I am an admirer of the Jesuit fathers who came from Europe in the 19th century and established good schools and hospitals and, of course, churches in the remote tribal areas in Jharkhand but the role of some of the Indian missionaries has been vulnerable. The South Baptist Mission based in the US also played a dirty role of creating insurgency in the North-Eastern States and converting non-Christian majority States into Christian majority States after Independence. Political problems in Nagaland and parts of Manipur are largely their creation. Reverting to the subject of speaking mother tongue in a Jesuit school, I remember that in the prestigious Don Bosco School in Egmore, Chennai, where my son studied in 1969-74, a boy speaking Tamil or any non-English language in the school would be fined. But in a Jesuit school in Vadodara where he studied for a year preceding my Chennai posting there was no such restriction on speaking any non-English language.

Thank God, the 'civilising' forces in India did not resort to annihilation of millions of the indigenous population as they did in the US, Canada and Australia. In Australia the indigenous population was reduced from several millions to just about one hundred thousand who were confined to a small corner of the continent in a 'National Park' as if they were animals. That was the demographic situation about 30 years ago when the Foreign Minister of Australia addressed a seminar at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi, I raised the issue of the annihilation of the indigenous people of the continent. Only Christian priests were allowed to visit the National Park for the obvious reason. The Foreign Minister had no answer. After a few years the Prime Minister of Australia apologised for the crimes committed by the forefathers of the white Australians and the present generation of the indigenous people were offered compensation. The Canadian PM followed suit after a few years and today some representatives of the First Nations are occupying important positions in the administration. The biggest culprit, the US, never apologised for the crimes committed by the European colonisers upon the Native Americans and ruthlessly weaning them away from their cultural moorings. It gave some compensation to them but ensured that many of the Native American groups became addicted to alcoholism and drugs and started opening casinos.

It is interesting to note that Verrier Elwin of whom Ramachandra Guha seems to be a fan had advocated a National Park policy for India's

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Socialist Party(India)

Action programme for six months

Today, there are two challenges before our Indian Republic. A few political organizations led by RSS are conducting hate-campaign against the minorities and thereby disturbing smooth functioning of our democracy. Secondly, international capitalism is aggravating problems of unemployment and inequality of income and wealth thereby thrusting great hardship over the masses.

The 4th National Conference of the Socialist Party (India) held on 14 and 15 November, 2016 has called upon all its units and activists to carry out the following action programme and build up strong popular support to the policies of the Party:

1. To organize Hindu-Muslim Bhaichara Sammelans at least at hundred places.
2. To participate in the rally to strengthen solidarity with the people of Kashmir on 23rd March 2017 at Shrinagar that would be organized by Rashtra Seva Dal. Those who would not be able to go there may organize public demonstrations at local places. It may be noted that 23rd March happens to be the day of martyrdom of Bhagat Singh and also birth anniversary of Dr. Lohia
3. To carry on mass awareness campaigns to prevail over the BJP to stop pro-capitalist

policies and allocate at least 25 per cent of annual Budget for Agriculture, Forest Development and Dairy which alone can help us achieve the goal of full employment.

4. To carry on campaigns against privatization and communalization of education
5. To hold four regional conferences on Electoral Reforms

To complete Party membership enrolment drive by 31st December 2016.; to conduct campaign to build up Rs 25 lakh Party Fund with the help of coupons of Rs 100, 500 and 1000.

–Pannalal Surana

An Appeal

The two-day 4th National Conference of the Socialist Party(India) concluded in Lucknow (UP) once again resolved to throw out the yoke of neo-imperialism imposed on the country in the guise of liberalisation. I am of the firm opinion that the Socialist Party will soon attain its past glory by carrying forward the legacy of the freedom movement and socialist stalwarts.

I felt honored by felicitating Mohammad Shoab of Rihai Manch

from the dais of the Socialist Party for his relentless efforts made for the release of innocent Muslims, particularly youths, from jail. Mr. Shoab, who is the national vice president of the Socialist Party, has successfully got released 11 innocent persons arrested and implicated by the police on false charges.

I welcome the decision of the national council of the Socialist Party to elect Dr. Prem Singh as

its president. He is known all over the country for his commitment for socialism, secularism and democracy. I believe that the party will become stronger under his dynamic leadership.

I, further, would like to appeal all like-minded individuals and organizations to extend their maximum support to Dr. Prem Singh in order to re-strengthen the struggle against the on-going nexus of neo-liberal-communal forces.

–Rajindar Sachar

(Contd. from Page 7)

tribes in a booklet published by the Oxford University Press around 1940 which I read a few years later, and after Independence he became a patriot and nationalist and confidante of Nehru. He tried and succeeded in keeping Nehru away from Indian anthropologists. In 1960 he was not only appointed a member of the Presidential Commission on the Scheduled Areas and the Scheduled Tribes headed by U N Dhebar under Article 339 of the Indian Constitution but he also drafted the Report of that Commission. As a (Senior) Research Officer who started the Research Cell of the Commission I am a witness to the deliberate attempt by Dr. Verrier Elwin to keep Indian anthropologists out. An uninformed social worker, Dayabhai Nayak, imagined that all the anthropologists did was to measure the head and the nose.

I have visited some settlements of the American Indian tribes and heard stories of the exploitation of these indigenous people from my anthropologist friends TN Pandey of UC Santa Cruz and Gillian Darling Kovanic of UBC Vancouver. At least the policies and programmes for tribal welfare and development in India have been more egalitarian due to Gandhian pioneers like Thakkar Bapa and his disciples like LM Shrikant and in the recent past due to activists like BK Roy Burman, BD Sharma and Medha Patkar. The tribals themselves have to educate, organise and struggle for achieving the Constitutional safeguards for them and protecting them from industrial and mining sharks and political and capitalist interests responsible for their uprooting from their lands and forests, deities and cultural heritage in the name of development and setting up industrial projects and big dams while advanced nations like the US have given up the concept of huge dams.

The government says that the situation would settle down in 50 days. How? As per data furnished by the Finance Ministry, Rs 17,50,000 crore worth of currency notes were in circulation in October-end.

The government, through its demonetization of old 500Rs and 1000Rs note made 14.5 lakh crore rupee (84%) invalid in the market, leading to a currency crisis. As per FinMin, Rs. 50,000 crore dispensed to customers in first 4 days (10-13 Nov). However, there is still a currency deficit of 14 lakh crore.

In India, most of the transactions carried out are in cash. As per an estimate (carried out by Fletcher School at the Tufts University in 2012) 86.6% of transactions carried out in India were in cash. The economy is going to take a big hit, with 84% of the cash being made illegal due to demonetisation.

Printing of new currency began in August-September, and by October 2016, the RBI printed 480 million of Rs. 2000 denomination notes and an equal number of new 500 denomination notes. Total value of these new notes = 96,000 crore (1000 notes) + 24,000 crore (500 notes) = 1.2 lakh crore. Time taken (between August-October) = 50 days approx. (guess estimate).

So, it took 50 days to print money of value 1.2 lakh crore. Going by this, it would take approx. 500 days (One and a half year) to print the remaining 12.8 lakh crore needed to bring back the economy to its pre 8th Nov. state.

And the govt. wants to make you believe that in next 50 days it would print 14 lakh crore, to make up for the present Currency Deficit?

If timely ameliorative measures are not taken, we are headed towards an economic recession.

- Arun Srivastava, Janta Ka Reporter

सुप्रसिद्ध समाजवादी चिंतक

सुरेन्द्र मोहन जी

की छठी पुण्यतिथि के अवसर पर

स्मृति सभा का आयोजन

विषय: वर्तमान परिदृश्य में समाजवादियों की भूमिका

मुख्य वक्ता: सांसद श्री शरद यादव, अध्यक्ष, जनता दल (ए)

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श्री एन.डी.पंचोली, श्री राकेश कुमार, श्री अरूण श्रीवास्तव, सुश्री रति सिंह व अन्य साथीगण

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सुरेन्द्र मोहन मेमोरियल फाउंडेशन एवं जनता ट्रस्ट

The RSS assault on our education system -III

Neeraj Jain

Here is a sample of the kind of appointments being made.

History writing in India over the past half century has produced some of the finest historians, recognised both nationally and internationally. Cocking a snook at this glorious tradition, the new government in July 2014 appointed Y. Sudershan Rao, the head of the Andhra Pradesh chapter of the RSS's Akhil Bharatiya Itihas Sankalan Yojana (ABISY), a historian with no significant publication in the discipline of history, and notorious for his anti-Muslim views, as chief of the prestigious Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR). Rao believes that the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are not myths but are truthful accounts of actual events. He is a defender of the Hindu caste system, and asserts that it had worked well in ancient times and that it has been wrongly interpreted as an exploitative social system. One of his first moves after his appointment was to disband the advisory committee of the Council's internationally reputed journal, *The Indian Historical Review*. The committee comprised renowned historians such as Romila Thapar, Irfan Habib, Richard Eaton, Muzaffar Alam and Satish Chandra, and had been set up with the objective of having an independent group of historians to oversee the journal.³³

Subsequently, on February 24, 2015, the entire Council of the ICHR was reconstituted with 18 fresh appointees, setting aside the long-standing convention of re-nominating members who had completed only one term. According

to one newsreport, 15 of the 18 appointees are affiliated to the RSS.³⁴

Soon after, in June 2015, the country's highest policymaking body on education received the same treatment. The government reconstituted the Central Advisory Board of Education, now headed by the new HRD Minister Smriti Irani, a scholar whose qualifications are shrouded in mystery, and filled it with yoga teachers, Sanskrit scholars and even actors. These 'educationists' will now lay out the path to develop India into a knowledge superpower.³⁵

Lokesh Chandra, an 87-year-old man, has been appointed head of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR). His qualification for the post: he claims that Modi is a greater leader than Gandhi and is "an incarnation of God".³⁶ The ICCR is the most ramified of India's education-research-cultural councils, with 10 centres and 100-plus university chairs abroad, besides 20 regional offices. It offers over 3,000 scholarships and organises scores of cultural performances and festivals—an enormous source of patronage and prestige, which the Modi government undoubtedly wants to use to sectarian ends.³⁷

Baldev Sharma, former editor of RSS mouthpiece *Panchjanya*, has been appointed the Chairman of the National Book Trust—the renowned publishing house that is supposed to be an autonomous body under the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Kalyan Kumar Chakravarty, an Indian Administrative Service

officer with a PhD in art history, has been arbitrarily removed as the head of the Lalit Kala Akademi, the apex body to support the visual arts; a culturally non-descript but 'reliable' administrator has been appointed in his place. The highly respected scholar and Director of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library in New Delhi, Mahesh Rangarajan, has been pressured to quit; newsreports say that the government is planning to transform this hallowed institution into a "Museum of Governance" and restructure it to broadcast the activities of the present government. Venu Vasudevan, the man who successfully transformed the long-moribund National Museum into an active site for exhibition, discussion and publication, during whose brief tenure four dead galleries of the museum came back to life and many landmark exhibitions were held, has been transferred to the Sports Ministry.³⁸

The chairperson of the Central Board of Film Certification, the respected Leela Samson, has been forced to resign and has been replaced by Pahlaj Nihalani, who crafted the BJP's election slogan "Har Ghar Modi, Ghar Ghar Modi". One of the important tasks that he has accomplished as chief of CBFC—making a five-and-a-half music video eulogising Modi and forcing cinema theatres across the country to air it.³⁹

Probably the most doozy of the BJP Government's appointments is the choice of Gajendra Chauhan to head the Film and Television Institute of India. Chauhan, whose most important qualification from

the Sangh Parivar's viewpoint is that he has served as the joint convenor of culture in the BJP, has done small roles in nondescript TV soaps and forgettable films like *Jungle Love* and *Khuli Khidki*. There is nothing in his body of work to show any kind of inclination to arts and aesthetics. And yet the BJP has appointed him to head India's premier institution of film and television—a post that has been headed in the past by luminaries like Girish Karnad, Shyam Benegal, Rajkumar Hirani and Adoor Gopalakrishnan.⁴⁰

The RSS is appointing its men as Vice Chancellors of universities across the country—from Allahabad University to Hyderabad Central University to even the Jawaharlal Nehru University. One such appointment is that of Girish Chandra Tripathi, a state functionary of the RSS, as Vice Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University, a post held earlier by luminaries like S. Radhakrishnan and Acharya Narendra Dev. Tripathi, a professor of economics at Allahabad University, has no books or research publications to his credit. Tripathi recently terminated the contract of Dr. Sandeep Pandey as a visiting professor in IIT-BHU, alleging that he was indulging in 'anti-national' activities. An amazing charge, considering that Dr. Pandey is not only a highly qualified academic with a PhD from University of California, Berkeley, he is also a well-known Gandhian socialist activist who has been associated with several grassroots movements which earned him the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay award (considered to be the Asian Nobel) in 2002! But then for the RSS, he was a thorn in their attempts to saffronise BHU, and so he was unceremoniously dismissed.⁴¹ On the other hand, RSS 'volunteers' have been appointed as assistant professors of the department of

history, despite their doctoral theses having been found to be plagiarised.⁴²

Mediocrities have no use for scholarship. In July 2015, the government forced Nobel laureate Amartya Sen to resign from the chancellorship of Nalanda University.

Even India's best science and technology institutions are not being spared. In December 2014, the Director of IIT Delhi, Dr R.K. Shevgaonkar, put in his papers. According to newsreports, one of the reasons for his resignation was the growing interference of the RSS in the institution, including using the technical knowhow of the IIT for research on RSS's pet themes like the cow.⁴³ Two months later, nuclear scientist Anil Kakodkar resigned as chairman of the Board of Governors, IIT Bombay, over differences with the HRD Ministry over selection of IIT Directors, accusing it of adopting "too casual a process for such an important activity" and saying he could not be a party to such "wrongdoing".⁴⁴ For the first time in the history of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, India's premier scientific research institution, the Prime Minister's office vetoed the appointment of the Sandip Trivedi as the institute's new director. Trivedi is a front-ranking theoretical physicist and is the recipient of prestigious awards, including the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award and the Infosys Prize. It was only after intense criticism of the PMO's interference by academicians across the country, including public criticism by Bharat Ratna recipient and renowned scientist Dr C.N.R. Rao, that the PMO withdrew its objections and Trivedi took over as director of TIFR in July 2015.⁴⁵

It is not that there was no interference by previous regimes in the cultural and intellectual life of the nation. But what is new with the purges being effected by the Modi Government is their systematic, organised, communally driven and ruthless character.

Assault on Our Universities

A most important component of the RSS agenda to communalise the educational atmosphere is to transform our universities into instruments for Hindutva propaganda. For this, it is not sufficient to appoint Sangh Parivar people as heads of universities. In democratic societies around the world, universities are considered to be autonomous institutions, vibrant spaces that promote critical inquiry and learning, encourage young minds to generate and debate ideas. This by implication means that they are places that kindle concern for the oppressed, defend the idea of pluralism, and foster tolerance and respect for diversity of views. If universities are to be reduced to factories producing mindless automatons in the service of a mind-numbing, virulent Hindu nationalism, then this very idea of a university needs to be crushed, its autonomy curtailed, its democratic spirit destroyed. And so, the BJP has launched a violent assault on our universities, blatantly interfering in their functioning, targeting independent-minded teachers and students. Dissenting voices, especially communists, Ambedkarites and other liberals, are being labelled as 'anti-national' and charged with sedition. It is not that earlier regimes did not interfere in the functioning of universities; but it is the first time (with the exception of the Emergency) that a party in power at the Centre has launched such a widespread campaign against the freedoms enjoyed by universities,

even organised violent onslaughts by vigilante groups, and attempted to silence all deviant voices.

We briefly discuss the three most prominent student groups / movements that the BJP has attempted to crush during the past two years, in IIT Madras, Hyderabad Central University and Jawaharlal Nehru University.

IIT Madras

The Ambedkar–Periyar Study Circle (APSC) was established by a small group of IIT Madras students in 2014 on 14 April, B.R. Ambedkar’s birth anniversary. The group of around 50 members organised discussions and talks on a range of subjects including agriculture, genetically-modified foods, the Industrial Disputes Act, language politics, etc., that attracted modest attendance. And it organised celebrations around the birth anniversaries of Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh.

In a well coordinated move, RSS students sent a complaint to the MHRD about the activities of APSC, and the ministry promptly responded by sending a letter to IIT Madras on May 15, 2015 raising the matter of “the distribution of controversial posters and pamphlets in the campus” and “creating an atmosphere of hatred among students by one student group” and also disaffection against the Prime Minister and ‘the Hindus’. The Dean of Students of the institution—who had earlier expressed his displeasure with the names of Ambedkar and Periyar, amply exposing his Brahminical proclivities—responded to this missive with extraordinary alacrity by “derecognising” the APSC on May 22, 2015 without giving the students a chance to explain their case.

IIT Madras is supposed to be one of India’s premier institutions promoting modern science and technology. It is expected to promote student bodies that provoke debate on various issues and promote scientific temper, like what the APSC was doing. Yet, the IIT Madras clamped down on this body, charging it with promoting hate. Ironically, this same institution has allowed right-wing organisations propagating Hindutva to flourish on the campus—from RSS shakhas to groups such as Vivekananda Study Circle; it is these latter student bodies who in reality polarise students along communal lines. In contrast, when under the influence of right-wing groups, IIT Madras decided to start a separate vegetarian mess, the APSC had launched a “wheat or meat, don’t segregate” campaign against this move.

Till then, few outside IIT Madras knew about APSC. Yet, within days of the Dean banning the group, the APSC literally went “viral,” provoking much-needed debate on the rights of students to discuss contemporary political and social issues on their campuses. Protests were organised across the country, the RSS’s anti-Dalit agenda stood exposed, and within days (in the first week of June), the Dean was forced to withdraw the ban.

Ambedkar Students Association (ASA), HCU

Eerily, the same pattern was repeated in the University of Hyderabad (also known as Hyderabad Central University or HCU). Here again, the target of the BJP was a very progressive and active student group, the Ambedkar Students Association (ASA). The ASA was born out of the turmoil created by the pro- and anti-Mandal agitations in the mid-1990s, and represented the first specifically

caste-based assertion on the HCU campus. Two decades later, it had become a mature and broad-based organisation. With its embrace of non-Dalit issues, including protests against attacks on minorities, today’s ASA represents precisely the kind of ‘dangerous’ solidarity that Hindutvawadi organisations fear. And so, clashes between ASA and the student wing of the BJP, the Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), started escalating, culminating in the ABVP hatching a conspiracy to suppress the ASA with the help of big brother MHRD and head honcho BJP.

The plot unfolded with the ABVP HCU President Sushil Kumar filing a false complaint against ASA members. Promptly, the BJP MLC, Ramachandra Rao met with the then Vice Chancellor Prof. R.P. Sharma, asking him to take action against the ASA members. The BJP Member of Parliament from Secunderabad and Union Minister of Labour and Employment Bandaru Dattatreya, an RSS member of 50 years vintage and pracharak for two decades, also got into the act and wrote to the MHRD against the “casteist, extremist and anti-national” activities of the ASA and demanded action against the group. Smriti Irani promptly sent off not one but five notices to the university administration, suggestively asking it to take action against the group.

Bowing to repeated pressure from the Centre, the HCU administration suspended five ASA members for a semester in August 2015. It sparked off massive protests which forced the Vice Chancellor (VC) to revoke the order pending investigation by a new committee. Meanwhile, the BJP appointed a new Vice Chancellor to head the HCU, Prof Appa Rao Poddile, who is infamous for being accused by his own staff for being a

casteist and who has a two-decade long history of rustivating Dalit students. As if appointed with a pre-planned agenda, he immediately swung into action, ordered a sham enquiry, and punished the five Dalit students once again. The punishment comprised their expulsion from hostels and banning them from accessing library, hostel and administrative building in groups. It amounted to social boycott of the students, reminding one of the reign of *Manusmriti* vis-a-vis the outcaste Dalits. These students—four of them being sons of agricultural labourers and one without both parents—who had crossed countless obstacles to reach the University were pushed back right into their ostracised existence as the “untouchables”.

Nowhere to go, the students erected a shed with the banners and posters outside the gate of the university and began living there in the biting cold of Hyderabad winter, without money (their scholarships had not been paid since last July) and without any arrangement for sanitation or food. It was this humiliating condition that drove one of the five suspended Dalit students, Rohith Vemula, to take his life on January 17, 2016. It was not suicide, but “institutional murder”, planned and executed by ABVP’s Sushil Kumar, and BJP’s Ramachandra Rao, Bandaru Dattatreya and Smriti Irani.

As news about the tragic death of Rohith, his incredibly moving suicide note, his life story—including his indomitable struggle against adversity that had brought him to one of the best universities in the country—and details about the conspiracy hatched by ABVP–BJP–MHRD spread through the social media, massive student protests erupted in campuses across the country.

Jawaharlal Nehru University

The powerful student movement that swept the country following the ‘murder’ of Rohith Vemula put the BJP on the backfoot. Its plans of winning over the Dalit students to its Hindutva agenda were in tatters; not only that, the participation of thousands of students in these protests made it obvious that the ABVP base among students was shrinking. So, the BJP came up with a new, and an even more sinister plan, to divert attention from its victimisation of a brilliant Dalit scholar and student leader, and win back its student following.

On February 9, 2016, a small far-left fringe student group in JNU had organised a cultural program, “The Country without Post Office”, on the campus, so that sympathisers and supporters of this group could voice and listen to the stories of Kashmiri students in Delhi. The group has no links to the Maoists, or to any of the militant groups in Kashmir. It also has no history of inciting or unleashing any form of violence on the campus or outside. The ABVP–BJP–RSS took advantage of the topic of the program, and hatched a plan to subvert it and blow it up as an issue of anti-nationalism on the JNU campus. That it was all pre-planned, and an organised conspiracy, is obvious from the way the events unfolded following the program:

Some masked outsiders infiltrate the gathering of students watching the program, and shout anti-India slogans (the police has yet to identify and arrest these outsiders); some TV channels immediately begin to air video clips of students shouting “anti-national” slogans; BJP MP Mahesh Giri files an FIR at the nearby police station; the newly appointed Vice Chancellor of JNU gives permission to the police

to conduct raids on the campus bypassing all internal mechanisms of the JNU to deal with indiscipline, and without informing / consulting the Deans, rectors and proctors; the police quickly move in and arrest JNUSU president Kanhaiya Kumar on the draconian charge of sedition accusing him of shouting anti-India slogans—when Kanhaiya Kumar was not even remotely involved in the organising of this program; overnight, the BJP releases a doctored video showing Kanhaiya shouting those slogans; some television channels immediately repeatedly telecast this video and systematically whip-up mass sentiments of people against him and JNU students, labelling them as anti-nationals; when Kanhaiya Kumar is brought to Patiala House courts in Delhi for bail hearing, the BJP goons in the garb of lawyers in a pre-planned and orchestrated attack beat up students, faculty members and journalists within the court premises; despite nationwide condemnation, the goons repeat the attack two days later, despite specific Supreme Court orders to ensure security for Kanhaiya Kumar and restricting entry of outsiders inside the court premises; a panel of senior lawyers sent by the Supreme Court to investigate the matter are also attacked by these hoodlums; the Delhi police remain a silent spectator to this complete breakdown of law and order, ignoring Supreme Court orders—an indication of the extent to which the country’s law and order machinery has become a complete pawn in the hands of the fascist forces; there is a deliberate delay in granting of bail to Kanhaiya even though it had become evident that he had been falsely implicated, and the sedition law under which he had been arrested was in any case inapplicable in this case; in the days that follow Kanhaiya’s arrest, students protesting against

government action in JNU in universities across the country are labelled as anti-nationals and brutally assaulted by ABVP activists.

Without a conscious strategy, perfect script and meticulous planning, such a perfect show would not be possible at all.

To Conclude

The RSS has been more than successful in spreading its tentacles at the grassroots across the country. It is this mass base that enabled the BJP to sweep the elections in 2014. This success has enabled the RSS to intensify its offensive to unite the 'Hindus' against the Muslims and Christians with the aim of transforming secular and democratic India into a Hindu Rashtra. There is no doubt. The very conception of India as a socialist, secular, egalitarian and democratic republic as visualised by our country's founders and enshrined in the Constitution of India is under threat.

Of course, progressive forces, especially the students and youth, are fighting back. A great movement is growing and spreading in many universities, from Hyderabad Central University and Jawaharlal Nehru University to Jadavpur University and Allahabad University, challenging the ABVP-BJP attempt to smother critical thinking and critical voices. After the lynching of 4 members of a Dalit family for skinning a dead cow in Una in Gujarat, Dalits have begun to mobilise in large numbers across the country against the growing atrocities on them, thereby tearing apart BJP-RSS plans to co-opt them into the 'Hindutva' fold.

But these secular-democratic-progressive movements still have a long way to go before they can

really challenge the BJP-RSS. While a majority of the people believe in democracy and the values of the Indian Constitution, presently, they are mired in hopelessness and remain mute spectators to this growing struggle between critical thinking and silent veneration, between secularism and communal hatred, between democracy and totalitarianism. We need to find creative ways to inspire them and involve them in these struggles. More importantly, the secular, democratic and progressive forces need to build a united movement to combat the fascist threat. The fascists are actually in a minority; it is because the progressive forces are so disunited that they appear to be so strong. The need for all progressive forces who share the values of the Indian Constitution to join hands has never been greater . . .

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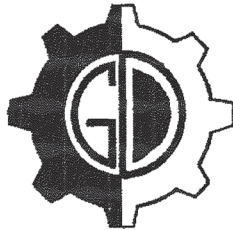
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Socialists, Jawaharlal Nehru and the legacy of Indian Freedom

Anil Nauriya

The historical juncture at which India finds itself requires redefinition and restructuring of the Socialist movement. The present-day Congress cannot entirely be separated from the legacy of the pre-freedom Indian National Congress, yet the former entity has distinct characteristics and must be organizationally distinguished from its historical predecessor. Moreover, with the current decline of the Congress, Socialists need to remind themselves that they are legatees of the space occupied by Indian nationalism since 1885. This includes the political legacy of, for example, early Indian nationalists like Badruddin Tyabji, Dadabhai Naoroji and Gopal Krishna Gokhale and the social legacy of Mahadev Govind Ranade that had inspired both Gokhale and Gandhi.

The split in the Indian National Congress in 1969 and the dissolution eight years later of the Congress(O), with its merger into the newly-formed Janata Party in 1977, had the undesirable consequence that the entire Congress space was ceded to Indira Gandhi's party, then known as Congress(I). It is this latter party which has in recent years been receding politically. In

the circumstances, it should not have been difficult to foresee that unless Socialists re-asserted themselves as legatees of the Indian freedom struggle as represented by the pre-freedom Indian National Congress, into which they were born and from which they have sprung, the vacuum left by the decline of the Congress would inevitably be filled by other forces.

It would not be meaningful, of course, to claim this larger national legacy, while neglecting the Indian socialist space itself. So it is necessary for Socialists to reclaim also the entire Socialist spectrum and political ferment represented by the founders of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934. Socialists must not confine themselves to a limited part of the Socialist trajectory. They need to come out of the time warp of the post-independence Lohia-Nehru controversies, particularly of the 1960s, with which some of them have got near-permanently embroiled and over which they have also become immoderately embittered. Lohia helped re-focus attention on five important issues: civil liberties, gender and colour-related inequalities, mass poverty, social backwardness

especially that entwined with caste, and linguistic iniquities. Many of these issues had engaged Indian nationalists earlier - for example, from Dadabhai Naoroji to Romesh Chandra Dutt on the economic aspects; to Gandhi, Abbas Tyabji, Motilal Nehru, C R Das and Tagore on civil liberties questions arising especially out of the 1919 events and after and Asaf Ali's inquiries on the NWFP and Bannu raids in 1938; to Narendra Deva and the language-related contradictions in the education system pointed out by the Education Committee headed by him in the United Provinces in 1938-39; to the Rashtriya Stree Sabha of the 1920s, Desh Sevika Sangh of the 1930s, Sarojini Naidu and socialists Kamladevi Chattopadhyaya, Rama Devi and Malati Choudhury on questions of the relation between nationalism and gender; to the entire legacy of constructive work associated with the freedom movement, as represented for example, by Thakkar Bapa, Kaka Kalelkar, Ginwala, Mithu Petit, Jugatram Dave, Khurshed Naoroji, B F Bharucha, Bibi Amtussalam, Perin Captain, Walunjkar, Zakir Husain, Asha Devi and Aryanayakam, and countless others. Lohia's own attachment to India's freedom movement and its legacy was reflected in his refusal to let go of the struggles that had taken place in the areas that were later included in Pakistan and his concern for legendary figures like the Frontier Gandhi, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the Baluch Gandhi, Khan Abdus Samad Khan and Punjab's Unionist leader Khizr Hayat Khan Tiwana, on all of whose post-partition years and days spent in Pakistani prisons Lohia maintained a vigilant watch.¹

The issues Lohia identified after independence were real and unresolved and many still

remain so. The salience that poverty measurement and poverty studies came to occupy in Indian economics and Indian planning, undoubtedly received an impetus from the dramatic manner in which the question of the per capita per diem earning was highlighted by Lohia in the Lok Sabha in 1963. Similarly, the urgency of the need for affirmative action in favour of "Other Backward Classes" was, in an appreciable measure, inspired by the importance attached by Lohia to the advancement of these groups. Language policy questions also came to the fore, in part, because of Lohia's emphasis on correcting the disadvantages attaching to a non-English-medium education, particularly in north India. Yet the triumphalism sometimes indulged in by a section of Socialists over the Lohia-Nehru debates and such passages-at-arms as the "3 anna versus 15 anna" controversies needs to be tempered with the understanding that the bonafides of the protagonists was not in question.

The answers Lohia provided to some of the social, linguistic and cultural issues he raised are not necessarily so complete or final that they cannot be supplemented, fine-tuned or re-thought.² On other issues too, remaining confined to some of the debates of the 1960s and the thinking that emerged then has constricted the intellectual growth of the socialist movement. A similar point was once made also by the late Kishan Patnaik in Janata in 1980.³ It is useful to recall here also that the late Surendra Mohan, in an introspective article written for Janata, had once pointed to the connection between the negativities in the opposition politics of the late sixties and the negativities of the post-Shastri establishment.

Another aspect of the matter is worth appreciating. The writings of Lohia and the politics of Lohia need, to some extent, to be distinguished as these are not necessarily congruent. Speaking generally, I would rate the writings of both Lohia and JP considerably higher than their politics - especially Lohia's politics in the 1960s and JP's in the 1970s. [Incidentally, this is the reverse of what is true in the case of Mahatma Gandhi whose praxis would often race ahead of his writings, phenomenal though these themselves were; Gandhi himself recognized this when he said that his writings could be burnt for all he cared and that it was his life that was his message; in the same vein, Nehru too had once observed how much greater Gandhi was than his "little books".]

Every movement requires periodic renewal; its dominant doctrines and practices need to be reconsidered in the light of experience. The political alliances Lohia forged and also the thinking associated with these alliances certainly need to be re-thought in the light of subsequent experience and also the changed circumstances in which the Congress is no longer the force that it used to be. The Socialist alliance with the Jana Sangh in the run-up to the General Elections of 1967 opened the route to further such unthinking linkages by Jayaprakash Narayan in the mid-1970s and by V P Singh in the late 1980s. The remedies sought by Lohia, JP and V P Singh, and especially the manner in which these were sought, may have proved worse than the disease. Few precautions were taken by them in the forging of their strategies and no adequate steps taken for the ideological training of cadres. Even if such precautions had been taken, it should have been obvious that aligning with reactionary forces, whether tacitly

or otherwise, would have long-term deleterious ramifications for the country.

Similarly, Socialists critically must re-examine the caste-orientations that have come to be associated with some of them. This is so especially where they graduate to running governments. They need, to put it as mildly as possible, to nuance their approaches; religious sectarianism can perhaps be obstructed but not wholly countered through caste-centric politics. Caste is relevant as a social reality whose influence one must seek to reduce and counter-act; it is also relevant as a basis for hostile discrimination which one must seek to eliminate. Caste cannot become an organizing-principle in itself since such mobilization is both intellectually and practically self-defeating.⁴ In an introspective article some decades ago, the late Kishan Patnaik had also deprecated attempts made by Socialists “to bolster the middle caste lobbies for electoral power politics”.⁵ The Socialist movement needs to return to Narendra Deva’s insight that the institution of caste is essentially anti-democratic.

In their pursuit of democracy too, Socialists must not confine themselves to the civil liberties framework which tends to restrict them to pre-occupation with Constitutional and legal transgressions like the Emergency, while often neglecting the social changes that underpin such phenomena and also developments like the growth of fascist tendencies that sometimes skirt these phenomena. The civil liberties movement and the socialist movement are distinct though these may in certain respects overlap.

Socialists must positively re-engage with the legacy of Jawaharlal Nehru in his role as a great fighter

for Indian freedom and connect with him just as the founders of the Congress Socialist party had. The founders of the Socialist movement did not see themselves as being apart from Nehru. Narendra Deva in his presidential address at the first session of the of the All-India Congress Socialist Conference at Patna on 17 May 1934 had in his opening words referred to Nehru in the following terms: “My task is made all the more difficult by the absence of our beloved friend, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, whose absence today we all so keenly feel and whose valuable advice and guidance would have been of immense value to us on this occasion”. Twelve years later, Narendra Deva wrote a perceptive appraisal of Nehru. Narendra Deva recognized that “Jawaharlalji took great interest in class-organisation. He was elected President of the All-India Trade Union Congress in the year 1929 and it has been his constant endeavour to make the Congress interest itself in the economic struggles of the workers. He tried to bring economic questions to the forefront. The resolution of Fundamental Rights passed at the Karachi Congress in 1931 was his contribution. His activities brought about a general radicalization of political thought in the country.”⁶

On Nehru’s attitude toward religion, Narendra Deva reflected: “Religion in its institutional form is repugnant to him as it is the bulwark of reaction and the defender of status quo. Its function in society has been to make social inequalities less irksome to the lower classes. But he has no quarrel with that purer form of religious faith which inspires the conduct of individuals. He, however, believes in ethical social conduct and has a deep sense of human values.”⁷

It was Nehru who, as Congress President in 1936, had re-organised the Congress headquarters and given Lohia charge of its Foreign Department. Nearly 40 years younger to Gandhi and some 19 years to Nehru, Lohia wrote to the latter on 23 May 1946: “...please don’t forget that you and another have influenced men like me so much that there never has been a place for a third nor ever shall be”. A photocopy of Lohia’s letter to Nehru was published by the socialist Bhola Chatterji (1922-1992) in an article in Sunday magazine some decades ago.

The socialist leader and intellectual, Madhu Limaye, who was close to Lohia and nearly three decades younger than Nehru, was conscious of the need “to take an objective view and keep out my personal likes and dislikes, prejudices and predilections”; he refers to Jawaharlalji as the “uncompromising sentinel of Independence” and acknowledges that he “gave a new orientation to (the) Congress policy and programme”; and that “he championed the cause of the peasantry” and “took up the case of the workers working in mines and the factories who were being treated as slaves”.

Jawaharlal Nehru is an intrinsic part of the nationalist legacy of Indian freedom; nor can the Indian socialist legacy be defined or recalled by excluding him. On inter-communal questions, which have a bearing on the very definition of India, Nehru’s record is par excellence and second only to that of Mahatma Gandhi.

Socialists must re-engage positively also with Jawaharlal Nehru as the builder of post-independence India. Madhu Limaye has fairly acknowledged Nehru’s initiative in bringing about reform in Hindu law in the 1950s.⁸ It

was Nehru who got the Congress committed to a socialistic pattern of society in its session at Avadi in 1955. The building up of the public sector enabled India for long to hold its own in a world that various international powers sought to bend to their own image. Stupendous efforts were made under Nehru to reduce India's external dependence on oil. How vital this effort was may be gauged from the lengths to which Western powers went in opposing similar Iranian efforts under Prime Minister Mossadegh against whom a successful coup was organized in the 1950s. [This latter story has been documented by Christopher de Bellaigue in his recent book, *Patriot of Persia: Muhammad Mossadegh and a Very British Coup*] The building up of an independent public sector tradition had other ramifications as well. The emphasis on research and development, 90 percent of which was done in the public sector, induced a tradition of self-reliance, partly squandered by later regimes. In the case of drugs, this tradition has enabled Indian firms today to be prime suppliers of relatively-low-priced vital medication to countries with similar problems as ours, such as countries in Africa.

Nehru respected Parliament and urged the judiciary, nurtured in colonial times, to recognize social concerns in a changing India. At least two rounds of land reform legislation, at the onset of the fifties and sixties, took place under Nehru's leadership. Above all and in spite of the bitterness ensuing from the country's partition in 1947, Nehru maintained inter-communal peace, with the first major riot occurring only in the early sixties. The extent to which Nehru moulded the post-independence Congress may be gauged from remarks that Jayaprakash Narayan

made in July 1964, a few weeks after Jawaharlalji's death. JP was reported to have said that leaving the Congress in 1948 to form the Socialist Party was a mistake committed on account of "the wrong assessment of the character of the Congress".⁹ According to JP, "(m)ost of his partymen thought at that time that the Congress would slowly develop into a conservative-cum-liberal party just like 'what the Swatantra Party is today'. But history belied this assessment".¹⁰ [Ironically, the then assessment may have provided an accurate description of the later post-Emergency Congress and especially towards the last two decades of the twentieth century.] Clearly, JP's assessment of Nehru's administration and Lohia's understanding were quite different. This consideration too should induce Socialists to broaden their understanding of Nehru.

Socialists energetically must counter the maligning and attempted discrediting of Gandhi and of Nehru by the Hindu Mahasabha, the Bharatiya Janata Party, the RSS and their associate organizations and supporters. This tendency has been in evidence for several decades; but it has lately assumed a virulent character. The direct attacks on Gandhi which used to be made by the RSS and its associates in the Jana Sangh days have, since they proved ineffective for their purposes, been replaced with more subtle strategies that would seek to invoke Gandhi for such matters as cleaning-up while ignoring his pluralism and mocking his humanism. The direct attacks are now made mainly by the Mahasabha and its related organizations which have sought even to glorify Gandhi's assassins. In the case of Nehru, the direct attacks, combined with efforts to erase his memory, are made by the entire Mahasabha-RSS-BJP-continuum. At the recent Indo-

African summit in New Delhi, the tendency referred to here was carried to the point where the African dignitaries had to remind the current Indian government of the shared vision and positive contributions of Gandhi and Nehru to Africa and its struggles.

It is incumbent for socialists in these times to defend not only Gandhi's but also Nehru's legacy against attacks from communal-sectarian forces; when Gandhi and Nehru are sought to be belittled, especially by forces unfriendly to the composite national struggle for freedom, it is the entire struggle that is sought to be traduced.

Socialists must seek to cultivate a scientific approach to the evaluation of Nehru. The currently dominant Socialist attitude toward Nehru induces some of them into making overt and covert arrangements with the BJP and its associates, just as they had in the past with BJP's predecessors. This predilection needs rectification. The Draft Platform of the Socialist Party in 1972 had ruled out any *modus vivendi* with the Jana Sangh. Yet this formulation was abandoned within a couple of years of it being advanced.

As inheritors of the heritage of the Indian freedom struggle, Socialists naturally speak of Gandhi, Narendra Deva, Jayaprakash, Yusuf Meherally and Lohia. They have no difficulty also in seeking bridges between the social struggles of Gandhi and of Ambedkar; although the latter was an outsider to the political struggle for Indian freedom, his social legacies are correctly seen by Socialists as being convergent with their own objectives, as Lohia himself recognized in the fifties. Why then the contemporary reluctance of a section of Socialists to recognize their obvious affinities

*Between the Lines***Dilemma before Sonia Gandhi****Kuldip Nayar**

and convergences with Jawaharlal Nehru? It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Nehru is unjustly excluded for subjective and even irrational reasons connected with the Lohia-Nehru controversies and because family domination emerged within the Congress especially after the crisis of the Emergency in 1975-77. Such exclusion is patently unfair to Jawaharlal Nehru, attacking whom has become a major organizing point for Hindutva. Besides, to remain silent in the face of such attacks has the effect of denying the 20th century history of the Indian nation's strivings and aspirations, a denial which, of course, the Hindutva forces ardently desire.

The crucial issue before the country is the social fascism associated with the ascendancy of the currently ruling forces and their associate organizations. Though it is right in this context to focus on protection of civil liberties and on safeguards against a repeat of the Emergency, it is necessary to go beyond form and formalism. There is an undeclared social emergency in the country. Developments in rural western Uttar Pradesh in the run-up to the 2014 General Elections should have left no doubt on that score. The lives and property of members of minority communities, Dalits and poor peasants are endangered. These forces operate with the support of elements within the Central and provincial state apparatus, the business world and affluent non-resident Indians. The fight against the malaise of corruption is only one part of the larger question of the accountability of power; the latter subsumes within itself struggles against governmental malfeasance and misfeasance in protecting citizens' lives and welfare. Such accountability and protection is a solemn obligation

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I wish I could agree with Congress president Sonia Gandhi that compassion was the distinctive character of her mother-in-law, Indira Gandhi. A person with an iota of consideration for individual freedom would not have detained 100,000 people without trial as she did during the Emergency in 1975. Not only that she also gagged the press and moulded the society in such a way that it had no hesitation to cross thin line between right and wrong, moral and immoral.

True, Indira Gandhi did help the people of the then East Pakistan in their struggle to free themselves from the distant Rawalpindi and the atrocities which the army committed against the Bangladeshis. Sonia Gandhi tells in a television interview with Rajdeep Sardesai that the then Prime Minister would tell them at the dining table how the Punjabi army was killing the people in Bangladesh intentionally, without remorse.

Probably, the liberation of Bangladesh was her finest hour and the opposition leader Atal Behari Vajpayee hailed her as Goddess Durga for having divided Pakistan. This obviated the danger of attack on India from the eastern side. However, the fact remains that the partition formula which recognized the two parts of Pakistan, East and West, was not followed.

Pakistan never forgave India for the separation although the Hamoodar Rahman Commission

report on the Bangladesh war blames people in West Pakistan for treating the Bangladeshis as second class citizens. This may be the real reason why the Bangladeshis rose against Rawalpindi and freed themselves from its clutches.

During the birth centenary of Mrs Gandhi, which is being currently celebrated, two things will be remembered, one commendable and another condemnable. The first relates to the liberation of Bangladesh and the second is connected with the Emergency.

As was probably agreed to before the interview, Rajdeep does not ask Sonia Gandhi any question about the Emergency. Once he tries to bring in Sanjay Gandhi but she corrects him that the interview was on Indira Gandhi. Sonia Gandhi refuses to compare Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Indira Gandhi. She merely says that they were two different people. She refuses to elucidate even though Rajdeep repeats the question.

At one time I too was on personal terms with Mrs Gandhi. I met her when the then Home Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri was a member of the Citizens Committee which Jawaharlal Nehru had constituted under her to reinvigorate the people who felt dejected after the debacle against China in 1962. Although I was a mere information officer, she had no qualms about treating people at par.

Despite our good relations, she had no compunction in detaining me during the Emergency. We never met after the detention although there were feelers from her side expressing her desire to meet me. I was too bitter to entertain the idea.

It was said about her that she was the only 'man' in the cabinet. She was assertive and clear in orders she gave. The Emergency, however, was thrust upon her by Sanjay Gandhi and his cohort Siddhartha Shankar Ray, then West Bengal chief minister. Probably, she too realized that it was her only chance to wriggle herself out of the Allahabad High Court verdict which had unseated her. Indeed, it was a hard punishment for a poll indiscretion.

But it was a judgment which had to be respected. She not only suspended the Constitution to do away with the judgment but also introduced authoritarianism which was not a part of the democratic governance. The entire parliament caved in and the members, because of fear, endorsed the Emergency without a whimper. They, otherwise, would criticize in private what she did.

Most pathetic was the role of the media. I recall that when the Emergency was imposed there was anger and more than a hundred journalists assembled at the Press Club at my bidding to condemn her act. But when I tried to pick up the threat after my detention for three months, there was hardly anyone to support me. Mrs Gandhi had created so much of fear in the minds of journalists that they were more worried about their jobs than the concept of the freedom of the press, which they otherwise cherished.

The problem with the Congress party today is that it has not gone beyond the dynastic dependence. And, somehow, the people are not enamoured of the dynasty anymore. Rahul Gandhi doesn't sell although he passionately and honestly pursues the Congress principles laid down by his great grandfather Nehru. Priyanka, Sonia Gandhi's daughter, goes down well with the masses. This is probably because she reminds them of Indira Gandhi, who still enjoys pre-eminence in their thoughts.

All this is true, yet the Congress has lost its relevance and the party has to work hard to make people believe that it can provide an alternative. Prime Minister Modi is still acceptable in spite of the steps like demonetization of currency. People believe that it was all for their good even though they have to face inconvenience.

It is a long haul for the Congress to push out the BJP from power. The biggest problem is that secularism is not a concept as attractive as it used to be once. The people themselves have been influenced by Hindutva thoughts. In fact, there is a soft Hindutva in the country today. How to resell the idea of India, that is democratic and secular polity, is the arduous task which the Congress is facing today.

That is probably the reason why Sonia Gandhi talked in terms of compassion when she was giving interview at the Anand Bhavan in Allahabad. In a way she has chalked out the programme before the Congress on the eve of elections in UP. Much will depend on how the various parties fare in the state polls.

That may influence the parliamentary election in 2019 and give direction to the country, including the Congress. The party's problem is that it has not won any election so far since the advent of Modi. Even in the Maharashtra civic polls the BJP is ahead of the Congress. Gujarat has gone completely to the BJP. This should worry the secular, liberal forces. The BJP is entrenching itself and the Congress is going down.

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by
Rohini Gawankar

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State of affairs of higher education in india

Sandeep Pandey

In a country which neglects its school education can we expect a good quality higher education programme? All the governments, since 1968 Kothari Commission recommendation of Common School System was made, have successfully evaded implementation of the idea. With the adoption of policies of privatization, globalization and liberalization as part of the new economic policies since the early 1990s, two types of education system can clearly be discerned. The rich are sending their children to private schools whereas the poor don't have any choice but to send their children to sub-standard government schools which forecloses any respectable option for the child's future. The child attending the government school would consider herself lucky if she were to complete the 12 years of schooling. As there is no teaching, a system is in place which enables students to pass their Board examinations by mass copying in exchange for a compulsory payment of Rs. 5,000, with an option of somebody else writing the examination in place of the real candidate for double the amount. In Bihar it is possible to even be the topper in this system. In the last academic year, Ruby Rai, Saurabh Shrestha, Rahul Kumar and Shalini Rai, had the honour of being the fake toppers and people who made it possible, Lalkeshwar Prasad, Chairman of Bihar State Education Board and his MLA wife Usha Sinha are behind bars.

The same parents who are averse to sending their children to government schools want their children to be admitted to government institutions when it comes to higher education as the best of them like Indian Institutes of Technology, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Indian Institutes of Management and National Law Schools are run by the government. India is one of the rare countries which allocate more budget to higher education than basic school education. The Indian elite whose children do not attend the government schools is not bothered about the quality of basic education in these schools but ensures good quality in higher educational institutions because their children attend them.

The private schools run like private corporations. In addition to charging high fees their sole focus is on performance. City Montessori School, which claims to be the biggest school in the world, with 20 branches in Lucknow, transfers low performing students from its school to other schools in the city at the class IX stage so that the performance of school in Board Examinations is not marred. Where the emphasis is on securing marks, and unfortunately the coaching institutions have made the entrance examinations to medicine, engineering and law institutions extremely cut throat competitive, the whole purpose of education is lost. A child in a private school with an aim to make it to one of the elite engineering, medicine or law institutes doesn't

have time to think about anything else. In fact, he is taught not to get digressed from his single minded pursuit.

Because of the foundation laid during school education when the student enters higher educational institutions the same old approach of securing marks is the priority for students. Teachers do not help improve the environment. Independent thinking, inquisitive mind is discouraged rather than being encouraged. Understanding the subject is not important, securing marks is. Hence our higher educational institutions don't produce enlightened citizens and sensitive human beings which a humane society would need. They are more like products of some mechanized operation themselves ready to become a cog in the wheel in some suitable setup which pays them well. Neither do they get an opportunity to devote any time to meta level thinking so that they may contribute for the benefit of humankind at a higher level and contribute towards advancement of human society. Indulging in philosophical thinking is considered waste of time.

Some students from modest background, for example, from Navodaya school do make it to the elite higher educational institutions. But it becomes another struggle for them to cope with largely English medium instruction. Some SC/ST and OBC students make it to these institutions taking advantage of the reservation of seats for

Nuclear weapons should not even be considered

Bharat Dogra

them. Chances of a SC/ST student from a vernacular medium school not performing well are higher because of her weak socio-economic background, which poses a dual disadvantage for them. A recent research on a survey conducted of students from Indian Institute of Technology at Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi has shown that the performance of students from SC/ST category is lower than that from general category by about a grade point on an average.

In a World Economic Forum ranking India's higher education is placed at 81st position out of 138 countries. According to another ranking India's Human Capital Index, which includes physical capacities, cognitive function and mental health/abilities, India is at 105th position out of 140 countries, last among all BRICS nations. Considering that India was at one time pioneer in the field of higher education with Nalanda and Taxila established at least a 500 years earlier than the first University which came into existence in Europe and which used to attract students from faraway countries, it is really a pathetic state of affairs today. Except for a few good quality institutions which can be counted on fingers most of higher education in today's India is farce. A country which boasts of one of the largest scientific and technological human power depends on outside world for most of its sophisticated technological needs. Indian students who are known to be involved in stupendous research overseas fail to function in domestic setups as a result their contribution don't directly benefit India most of the time. No Indian academician has been awarded a Nobel for their work in India since Independence.

One extremely unfortunate aspect of the recent escalation of hostilities between India and Pakistan has been that at times threats regarding use of nuclear weapons have been exchanged in a very irresponsible way. Such threats should be avoided even in hostile conditions as the implications of use of nuclear weapons are simply too disastrous to be contemplated.

The ghastly tragedy resulting from the use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki is well known. The existing nuclear weapons have a capacity to cause destruction which is a multiple of over 10000 of what was caused in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Hiroshima, August 6, 1945 : Father Kleinsorge, a German missionary, heard pathetic voices of people asking for water. When he managed to reach the place from where the voice had come, he saw nearly 20 persons, all of them in similar condition - their faces were wholly burned, their eye sockets were hollow, the fluid from their melted eyes had run down their cheeks.

It is images such as these from Hiroshima and Nagasaki which lead several people to conclude that the luckiest people in a place hit by an atomic bomb are those who die instantly.

Temperature at the hypocentre of the explosion reaching the double of what it takes to melt iron, the face of a schoolgirl sitting almost a

kilometer away from this hypocentre being burnt beyond recognition, skin sloughing off scalded bodies, badly injured starving people unable to swallow anything because of the stench of dead bodies - this was the devastation caused by a 12.5 Kiloton bomb in Hiroshima which killed and wounded as many people as a mass raid of 279 aircrafts, laden to capacity with bombs, striking at a city ten times as populous.

Nearly one hundred thousand people were killed within a few minutes in Hiroshima and Nagasaki after being hit by nuclear weapons in 1945, but if we count the longer-term deaths, those caused by internal bleeding, leukaemia, various other forms of cancer, then the death toll is likely to be as high as 3,50,000. In addition the next generation continued to pay for this cruelty in the form of children born with mental retardation, physical deformities and other serious health problems.

So cruel was the devastation that all of us must necessarily ask - we certainly do not want Hiroshima to happen to our friends, but do we want it to happen even to our worst enemies?

Despite this, the incredibly cruel fact remains that humankind now possesses nuclear weapons which are many times more powerful than the ones used in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and efforts are constantly on to increase the destructiveness of these weapons. There are over

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Political Resolution of the Socialist Party(India) *passed in the 4th National Convention held in Lucknow on 14-15 November 2016*

Most of the established parties do all sorts of things to grab power during state and center elections. False promises, personal allegations and counter-allegations, communal tension, casteism, regionalism, lingualism, individualism, dynasty politics, money & muscle power, conspiracy and all such tactics are used shamelessly. Superficial sympathy is shown towards deprived sections of society to mislead the poor and working class in order to bring them in respective parties' fold. The media, following the maxim of 'people buy what they see' serves up this anti-people politics 24X7. In the midst of all this cacophony, there's no space for meaningful debate on fundamental issues like poverty, the complexities of the chasm between the rich and the poor, unemployment, illiteracy, malnutrition, suicides by lakhs of farmers, suppression of civil rights, the increasing vulnerability of tribals, dalits, women, minorities and environmental destruction. Actually, all mainstream parties are in union since the beginning of nineties on implementing the policies of liberalization, privatization, globalization, consumerism, centralism and jingoistic nationalism. These parties frame their policies for the profiteering of national and multi-national corporate, following the dictates of the World Bank, IMF, WTO and other such organizations which propagate corporate capitalism. Thus, the main stream political parties have become agents for the sell-off of natural resources - water, forest and land - to the big corporate houses on throw away

prices.

The neoliberal capitalist era has wreaked havoc at the global level too. The powerful and so-called civilized nations have pushed many countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Egypt, Sudan, Congo, Mali, Mozambique etc into long term civil war or armed conflict with the sole purpose of selling arms, gaining contracts and getting access to these countries' oil, gas and mineral resources for their corporates. These nations ensure the supply of funds and ammunitions to terrorist organizations like the Taliban, ISIS, Al Shabab, Hizbul Mujahideen even though terror incidents are happening in European countries and America as well. Due to all this millions of men-women-children are condemned to live in refugee camps for many years. During the past years many thousands of people setting out for Europe via the Mediterranean Sea have drowned in it. The human traffic and drug mafia network throughout the world is extorting money from war ridden nations in Asia and Africa and channeling it back to Europe. It is also forcing women into prostitution and youngsters into debilitating addiction on a large scale. The black money of politicians, industrialists, bureaucrats, brokers of all countries is stored from Swiss banks to offshore tax heavens. The United Nations, UN Security Council, European Union etc. have not been able to find solutions to these human civilization threatening problems so far.

Through this national convention Socialist Party calls upon like-minded people and organizations in India and the world to reject this capitalist-consumerist model of development based upon indiscriminate plundering of natural resources by powerful nations and corporate houses. They must think of an alternative models of development based on preserving environment, equality, simplicity, decentralization and co-operative planning to eject the inhumanity out of the vicious cycle of violence and oppression.

In our state assemblies and parliament, three-fourth of the elected members are millionaires winning elections with money-power, who have nothing to do with issues of poor and working class people. It is obvious that there is a need of fundamental reforms in the election system too. Socialist Party demands that expenses done by parties should be added to the expenses done by respective party candidates. All political parties should be brought under the ambit of the Right to Information Act (RTI) for their property and income-expenditures. Instead of declaring the candidate with highest number of votes as the winner, proportional representational system based on ratio of votes should be implemented.

Since the beginning of neo-liberal policies, anti-laborer and pro-industrialist changes have been introduced in the labor sector. Socialist Party demands that original labor laws should strictly and completely be implemented. If there

is need of pro-labor change in labor laws then trade union representatives should be taken into confidence. Socialist Party supports the 12 points demand charter submitted by Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) along with other trade unions.

The present government has ignited a debate on Uniform Civil Code targetting the Muslim community. The Socialist party believes that in a country like India, consisting of various minorities, a uniform civil code is neither possible nor necessary. The sensitivity of each religious group has to be respected and the majority of religious group has no right to foist its own practices on other minorities. Even amongst majority i.e. Hindus different practices prevail. Thus in North marriage between uncle (Mama) and niece is unimaginable, while in the south this practice is quite prevalent.

The question of Triple Talaq is being heard before the Supreme Court and has no relevance to the question of Uniform Civil Code, which is a separate category.

The question of discrimination against women is the real question in this subject. The fact that many Muslim Countries, including Pakistan and Bangladesh do not have instant Talaq under their law, and many Muslim scholars in India have openly said that under Islam Triple Talaq as practised to be found in India is not sanctioned. Even Pakistan and Bangladesh do not allow instant Triple Talaq. It may be noted that in Bangladesh Hindu Minority is still following Hindu Law of pre-1947 period and has opposed any reforms on the line of those enacted since 1956 in India. The Socialist Party condemns the mala fide intention of RSS and other communal bodies to heighten

tension amongst the minorities on this subject.

The Socialist party views with great concern the continuous deterioration of Human Rights in Jammu and Kashmir: Schools are closed under directive from Hurriyat, children have been arrested under Public Safety Act, the killings by the security forces even of small children and blinding by pellet guns are grave matters of daily pain and suffering. The Party demands that the children should be immediately released and all efforts should be made to reopen schools through process peaceful dialogue.

The party calls upon the central government to immediately initiate dialogue with all parties, groups, and Hurriyat. There should be no pre-condition for talks either from the government, Hurriyat or other groups. The central government should withdraw Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) which has been a long standing demand of all human right bodies. At the same time people of Kashmir should be assured by the central government that the Article 370 of the Constitution will be maintained strictly and that there will be no dilution done in it.

Ever since the BJP has come to power communal tensions have increased in society. Minority Muslims, dalits and tribals have been violently and even fatally attacked. Communal hysteria was whipped up first in the name of 'love jihad' and then 'goraksha', which has left the minorities and dalits feeling very vulnerable and insecure. The RSS and allied organizations are doing all these acts. They have an undeclared support of the BJP, government and the Prime Minister. All this is being done as a strategy to manipulate the majority Hindu vote bank. This government has

not even spared the national flag and army for electoral gains. The RSS, which worked for British rule during the freedom struggle, is now self-proclaiming to be nationalist and blaming other political parties and dissenting organizations and people to be anti-nationals. It does not appear that government believes in the Constitution of India to run the country. The Prime Minister and his team have brought most of the mainstream media into their fold using state and corporate power.

This government has handed over the economy to corporate houses and the society to hooligans of RSS. The government, with its intentions of implementing the agenda of RSS, has not only intervened in the working of schools, higher education and research institutions, but has also harassed Dalit and weaker sections' students. The BJP has many leaders from the Dalit, backward and Muslim background, who are not associated with RSS but are silent. Congress and other regional party leaders and governments are not working effectively to curb the activities of RSS that aim to sabotage the constitutional setup of India. In Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party's government has not taken effective actions against criminal acts sponsored by RSS. The Socialist Party through this national convention wants to alert people of India that they should seriously look into the intentions and actions of RSS/BJP of dividing the society and oppose them.

The Socialist Party inspired by the inheritance of great leaders and thinkers like Acharya Narendra Deva, Gandhi, Dr. Ambedkar, Bhagat Singh, JP, Dr. Lohia, SM Joshi, Yusuf Meherally, Achyut Patwardhan, Kamladevi Chattopadhyaya, Sarojini Naidu, Karpoori Thakur, Madhu Limaye,

Kishan Patnaik, reaffirms its faith in the fundamental principles of

socialism and its pledge to establish a socialist order uprooting neo-

liberal order in solidarity with the working class.

Pledge

The policies of globalisation, liberalisation and privatisation being implemented in the country over the last more than two decades have pushed the Indian economy into a deep external and internal crisis. The external debt of the country has crossed a record \$480 billion. To entice foreign investors into the country, the 'swadeshi' BJP is surrendering to their conditionalities. Even defence and railways are being thrown open to foreign investors; it has quietly dropped its opposition to FDI in retail sector, which will destroy the livelihoods of crores of small retailers; steps are being taken to privatise the financial sector and hand over control of lakhs of crores of rupees of people's savings to speculators; it is bending over backwards to meet US objections to India's nuclear liability law. Even our independent defence policy is being jettisoned and military agreements are being signed with the US that will make India into a subordinate military ally of the Americans.

The country is now being run only for the profiteering of giant foreign and Indian corporations. On the one hand, the government is giving tax concessions to the rich and writing of their bank loans to the tune of lakhs of crores of rupees, as well as handing over control of our infrastructural and financial sectors and our mineral resources to big private foreign and Indian corporations for their plunder. Throwing all democratic norms to the winds, laws are being modified to enable state governments to drive out people from their lands and forests, and hand them over to big corporations for exploiting mineral

resources, or for building giant infrastructural projects, big dams, elite housing projects and so on.

And on the other hand, the government is implementing policies that have drastically affected the livelihoods of crores of common people. As it is, the employment situation in the country was precarious, with less than 10% of the total jobs available in the economy being formal jobs where workers have some legal rights and job security. To enable corporations to maximise their profits, the government is now demolishing labour laws so that businesses can eliminate even these limited formal workers and replace them with contract workers, hire and fire them at will, pay them rock bottom wages and force them to work for 10-14 hours without paying overtime wages. Even in the unorganised sector, job creation has considerably slowed down. Livelihood of workers in each and every sector, from fish-workers to farmers, from weavers to garbage workers to daily wage labourers, is being adversely affected by neoliberal policies. Thus, in agriculture, public investment is falling; both input subsidies and output support to farmers are being drastically cut; farmers are finding it difficult to access loans from banks at subsidised rates, pushing them into clutches of moneylenders – all these policies have pushed the farming sector into such deep crisis that more than 3 lakh farmers have committed suicide over the past two decades. It is this worsening of the unemployment crisis due to two decades of globalisation policies that is at the root of the massive mobilisation of Jats in

Haryana, Patels in Gujarat and now the Marathas in Maharashtra.

As it is, the Indian government's social sector expenditures were very low; as a part of the neoliberal reforms the present government is now further reducing them. It is because of these low welfare expenditures of the government that the majority of the people in the cities are forced to live in subhuman conditions in slums. The sharp cuts being made in government spending on education, and the resulting privatisation and commercialisation of education, has led to school and college fees going through the roof, pushing education beyond the reach of the vast majority of the population. The destruction of our public health system has made India the disease capital of the world. Steps are being taken to even eliminate our ration system (PDS) whose aim was to keep food prices in check and provide essential food grains to the country's starving millions at subsidised prices.

Taking advantage of the worsening economic crisis, the BJP had launched a huge propaganda campaign during elections to the 16th Lok Sabha held in April-May 2014, promising the people 'acche din', and swept the elections. However, after coming to power, the Modi government is implementing the very same policies of capitalist globalisation, only at a much faster pace and in a blind manner. What is new, and of even more serious concern, is that the RSS/BJP are simultaneously implementing a regressive communal fascist agenda to transform the secular India into a 'Hindu Rashtra' of their dream.

In order to promote unscientific, obscurantist mentality even in the field of education and research persons with RSS leanings are being appointed as heads of all important academic-cultural-research institutions. Education is being communalised. Simultaneously, the RSS/BJP have launched a vicious offensive to attack all ideologies and progressive forces that can challenge their fanatic Hindutva agenda in the name of a false nationalism. Even more serious and divisive are pronouncements by RSS/BJP leaders valorising Nathuram Godse, the killer of Mahatma Gandhi. There is no doubt that it is this atmosphere of hatred and intolerance being created by the RSS/BJP that have given birth to the fanatic goons who are responsible for the cowardly killings of Dr. Narendra Dabholkar, Comrade Govind Pansare and Prof. M.M. Kalburgi.

The present spectre in the country proves that neo-liberalism and fascism are twin brothers; the former creates the ground for the latter, and the latter by its rejection of the principles of democracy, makes it possible for corporate houses to continue with their accelerated profit accumulation despite the worsening economic crisis. This global capitalist model of development is pushing underdeveloped countries like India into deep economic and social crisis and also the world towards an unprecedented global ecological crisis.

It is at this critical juncture, when:

- Policies of capitalist globalisation have pushed the country into an unprecedented economic crisis;
- RSS/BJP are threatening the very conception of India as a socialist, secular and democratic republic as enshrined in the Constitution

of India; and

- Earth is facing an environmental emergency that is endangering most species on the planet, including our own -

We, the delegates to the 4th National Convention of the Socialist Party (India) resolve to

- * Establish an alternative socialist model of development focussing on village level agro-industries and small scale industries which provides decent and well paid jobs to unemployed youth;
- * Local people's control over resources and planning under the doctrine of Chaukhamba Raj (Four Pillar State) propounded by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia;
- * Defend agriculture from capitalist-imperialist onslaught and promotion of innovative methods of agriculture based on sustainable and environment friendly approach/policies; we oppose GM foods;
- * Fight against privatisation and commercialisation of education; we stand for an education system that provides compulsory, common, equitable and truly good quality education to all children/students from KG to PG by the state; we stand for an education policy that promotes scientific and secular approach in order to inculcate values of democracy, secularism, gender equality and elimination of caste in students;
- * Oppose FDI in the Defence and pursue an independent defence policy in order to combat neo-imperialism;
- * Fight against the ongoing privatisation of public sector corporations and public sector financial corporations and pension funds;

- * Support the ongoing struggles of the workers' unions against government attempts to weaken labour laws and extend our support to their 12-point charter of demands including decent minimum wage, inflation-indexed minimum wage and abolition of contractualisation of labour as voiced during the recent all-India strike on September 2, 2016;
- * Extend support to all peoples' struggles taking place across the country, whether it be people fighting against destructive nuclear and coal fired power plants, or people fighting against land acquisition for industrial corridors or giant infrastructural projects without their consent and without adequate compensation and rehabilitation, or farmers fighting for more government support for agriculture, or people fighting against violation of human rights and civil liberties, or people fighting against the atrocities on vulnerable sections such as dalits, tribals, minorities, women, children;
- * Struggle for a health care policy that reverses the present privatisation of health care and provide easily affordable and good quality health care to all people as a right;
- * Put pressure on the Indian government to renegotiate its external debt with earlier colonial powers and demand that it be written off, and instead demand compensation for 200 years of British colonial rule that has crippled our economy;
- * Work for building a casteless and genuinely secular society;
- * Struggle for building a society wherein women and men are genuinely equal.

Thus Stands the Socialist Party
Upholding Brotherhood and Equality

Demonetisation of high-value currency in india

Chandra Bhal Tripathi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi suddenly announced on the evening of November 8, 2016 that from that midnight Indian notes of the value of Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 would cease to be legal tender. Certain relaxations were announced as a stop gap measure until December 30, 2016. These orders were amended on almost daily basis changing the limits or expanding the number of institutions and agencies where the people could seek relief. India witnessed the spectacle of millions and millions of middle class, working class, poor people and daily wage earners standing for hours in serpentine queues in order to change their old notes into new notes within limits. The worst sufferers were daily wage earners, small vendors, vegetable sellers, rickshaw pullers who did not have any bank account and had their meagre savings in the form of Rs. 500 notes. In majority of the cases they would return empty handed because after waiting for hours when their turn came they were told that the bank had run out of cash. The story of the account holders wanting to withdraw their own money for their daily use was not much better as they too had to stand in queues and return disappointed due to the same reason of want of adequate cash. Bulk of the ATMs were non-functional as they had not been recalibrated to suit the size of the new notes.

Thousands of families in every city went without two square meals and in some cases even without one meal because in the absence of smaller notes they could not buy their daily needs of food, vegetables

and milk. In Delhi a 22-year old girl committed suicide after standing in the queue at different banks for three consecutive days but in vain. The total amount of savings of this family of daily wage earners was Rs. 4,000 in the form of now illegal Rs. 500 notes. Hunger, starvation and frustration led this poor girl to take this extreme step. Until a few days ago the number of people who died in the queues had reached 37. For people in other countries, specially in the West, this would appear incredible.

The press, at least with a semblance of independence, was full of stories of the unprecedented hardship suffered by the common man on daily basis. There were reports of deaths of patients whose kin could not buy medicines. Either they died at home or on the way to the hospital. There was one silver lining to be seen among some compassionate small grocers who came to the rescue of the unfortunate lot by giving them food items on credit. Until November 24 Kendriya Bhandars, partly empty, sold their items to customers against the old notes provided you bought things for exactly 500 or were prepared to forego the small amount of the due balance.

The agents, real estate fellows, the moneylenders, the blackmarketeers had a hey day by giving a needy person Rs. 300 in notes of smaller value against an old note of Rs. 500 which is still a legal tender until December 30, 2016. Some generous ones might give you Rs. 400 against an old note of Rs. 500. And all this was happening under the very nose of the administration. The

insensitiveness of the administration, specially the police, can be gauged from one incident at Sambhal in Uttar Pradesh where a Superintendent of Police and a lower level police official have been suspended by the Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav who saw a video of the police personnel caning the people standing in a queue before a bank.

How and why this chaotic situation prevailed all over India and persists to a less degree needs investigation. That this should happen in a country where the BJP led by Modi came to power on the promises of good governance, *achche din*, and bringing back the huge amount of black money stashed in foreign banks within one month of coming to power, makes the Indian Government and Narendra Modi personally answerable to the people of India.

It is due to the faulty electoral system that with 31 per cent of popular vote the BJP won a majority of Lok Sabha seats and formed the Government at the Centre in 2014. To quote the old cliché, power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The country as well as our foreign well-wishers have been watching the efforts of the present Union Government to overhaul the liberal character of our motherland and Talibanise the country by its programmes of saffronisation and *Hindutva* ideology. But our people were least prepared for the untold suffering unleashed by PM Modi with ulterior intentions.

It is amazing that we have amongst us paid intellectuals and journalists

who sing paeans of Modi. The other day I came across a very long article by one such person which was full of misleading statements and irrelevancies, though admitting that the Government ought to have made adequate arrangements for implementation of this policy of demonetisation. There is plenty of literature floating around the issue of demonetisation. For the Hindutva group Jawaharlal Nehru University is a red herring to the bull as it imagines the entire premier institution of the country having been controlled by communists of CPM variety because of which it felt necessary to impose a little known Professor of IIT Delhi as the Vice-Chancellor of JNU. Here I would like to refer to the views of a non-communist eminent economist and retired Professor of Economics at JNU, Prof. Arun Kumar, who has opined that demonetisation is not the way to tackle black economy and it will, in fact, affect the white economy and may lead to recession.

I am not an economist but as a layman and as a citizen of India I wish to put seven questions to Narendra Modi:

How many people in India knew beforehand about the imminent declaration of November 8? Officially at least 21 members of the Board of the RBI including four from the private sector knew about it at least one month before when the agenda of the Central Board meeting was circulated to them. Did these privileged people include leaders of the ruling party (not its allies)?

It is said that the top sympathetic corporate houses and party leaders were alerted even earlier and, therefore, the conversion of black money into white took place in India on a large scale as may be evident from abnormally high

deposits in banks during the quarter July–September 2016 as compared to any previous quarter.

Will the BJP be the beneficiary of this exercise during the State Assembly elections scheduled in early 2017 in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, etc.? Will the Government be willing to declare the amount of donations received by the BJP from the corporate houses and other businessmen under the RTI Act? All political parties should be brought under the purview of this unique Act.

It is universally known that the root cause of black money and corruption is funding of political parties and

politicians by the business class. Why not adopt State funding of elections to political parties proportionate to the percentage of votes secured by them in the last General Election? If PM Modi has the guts he should bring in this reform, otherwise he will be treated as a party to black money and corruption like UPA and some other political parties.

Are the political parties including the BJP prepared to adopt the system of proportional representation for the legislatures? That will eliminate the root cause of political corruption. But I have serious doubt about it. When a PM like Nehru opposed the

सुप्रसिद्ध समाजवादी चिंतक

सुरेन्द्र मोहन

की छठी पुण्यतिथि के अवसर पर

स्मृति सभा का आयोजन

विषय : वर्तमान परिदृश्य में समाजवादियों की भूमिका

अध्यक्षता : श्री शरद यादव, सांसद

वक्ता : श्री राजकुमार जैन, श्री हरभजनसिंह सिद्धू, डॉ. प्रेम सिंह, सुश्री रेणू गंधीर, श्री कुमार प्रशांत, श्री कुर्बान अली, श्री योगेन्द्र यादव, सुश्री तारा, सुश्री रजनीतिलक, श्री एन.डी. पंचोली, श्री राकेश कुमार, श्री अरूण, श्री वास्तव, सुश्री रति सिंहव अन्य साथीगण

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आयोजक

सुरेन्द्र मोहन मेमोरियल फाऊंडेशन एवं जनता ट्रस्ट

सम्पर्क : श्रीमती मंजू मोहन : 9971526169, 011 / 22231810

Private Member's Bill on the subject introduced by Minoo Masani in the Second Lok Sabha, what can we expect from the current crorepati MPs? It will be interesting to compare the financial status of the Members of the First Lok with that of their successors in the current Lok Sabha and find which party has how many crorepatis.

What happened to Modi's pre-electoral promise of bringing back to the country all the black money stashed in foreign banks within one month of coming into power? He also stated that the quantum of such ill-gotten money was such that hypothetically speaking, if this money was distributed among the 1.3 billion people of India everyone would receive Rs. 15 lakhs. Not one

but 30 months have elapsed since but the Modi Government have adopted a policy of deafening silence on the issue for obvious reasons.

Introduction of Rs. 2,000 notes is beyond anyone's understanding unless the objective is to facilitate accumulation of black money in lighter bulk.

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also on all political parties, a duty which Gandhi as well as Jawaharlal Nehru fully recognized.

1. Lok Sabha Debates, 24 September 1965, cited in Lohia and Parliament, New Delhi, Lok Sabha Secretariat, 1991 p. 296
2. For some possible ideas in this context, see my article, "Three Outstanding Linguistic Issues : Some Suggestions", Janata, 26 June 1994.
3. How the composite insights of the socialist doer and thinker Karpooori Thakur and later of Kishan Patnaik were lost a decade or so later in the exclusively-caste-oriented framing of the reservation question in 1990-91 is pointed to in my article, "Moment of Truth for Janata Dal", Economic and Political Weekly, 29 June 1991.
4. Anil Nauriya, "Look Beyond Mandal", The Times of India, 19 December 2006
5. Kishan Patnaik in Janata, 15 June 1980
6. Acharya Narendra Deva, "Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru" in Acharya Narendra Deva, Socialism and the National Revolution [Yusuf Meherally (ed.)] Bombay, Padma Publications., 1946, pp. 203-4
7. Ibid., p. 206

8. Madhu Limaye, Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru : A Historic Partnership, 1916-1948, Vol IV, Delhi, B.R. Publishing Corporation, 1991, p. 236.

9. See The Hindustan Times, 4 July 1964, cited in Girja Shankar, Socialist Trends in the Indian National Movement, Meerut, Twenty-First Century Publishers, 1987, p. 294n.

10. Idem

(Contd. from Page 5)

15000 such nuclear weapons in the world.

Not only nations but even terrorist groups have acquired an awesome capacity to kill more people than entire wars fought in earlier generations. According to Time magazine, terrorist outfits, particularly when they have the help of a foreign government, can use nuclear weapons to kill around a hundred thousand people.

Even without the wartime use of nuclear weapons, merely maintaining a huge nuclear complex either for direct military purposes or for supporting it can pose a threat to the health and well being of hundreds of thousands of people.

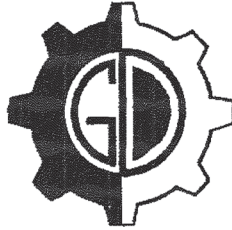
The efforts to reduce the risk from nuclear weapons have not made any significant progress. In

fact depleted uranium weapons are being freely used, and the chances of use of tactical nuclear weapons have increased. There is no guarantee yet that full-blown nuclear weapons will never be used.

As for the actual wartime potential of nuclear weapons, it is clear that a monstrous force which is several hundred times more destructive than what was seen in Hiroshima can be unleashed in a future nuclear war. The destructive potential of nuclear weapons is already adequate to destroy almost all life on earth, by its immediate effect and longer-term impacts of environmental ruin, cancers, genetic damage, starvation and worse. So no matter where these are being produced - in which country and for what purpose - there should always be only one answer to nuclear weapons - No, no, no.

While the final aim is to free our planet entirely from the threat of nuclear weapons, more immediate efforts are also needed to ensure that whenever hostilities increase among any nuclear weapon powers, at least the use of nuclear weapons should never be considered. In addition urgent efforts are needed to prevent terrorists from gaining access to any nuclear weapons. Eliminating all possibilities of use of nuclear weapons should get top priority in the near future.

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**Learning from Hundred years
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**Social sciences and
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Anand Kumar

India versus India

Gopalkrishna Gandhi

**Solidarity with the peoples of
Kashmir**

**Socialist Party (India)
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Editor :

G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

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

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Farooq should resign from Rajya Sabha

Kuldip Nayar

You can tell from the speeches of Farooq Abdullah whether he is in power or not. Obviously, he is in the wilderness these days because the speeches he is making are bitter and blatantly against India to the integrity of which he has sworn loyalty as a Rajya Sabha member. His latest is the support to the Hurriyat, which advocates secession of Kashmir from the country.

In his speech, he says: "I want to tell the workers of National Conference not be out of this struggle. I warn you: We are a part of this struggle. We have fought every time for the interests of this state."

Farooq will be well advised to resign from the Rajya Sabha because he cannot be with India and the Hurriyat at the same time. In fact, I am shocked how a person who has been a Union Minister and Kashmir's Chief Minister can make such a statement which runs counter to the constitution. Significantly, he addressed the gathering in Kashmiri.

Farooq is a person who has no control over himself when he is angry. He can say anything. I recall that when once he addressed the Aligarh University, he spoke like a

fundamentalist. I, sitting at the same dais, chided him. In my speech, I said that he reminded me of the Muslim League days before partition when Mohammad Ali Jinnah would say that Hindus and Muslims were two different nations and would make the religion at the basis of nationality.

A couple of weeks ago, Farooq wrote in a Srinagar journal that his father Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah would have been happy that the Kashmiri youth had picked up the gun to support their demand for independence. I knew the Sheikh well and I do not think that he would have made such an irresponsible statement.

The problem with Farooq is that he wants to remain in headlines. To do so he would say anything. Is Farooq confident that what the Hurriyat is preaching is in the interest of the people in Kashmir, much less India. Has he ever weighed the repercussion of the valley's separation from the rest of country? Kashmir is a land locked territory and does not have an easy success to any place except India.

The boys who are fighting against the Indian forces are very clear about what they desire. Only recently when I was in Srinagar, many among them

met me. They said that they wanted the valley to be converted into an independent sovereign Islamic state. They did not favour integration with Pakistan. Syed Ali Shah Geelani, a separatist Hurriyat leader does not represent them because he now wants Kashmir to be part of Pakistan, even at the expense of undoing the partition arrangement.

In fact, the Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh wanted to stay independent after the British quitted. But tribals and the irregular Pakistani forces (the regular ones also) marched from the Pakistan occupied Kashmir to Srinagar. They would have captured it if they had not stopped at Baramula to loot and plunder.

At that time, Farooq Abdullah's father, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, released from the jail on the insistence of then India's Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, organized the people's militia during the Maharaja regime and stalled the forces marching towards Srinagar till regular Indian forces landed at the airport to push back the invaders to the territory, what is now known as PoK (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir).

Those who are saying all the time that Kashmir is an integral part of India are wrong in the sense that the state of Jammu and Kashmir enjoys autonomy as enunciated in Article 370 which says that except the three subjects—foreign affairs, defence and communications—the other articles of the Constitution that gave powers to the Central Government would not be applied to Jammu and Kashmir. The exception would be made only with the concurrence of the state's assembly.

In other words, because of these constitutional provisions, the State of Jammu & Kashmir enjoyed the type

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Learning from Hundred years of Dravidian Movement

K. S. Chalam

The year 2016 being projected as the centenary year of Dravidian movement, there are desperate and euphoric attempts by different camps to evaluate the impact of the movement on the non-Brahmin population in India in general and in the South in particular. One hundred years of social history of the country with two divergent movements, one in the South in the form of Dravidian self-respect and the other in the West in the guise of Brahminical Hindutva, started almost at the same time, deliver contrasting narratives today. The triumph of the so-called Hindutva attributed to RSS and its political arm BJP and the gloomy presence of confused strategies of fragmented Dravidian protest in the political outfits of DMK, AIDMK and umpteen number of so called Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu seems to be a serious challenge for scholars to analyse the historicity of two contemporary phenomena. Interestingly, the role of the Left in the socio-cultural life of India is said to be not outstanding as they remained non-committal to the ideological postures of the two and the so-called secular Congress and other parties are looked upon by people with suspicion. The role of the civil society in the area of social reform, typically, appears to be dismal?

The Dravidian movement characterised as the South Indian (composite Madras state) non-Brahmin revolt against the social taboos imposed by the Brahminical Hinduism is being reviewed by scholars and commentators while the champions are preparing to

celebrate the centenary year in December 2016. It is noted that the release of the non-Brahmin manifesto issued by Thegarayar in December 1916 is the beginning of the movement. However academics and some of the Dravidian activists do not agree with the date of the beginning of the movement. In fact, Dr Subrahmanya Swamy wrote an article in Frontline during the NDA-1 regime in 2003 claiming that the Dravidian movement began in 1916 and was being fading away now. He made interesting observations on the movement, being an activist from Tamil Nadu settled in Delhi. Dr. K. Veeramani, General Secretary of D.K reacted to the article denying the allegations and protested against the distortions of Dr Swamy who held that, "In 1932, the (Dravidian) movement suffered a setback when Dr. B. R. Ambedkar rejected the British offer of separate electorates for the Scheduled Castes, and sided with Mahatma Gandhi to sign the Poona Pact." Dr. Veeramani retorted saying, "But what happened actually? Dr. Ambedkar accepted the British Prime Minister Ramsey McDonald's Communal Award, Gandhi stoutly opposed this and undertook a fast unto death, saying that he would give up the fast only if his alternative proposal was accepted. So Dr. Ambedkar was put to intense, unfair psychological pressure, rather coerced, and made to sign the Poona Pact which, again, was not fully implemented in the proper spirit. The Scheduled Castes and Dr. Ambedkar were betrayed. This strengthened their disillusionment with Gandhi and his party, and brought them closer to Periyar and

his followers.” It is interesting to note that the Dravidian movement is being evaluated with reference to the presence of scheduled castes in the movement and is being disparaged for the kind of assaults perpetuated against dalits in Tamil Nadu mostly by the backward castes who are supposed to have been inspired by the Dravidian movement. Thus, some commentators are inclined to call the whole movement as hoax. It seems the evaluation of a social movement that has been recorded as one of the greatest events in the social history of modern India whose leader Periyar EVR was labelled as the Prophet of New Age by UNESCO in June 1970 is a misdemeanour. There are hundreds of studies on Periyar and the movement undertaken both by Western and Indian scholars eulogising it as an epoch cannot be simply wished away as an ingenuous social outburst.

Scholars like M. S. Gore and other social scientists have developed parameters in contextualising and evaluating the achievements of a social movement. It appears that subjecting a movement like the Dravidian ideology of protest in terms of Dalit bashing is unwise as Dalits are being subjected to lynching not only in the South where a social reform movement was present but it is much severe even in the home state of Babasaheb Ambedkar like Maharashtra where Phoolley had a similar initiative much before Periyar. The evil is spread into areas that were not known for such brutalities before. It is exactly for the reasons of discrimination, humiliation and inhuman treatment meted out to Dalits by caste Hindus and the tenets of Manu Dharma upheld overtly and covertly by the Dvijas, Phoolley, Periyar, Ambedkar, Lohia and others critiqued Brahminism and not Brahmins. As one of the defenders of Dravidian

movement N. Nandhivarman, General Secretary, Dravida Peravai put it, “the Dalit movement that is on the rise at the dawn of 21st century is a natural offspring of the Dravidian movement. Wherever men claim equality and whenever all human beings seek equal rights, the spirit of the Dravidian movement will live there. No one can say that with the withering away of the Soviet Union, the Socialist movement is dead; the same logic and historical compulsions apply to the existence of the Dravidian movement.” One may still differ with the views of the remorseful defendants, but we cannot reduce a social movement to a protest ideology merely on the basis of its temporary setback or unintentional flaws.

The greatest miscarriage of the Dravidian movement appears to be in its inward looking strategy of programme of action limited to select pockets of space, time and families. There are several impediments and shortcomings in the expansion of the movement beyond Tamil speaking areas. It was perhaps due to the reorganisation of erstwhile Madras state as Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu in 1956 reordering the Dravidian speaking language regions as four, the movement got divided?. Perhaps it was at this juncture that the Dravidian spirit got fragmented and the Dravidian sensibility did not go beyond Madras. Though reformers like Tripuraneni, Thapi and others in Andhra, Narayana Guru, Ayyankali and others in Kerala and Brahmanetara Parishat, Veerashaivasangh, Dharmalingam, Devraj Urs and others in Karnataka protested against the hegemony of Brahminism in social, cultural and political life of the people, they did not work however under a single platform. In fact the above movements in the South got their inspiration from Justice Party and

Periyar. Yet, they did not go beyond their immediate regional needs and issues of the backward classes and Dalits. It appears that they were all together to fight for the First amendment to the Constitution to uphold caste based reservations in the South based on Communal order issued in 1920s. They could do it in 1951 because the states were not formed at that time and Periyar and Ambedkar were alive to lead the movement. But, the Dravidian ideology seems to have watered down to that of defending caste based reservations after independence and reorganisation of the states. We cannot attribute the failure of the movement to Periyar alone as he became old and got exhausted and internal bickering in the movement through splits of Annadurai, later Karuananidhi, and MGR further shortened the life of Dravidian upsurge.

A section of the critiques of Dravidian movement subscribing to the exclusionary vision from that of a section of the Dalits, reading the rationalist outburst of the Black shirts as negative due to their allegiance to Christianity, Islam and other faiths is not really conducive to make comments by the dispassionate observers. It seems the derisive elements have failed to look at the emergence of Hindutva and its expanding tentacles in Tamil Nadu heartland as a threat to the Dravidian concept. Tactically, RSS as per a report in *The Hindu* in November 2014, appropriated the Dravidian symbols such as celebrating the 1000th year of the coronation of Chola King Rajendra I and was able to attract people in the age group of 25-40. The paper has cited Mr Sadgopan saying that, ‘as the number of people coming to RSS grows, the BJP will get ideologically committed individuals,’ and it has gained confidence after the resounding victory in Parliamentary elections.

We do not have such statements by others who are joining the opposite camps. There seem to be very few attempts as of now to evaluate the impact of the new developments in the South on the social tensions.

Dravidian movement is not an upshot of Periyar or Tamilians and is not directly related to the so-called non-Brahmins alone. The concept Dravida as per pundits is a derivative of Tamil in Sanskrit and Periyar asserted 'there is only one language, and she is Tamil'. He went on to say that, "it is my firm conviction that the Kural was especially created to demonstrate that the arts, culture, ethics and conduct of the Tamils were vastly different from and antithetical to those of Aryans". In my Dravidian University Foundation day lecture I tried to bring out the origin of the word citing Iravatham Mahadevan, Asko Parapola and others that the name 'Harappa' itself constituted two Dravidian words *Hara* and *Appa* typical to South India. The Kharavela Hathigumpha inscription contains reference to Tramira countries and so on. Therefore, the Dravidian movement should have been an all-inclusive and culturally diverse campaign to bring in the historical significance of the first settlers in India. In fact a careful reading of the movement shows that several diverse movements are integrated and Periyar is shown as the leader of the movement. As EVR himself agreed that the Dravidian nation is very old and he wanted to bring in reform to bring all the groups together. In fact the self-respect movement, anti-Brahmin movement, caste-based reservations, atheism and social reform are distinct genres of a large species of a binary called Aryan-Dravidian classification in Indology/Dravidology that remained an orphan in academic discourse in an age of post-colonialism. This appears to be typical to Indian

scholarship in India as compared to the Palestinian, Jewish, African, etc identity movements based on common threads of links of blood, genetics, language, culture and history.

The contemporary political situation in the world where Donald Trump seemingly a German heir won and some NRIs identifying with him and the so-called fringe groups in India parading openly supporting him indicate that Periyar and the Dravidian movement in a different form would re-emerge if the present trends are an indication. We wish that Indians whose destiny was sealed under the Constitution should respect diversity and pluralism to

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of autonomy which other states do not have. Subsequently, the Sheikh Sahib had the state constituent assembly pass a resolution that the state of Jammu and Kashmir had acceded to India irrevocably. Before doing so, he sent Sadiq Sahib, who became the state chief minister later, to Pakistan to assess what kind of polity Islamabad was going to pursue.

After hearing Sadq's view that Pakistan wanted to be an Islamic state, the Sheikh Sahib, a product of people's struggle to obtain independence from the Maharaja and the British, took no time in joining India because he wanted the state to be pluralistic. A democratic India, where there would be religious freedom, was the obvious choice for him because Pakistan wanted to be an Islamic Republic.

With the passage of time, the Sheikh became the only liberal voice which could be heard clearly in the midst of challenges and counter-challenges by Hindus and Muslims. I recall when I was released from

help create conditions of live and let live. The Dravidian movement has initiated a paradigm shift in our social relations in recent years that need to be carried with care. Otherwise the nation would again get divided and this time caste wars and communal violence would be diverted against those who are considered as responsible in maintaining divisions and despairs. Dravidian movement might disappear now due to cunning collusions and distortions of the select few under the weight of the movement's own limitations in the short run, but it would never vanish as long as discrimination, indignity and inhumanity are perpetuated in the name caste, religion, colour, language and culture.

the Tihar Jail during the Emergency my co-prisoners asked me to visit Srinagar and request the Sheikh to speak against the Emergency because he was respected all over the country. He had no hesitation in issuing a statement that the Emergency had overstayed and should be withdrawn.

I wish Farooq had imbibed the qualities of Sheikh Sahib and guided New Delhi instead of flirting with the separatists to harm India's cause. He is acceptable throughout the country even though he is found whimsical. He should think twice before he gives even indirect help to separatists. By announcing his support for the Hurriyat he has raised many questions in the minds of people, both in Kashmir and the rest of India.

Farooq should realize that his constituency is the entire country. When he says anything which tells upon on India's unity he confuses people because they see him on the side of India's integrity, not its dismemberment.

Solidarity with the peoples of Kashmir

We, twenty five citizens of India, representing people's movements, women's organisations, trade unions, human rights organisations, youth organisations and individuals who are journalists, writers and filmmakers, from the states of Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Nagaland, Odisha and Tamil Nadu, visited Kashmir from 11 to 20 November 2016 with the objective of understanding first-hand, from ordinary people and civil society, the situation of the peoples of the Kashmir Valley that has emerged over the past four-and-a-half months since the killing of three Hizbul Mujahideen militants, Burhan Wani, Sartaj Sheikh and Pervaiz Lashkari by the Indian Army and J&K Police on 8 July 2016.

In the last 135 days, over 102 unarmed civilians have been killed by the Indian Army, the J&K Police and central paramilitary forces. More than 15,000 people have been injured by armed firing and in pellet firing and shelling, of which around 7,000 are cases of severe injury. A majority of those who have been killed are young and many are minors. This information has been documented by the media.

Over the nine days, we visited the districts of Anantnag, Bandipora, Baramulla, Budgam, Ganderbal, Kulgam, Kupwara, Pulwama, Shopian and Srinagar.

We met with families of those who have been killed by the Indian Army, the Border Security Force (BSF), the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and the J&K Police (JKP)

including the Special Operations Group (SOG) and Special Task Forces (STF). We met with families of those who have disappeared or have been jailed, including human rights defenders. We also met with victims grievously injured, including being blinded by pellet gunfire and PAVA shell fire over these past four-and-a-half-months.

Apart from ordinary people of the 10 districts mentioned above, we met with lawyers including the leadership of the J&K Bar Association (JKBA); trading and business communities including the Kashmir Economic Alliance (KEA), Kashmir Fruit Growers & Dealers Association, and district-level traders federations; state government employees and their unions including the Employees' Joint Action Committee (EJAC); students' unions; human rights defenders including the Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society and the Association of Parents of Disappeared Persons; political organisations and parties including the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), other member parties of the All Party Hurriyat Conference, Jammu & Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), and the Muslim League; Kashmiri Pandit community including the Kashmiri Pandit Sangharsh Samiti (KPSS); relief, voluntary and social welfare organisations including Kashmir Centre for Social and Development Studies, Firdous Educational Trust for Orphans as well as scholars, academics, journalists, doctors and other medical practitioners, artists, and theatre professionals.

Following the, alleged extrajudicial, killing of 8 July there have been large, unprecedented protests across the Kashmir valley starting on 9 July, the day of Burhan Wani's funeral. These unarmed protests have been met with sustained attack by the Indian Army, J&K police and paramilitary, including with the use of pellet guns, PAVA shells and firearms. We learnt of several deaths caused by targeted killings of unarmed civilians by armed forces in the absence of protests or demonstrations. Most deaths we came across have been caused by injuries waist-above, without any warning fire. Deaths and injuries caused by pellet guns too are all above the waist and preponderantly at eye level causing blinding or long-term ophthalmic damage. In the case of deaths, we learnt that the J&K Police has lodged 'cross' FIRs using similar and repetitive, if not identical, charges of the victim being 'anti-national'. These government actions amount to a violation of the right to life.

Families that have pursued the legal remedy to identify the representatives of the Indian Army, J&K police and paramilitary, including those granted immunity under the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990, who engaged in acts of killing innocent people, have become targets of repeated arrests, torture and raids. These government actions amount to criminal intimidation and have served as a deterrent to many families from pursuing the course of justice.

Of the papers of those who have been arrested, especially under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978 (PSA), that we were able to look at, the charges lack prima facie substance and employ similar, if not identical, language. We spent a morning attending proceedings at the J&K High Court. In all the cases involving arrests under the PSA, including the case of PSA filed against human rights defender Khurram Pervez, the Government Counsel merely sought to delay cases by seeking more time to file documents when in fact the FIR/case dossier forms the basis of the arrest. We came across several cases of those who won their release through the courts, being promptly rearrested on the basis of new FIRs filed against them by the government. Cases of arrests of minors, including under the PSA, were also brought to our notice. These government actions amount to a violation of the principles of natural justice.

Families of detained and arrested persons also brought to our attention instances of grievous custodial torture by government interrogators in police stations and jails, indicating the levels of impunity enjoyed by the Indian Army, under the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990, and the state police, under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978. People also reported that multiple wings of the intelligence were in operation, causing fear, mistrust and suspicion among people.

In the towns and villages where there were killings by the Indian Army, J&K police and paramilitary, we met with ordinary people who narrated a cycle of search and seizure raids following killings, and

of indiscriminate firing, including at funerals and memorial gatherings. In several of these instances the Indian Army, J&K police and paramilitary broke windows and destroyed household goods, livestock, and food rations in peoples' homes. In several of the villages and towns we visited, the armed forces, during their search and seizure operations, routinely destroy the local electricity transformer or sub-station, denying the entire village or locality access to electricity. These government actions amount to handing out collective punishment. Women spoke of being subjected to violence and molestation by the Indian Army, J&K police and paramilitary, and reported several instances of verbal and physical abuse during the search and seizure operations. Paramedics working in the government health system reported that during this period they witnessed a significant increase in the number of miscarriages, which were caused by physical violence. These government actions amount to a violation of every law and the international covenant that is aimed at protecting women from sexual and other forms of violence.

We were very moved by the extraordinary efforts of the doctors, nurses and paramedics of the state's public health system in responding to the huge number of cases of those injured by the Indian Army, J&K police and paramilitary. Most of them, at various points in the last four-and-a-half-months, have worked twenty-four hours a day, two to three days at a stretch. We, however, found that many doctors were harassed by government intelligence to reveal the identity of their patients. The J&K police and paramilitary have also raided hospitals, including in one instance

a women's ward. We met with ambulance drivers who were intimidated and threatened by the armed forces for ferrying the injured. We learnt that pharmacies and kitchens setup by relief and social welfare organisations and the business community, who stepped in to assist the government hospitals in meeting the extraordinary challenge of saving lives, were disbanded by the armed forces. In at least one case, a key leader of this 'critical assistance', as described by a senior government doctor, was arrested and jailed for over a fortnight. These government actions against emergency relief workers and health professionals are in violation of international covenants and India's own commitment to UN treaties.

We were witness to the closure of local town and village mosques by government authorities, across the Kashmir valley, including the Jamia Masjid in Srinagar and Jamia Masjid in Shopian. These government actions amount to violation of the right to freedom of religion.

We were witness to the ban on internet on mobile telephone services. We also noted from media reports of raids at newspaper offices, the shutting down of all newspapers in Kashmir for three days in July, and the blanket ban on the publishing of the newspaper *Kashmir Reader*. These government actions amount to a violation of the right to freedom of speech and internationally accepted norms of freedom of the press.

We noted the targeting of J&K state government employees, including the summary dismissal of 12 employees and the denial of salaries, issuing of show cause notices, and the suspension of

several others. Office bearers of government employees' unions who have protested these government actions of unfair labour practice have been detained or arrested. These government actions amount to a violation of the right to freedom of association.

We witnessed the people's affirmative response to the strike call issued by the All Party Hurriyat Conference through the nine days that we were in Kashmir. We see this as the resilience and resoluteness of the resistance of the peoples of Kashmir against the actions of the Indian state.

Nearly every voice that we heard of the Kashmir peoples talked of the long-standing Kashmir dispute from the days of India's independence and partition, the division of Kashmir between India and Pakistan in 1948, and the sustained efforts of the peoples of Kashmir to assert their right to self-determination. From common people we heard articulate accounts of what they have faced from the Indian state and, in particular, of the sustained attack on their democratic rights from 1989 onwards. The failure of the Indian state and every government since independence to address the political sentiments of Kashmir's peoples is a source of both hurt and enormous resentment.

We heard from every quarter we spoke to that, in this present phase, the BJP government at the centre and the PDP-BJP government in J&K has refused to address the strongly felt sentiments of the peoples of Kashmir. The stubbornness of the BJP government at the centre and the PDP-BJP government in J&K to dialogue with the people of the Kashmir valley

and their representatives is well documented in the media. The PDP, in our meeting with them, confirmed Delhi's policy of non-dialogue and non-compromise and set out their support for this policy.

We also noted that, over these four-and-a-half-months, the BJP government at the centre has sought to create a war-like situation with Pakistan along the border of J&K, employing the alleged Uri attack to build a Hindu majoritarian sentiment against Kashmir, Pakistan and those of the Islamic faith.

We conclude that the BJP government at the centre and the PDP-BJP government in J&K are engaged in actions that amount to a complete violation of universally accepted human and democratic rights and of the very Indian Constitution they claim to want to impose in the Kashmir valley. With use of government force and the rest of the machinery at their disposal, the government has acted and continues to act in grievous violation of the right to life, the right to free speech, the right to freedom of association, the right to freedom of religion, the right to freedom of press and the principles of natural justice. We are also distressed by the fact that senior members of the BJP government have made, and continue to make, inflammatory and provocative statements against the peoples of Kashmir. Regrettably, the parliamentary opposition has lacked the political courage and will to call upon the accountability of government actions.

We also conclude that the actions of the BJP government at the centre and the PDP-BJP government in J&K are acts of vengeance aimed at forcing the peoples of Kashmir into

subjugation by using every possible force available to government for breaking the peoples' resolve for a democratic settlement to achieve their aspirations. As representatives of diverse peoples' movements, trade unions and other organisations in India, and as India's citizens, we can say without reservation that the actions of the Indian state in Kashmir amount to profound violation of democratic and human rights. Hence, we call upon the Government of India to forthwith:

Recognise the Kashmir dispute and accept that its resolution can only come through a political solution, not through military intervention and a suppression of all human and democratic rights;

Withdraw the army and other paramilitary forces including the Central Reserve Police Force, Border Security Force and Indo Tibetan Border Police from civilian areas of Jammu and Kashmir;

Repeal the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978 and the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990;

Release all political prisoners and, in particular, all prisoners arrested under the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978;

Grant access to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for a UN fact-finding mission in Jammu & Kashmir;

Establish a judicial tribunal under the supervision of the Supreme Court to examine all cases of extra-judicial killings, including that of Burhan Wani;

Enter into an open and transparent dialogue, without pre-conditions, with all sections of the Kashmir

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Social sciences and public policy in India: Need of reciprocity

Anand Kumar

India is engaged in democratic nation-building after successful culmination in 1947 of a century long freedom mobilizations from foreign rule into a sovereign republic. It has mobilized all kinds of intellectual and material resources for it. This process has gone through three distinct cycles since independence: 1. Planning for self-reliance (1950-1971); 2. Politics of poverty eradication (1971-1984); 3. Combining economic liberalism and social justice about gender, caste and ethnic groups (1984-2014). A new cycle has been initiated around centrality of cultural nationalism after the Lok Sabha elections of 2014 which has brought in National Democratic Alliance led by Narendra Modi as prime minister and Bharatiya Janata Party as the dominant party.

It is strange that there has been decline in the significance of social sciences in these seventy years of nation-building while we witnessed increasing intensity of mobilizations for socio-political reforms in the context of gender, caste, religions, languages, and ethnicity. The social scientists are found to be lagging behind the social activists in most of the instances. There has been change of role of social scientists from 'partner in progress' during the years of Prime Minister Nehru (1947-1964) to 'selective support' in the short period of Lal Bahadur Shastri (1964-1966) and long years of Indira Gandhi (1966-1984) with an interval during 1977-1979 and 'increasing exclusion from public policies' since 1984. It is a strange

situation where the space of public policy is seen to be occupied by politicians and social activists at the cost of social scientific inputs.

It has created an atmosphere of ad-hocism, benign neglect and lack of sustainability in the sphere of public policy in all major domains. A glance at the fate of some of the major episodes of public policy making may be sufficient to sense the growing gaps in the interdependence between public policies and social sciences. Let us mention a few examples about it: 1) Justice Verma Committee Report on violence against women, 2. Justice Sacchar Committee Report on the deteriorating condition of Muslims, 3. Prof. Arjun Sengupta Committee Report about the conditions of workers in the un-organised sector, 4. Bandopadhyay Committee Report about the challenge of extremist activities in a large number of Indian districts, 5) Indrajeet Gupta Committee Report on electoral reforms, and 6) Prof. Yashpal Committee Report on educational reforms. All these reports have four common features: i. They are about some of the most burning problems of nation-building in India; ii. Each report received wide support from intellectuals, media and aggrieved sections of the society; iii. All the committees, with people of substance as members, were appointed by the highest authority of the country; and iv. All the reports remain least implemented so far - this lack of commitment of the power elite to engage in public policy making process on the basis of careful

deliberations and considerations is quite suicidal as it promotes cynicism as well as lack of trust in the policymaking process. But there is no effort from the side of policy makers or social scientists to get closer to each other for sustained dialogue and deliberations and course correction.

A situation of concern

The problem of interfaces between social sciences and public policy has been a recurring concern of social scientists as well as the public policy makers since the emergence of '3 Ms' as the new imperatives of nation-building in early 1990s – Mandal Report based reservations for the Other Backward Classes, Mandir mobilisation, and Market-centric initiatives. There is need on the part of the social scientists to be aware about their social responsibilities which include a meaningful role in public policy system. On the other hand, it is relevant and necessary for the public policy making to be in constructive interaction with the social sciences to avoid trappings of populist politics and political opportunism at the cost of national objectives and consensual progress.

Social sciences are the source of authentic knowledge of the social realities. A socially indifferent social science has no relevance or influence in society, including the policy makers. They are treated as 'ivory tower intellectuals'. A public policy regime without organic relationship with the social sciences is often victim of short sightedness as well as the conspiracies of the

vested interests. It causes a) mal-development, b) governance crisis, c) legitimacy deficits, and d) limit to citizenship building due to wasted opportunities and failed programs. Therefore it is always helpful for both - the public policy making system and the community of social scientists - to keep enquiring about the nature and result of mutual interfaces.

Some features

Let us try to identify the essential features of this relationship as it has evolved in the last seven decades since independence from the foreign rule.

First of all, it is an uneven relationship where economics is the privileged social science due to our national emphasis upon 'economic planning and development'.

Secondly, it is a state-centric. There has been primacy of state in establishing and promoting social sciences through the state funded research centres and universities. The LPG paradigm has not created much change in the centrality of state funding in the context of social sciences in the last two decades as the private universities and foundations have adopted an attitude of benign neglect towards social sciences due to their preference for 'technology' over social philosophy, history, sociology and psychology and 'management' over 'politics'.

Thirdly, the social scientists are found to be working under two pressures - western paradigms and state patronage. They have shown limited capacity for autonomy from 'Western and corporate 'dominance' and commitment for 'people-centric' social sciences. Increase in the centres of studies and research in

social sciences has created some difference since the 1980-90s. But the barriers between the elite institutions and masses' concerns has not lowered much due to calculated indifference of the state and policy makers towards non-English and non-metropolitan sites of knowledge generation about the dynamics of social realities.

Fourthly, there is some change at the ground level with changes in a) the composition and interests of the power elite, b) enlargement of the social basis of democratic system, and c) increasing social mobilizations and protest movements. It has impacted the character of social sciences and their priorities in teaching and research.

Fifthly, the social scientists are finding new constituencies and relevance in the context of public policy discourses in the recent times. It is due to emergence of a 'rainbow of protest politics' as exemplified by i. new urgency about the gender issues, ii. the Dalit assertion, iii. the problems of dignity and security of the tribal communities, iv. crisis of confidence among the minorities including the Muslims due to majoritarian thrusts in the public sphere and public policies, v. ecological concerns, displacements and disasters, vi. anti-corruption protests, vii. ungovernable pockets of extremist and separatist politics, viii. propensity of social violence, ix. new legitimacy of identity politics and vote banks, and x. disenchantment with liberalization driven industrialization and consumerism. The introduction of new policies in promoting gender justice, social justice, health, education, employment, and governance reforms are some of the most outstanding examples of this

change in the status and relevance of social scientists.

Finally, the interface between social sciences and public policy has been deeply affected by politics of knowledge and corporate lobbies within the LPG framework of policymaking.

What is wrong?

It seems that there are few major problems in promoting a meaningful bonding between the public policy system and social scientists these days. Our system is developing legitimacy deficiencies that make power elite nervous about dissent and criticism. Then there is the reality of transition from state-centric public policy framework to market mediated public policy initiatives. It has ideological barriers which are preventing meaningful dialogues not only between the policy establishment and the social sciences, but also within the community of social scientists. Moreover, the universities and research institutes based social scientists are found to be inclined towards a bit 'sanitised' version of the social issues and their solutions. It makes them 'un-trustworthy' in the eyes of the affected sections of our society.

Let us not forget that all democratic regimes must learn to live with differences and dissent by maintaining commitment for sustaining the culture of dialogue. In historical terms, the heretics, radicals and rebels have been always there among the social scientists. But their presence should be utilized by our policy establishment and knowledge systems as 'catalytic agents'. But often they are getting marginalized by their fraternity as well as the public policy patrons

due to their unorthodox ways and views. They are labeled as 'public intellectuals', 'dissenters' and 'too theoretical and academic' and treated with benign neglect. There has been always a silent conflict between the 'relevant and respected' social scientists and 'heretic' and 'marginal' social scientists with reference to analysis and assessment of public policies, their meaning, functions and relevance. It is interesting that this conflict has been a relevant source for hegemonic and counter-hegemonic trends in social sciences which created spaces for new initiatives and voices. Given the Indian experience, we can safely suggest that so far the relationship between social sciences and public policy has been informed by the triple imperatives of i) democratic nation-building, ii) constitutional commitment of justice - economic, social and political, and iii) intervention in the dynamics of social changes, including traditionalization, modernization to globalization. But it has been a relationship between two extremely unequal entities bordering patron-client system due to lack of insufficient autonomy of the social scientists and 'distant' relationship between the social sciences and non-state aspects of our national life, including the dynamics of market forces and post-colonial communitarian issues.

In a national dialogue held in 1970s, it was observed there are four kinds of social scientists who have been available for various roles in public policies: 1. Liberal, 2. Managerial, 3. Marxist, and 4. Moralistic. We can add a few more categories today. But it is evident that we have moved far away from the 1970s as the setting for public policies has changed due to increasing relevance of new

realities created by the togetherness of global factors and regional-local imperatives. The status of social sciences has been also affected because of our dissatisfactory role in understanding and interpreting the social changes which were promoting new discourses of power and challenges before the people. The experts of modern Indian history and political science are still baffled about the causes and consequences of major shifts like the expansion-decline expansion of the Maoist influence, the rise and success of JP Movement, the beginnings and the end of the Emergency Raj and the evolution of LPG regime. Similarly, the sociologists were found to be lagging behind the women's movement, the Dalit assertion particularly the rise of Bahujan politics, Mandal-Mandir mobilizations, and failure of nation-building process in Kashmir and the Northeastern communities. The economists continue to fiddle with facts of poverty with changing regimes at the states and the centre.

The way ahead

Our public policy setting is marked by three major changes. There is the end of planning and rolling back of the state. Then there has been devaluation of the university system due to commercialization of higher education. We are also witness to increasing primacy of politics over academics since 1980s. Therefore, there is need to create 'intermediate spaces' for maintaining a critical minimum relevance of social sciences in public policy making and evaluation. These intermediate spaces can mediate between the social sciences and public policy in a non-hegemonic and contested political system in democratic societies.

There are five such spaces which need our attention and support :

1. Interdisciplinary platforms of research and interaction;
2. Research institutes of interest groups including the political parties, the trade unions, the informal sector labor, peasant associations, chambers of commerce and industry, professionals' bodies and social communities;
3. Continuous engagements of social scientists with social movements and protest processes as 'economics, sociology and politics from below';
4. Preventing primacy of pseudo-social scientists including failed politicians, semi-educated bureaucrats and social sciences administrators in policy discourses; and
5. Self-sustainable processes of public education and opinion building about contemporary issues and problems by social scientists through media, semi-professional forums and mass oriented literature dissemination in popular language and terminology.

We cannot wait for funding from global or national agencies for it because we are fast becoming a nation which is suffering with truth deficit about public policies. Restoring truth in public sphere and promoting peoples' well being on the basis of sound public policies is expected from social sciences as a social responsibility. It is our contribution for promoting and deepening Swaraj.

(Contd. on Page 13)

Socialist Party (India)

Economic Resolution

Policies of liberalization, privatization and globalization, dictated by the World Bank, IMF, WTO and other such world economic institutions, are playing havoc world over, particularly to the lives of poor and weaker sections of society. Despite repeated failures and shortcomings of these very policies, the ruling establishment of India and the world is pursuing them shamelessly with even greater intensity. These policies have resulted into the greatest poor-rich divide ever! The divide is also increasing among the developed, developing and under-developed nations. On one hand the luxuries enjoyed by the rich do not know limits on the other hand the poor are forced to suffer from epidemics, natural disasters and to live undignified life without basic civic facilities. The neo-liberal policies have resulted in immense inequality and corruption during last three decades.

But the governments, talking only GDP, are not ready to listen anything against these economic policies. GDP is a poor economic indicator and reveals little about the condition of lives of poor. A developed nation of Europe has shown increase in GDP by including the earnings from prostitution in its country. And here in India, the present government is changing the basis of price rise, GDP and other indicators to somehow show growth. The government has shown the difference between production and expenses to be more than 1 lakh 30 thousand crores, which if removed, will reduce the growth rate by 2%.

Cheap imports, especially from countries like China, are killing the skills of the local craftsmen as the work done by them is costlier. Even big industries like garments, engineering and machinery are being pushed towards closure by cheap imports. The MNCs in automobile, mobile, electronics/computers sectors are reaping huge profits. The policy of minimum imports in petroleum sector has been done away with. These policies have resulted into suicides of lakhs of farmers, displacement of crores of people, massive unemployment and destruction of the environment.

The agrarian sector and tribal population face the direct brunt of these economic policies and capitalist development model based upon them. This year, in spite of a good monsoon and a good farm produce, the farmers have not got good returns. This is reflected by the increase in suicides of farmers. The backbone of the agrarian sector has been broken by the two and half decades of implementation of neo-liberal policies. The farming is continually oriented towards foreign needs and cash crops. Local basic needs like pulses are increasingly made dependent on imports. Pulses are the only source of protein in plate of poor and that too has become unaffordable now. The entire agrarian sector, which includes seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, is becoming more and more dependent on MNCs. The government is adamantly pushing for introduction of GM crops, which can cause irreversible, disastrous impacts on health and environment.

In the name of breed improvement indigenous animal husbandry, fish farming, poultry and all such sectors are being opened up for MNCs. Local varieties of crops, fruits and animals are disappearing. There is a lesson that needs to be learnt from the spread of epidemic diseases like bird flu, mad cow disease, etc. But who cares?

Since its beginning, the Modi government has launched a campaign of land grabbing, which is being resisted by farmer unions and unity of opposition parties. But behind this thrust there are huge corporations and MNCs, which are eying the land of farmers and tribals. Socialist Party, since its inception, has been demanding that all available land should be equitably and appropriately used and for the same purpose a land use commission, which comprises of representation of farmers and tribals, should be set up.

It is not just land but all other natural resources are also at stake. There is a fast move to hand over water of rivers to MNCs and big industries. Red carpets are being laid for big industrial houses, foreign capital and foreign trade. But there is no increase in either manufacturing or in foreign trade. The government is filling its coffers finding respite in low crude oil prices and throwing away huge amounts of money to big business houses. The stock market and commodity markets are death fields for common investors and farmers. For the last three years there is no change in this situation. Whether it be neem-

coated fertilizers or copying of Israel drip farming, all have turned out to be total failures for farmers.

Neo-liberal economic policies have caused havoc for tribal people. So-called development programs have resulted in displacement of crores of tribals. Their land, minerals below land, rivers, forest produce, and even sand stones are sold to make enormous money by corporates, politicians and bureaucrats. Dalits don't own means of production and this loot of land, forest and other natural resources has eliminated their chances of getting a share of these resources. Availability of land for residential purposes has also become an issue in villages. The retail sector, which has been the backbone of agrarian and the rest of our economy, is now under grave threat from the FDI from giant MNCs, like Wall Mart, Tesco, Carrefour, Metro, etc.

The availability and condition of employment has been worsening. Government says that FDI is our only option for fast economic growth. So government is offering big sops to MNCs. But the MNCs have sophisticated manufacturing which use automation to reduce

expenditure on salaries, and in turn lead to a jobless growth. Crores of degree holder youth are jobless. This was when Modi, in his election speeches, had promised 1 crore jobs every year, but those jobs are simply not there. The Socialist Party believes in self-reliant and independent economy that operates on cooperative basis with a target of total employment in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry and other small scale industries with Indian capital. Agricultural land should not be acquired. Irrigation facilities and easy loans with guarantee of profitable prices should be provided to farmers.

Recently Rs. 500 and 1000 notes have been invalidated. Tall claims are being made by the Prime Minister that this demonetization will end corruption, black money, tax evasion, boom in property prices, terrorism from across the border and so on. These tall claims are sufficient to show the hollowness of demonetization. This decision is made essentially to cover the failure to bring back black money from outside India. The claim of depositing Rs. 15 lakh to each Indians' bank account by Modi was based on estimation of this black money

Defence Resolution

The present BJP government at the centre is implementing anti-constitution neo-liberal policies at a faster pace than the previous UPA government. The most striking example of this is increasing the FDI limit in defence equipments manufacturing to 100% from the earlier limit of 49%; and the government is working overtime signing defence related agreements with various foreign companies.

The only condition government has put for this is that once FDI reaches 100% it will need government's permission. All other essential restrictions and conditions imposed on foreign investment in the Defence sector have been removed. For instance, under the Arms Act of 1959, the manufacture of small weapons and ammunition was to be done within the country only. For this FDI was not needed. Now

parked outside India. This sudden declaration of demonetization has caused immense inconvenience to the ordinary people. They are standing in long queues for exchange at the loss of wages. The Socialist Party believes that black money is an unavoidable result of the capitalist-neoliberal policies. We can see the same across the world. The claim made by government, which is implementing neo-liberal policies on a much faster pace than the previous UPA government, is principally untenable.

The Socialist Party rejects the neo-liberal economic policies and demands that development policies, which are decentralized, complementary to the local ecosystem, diverse and based on sustainable development, should be implemented. Only such pro-people and pro-environment policies can guarantee full employment and balanced usage of natural resources. Country's wealth is its people and resources. We see reflection of decentralized, diverse and sustainable development's clear vision in the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi, Rammanohar Lohia, Jayaprakash Narayan and Kishan Patnayak.

this is not the case. Another thing to be taken into account is that earlier there was a condition for FDI that it was supposed to transfer technology to India. But now, even this condition has been withdrawn. This means that foreign companies can now manufacture with old technology or just acquire an Indian company and do their business. Therefore the biggest example of "Make in Foreign" under the Modi

government's "Make in India" campaign is of allowing 100% FDI in Defence sector. This move is both shocking and ironic as it encourages "Make in Foreign" rather than "Make in India".

Another important restriction on FDI in the earlier regime was that foreign companies were required to make a joint venture with the original equipment manufacturer. Now this condition has been removed. This will make foreign companies operate at the same level as Indian companies. This means stiff competition for Indian manufacturers. It will not be long before foreign companies take over Indian companies.

The dangers of agreements with foreign companies are not just financial and technological. There is always a danger of leaking designs of defence equipments to enemies. Recently a case validating this suspicion came into light when 22,400 pages of documents leaked from the data bank of French submarine manufacturer DCNS, which has the contract of manufacturing submarines at Goa. Investigations show that the leak occurred at some South Asian location, and via China it reached Pakistan. Though government has ensured a probe, but so far there is no action against the company. The government has not even initiated the cancelation of the contract of manufacturing the submarines with the French company. Meanwhile a deal has been signed for purchase of Rafale French fighter jets. It is alleged that the said deal is the costliest in the history of our defence sector purchases. Government will purchase 36 Rafale jets for a total of Rs. 59,000 crores, which means that each jet will cost a whopping Rs. 1600 crores!

Raising any question/suspicion on defence related issues is fussed about in an ugly way now-a-days. Country's Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju's statement that a new culture of questioning the defence forces is taking shape and it is wrong is a specimen of such mind-set. The armed forces, security and defence deals are being made a question of patriotism and pride in such a way that people, media and organisations would desist from raising questions. In such a scenario, we will not even be in a position to address corruption scams in the defence sector like the Bofors scam. In our democracy elected government and the parliament take decisions on all defence related issues. Therefore questions and suspicion are raised about the government and not the armed forces. There is a conscious attempt to soft-pedal the voice against the present government in the guise of armed forces.

The farce of government's OROP (One Rank One Pension) claim has been exposed by the tragic suicide of a 70-year old ex-army man. The irony is that opposition parties like AAP and Congress are making it an emotional issue, which is being used taken advantage of by the ruling BJP.

So, on one hand the government is escalating tensions at the border and signing new defence deals with Russia, France and USA and on the other hand soldiers coming from poor and farmers' families are being abandoned to commit suicide. Furthermore, there is an attempt that playing politics and raising emotional fervour in the name of armed forces is a sole right of one party i.e. BJP; and citizens/media do not have a right to seek or furnish information and to ask questions in this matter!

The Socialist Party firmly believes that when the present government has jeopardized national security and the interests of the armed forces by opening the defence sector to trade by foreign companies, there should be maximum possible transparency and discussion on defence related issues. The Socialist Party also demands that permission for 100% FDI in the defence sector be withdrawn immediately.

(passed in 4th National Convention held in Lucknow on 14-15 November 2016)

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Let us end this short essay with a quote from Tagore from his foreword to his monumental work Towards Universal Man in 1892:

"I once read a story of a poor man who wanted to buy himself winter clothes for winter and summer clothes for summer. So he used to save up all the money he could get by begging. But he could not save up enough to buy summer clothes until summer was gone. This went on year after year until God, moved by piety, told the man that He would grant him a wish. "All I ask for," the man said, "is this: let the vicissitudes of fortune end, so that I no longer get winter clothes in summer and summer clothes in winter." We too pray that God would end the vicissitudes of our education, and grant us winter clothes in winter and summer clothes in summer. God has put before us everything we need, but we cannot help ourselves to the right thing at the right moment. And that is why we live like that beggar in the story. So let us pray to God to give us food when we are hungry and clothes when we are cold. Let us pray that He would unite our language with our thought and our education with our life."

India versus India

Gopalkrishna Gandhi

Before entering into the theme, I want to say that there is a deep dichotomy, a fundamental two-ness in the Indian psyche which can be seen as an 'India versus India' phenomenon. We are as a people steeped in the fatalistic acceptance of anything that happens around us as 'given by kismet, ordained by karma, etched on our foreheads as the lines of Fate. And so, acceptance, resignation, detachment are seen as philosophically desirable, spiritually advised and pragmatically sensible. On the other hand, India has also been the site of great reforms, of revolutionary changes, campaigns, agitations, movements for change all of which are about anything but quietist, accepting. They militate against 'kismet'. Fatalist acceptance of the given on the one hand contrasts with the anti-fatalist urge for change. So we have two Indian mindsets at the very taproot of our civilisation. And our present preoccupation with the famine of currency makes me wonder whether we are to admire the great patience being shown by our people or lament the lack of protest among them.

'India versus India' sounds like a litigious title. Do I mean by it that despite the money and the strain involved in litigation, despite all the time it takes up, legal action is a favourite Indian habit, amounting to an addiction? That we, as a people, delight in taking one another, especially relatives, to court or that the Indian State rather routinely fills its already over-crowded jails with more and ever more under-trials, many if not most of them innocent?

In truth I believe that to be quite true. If we were to roll all Indians who are plaintiffs and respondents into two giant collectivities we would have India versus India, a Mahabharata of Mahabharatas that neither Ramanand Sagar nor Peter Brooks would be able to handle. Next to temples, mosques, gurudwaras, the most favoured place of recourse is the *nyayalay*. We can be, in a generalisation with exceptions discounted, as a people, *vivadi, adalatbaz*. Where but in India would private perceptions of the public's interest or the public's interest in individual hurt or the travails of an identifiable group, become a whole genre of litigation - the PIL ?

If the *awam* seems to be an adept in litigation, the State is on board as well, keeping hundreds of thousands of lawyers in silk, keeping attorneys general, advocates general, solicitors general, their additional alternatives, and a platoon of public prosecutors and standing counsel ceaselessly, sleeplessly and thanklessly occupied. Together they keep notaries public ready with ink-pad and stamp paper, clerks in the kindergarten of the law but post-Docs in the legal system, tippety-tappetying away on their Remington or Olivetti typewriters, rolling out *vakalats*, affidavits, counters, anticipatory bail applications, now in panic over the famine of fifties, twennies and tenners and the most prized of all, the blue note '*ikksau da note...please...bas...thank you, soniye...*'. The precarious car slots for the judges outside courts beside a mayhem of

mis-parked cars, autos, Media OB vans, motor-cycles, fruit-juice, tea and chat vendors all around and oh, threading their course with grim determination through the tangled mass of dismayed men women, those streams, streams upon streams of starched white shirts, shiny black coats and gleaming shoes, heading towards the equivalent of *suryodaya* on a foggy morning in Kasi, which is that moment when, in the hall there is a sudden hush, chatter ends, laughter freezes, all stand, the Judges enter, take their seats, and as the case on top of the day's listing begins, there comes to be intoned, the mantra of mantras, litigant India's one and true *suprabhatic Aum*, which is 'Milord...' And we have India versus India.

But our laws, our courts, judges and lawyers are not about litigation alone. They have led to decisive, courageous interventions. They have nursed foresight, gestated evolution, protected the intelligence that conserves and the wisdom that reforms. Husnara Khatoon v/s the State of Bihar gives an example. India has been notoriously sluggish in the matter of prison reforms, on the condition of prisoners. Kapila Hingorani's petition on behalf of several prisoners won for 40,000 of them release. India versus India stood in *Husnara* in the shape of a thirst for *insaf* versus a fatalistic surrender to *kismet*. Our laws and our law courts have judged issues on the claims of two faculties which make humans of the homo sapien - IQ and MQ, the intelligence quotient and the moral quotient, better known

as the human conscience. With a bandaged arm, elbow in sling, wrist in a compress of crepe, every digit on the palm wearing, like medallions, square or round patches of band-aid, the bruised yet trusting Indian salutes India's pre-eminent site where India's IQ meets India's MQ – the Indian judiciary.

Every society through each generation knows men and women of high IQs and also men and women of high MQs and, very significantly, men and women, with both high IQs and high MDs, showing thereby that if it feels great to be smart but it also feels good to have a sense of right and wrong. Such persons are few in number, but they are there. Among them some, even fewer, add courage to their conviction. They express their views without hesitation. No *agar-magar* stops them.

Ever since Gandhi used the phrase 'keeper of my conscience' or 'conscience-keeper' for Rajagopalachari, it has been overdone. That is one among the minor hassles Gandhi has created. Because of him now, every blunder is a "Himalayan blunder", every hollow promise is 'a post-dated cheque'. And poor old Western civilisation has become forever 'a good idea'. Overuse however is no reason to not use the phrase 'conscience keeper' when it is right to use it, necessary to use it. Individuals need conscience keepers because their consciences frequently doze off. Nations need conscience keepers because their consciences only occasionally wake up.

Jayaprakash Narayan was one exceptional conscience keeper to our beloved India - a country at once wise and foolish, loving and murderous, offering shelter, sanctuary, *sharanam*, *ashraya*

but also distancing, abandoning, expelling, a country at once varied and yet bonding, so united and so hopelessly divided as to become a spoonerist's special : diversity in unity...I mean... ..university in diversity...sorry....unity in diversity. JP had humour aplenty in him to laugh at that but he was essentially the most earnest man I have ever met. He knew how India could be at war with a part of itself, a part of India at war with India. He said to Kashmiris - these are not his exact words, but a paraphrasing of what he said - 'Countries, people, behave in strange ways. You know Pakistan and what it did to you in 1947-48. You know India and what it did for you in 1947-48. You and I can be proud of the Indian officers and Jawans who laid down their lives here, staving the invaders off. Later, things have happened between India and you that should not have happened. I am ashamed of those. I know you mistrust India. I can understand why. India sees Kashmir as part of its map, whereas it should have seen India as part of Kashmir's mind. Your shikaras, your bokharas, your walnuts, your carpets, your summer breeze, your winter snows have gone into India's consciousness, but India's great Constitution, its independent judiciary, its free media, its resurgent womanhood, has not enter your minds. This is not your fault, it is India's. The way Sheikh sahib was treated, the way your elections turned into farces, hurt your izzat, your Kashmiriyat is all shameful. But, please, please do recognise the fact that India is a Republic, whose conscience though often asleep, even comatose, can be and is awakened. If shown its error, India can correct its methods. I will do my best to help it do so. Trust India, trust me. Do not, and I repeat, do not go with some delusive dreams which

could become the most horrible nightmares'.

This was India versus India trying the non-litigious road of mediation.

And at another end of the country he told the diverse Naga people, similarly, something like (again not his exact words but certainly his message), 'You are a proud, self-respecting people with a distinct culture and history. India, its hinterland particularly, is so wrapped up in its own sense of glory and greatness, real and imaginary, that it does not have the time or the temperament to appreciate your heritage enough. Just as it has branded all south Indians as Madrasi, it has branded all of you as Naga. It does not even know that the Naga are many people, at least 17 distinct people, with distinct cultures, language, dress. Most Indians think of you in terms of red and black shawls, spears and Republic Day parades. That is India's loss, not yours. India can be mulishly adamant but somewhere it knows how to correct itself, rectify its errors. India can go wrong, India cannot be evil. Trust it, not those further to your north or east, who tell you to look in their direction. That way lies a steep fall into an unknown valley'.

This was again India mediating India.

JP was asked by the Indian state to help solve the problem of dacoits in the ravines of Madhya Pradesh. He got through to them, which was no small success. They wore belts of bullets, their palms were red, their fingernails, black. They were ferocious, yet trapped. Trapped, yet ferocious. The state had roned them in but was yet afraid to touch them. A giant among the daku asked

JP if they can trust the state. What guarantee could he, JP, give them that if they surrendered. Will they, on surrendering, not be tried for multiple murders and hanged? JP said he could not guarantee that they would not be, he could not speak for the Indian state. But this much he said he could guarantee them: If after having been promised amnesty due to Jayaprakash's mediation a surrendering dacoit is hanged, Jayaprakash will die with him. That was enough. The bullet belts were unloosened, guns dropped. To be fair to the Indian state, it kept its word to JP. To a lesser man, one who was no conscience-keeper, it may not have.

Kashmir, Nagaland trusted him. The denizens of Chambal's ravines put their faith in him. The south of India, too, curiously, bonded with him. He was, after all a socialist. The south never saw him in terms of a Hindiwala who without knowing the next thing about, say, Tamil, still insists on their speaking to him in his language, a typical India versus India signpost. JP was not the shallow politician who would go all vanakkam-vanakkam in Madras and then in Hyderabad mix up his Tiru-s with his Garu-s. He knew his India, north-south, east-west. He knew its boundaries and neighbours as well. He knew the India that could hurt its many Indias, the many Indias that could harm India. Conscience is not a mushy heart; it has a taut mind.

And yet what did the State do to the same JP when he raised his voice against corruption, against dictatorship? *Vinashakale viparitabuddhi*, JP said softly as he was led to the van taking him to prison, in 1975. What the state did

was shameful but what civil society did was worse. In utter cowardice it watched in silence and then went about its business. In Faiz Ahmed Faiz's immortal words persons of conscience are inconvenient and unwelcome to the State and to society. They suffer at the hands of both the King and his loyal subjects.

Hakim-e-shaharbhi, majma 'e-am bhi

The Governor and the populace, both, send

Tir-e-ilzambhi, sang-e-dushnambhi

Calumny's keen arrow, insult's hurtling stone

Such rare people, so rare as to be countable on the fingers of

one hand, personify more than the word 'conscience'. Their restless conscience stands four square against its envious opponent, calm cunning, its clever rival, conformism.

When their comments are addressed to or are about seats of power, they suffer victimisation, persecution, and worse. Even fewer have the greater courage - temerity, almost - to speak their minds not just to the sovereign but to society, to their own *samaja*. If the sovereign can be vengeful, society can be vicious. If the state can prosecute, society can victimize. Its weapons are ridicule, calumny, spite. Those who speak up against an unjust State are brave; those who speak up against an unkind people are braver.

(to be Concluded)

(Contd. from Page 7)

peoples and their representatives in order to bring about a resolution of the Kashmir dispute that recognises the aspirations of people to determine their own destiny through demonstrably democratic means.

We also call upon all Indian citizens to recognise that the actions of the Indian state in the Kashmir

valley are far removed from the values of a democratic republic and beyond the pale by any acceptable norms of a civilised society in the 21st century. We call upon all Indian peoples to ensure that the injustices against Kashmir's peoples are brought to an end and their democratic aspirations addressed.

—Amirtharaj Stephen, Photographer; Anuradha Bhasin, Pakistan India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy; Bilal Khan, Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan; Devisingh Tomar, Narmada Bachao Andolan; Gautam Mody, New Trade Union Initiative; Id Khajuria, Pakistan India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy; Jatin Desai, Pakistan India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy; Kavita Krishnan, All India Progressive Women's Association; Lakshmi Premkumar, Researcher; Madhuresh Kumar, National Alliance of Peoples Movements; Medha Patkar, Narmada Bachao Andolan; Ujahid Nafees, National Forum on Right to Education; Pfokehil Kriizini, Naga Peoples Movement for Human Rights; Pramod Puzha, Journalist; Prajakta Dhulap, Journalist; Khajuria, Pakistan India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy; Shankar Mahanand, Janwadi Sanskritik Andolan; Soroj Mohanty, Peoples Union of Civil Liberties (Odisha); S P Udaykumar, Peoples Movement against Nuclear Energy; Swathi Seshadri, Researcher; Vasundhara Jairath, New Socialist Initiative

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Education too demands the attention of prime minister

Sandeep Pandey

Is Pakistan dividing India?
Kuldip Nayar

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Progressive politics of the world
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**Accidents - a leading cause
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Bharat Dogra

Recently we saw a debate on Uniform Civil Code in the context of triple talaq with the Prime Minister saying that he can't allow lives of Muslim women to be ruined. He said it is the responsibility of the government to get Muslim women their rights according to the Constitution. Narendra Modi has also said that his government believes in a permanent and lasting solution to the problem of Kashmir within the framework of Indian Constitution.

While Narendra Modi's sympathy for Muslim women in laudable and we only hope that Kashmir problem will be solved one day, there is something more basic which demands the government's attention and is easier doable than the two problems just mentioned.

The Indian Constitution initially as part of the Directive Principles and subsequent to the 86th amendment as a fundamental right guarantees free and compulsory education to children in the age group of 6-14 years.

The 17 member Indian Education Commission with another 20 international experts advising it, functional during 1964-66 under the chairmanship of Professor D.S. Kothari, the then chairman

of University Grants Commission, came up with recommendation of a common public education system.

While there is a Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act in existence since 2009 it may not be very difficult to verify the veracity of 'free and compulsory' part of it as one ventures out into Indian streets or workplaces.

Even though Dr. B.R. Ambedkar wanted the right to education to be included in the Fundamental Rights of Constitution of independent India he had to be content to keep it as part of Directive Principles due to stiff resistance from the elite members of Constituent Assembly. It was in Unnikrishnan vs. State of Andhra Pradesh, 1993 judgment that the Supreme Court pronounced right to education as a fundamental right till the age of 14 years. Central Government appointed the Saikia Committee in 1996 to examine the feasibility of making elementary education a fundamental right. The committee recommended that free elementary education be made a fundamental right through a Constitutional amendment. Tapas Majumdar Committee was formed in 1997 to look into financial requirement for implementation of this idea. The same year 83rd

Editor :
G. G. Parikh

Managing Editor : Guddi

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

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

*Between the Lines***Is Pakistan dividing India?****Kuldip Nayar**

Constitutional Amendment Bill was introduced but it faced opposition because it had diluted some of the provisions of right to education. For example, it restricted the right only to age group 6-14 years. A lot of changes in the government's outlook towards education in this period took place due to interference of international financial institutions in the education policy. In particular, government's commitment to the cause of universal elementary education was diluted and a clear shift towards privatisation was perceptible. The Bill was finally passed as 86th amendment in 2001. But the then government failed to get Free and Compulsory Education Bill passed in spite of making three attempts in 2003 and 2004 due to opposition. One of the objectionable provisions was to allow extra-Constitutional bodies to take over the education programme with no guarantee that they would work within the framework of Constitution. Finally during the Manmohan Singh government Kapil Sibal got an opportunity to draft a fresh Bill. Principles of equality of opportunity and social justice were ignored in his exercise. The draft presented in 2005 in the Central Advisory Board of Education was vociferously questioned by educationist Anil Sadgopal and others. Eventually another draft Bill was introduced in 2008 which became an Act in 2009. At least 25% children from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections are entitled for free education from Class I to VIII in all schools now. But this is simply insufficient if all children in India have to have access to education of equitable quality. No government in history has been willing to fulfil its Constitutional obligation of providing resources necessary for universalisation of elementary education.

(Contd. on Page 11)

Home Minister Rajnath Singh has said that Pakistan is again trying to divide India on the basis of religion. He conveniently forgets history. Pakistan was a consequence, not the cause. The society was divided and both Hindus and Muslims had reached a point of no return. Consequently, they had marshaled themselves in two separate camps with little contacts with each other.

True, the Muslim League under the leadership of Mohammad Ali Jinnah wanted a separate sovereign Muslim state, but there was a time when he had accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan which gave the Centre three subjects—Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications. It was Jawaharlal Nehru who said the constituent assembly could change anything. That made Jinnah to go back from the Cabinet Mission Plan and he openly said that he did not “trust” the Congress, which claimed to represent the unity of India.

Rajnath Singh would do well to change the agenda of his Bhartiya Janata Party, the establishment of a Hindu Rashtra. It is doing so with a vengeance. After coming to power at the Centre, the BJP has changed the top honchos of institutions because of the orders from its mentor, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

Even the Nehru Centre which imbibed the teachings of Jawaharlal Nehru, an icon representing the national freedom movement, has been drastically disturbed. Satish Sahney, the Chief Executive, is a staunch RSS follower. The students at the Film Institute in Pune have been at the receiving end after

Gajendra Chuhan was appointed as its head. No amount of protests had made the government relent. Appointments in other institutions, too, had followed the same pattern.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has not taken any policy decision which would reflect the Hindutva philosophy. But his speeches and actions suggest a lurch towards the right. The society has a veneration of soft-Hindutva, whether the Prime Minister says so or not. After all, the nation had returned him with an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha and he is making the party's agenda good.

The Muslims, who are roughly 12 crore, hardly count for in the government affairs. The centre has only one Muslim cabinet-ranked minister and he, too, holds an insignificant portfolio. The community does not voice its demand any more as if it has already accepted the number two position. In fact, it is on a defensive mould blaming itself for the partition of the country.

Once I asked a Muslim luminary at the Jamia Millia at Delhi why the community was conspicuously silent? He said that it now wanted only safety for its life and property and had realized that the majority community doubted their commitment to the country. The Muslims, he said, were conscious that they were behind the country's division and that they would be mistrusted if they were to ask anything more.

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Remembering P. Viswambharan

B. Vivekanandan

P. Viswambharan, veteran socialist leader from Kerala, is no more. He passed away peacefully at his home on 9 December 2016, after a brief hospitalisation. He was 92, and was a bachelor. As he laid down, in a 'Personal Note' to his brother's son Ail Kumar, not to perform any religious rituals after his death, he was cremated adjacent to his home, near Kovalam, without any customary rituals. His body was cremated with full state honours. A large number of people, from all walks of life, attended his funeral.

P. Viswambharan was an extra-ordinary person. He was an embodiment of value-based politics in Kerala. He was a freedom fighter, a Member of the Travancore-Cochin State Legislative Assembly (1954-56), a Member of the Kerala State Legislative Assembly (1960-64), and was a Member of the Lok Sabha (1967-71). In addition, he held several positions in Kerala politics. He became the State Secretary of the Praja Socialist Party in 1964, and the State Chairman of the Socialist Party in 1971. He became the State President of the Janata Party in 1980, and, later, became a Member of the Janata Dal's National Executive. During the Emergency, he was the State Secretary of the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). But, he never occupied a ministerial position either in the State or in the Centre. In his demise, Kerala has lost a beacon of clean politics.

P. Viswambharan was born on 25 June 1925 at Kovalam, near

Trivandrum. After completing his school education in Trivandrum, he did his higher education at Scott Christian College, Nagarcoil, Arts College and the University College in Trivandrum. After graduation, he joined the Law College, Trivandrum, for doing his law, but could not complete studies there, as he got more deeply involved in the freedom struggle and in state politics.

Mr Viswambharan joined politics as a student activist during the 'Quit India' movement and played a significant role in the founding of Students' Congress in the Travancore state. In politics, his mentors were tall leaders, like Pattom Thanu Pillai, Ponnara Sreedhar and T.M. Varghese.⁷ Interestingly, owing to his closeness with Pattom Thanu Pillai, P. Viswambharan was given the nickname "Kutty Pattom" (Junior Pattom) by the political circles in the state.

In the early years of his political career, Viswambharan combined politics and journalism, and became notable for his news scoops, including the most sensational one pertaining to the assassination attempt on Sir C.P. Ramaswamy Iyer, then Diwan of Travancore State. As an accomplished journalist, Viswambharan made a mark. He was associated with Malayalam newspapers like *Malayali*, *Mathrubhoomi*, *Desabandhu*, and *Swathanthrakahalam*. He worked also for the news agency, United Press of India (UPI). He was the founder General Secretary of

Travancore-Cochin Journalists' Union.

Mr Viswambharan joined the Socialist Party in 1949, and remained its staunch votary till he breathed his last, last week. He believed in socialist ideals and responded to public issues keeping those principles and ideals in view. He maintained a close relationship with many top socialist leaders at the national level. Among them were Jayaprakash Narayan, Asoka Mehta, Rammanohar Lohia, S. M. Joshi, George Fernandes, Madhu Dandavate, Madhu Limaye, Surendra Nath Dwivedy, Surendra Mohan, H.V. Kamath, G.G. Parikh, Samar Guha, Samarendra Kundu, and Pannalal Surana. Along with Pattom Thanu Pillai, Ponnara Sreedhar, Arangil Sreedharan, K. Chandrasekharan, P. Kunjirama Kurup, and Sivaramabharathi, P. Viswambharan played a significant role in building up the socialist movement in Kerala. He organised systematically many Socialist Study Camps, in different parts of Kerala, to generate a stream of young, well-informed, socialists in the state. Indeed, those who attended these Socialist Study Camps, have constituted the unflinching support base of the socialist movement in the state ever since. It was during these heydays that, in the 1967 General Elections, the Samyukta Socialist Party won three Lok Sabha Seats - P. Viswambharan in Trivandrum, Arangil Sreedharan in Badagara, and G.P. Mngalathu Madhom in Harippad - besides

20 State Assembly seats from Kerala. Looking back, Socialist politics in Kerala in the 1960s and 1970s was fruitfully dominated by a formidable triumvirate - P. Viswambharan, Arangil Sreedharan and K. Chandrasekharan.

Last time Mr Viswambharan contested the Lok Sabha elections was in 1977, when he contested, as a Janata Party candidate, against the Communist Party veteran M. N. Govindan Nair, and lost. Pertinently, a secret attempt was made at that time to deny him the Janata Party Ticket to contest from the Trivandrum Lok Sabha constituency. And, therefore, contesting from Trivandrum at that time became a prestige issue for Viswambharan. As the secret move to deny him the Lok Sabha ticket was known well in time, that attempt to bypass him was squarely defeated, and he was given the Janata Party ticket to contest. Yet, he lost that election. That was his last electoral contest. Had he won that election at that time, he would have been in the central cabinet.

Mr Viswambharan made his mark in the cooperative movement of Kerala. He was associated with a large number of cooperative societies in the state. And, in this he paid special attention to organise cooperative societies in the coir manufacturing sector. In his own village, Pachalloor, he established a successful coir cooperative society - the Pachalloor Coir Cooperative Society - which has grown into a notable one in the state, and made an impressive impact not only on the manufacturing of innovative coir products, but also on its marketing outside the state, including in North India. Indeed, this author had the privilege of accompanying him once from New Delhi to Ludhiana,

in Punjab, in search of new markets for his coir cooperative society's products. For many years, he was President of that coir cooperative society. Besides, he was President of the famous Alleppey Coir Central Marketing Cooperative Society. He was in its Director Board for many years. For market promotion of Coir products outside India, Mr Viswambharan made three visits abroad. In addition, he was a member of the Executive Committee of the National Federation of Industrial Cooperatives for 20 years.

Mr Viswambharan was an outstanding trade unionist. He was President of many trade unions in Kerala. He was active in organising quarry workers, coir workers, port workers, motor workers, textile workers, and so on.

He was associated with many non-political institutions too. He was closely associated with Gandhian institutions, like Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, in Trivandrum. Similarly, he was closely associated with Mitraniketana, the world famous rural development institute in Vellanad, near Trivandrum. He was a member of its Governing Council for many years. He was a trustee of the S.M. Joshi Socialist Foundation, Pune. He took active interest in the working of the Yusuf Meherally Centre. He founded Janata Forum in 1980 for discussing contemporary issues and remained its president since then. He played a big role in the development of Kovalam as an international tourist destination, in the establishment of a Railway Division in Trivandrum, and in making the Trivandrum Airport as an international airport.

He was a voracious reader, and invariably did his homework

well before he made his major speeches, whether in the Lok Sabha, or in the State Assembly, or at public meetings, or at Socialist Study Camps. For students of Kerala politics, he was a walking encyclopaedia of Kerala's political history, and of political personalities of the state. He regularly published incisive articles in *Janata* on political developments in Kerala. In the last days of his life, he was, like many other freedom fighters, deeply disappointed, and concerned over the decline of ethical standards, and unabashedness, in today's politics in the state and the country. He was concerned over the kleptocracy that is growing in Indian democracy through the establishment of reciprocal nexus between some new rich businessmen and the political and administrative elite, targeting public assets like natural resources and minerals as objects of their theft.

P. Viswambharan detested parasitical politics, and had never approved its use as a means of self-aggrandisement. In tune with that, even for his elections, he would refrain from approaching vested interests for financial contributions as he knew that the vested interests would expect reciprocal support for their unfair actions. As result of this basic approach, after every election he contested, he had to sell his personal property, without any remorse, for settling the accounts. This author is aware of such instances. That was Viswambharan. Seldom we see such examples in today's politics. That is why even his political rivals never suspected his honesty and integrity, and respected him and his judgments.

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Progressive world politics

D. K. Giri

The Socialist International (SI) operating since 1951 has practically split. A new network called Progressive Alliance (PA) was created on 22 May 2013, at Leipzig, Germany, coinciding with the celebration of 150th year of German Social Democratic Party. According to the parties and countries who founded the PA, SI had become rigid, bureaucratic, exclusive, ineffective and almost dysfunctional. The office bearers, mainly the Secretary General, clung on to his position, and even after several soundings refused to step down. He assumed charge in 1989 and continues till date. I wrote an evaluatory piece of SI on the eve of its Congress in Cape Town, South Africa, citing some of the organizational deficits (*Janata*, April 2012). But they were not to pay heed to criticism or suggestion. Immediately after Cape Town, the idea of Progressive Alliance was conceived in a meeting on 15 December 2012 in Rome. Further deliberations took place in Cascais, Portugal (February 2013) and Gothenburg, Sweden (5 April 2013), in the run up to its formal launching on 22 May in Germany. After four years of its functioning, the General Assembly (Steering Committee) of PA met in a working session on 1 December, in Berlin where I was present to discuss “the way forward”. The Chairman of Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), who is now the Deputy Chancellor of Germany, shared his views and interacted with the delegates.

How is PA different from SI? The new network PA is quite different from SI in its organizing principles, in its outreach and activism. Unlike SI, which includes only political parties, PA has parties, think tanks, academic institutions and individuals – all of them subscribing to progressive thinking and action. Ideologically too, it is more inclusive, it admits into its fold progressives, social democrats, socialists, labour parties and organizations, left liberals – a broad social democratic ideological family. It is active round the year in most parts of the world, organizing seminars, workshops, interventions such as petitioning the governments and leadership whenever they violated democratic and human rights accorded in their respective political systems and international statutes, etc. PA also builds and strengthens regional ideological networks like Network of Social Democracy in Asia (SocDem Asia), Arab Social Democratic Forum (ASDF), and Central African Progressive Alliance (CAPAC). It works with other international partner organizations like Socialist International Women (SIW), Group of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament (S&D), Party of European Socialists (PES), Party of European Socialists Women (PES Women), and the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY).

Unlike SI, which has a big organizational structure, PA is a lean body with a Steering Committee consisting of all its 130 members, a Board of 30 elected by the Steering Committee, and a Co-ordinator

elected by the Board, to run the day-to-day affairs of the Network, who convenes the Steering Committee and the Board and chairs them. The Board appoints an auditor. Contributions to PA are voluntary, and all contributing members constitute the Finance Committee. The structure is lean and efficient, has functioned well so far. In Berlin meeting, it was decided that the structure and functions of PA will be reviewed in two years by the Steering Committee.

I would like to reflect on the opening speech of Sigmar Gabriel, Chairman, Social Democratic Party (SPD) Germany, and Deputy Chancellor, Germany, and the deliberations that took place on the three documents adopted in the meeting. They were the working agenda of the PA, a new agenda for peace and justice, and guiding principles of PA. Sigmar Gabriel made three main points in his speech. First, the internationalism of social democracy – he said when socialism evolved in Europe, capitalism was national but powerful, so in order to fight capitalism, working class had to embrace international solidarity, like the slogan “workers of the world unite” and so on. Presently, it is the other way round, capitalism is globalised and socialism seems confined to national boundaries. This needs to change. Socialism would not succeed without international solidarity. Second, socialists in opposition keep in touch with its partners in other countries but when they come to power, they tend to speak only to the governments of

other countries not the comrades. This was quite refreshing to hear from the Chairman of SPD, which I endorsed by giving an example that a Socialist Head of State from Europe came to India, came more than once and did not meet any Indian comrades who are partners of his party and worse, he once came and gave a memorial lecture for a non-socialist, a former right-wing BJP member. Third he said, we should actively support each other across the countries. When the German Social Democrats were collecting money for Portuguese and Spanish comrades, he was inspired by the solidarity actions of Germans and joined SPD. He was happy to recall that Portuguese Socialist Party was born in Germany. His speech was received well and his party's commitment to support and promote PA was deeply appreciated by the members present.

On the documents, the Guiding Principles consisted of PA's Commitment, the Agenda, and the Structure. The Commitment is to, "as progressive parties, make the 21st century, a century of democratic, social and ecological progress." In order to accomplish this goal, PA has a realistic and dynamic strategy – "we have to understand the needs of our fellow human beings and work out modern political approaches to satisfy these needs." The rest of the Commitment is reiteration of social democratic approach and recognition of newly emerging issues like LGBT rights, racism, climate change, securing peace and human rights as "global public goods", and eradication of poverty and hunger once and for all.

The working agenda contained, among other things, a review of activities so far, PA's motivation and

obligation, the focus of PA's work and the way ahead. The learning from its four years' existence is that PA is based on commitment of individual parties whose initiatives and projects, implemented along with PA; "the strength of Progressive Alliance lies in this commitment and ownership."

The motivation of PA is drawn from its organizing principle which is 'inclusive', PA enrolls not only political parties, but also progressive organizations and movements. The obligation of PA is to promote international exchange and cooperation. PA collectively underlines the urgent need of such an obligation in the face of increasing political and social challenges; financial, economic, ecological crisis and structural inequality, the intensification of distortions in democracy and the revival of narrow nationalism. All in all, the progressives should create a utopian surplus in place of 'dystopian norm' prevalent these days. PA strongly and highly optimistically believes that it is possible to create a difference in the interest of many, not a few. PA has three focus points in its activities – programmatic discussions, solidarity activities, and exchange of campaigns. The first is to generate clearer understanding of issues at global level, the second is to "come to the aid of all the comrades throughout the world who are suffering from political oppression and persecution or whose stand for our values requires the support of the progressive community.

The third document was the "New Agenda for Peace and Justice". The strategy for creating and realizing the new agenda consists of putting a progressive global, political and economic system that puts people of

the centre. This is really revalidating Mahatma Gandhi's approach to planning, strongly adhered to by E. F. Schumacher in his legendary work, "The Small is Beautiful, Economics as if People Mattered" (1975). This book comprised 25 essays by EFS underlining people-centric planning and people-friendly technologies. The second element of the strategy is internationalism, "We Progressives have to offer policy solutions that foster global cooperation rather than confrontation embrace diversity and create a climate of inclusion in the globalizing work".

The document lists several other areas for advocacy and interactions: (i) It emphasizes upon "Reinforcing Common interest, alliances and organizations". Expanding and reforming the United Nations is a top priority. (ii) Democracy is the most preferred political system as it regulates conflicts and reconciles differences. (iii) Human rights and human dignity are non-negotiable. PA will work with anyone who defends human rights anywhere in the world. (iv) For progress and prosperity, peace is a social precondition. But permanent peace can be secured only when structural problems like inequality, hunger, racism, social and political violence, are eliminated. There are several other social and economic, political and religious factors that disturb peace in almost all countries in the world in varying degrees. They have to be addressed as objective conditions in order to ensure peace.

All documents underlined solidarity. Active support has to be extended to all those who are at the risk of isolation, oppression and persecution. The deliberations

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Demonization: Assault on the People

Ram Puniyani

The month old gamble of Mr. Modi has put the whole country in an unprecedented chaos. The demonetization of 86.4 per cent of the circulating currency in the form of 500 and 1000 rupee notes has put into jeopardy the life of major sections of society. Nearly seventy people have died in the queues to withdraw the money from Banks/ATMs. The daily wage workers have to lose their daily earning to withdraw the cash, many daily wage earners had to go back to their villages for lack of work, the small trade has been damaged severely, farmers are neck deep in trouble while probably those holding the 'black money' don't have to suffer such an ordeal. The 80 per cent of the estimated black money is stashed in the overseas tax havens; roughly 15 per cent of such wealth is in the form of real estate, gold and shares. It's only 5 per cent of money which is in the form of currency notes. It is for this five per cent quantum that 86 per cent currency has been demonetized and millions of people, who barely make their two ends meet, have been put to such a massive discomfort.

The impact of this is that the hard earned money of the peasants and common people in the cooperative banks, agricultural credit societies, housing societies and so on has been frozen in a single stroke. The agricultural-rural economy is close to paralysis. The massive loans of corporate houses have been labeled as 'bad loans' and have been waived off. All these expose that the true intention of this assault is not eradication of black money, but

to unleash a social engineering for draining away the meager earnings of the common people into the coffers of corporate billionaires through the banking system. This move has full backing of those who deal with black money or those Corporate giants who stand to benefit as their loans are being waived off.

The response to this has been very diverse. Most of those standing in long queues have expressed their opinions though their life and sweat. While few among them have also praised the effort by saying that in the long run it will be better for them. Most of the opposition parties though disunited as usual have vehemently criticized the move of the government. Prominent economists and substantial section of media have scathingly criticized the move of the government. The critics of the Modi policy, again as usual are being labeled as anti-nationals. Baba Ramdev, the fellow traveler of Modi politics used the word 'Deshdrohi' and RSS groomed Devendra Fadanvis, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra, used the word Deshvirodhi for these critics. The large section of followers of Modi mania, despite their discomforts are holding that it is a good move. Their delusion is that in the long term the system will be better and they will benefit. Modi launched an app to conduct the survey to show that people's opinion is with him, while few surveys are showing growing resentment against this move.

It's no mystery as to why this measure must have been undertaken. Two major Gujarati papers had carried the news of demonetization several months ago. Many are arguing that it is to cripple the opposition parties in the forthcoming elections in UP and Punjab in particular. The idea is to reduce the campaigning capability of opposition parties. There are reports that BJP has purchased lots of real estate just prior to demonetization. The problem of 'bad loans' given to the corporate are being aimed to be solved through the public funding for Corporate giants through the banks, through the massive deposits which is the goal of this move.

Modi campaign for power in 2014 was built around the promise of Acche Din and bringing the black money from overseas banks and then depositing of 15 Lakhs in everybody's account. The social scenario has worsened abysmally during the last two years. The prices of commodities reached sky high during this period. Tur dal has shot up from Rs. 60 to 150 per KG. Despite the drastic fall in the prices of crude oil in international market from 119 per barrel to 30 per barrel, the petrol price in India has come down only from Rupees 67 to 60 or so only. Corporates like Mallya have made merry by running away with huge debts. This along with the non-realization of boastful promises like rupee becoming stronger vis a vis dollar are nowhere in sight. The agrarian crisis has been worsening. With the demonitisation the production in unorganized sector

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60 years ago

...But how was Ambedkar's death received at the time? How did Indian political or thought leaders in 1956 react to the event as it happened? What, if anything, did they say about Ambedkar and his legacy at the very moment he left this earth? This column provides some answers to these questions, based on a reading of some old, faded microfilms of newspapers printed 60 years ago.

Ambedkar died in Delhi in the morning of December 6, 1956. Through the day the tributes kept pouring in. Speaking to Parliament before it adjourned in his memory, the prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, referred to him as "the architect of the Constitution", adding "that no one took greater care and trouble over Constitution-making than Dr. Ambedkar". Turning next to Ambedkar's great interest in the reform of Hindu personal laws, Nehru remarked that he was "happy that he saw that reform in a very large measure carried out, perhaps not in the form of that monumental tome that he had himself drafted, but in separate bits". Above all, said Nehru, Ambedkar would be remembered most "as a person, as a symbol of the revolt against all the oppressive features of Hindu society".

Nehru then turned to the paradox of Ambedkar joining a government led by the Congress, a party he had so long and so bitterly opposed. "When I invited him to join the government," remarked the prime minister, "some people were surprised that I should do so because it was thought his normal activities were of the oppositional type rather than of the governmental type."

Nehru continued: "Nevertheless I felt at that time that he had played a very important part and constructive role in the making of the Constitution. I felt that he could continue to play [an] important constructive role in governmental activity and indeed he did."

The first part of Nehru's tribute was generous, recognizing as it did that Ambedkar symbolized "the revolt against all the oppressive features of Hindu society". However, the second part was patronizing, with the prime minister drawing attention to himself, by speaking of how *he* was instrumental in persuading this Opposition and indeed oppositional leader to join his government.

The sources I consulted had no reports of any tributes offered at the time by any leader of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, or of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. They seem to have stayed silent. However, one Hindu conservative who did comment was N.C. Chatterjee of the

Hindu Mahasabha, and in terms even more patronizing than Nehru's. Chatterjee called Ambedkar "one of the Greatest Hindu leaders of modern India". Chatterjee spoke of how Hindus like Dayananda Saraswati, Gandhi and Savarkar had "strongly championed the cause of the uplift of Harijan brothers and sisters", adding: "But it was Dr. Ambedkar who gave a new orientation to that movement due to the spontaneous urge of one who was directly afflicted by the terrible handicaps imposed by the blight of untouchability".

The Hindu Mahasabha leader downplayed two major aspects of Ambedkar's opposition to the caste system. First, by seeing it as merely "spontaneous", he ignored the substantial intellectual critique that Ambedkar had offered of the iniquitous and oppressive Hindu social order, in books such as the *Annihilation of Caste*. Second, Chatterjee ignored, or perhaps more accurately suppressed, Ambedkar's decisive rejection of Hinduism. To refer to Ambedkar as "one of the Greatest Hindu leaders" was dishonest. From 1935, Ambedkar refused to see himself as a "Hindu", and of course, he died a Buddhist.

Consider next the comments on Ambedkar's death by the president of the republic, Rajendra Prasad. Back in 1949-50, Prasad had bitterly opposed Ambedkar's (and Nehru's) attempts to reform Hindu personal laws. Now, six years later, he sent a message calling Ambedkar "the architect of our Constitution" and a "great personality" in "Indian public life". Meanwhile, the chief minister of Ambedkar's home state, Y.B. Chavan, claimed him as a son of the soil, saying that the death was a great loss "to India generally, and Bombay State in particular". While praising him in anodyne terms, neither the president of Ambedkar's country nor the chief minister of Ambedkar's state paid any attention to the radical, egalitarian legacy that the man had left behind.

A more insightful assessment came from the young socialist leader, Madhu Dandavate. He called Ambedkar "a great scholar, an eminent educationist, the architect of free India's Constitution, a great rebel against social injustice... [and] a dynamic force of social change". I think Ambedkar himself would have approved of the ordering of these achievements; for the likes of Chatterjee and Prasad, and even Nehru, forgot to remember that he was also a considerable scholar. The best tribute to Ambedkar's memory, continued the socialist Dandavate, would be to create "a society free from the evils of casteism".

Ramchandra Guha in *Telegraph*

India versus India - II

Gopalkrishna Gandhi

Tagore's famous poem 'Where the mind is without fear', when read or recited in the original Bangla, has a resonance that goes beyond its great ring in the English translation : *Chittajethabhoy-shunno...* (Where the mind is without fear)... *uchchojethashir...* (and the head is held high...). *Uchchashir*, we have as when Sakshi and Sindhu win medals for India at the Olympics, whenever Saina soars. And when Dilip Tirkey, the great hockey champ and an MP, sets about organising a tribal village hockey tournament for villagers from Odisha, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh and says : "The region should develop as a cradle of hockey instead of a nursery for Maoists. The youth of the region should pick up hockey sticks instead of guns." My *shir* is *uchcho* when I read that. Also when Uday Kumar designs the fantastic font of the Indian rupee, combining the Roman R with the Nagari Ra , the Dollar-Pound-Yen double dashes drawn across it. And when an academic of the distinction of Nayanjot Lahiri is awarded, for her magnificent work on Ashoka, the American Historical Association's Richards Prize for the best book in South Asian history. An *uchcho shir* is only natural when these wonderful things happen.

But as to *bhoy* – Boy, O Boy! The Indian mind is not *bhoy-shunno*; it is *bhoy-purno* today. Just consider how cloven we are. A Kashmiri Pandit in the Valley, in his own home, knows *bhoy*, a Kashmiri Muslim in Jammu is in *khauf*, a Naga in Manipur, a Manipuri in Manipur itself, is in fear. And when the Cauvery fever

climbs, Kannadigas in Chennai and Tamilians in Bengaluru are in fear, real fear. Karnataka number plates vanish from Chennai roads, TN plates from Karnataka. Dalits in Bihar have been in *bhoy* of organisations like the Ranvir Sena, since they can remember. Senas are a factor in Indian life, political, social, cultural. What music one may hear, who may or may not act in films are all subjects of Senaic preoccupation in Mumbai and in Mangalore. To them may be added the devotional fervour of an earnest group called the Hindu Sena which organised a yajna at Jantar Mantar some weeks ago for Donald Trump's victory. Our one and only official Sena, our Army, of which we are all justly proud, with the Navy and the Air Force is needed to protect us from external aggression, to defend us. Who are the other non-official Senas guarding ? Who are they fighting? India versus India is all one can say, by way of answer.

Being in a minority in India is not an ethnic condition as much as it is a circumstantial state. You can be in a majority one moment, in a minority the next, You can be in a majority in the bus terminus, in a minority in the bus. You can be an Indian while boarding a train, and can become a Hindu or a Muslim on the journey in one moment if your phone or your radio gives a certain type of news during the journey. You carry your minorityism in you, you carry your *bhoy* in you. A divisive India, a suspicious India, a fearful India is in potentiality always, and in reality often, pitted against a diverse

India, the India that trusts, helps, supports. There, India becomes its own adversary, India versus India. Acharya Kripalani said famously once, and I quote from memory: '*Gandhi ne ek badi ghalati kari. Usne haemin sikhaya ki bairiyon se kaise dosti karein. Usne yah nahin sikhaya ki apnon se kaise dosti karein*'.

Partition re-drew India's map. Polarization is re-drawing India's mind. Extremists on both sides of the Hindu-Muslim divide are at it, vigorously. India versus India is nowhere more visible today than in the recent re-invoking of the demand for a Uniform Civil Code. At a public meeting in Chennai yesterday, Dr Faizan Mustafa, Vice Chancellor of the NALSAR Law University in Hyderabad reminded his audience that those organisations asking for a common civil code now are the same or descended from the ones that had vigorously opposed the Hindu Code Bill in 1949. Protecting certain customs and practices in Hindu society but wanting those in Muslim society to be done away with, is a contradiction that the 'uniformists' must address. The surge in the Hindu right of compassion for Muslim women would have sounded less unconvincing had it been accompanied by a simultaneous concern for gender rights in India as a whole. The Indian state and the ruling party at the centre should be uniform about reform. Equal representation should be a call along with uniform laws. Are Muslims represented anywhere near their proportion to their population in

our Parliament, our Assemblies, in the bureaucracy, police and judiciary? Whether they are Hindu or Muslim or whatever, opponents of triple talaq should also oppose the obscuring of Muslims from the Indian polity, Indian society.

And here it needs to be said Muslim responses to the uniform civil code idea's revival will be greatly strengthened if Muslim opinion acknowledges, in all fairness and objectivity, that in the matter of post-divorce maintenance and security, a great deal of improvement within the Muslim fold is indeed overdue. Likewise, Muslim aspirations for equal opportunities in the Indian polity and in its social and economic organisations need to be paralleled in the Muslim community's eagerness to end the huge disparities in itself. The rich-poor divide in India's Muslim population, the gulf between the Persian-Arabic-Urdu speaking Muslims and, for instance, the Tamil or Malayalam speaking Muslims is phenomenal. And in action taken against terror suspects it is the poor Muslim who has to prove innocence first. Reform is needed in each section of society and in every generation.

If the swagger of dharmagurus in Hindu India more than meets its match anywhere it is in the disproportionate hold of Islamic clerics in the life of the Muslim population. The grip of religious leaders on the thoughts and fears, suspicions and frictions of ordinary Indian of all denominations is increasing and threatens to widen divides and deepen obscurantism, superstition, bigotry and patriarchy.

The illiberal majority's minority baiting must not be matched by illiberal minority silence or

inaction in areas where reform is due. Homogenising diversity is not a step in equality; it is a design in domination. Equally, keeping much-needed reform out is not a step in minority self-protection; it is a sign of regressive self-isolation. Freedom and evolution go together. India is versus India when one Indian community bullies another Indian community into conformity or submission. India is versus India when one Indian community bullies its own constituents into conformity or submission.

In the ethnic enervations of India, the most important contestations of India get overlooked. These concern the individual Indian. Dr Ambedkar envisaged the individual as the basic unit of the Indian polity, not the village or the panchayat. He saw in India every Indian, and in every Indian, India. Can an individual sue himself or herself? Can India really be versus India? India has shown it can. In matter after matter, Indians have demanded and got relief from India. And yet they have not got their due.

The individual citizen has been accorded dignity in *Shreya Singhal*, where the Supreme Court struck down Section 66A of the Information Technology Act which was going to invade privacy, in *NALSA* where the court recognised transgender people as a third gender; and in *Novartis* where on an appeal from a judgment of the Madras High Court, the court struck down a patent granted to Novartis over a cancer drug. If the Indian is India then that India has won in these cases over the India which diminishes the individual.

The Courts however are as fallible as any human institution and I would be failing in my duty to the veracity

of Justice Tarkunde if I did not place on record my disappointment over some other orders in which the Indian who is India has been disregarded. In *Bombay Dyeing v. Bombay Environmental Action Group*, for instance, a PIL filed by the Bombay Environmental Action Group (Bombay Dyeing appealed to the Supreme Court) the judgment had the effect of depriving several Mumbai residents the access to parks and recreational spaces.

India's ecological integrity does not seem to be a worry to most politicians, entrepreneurs, administrators. The networking of rivers is a matter in which I had hoped our Courts would see what is clear, namely, that rivers are not just streams but a whole set of inter-dependent and unique natural properties which need to be conserved, not an un-explored grid that needs to be architected. Here, the court issued a mandamus to the Central government to link India's rivers, at the potential cost, as Shyam Divan has pointed out, to India's ecological integrity. India versus India could not have found a more powerful negative example than in this order.

India is exploited, misused, disfigured by India. Our tobacco, guthka, plastic and construction lobbies seem to enjoy an indemnity unheard of anywhere else in the world. All of them strike at the heart of life. The sources of our breath, of the water we drink and give to our children to drink contain either their products or their effluents or their debris or all of them. We are breathing toxins, drinking the most harmful substances that can be imagined. As Chennai which choked on its own real estate jungle knows from last year's experience, we are

being sucked into our own chortling sewers. Nowhere is India its own enemy as in its losing battle against the despoliation of its physical environment.

We need chastising. We are all, because of not doing enough, not doing it in time, sinning against our own children and grand children. India is cannibalising itself. Who will file a PIL for India's natural resources? Will India sue itself?

(Contd. from Page 2)

From the experience of countries around the world, the only way in which all children can receive equitable quality of education is when a common school system is put in place. The government is doing everything but this.

The question is what is more basic – a Common School System or a Uniform Civil Code? Is the misplaced priority of government deliberate? Can Narendra Modi allow the lives of half the children in India to be ruined? A government which considers Constitution sacrosanct when it comes to resolving the problem of Kashmir doesn't give a hoot to it when its basic provisions are violated in implementation of fundamental right of children. When will the children of India get their Constitutional right?

Quite clearly political expediency determines when the sanctity of Constitution is to be invoked and when it is to be junked.

The government has launched a skills development programme. But how does it expect the youth who're uneducated, under-educated or ill-educated, having passed their examinations using unfair means, a widespread practice, to develop any useful skillsto contribute to the national economy? A country

which aspires to be a world leader cannot do so on the basis of poor and substandard state of education of its population. All countries which have progressed have done so on the foundation of sound education and health state of their citizens.

The Prime Minister has a habit of going and spending his time on important festivals at the border to boost the morale of our soldiers. He'll do a favour to the Indian education system if he visits thegovernment run schools of the country and motivates the teachers and students in classrooms. Nationalism is not just going and expressing solidarity at the border. It is also a national duty to ensure that every child is in school.

(Contd. from Page 2)

Home Minister Rajnath Singh's Martyrs' Day speech has only underlined the suspicion that the hard core Hindus have about the Muslims. The average Hindu accommodates the average Muslim and both, despite prodding by the leaders, live and do business amicably. The communal riots have dramatically dipped and there are instances when the Muslims have helped the Hindus in rehabilitation and vice-versa.

India must admit that it has not been able to establish secularism in the full sense, although democracy has got planted. It is very much visible during elections. The lack of secular ethos is because of the doubtful commitment by Hindus who are in a majority. In fact, it is their duty to put the minority community at ease and give it confidence.

I was recently at Srinagar. An engineer who conducted me was a Muslim. He complained that he did not get any worthwhile job in the rest of the country because of his

religion. When the private sector found that he was a Muslim, even though he had all the qualifications for the job, he was not hired. That he was a Kashmiri only aggravated the situation further.

Even other Muslims find it hard to get jobs in the rest of the country. The private sector does not normally hire them because of prejudice. And they find it difficult to score in open competitions since they have not had the education in private schools where the fee is steep. The government schools lack the facilities like good faculty and environment which only add to their woes.

I was Delhi editor of *The Statesman* when a Muslim employee, who had returned to India after his education in England, complained that he did not get a house in a decent locality. To my horror, I found that he was speaking the truth and that it was not possible for a Muslim to hire on rent a good accommodation owned by a Hindu. That was in the sixties. Even today, there is hardly any change in the attitude by the majority community.

Rajnath Singh should take steps to ensure that the Muslims get accommodation in localities which have Hindus in majority. Otherwise, there are bound to be areas which are overcrowded and where the Muslims feel safe. It's of little use to have the routine Iftar parties which every government or, for that matter, party leaders have to placate the minority community.

Even in a sophisticated city like Mumbai, the Muslims had to remove their name plates at the time of riots to hide their identity. It is a pity that Hindu neighbours could not give them enough confidence so that they feel safe and mingle with them without any inhibition. The feeling

of security is what they want. It is the duty of government to instill that.

For that the security forces would have to stay above the religious pull. It has been noticed that the force when used in riot-ridden localities tends to become parochial. The army is often called to maintain peace because it is not contaminated.

Rajnath Singh should take steps to get rid of religious phobia in the force that he commands. Instead, he is giving speeches and blaming Pakistan for the pernicious fallouts of the country's division.

(Contd. from Page 4)

Generally, P. Viswambharan presented a tough exterior to ward off any one trying to inveigle him to support an unfair proposition. Perhaps, this is an approach he had imbibed from his mentor, Pattom Thanu Pillai. But, like in the case of Pattom Thanu Pillai, behind this exterior is hidden a warm hearted, fair minded person, who would quietly go to any extent to support truth and justice. He was a good host and a decent guest who valued personal friendship. He was a politician *par excellence*. And, he was a broad minded secularist, and was more concerned about the problems of common man. His image as a clean politician earned him universal respect. He will be remembered for long as an icon of clean politics in Kerala.

(Contd. from Page 6)

that followed brought out country-specific issues which were adumbrated, in principle, in the documents. The members expressed sympathy and solidarity for each other and resolved to cooperate on a regular basis. It was felt that, while meetings generate a climate of confidence, unity and solidarity, contacts between the meetings need

to be maintained for meaningful and practical mutual support.

The progressive movement launched and maintained by the platform of Progressive Alliance is the front-runner in the world today. After the demise of communist parties and their networks, and inefficacy of Socialist International, PA is a breath of fresh air and looks promising. Its organization is inclusive, flexible and dynamic, and principles capture the contemporary imagination while providing scope for continued exploration. Its open-mindedness in thinking and transparency in organizing will appeal to many and deliver desired outcome.

P Vishwambharan was a colleague of my parents – Pramila and Madhu Dandvate - in the socialist movement for over sixty years. A frequent visitor to our home, Mr Viswambharan was more of a family member to us. His unflinching devotion to public service, trade unionism and social justice movement earned him friends and admirers across political spectrum.

–Uday Dandvate

(Contd. from Page 7)

has come to a near-halt. It seems Mr. Modi, taunted by opposition and critics on his boastful promise, now wants to claim that so many efforts are being done in this direction. As such the major area of non-taxed money remains untouched. There is a push towards cashless economy where large number people seem to be unprepared for that.

During last over two and a half years the so-called fringe elements

of RSS combine, Modi's ideological pond has become bolder and has thrown up non-issues, identity related ones, in the public domain. These emotive issues which took off from the Ram Temple-Babri Mosque dispute have been joined in by issues related to holy cow, beef, pseudo nationalism Bharat Mata ki Jai, abolishing the autonomy of education institutions, creating a growing atmosphere of intolerance leading to returning of awards by eminent writers and social workers has come to the fore. The deeper issues related to poverty alleviation, employment, malnutrition, health and matters pertaining to agrarian crisis have been buried under the weight of pseudo nationalism. This hyper nationalism has also worsened the state of affairs in Kashmir and relations with neighbors; with Pakistan and Nepal in particular.

The demonetisation seems to be a move which will benefit the corporate world and is creating huge suffering for the average people. The propaganda, 'this will benefit us' has been created with great amount of success. But can this deceptive propaganda win over the reality for so long?

Demonetisation in a nutshell

Before November 8

- Total value of currency : Rs. 17.50 lakh crore
- Value of currency in Rs. 500, Rs. 1,000 notes : Rs. 15.5 lakh crore.

On December 10

- Amount deposited in banks in Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 notes : Rs. 13.23 lakh crore
- Value of new currency infused : Rs. 5 lakh crore.

–*The Indian Express*

Accidents - a leading cause of human distress

Bharat Dogra

Accidents are a leading cause of human distress. One indication of this is that over 3.5 million people die in a typical year in the entire world from various kinds of accidents, while the number of serious injuries caused by accidents is many times more. Some of these injuries are of a nature that, over a period of time, these may end up causing even more distress than sudden deaths.

Taking the average for some recent years, the available statistics suggest that the number of fatalities from all accidents is much higher than total deaths from homicides, suicides, war and civil strife all combined. The latest available factsheet prepared on this subject by the World Health Organisation (WHO) tells us that among the various causes of death by injuries, over 50% were caused by accidents while 29% were caused by suicides, homicides and war combined together. 21% were caused by other injuries (these again include some accidental deaths).

Of course the situation can change in a particular year if war and strife related fatalities go up suddenly, but then we should not forget that in the case of catastrophic accidents (like Bhopal and Chernobyl), accident related fatalities too can increase very suddenly.

Exact comparisons become a little difficult as the category of 'other unintentional injuries' in WHO data is not well defined. If we assume that about one-third are accidental deaths (such as deaths caused by choking, asphyxiation, injuries from machinery, etc.) then we have the

startling statistics that at the world level, over 3.5 million deaths in a year are caused by all accidents taken together, while the number of deaths from suicides, homicides and war together is about 1.6 million. (Table 1).

Table 1
Approximate Number of Accident Deaths in one year (in millions).

Road Accidents	1.3
Falls	0.5
Drowning	0.5
Fires	0.4
Poisoning	0.4
Others	0.4
Total	3.5

This is just one indication of the high distress levels caused by accidents. In addition we should remember that serious injuries caused by accidents are many times greater than fatalities. As the WHO says, "The millions of deaths that result from injuries represent only a small fraction of those injuries. Tens of millions of people suffer injuries that lead to hospitalization, emergency department or general practitioner's treatment, or treatment that does not involve formal medical care."

Serious injuries apart from being very painful can cause disability for varying lengths of time. Their treatment can be very expensive in countries lacking good public health facilities. These can impose a heavy burden on family members and caretakers, apart from the pain and disability suffered by the victim.

In the case of occupational injuries, the number of injuries is particularly higher compared to

fatalities - the available data shows about 120 million accidents in a year while fatalities are about 2,00,000 to 3,00,000. Thus in the case of occupational accidents, injuries are likely to be several hundred times the fatalities.

However for all accidents taken together we may take the conservative estimate of 40 serious injuries per fatality. This assumption is less than what the factual data for Britain tells us - 50 injuries for one fatality. This gives us a figure of 140 million serious injuries caused by all kinds of accidents in a year.

A serious accident affects not just the direct victim but also the victim's family, close friends and dependents. As a conservative estimate, we may say that about 5 persons are affected indirectly to a lesser or greater extent per fatality and serious injury. Thus about 720 million people, including actual victims, are likely to be affected directly or indirectly in a serious way by accidents in a typical year. This may well be an under-estimate.

Thus counting both direct and indirect victims, in a typical decade about 10 per cent of the world's population is likely to be affected by accidents.

As the mortality or serious injury caused by accidents is so sudden, this is likely to be much more painful, traumatic and difficult to come to terms with compared to mortality and disability caused by long-term illness and disease. The emotional distress and coping problems are likely to be much more in the case of accidents.

This is the most dangerous time for our planet

Stephen Hawking

We can't go on ignoring inequality, because we have the means to destroy our world but not to escape it

As a theoretical physicist based in Cambridge, I have lived my life in an extraordinarily privileged bubble. Cambridge is an unusual town, centred around one of the world's great universities. Within that town, the scientific community that I became part of in my 20s is even more rarefied.

And within that scientific community, the small group of international theoretical physicists with whom I have spent my working life might sometimes be tempted to regard themselves as the pinnacle. In addition to this, with the celebrity that has come with my books, and the isolation imposed by my illness, I feel as though my ivory tower is getting taller.

So the recent apparent rejection of the elites in both America and Britain is surely aimed at me, as much as anyone. Whatever we might think about the decision by the British electorate to reject membership of the European Union and by the American public to embrace Donald Trump as their next president, there is no doubt in the minds of commentators that this was a cry of anger by people who felt they had been abandoned by their leaders.

It was, everyone seems to agree, the moment when the forgotten spoke, finding their voices to reject the advice and guidance of experts and the elite everywhere.

What matters now, far more than the victories by Brexit and Trump, is how the elites react

I am no exception to this rule. I warned before the Brexit vote that it would damage scientific research in Britain, that a vote to leave would be a step backward, and the electorate – or at least a sufficiently significant proportion of it – took no more notice of me than any of the other political leaders, trade unionists, artists, scientists, businessmen and celebrities who all gave the same unheeded advice to the rest of the country.

What matters now, far more than the choices made by these two electorates, is how the elites react. Should we, in turn, reject these votes as outpourings of crude populism that fail to take account of the facts, and attempt to circumvent or circumscribe the choices that they represent? I would argue that this would be a terrible mistake.

The concerns underlying these votes about the economic consequences of globalisation and accelerating technological change are absolutely understandable. The automation of factories has already decimated jobs in traditional manufacturing, and the rise of artificial intelligence is likely to extend this job destruction deep into the middle classes, with only the most caring, creative or supervisory roles remaining.

This in turn will accelerate the already widening economic inequality around the world. The internet and the platforms that it makes possible allow very small groups of individuals to make enormous profits while employing very few people. This is inevitable, it is progress, but it is also socially destructive.

We need to put this alongside the financial crash, which brought home to people that a very few individuals working in the financial sector can accrue huge rewards and that the rest of us underwrite that success and pick up the bill when their greed leads us astray. So taken together we are living in a world of widening, not diminishing, financial inequality, in which many people can see not just their standard of living, but their ability to earn a living at all, disappearing. It is no wonder then that they are searching for a new deal, which Trump and Brexit might have appeared to represent.

It is also the case that another unintended consequence of the global spread of the internet and social media is that the stark nature of these inequalities is far more apparent than it has been in the past. For me, the ability to use technology to communicate has been a liberating and positive experience. Without it, I would not have been able to continue working these many years past.

But it also means that the lives of the richest people in the most prosperous parts of the world are agonisingly visible to anyone, however poor, who has access to a phone. And since there are now more people with a telephone than access to clean water in sub-Saharan Africa, this will shortly mean nearly everyone on our increasingly crowded planet will not be able to escape the inequality.

The consequences of this are plain to see: the rural poor flock to cities, to shanty towns, driven by hope. And then often, finding that the Instagram nirvana is not available there, they seek it overseas, joining the ever greater numbers

of economic migrants in search of a better life. These migrants in turn place new demands on the infrastructures and economies of the countries in which they arrive, undermining tolerance and further fuelling political populism.

For me, the really concerning aspect of this is that now, more than at any time in our history, our species needs to work together. We face awesome environmental challenges: climate change, food production, overpopulation, the decimation of other species, epidemic disease, acidification of the oceans.

Together, they are a reminder that we are at the most dangerous moment in the development of humanity. We now have the technology to destroy the planet on which we live, but have not yet developed the ability to escape it. Perhaps in a few hundred years, we will have established human colonies amid the stars, but right now we only have one planet, and we need to work together to protect it.

To do that, we need to break down, not build up, barriers within and between nations. If we are to stand a chance of doing that, the world's leaders need to acknowledge that they have failed and are failing the many. With resources increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few, we are going to have to learn to share far more than at present.

With not only jobs but entire industries disappearing, we must help people to retrain for a new world and support them financially while they do so. If communities and economies cannot cope with current levels of migration, we must do more to encourage global development, as that is the only way that the migratory millions will be persuaded to seek their future at home.

We can do this, I am an enormous optimist for my species; but it will require the elites, from London

to Harvard, from Cambridge to Hollywood, to learn the lessons of

the past year. To learn above all a measure of humility.

- *The Guardian*

Appeal

As we all know that the organizational network of Khudai Khidmatgar has been spreading steadily all across the country at various levels in cities, towns and villages and it is reaching out to the rural populations at large. The number of youth who have the spirit and thirst of working for societal development towards harmony and peace have been increasing each day and the true Khudai Khidmatgars following the footsteps of the great patron Sarhadee Gandhi Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan.

Khudai Khidmatgar as an organisation believes that there must be some sort of practical orientation and guidance so that young minds develop better understanding of peace and harmony with all religions and all the sections in the society. Besides this, our volunteers expect basic assistance when they are visiting the national capital - New Delhi from other parts of the country for rendering their service and to be involved in organizational activities, they require free and secure accommodation in the city as otherwise the accommodation is very expensive in the city.

So we decided that we would have accommodation facility for ourselves. The hall would be utilised for various activities of the Khudai Khidmatgar like:

1. To avail the opportunity for the youth from all sections of the society so that they have multicultural exposure and they learn to respect tolerance and

diversity in the society.

2. To provide the residential opportunity for Muslim youths to involve them in various social activism and social leadership initiatives for their better practical understanding.

3. To initiate the concept of food bank (to distribute food to the elderly, needy, students from weaker economic background, etc.)

4. To provide temporary residential assistance for the people coming from various parts of the country with organisational work or any other societal work to the capital city-Delhi.

5. Conducting residential orientation programmes for youth to make them learn and understand the concept of peace and harmony.

So, we decided to purchase a hall near Jamia Millia Islamia (Jamia University- Okhla) with (20x50) 1,000/Sq ft. with the cost of 14,000,00 to accommodate at least 15 temporary residents for aforesaid activities in a better way.

Some of our friends extended their contributions for this initiative and Rs.5,000,00 have already been collected, now we are expecting the remaining amount to be contributed for the planned "House for All-SABKA GHAR" with your support.

We therefore appeal to you earnestly to extend your financial support for this initiative so that it can become a reality.

- **Faisal Khan**
Khudai Khidmatgar
9999746196

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Editor : G. G. Parikh

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

Email : janataweekly@gmail.com

Democratic deficits in India

Anand Kumar

The Indian journey from a colonial repressive social formation to a democratic society based upon triple justice - political, social and economic - through peoples' representation in governance and participation in nation-building is a fascinating story of collective human imagination and endeavour. It has attracted global attention because of its achievements so far. But there is no scope for glorification as our democratic project needs to engage in course correction as we are lagging behind in so many ways. The need of review and basic reforms can be illustrated with two examples.

First, let us look at what are the major deficits of Indian democracy after 70 years of efforts of democratization? There are at least six major zones of deficiencies in our system today – i. development deficit, ii. governance deficit, iii. legitimacy deficit, iv. democracy deficit, v. nation-building deficit, and vi. citizenship deficit. Secondly, we need to check our ranking in the world today, specially with reference to our neighbor China and other BRICS partners including Brazil, Russia and South Africa in terms of holistic well being of our

citizens. According to the latest report of the United Nations Development Program of 2015, India ranked 130th out of a total of 188 nation-states in terms of human development index with nearly 1/3rd population living in conditions of distress and destitution. The internal variation between the constituent provinces of our country presents much more worrying picture. It is causing restiveness for reforms among the Kisans, women, youth and several marginalized sections of our society including the Dalits, Adivasis and the minorities.

If a) furthering of human development, b) celebration of diversities, and c) strengthening of civil society are three significant indicators of the health of democracy in any post-colonial society then the relationships of our democracy with development, diversity and civil society are under stress. The Indian engagement with the paradigm of Liberalization-Privatization-Globalisation (LPG) since 1990s has made us enter a phase of jobless growth. In more nuanced terms, there is stagnation in agriculture and allied sectors causing flight from rural areas and

crowding of the metropolitan centers. Declining growth is being experienced in the manufacturing sector which is creating stagnation in the labour market. Only service sector is experiencing accelerated growth with marginal elasticity of employment due to capital intensiveness of the sector.

Socio-culturally, the idea of India was based upon recognition and celebration of unity in diversity. But the constitutional commitments for striving for a republic of citizens based upon secularism and socialism is getting interrogated. There are numerous instances to suggest that the Indian state is found to be engaged in managing the rise of majoritarianism as well as minority alienation. It is found to be related with divisive consequences of electoral competition which is directly increasing the relevance of identity politics. The civilizational and communitarian cleavages of religion, caste, ethnicity and regions are getting politicized without complementary growth of citizenship.

Historical sociology of democracy and democratization - from Alexis de Tocqueville to Charles Tilly and from Srinivas and Kothari to Amartya Sen and Ashutosh Varshney - suggest that there is a positive correlation between building of a democratic polity and evolution of civil society. Here development of democracy is evaluated with help of four types of indicators - nature of constitution, substance of the polity, processes of the power relations and procedures of the legitimacy system. The case of India looks very convincing on all four counts. But a closer look makes anyone recognize that our democracy is facing four major speed breakers - grip of the dominant castes over dependent castes,

primacy of patriarchal forces over women, deep economic disparities and identity politics. Similarly, the making of civil society is suggested to be taking place in the social spaces within the triangle of family, religion and state through voluntary associations and civic activities for secular and common causes. A fertile ground for the expansion and efficacy of civil society in India since independence is found to be growing as indicated by at least the following features :

- a) Assertion for justice and representation in policy making;
- b) Increasing electoral participation by the women, minorities, Dalits, and Adivasis;
- c) Expansion of social basis of politics beyond the educated sections and modern occupational classes;
- d) Increasing frequency of social mobilizations;
- e) Increasing engagement in political competitions and coalitions for political power;
- f) Pressure for reforms in governance and electoral system; and
- g) Recognition of citizens' role beyond votes and political parties through Right to Information and Public Interest Litigations.

At the same time, there are major indicators which suggest that the parliamentary system of India and political culture both need urgent reforms to overcoming the deficits of citizenship-building to further the progress of civil society. They include the following:

- a) Under-representation of women and Muslims;
- b) Declining accountability and

responsiveness of elected representatives;

- c) Lack of financial transparency in the election process and affairs of the major political parties;
- d) Corruption at high places of public authority; and
- e) Identity politics around caste, ethnic, religious and regional identities and interests.

Where we are going wrong?

It is true that the political community of India was warned by the makers of our Constitution at the time of its adoption in 1949 itself about the need to be engaged in minimizing the contradictions of togetherness of political equality and social and economic inequalities in shortest possible time after independence. Otherwise we may suffer catastrophic consequences in the later decades was alerted by Dr Ambedkar. It was also underlined another stalwart of the Indian freedom movement Dr Rajendra Prasad that any Constitution is to be carried forward not by the principles enunciated in it but through the quality of the persons and their practices who will be assigned the responsibility of representing the citizens in the years to come. In other words, there was underlining of i) the ideological need of developing democracy on egalitarian lines of social and economic progress, and ii) programmatic pre-condition of promoting an altruistic political elite through elections and social mobilizations. Where are we today in terms of the ideological framework of our democracy and what kinds of persons have come forward as the representatives of our people? What is their combined

impact upon grassroots democracy as manifested through local governance and dynamics of civil society including social mobilizations?

Between the Lines

Tragedy of Bangladesh

Kuldip Nayar

A combined reading of some of the most revealing studies as evident through the reports of our national committees and commissions suggests that we are a ‘drifting democracy with dangerous deficiencies’. Why? Because a) there is growing gap between the needs of the women (Justice Verma Commission Report on violence against women); b) the dignity and dreams of the minorities, particularly the Muslims (Justice Sachar Committee report); c) there is rise in attraction towards the extra-constitutional formations and their extremist activities among the weaker sections including the Dalits and Adivasis (Bandopadhyay Committee Report); and above all d) no betterment of nearly 77 per cent working population of our country which is forced to live as ‘working destitutes’ and surviving with minimum purchasing power (Prof. Arjun Sengupta Committee Report).

In short, all is not well with our Swaraj at the level of common person and daily governance in villages and towns. It is because our post-colonial Indian political class has taken care of being correct at the level of the formal macro-processes like regular elections, free press, space for political formations and voluntary associations and opportunities for citizens for local initiatives. But our system leaders have been equally negligent about deepening the project of democracy at the grass roots levels which informs the daily lives of the millions

(Continued on Page 4)

It is not understandable why the properties and temples of Hindus are being vandalized when the country is in the midst of its liberation celebrations. Forty five years ago India, which has a Hindu majority population, helped the people of then East Pakistan wrest independence from the unwilling hands of the army-dominated West Pakistan. More than 2,000 Indian soldiers and officers sacrificed their lives in the war against Islamabad.

Above all, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is the daughter of Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman who liberated the territory through people’s movement which he built. Her credentials of fighting against religious forces cannot be doubted. It is, however, another matter that she has used the action against fundamentalists as a battle against opposition parties.

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) complains that her wrath is directed against them because they are the only alternative. The ruling Awami League headed by Sheikh Hasina, they complain, is using all tactics to finish them. Even the rumours have been set afloat that they are anti-India so that Khalida Zia’s image is tarnished.

I recall my meeting Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman at Dhaka soon after the liberation of what is now called Bangladesh and complained to him that there was a lot of anti-India feeling. I had gone to the Dhaka Press Club and found the media

hands jibing that the smoked Hilsa fish was available at Kolkata hotels but not in Bangladesh. They also strongly criticized New Delhi and Kolkata for appropriating the gains of liberation.

Lt. General Jagjit Singh Aurora, who led the Indian troops, was particularly mentioned for looting the rich West Pakistanis who were transacting business from the then East Pakistan. Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman told me that a Bengali did not forget the good done by the one who gave a glass of water: “Your countrymen have died here while helping the Mukti Vahini in liberating the territory.” He said that secularism in Bangladesh was deep rooted and could not be ignored in any situation.

But strangely the secular identify of Bangladesh is being questioned now. The Jamaat-e-Islamia, which was once part of the government during the military regime of General H. M. Ershad, is trying its best to sell the Islamic way of governance and wanted close relations with an Islamic state in the world. Fortunately, there is practically no response to this in Bangladesh.

However, the unpopularity of Sheikh Hasina has made the Bangladeshis look not only anti-India but soft Islamists. She is only busy obliterating the followers of Begum Khalida Zia, the main opposition leader. In this fight, even the secularists who are on the side of Begum Zia are being dubbed as

communalists and constantly hounded.

Sheikh Hasina is now anxious to entrench, and not part with power. The opposition parties openly say that they may not be able to remove her in elections because she would not hold a fair poll. She is already talking of dynastic rule and consulting her son in America openly in all government matters.

In line with that thinking, the Prime Minister is appointing her own followers at key positions in different universities and educational institutions even though they lack competence and literary qualifications. In the process, she is destroying the educational system based on merit. But this does not concern her because she believes that in the name of secularism she can put any of her loyalists at high positions. She behaves as if it were her birth right to rule.

A bill is sought to be enacted where anyone challenging her father or his rule would be considered anti-national. This is, indeed, a strange way of looking at democratic traditions. But once this becomes a law, stranger things can take place in Bangladesh. The opposition parties, which are her main targets today, will be left with no voice to raise in the days to come. The environment would be more authoritarian and dictatorial. And a very few would be able to question the government.

In all of her actions, Sheikh Hasina has forgotten the welfare of the country. The problem that Bangladesh faces today, as it celebrates its birth anniversary, is how far the government has been able to help people benefit through

economic development. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The Prime Minister counts her gains only in terms of key jobs she has given to her staunch followers.

The judiciary is no more independent. There are no collegiums to select judges as is the case in India. The government directly appoints them. And as the first foreign minister of Bangladesh Kamal Hussain, who was in town, told, despite the independent judges on the bench some tend to tilt towards the establishment. They behave as if someone is overlooking their shoulders. Accordingly, their judgments reflect a slant which does not behove an independent judiciary. The Hindu judges feel the pressure.

I recall the conversation which I had with our High Commissioner at Dhaka Subirmal Dutt. In reply to my complaint that the plight of Bangladeshi Hindus would be unenviable he said that this point was discussed before India's help. It was assumed that most of the one million Hindus living there would migrate to India and many of those staying back would embrace Islam.

This may be true but it was never imagined that the properties and temples of Hindus would be destroyed. The fact that there were more than 200 million Muslims in India would influence the Bangladeshi Muslims not to do anything which would alienate New Delhi and the Hindu population of India.

Bangladesh has to renew its ethos, the image of a secular democratic country. Organisations like the Jammat-e-Islamia would drag it to fundamentalism. But that was not in the mind of Sheikh Mujibur-Rehman, father of the nation,

who wanted to establish a country which would not discriminate against the minorities. Sheikh Hasina, to her credit, wants to follow his footprints. But she has become authoritarian, and her action does not reflect that. This is the tragedy of Bangladesh.

(Continued from Page 3)

of men-women on a daily basis. This has invited the blame after 70 years of freedom and parliamentary democracy, that India is now trapped in the syndrome of psephocracy in the name of democracy where there is declining role for citizens' participation and effective contribution in governance and development. It has to do with lack of commitment towards decentralization of power and authority even after a path-breaking constitutional amendment exercise for it through the 73rd and 74th amendment act. It looks like a great betrayal which deserves urgent resistance through civil society initiatives for political and electoral reforms to save our constitution from further abuse and make our people act like life-guards of our national project of democratic nation-building.

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Demonetization: the politics of public suffering

Prem Singh

There have been various and repeated references to the suffering of the public caused by the decision of demonetization by the government. The suffering of the ordinary people due to this astounding decision has been criticized even by the High Court and Supreme Court. Around 100 people have died because of it. The supporters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi claim that people are not distressed with this decision; they are happy; if people were unhappy, they'd be on the streets protesting instead of queuing up outside banks. But at the same time they are seen threatening the sufferers and the journalists who dare to highlight their plight. However, at some point Modi supporters could recognize the suffering of all the people who are queuing up outside banks from morning till night. That is why they constantly remind the people of the hardships endured by soldiers on the borders. The Prime Minister claimed after the implementation of demonetizing that suffering would be over in four to five days, but later he made an emotional appeal telling people to brace for another 50 days, for the country's sake!

The public, specially the working class, has suffered a lot after demonetizing. The utterance of some genuinely concerned persons regarding the plight of the public saying that those who are responsible for this would be cursed by the poor (*garib ki haay lagegi*), is but a weak plea. Such poetic justice pleas have no place in today's politics. In a democracy, no

government has any right to inflict misery upon the people even for one day. Dr. Rammanohar Lohia, in his doctrine of immediacy, held that the justification/legitimacy of every action/decision must lie within that action or decision. Any rationale offered with reference to the future good, merely help governments/political parties unleash oppression on people. In the case of demonetizing too highly exaggerated claims are being made for the emergence of a 'golden India' in the future as is seen in expensive advertisement campaigns by the government.

In the wake of the adoption of neo-liberal economic policies, there is a precipitous change in the attitude of the ruling class towards the suffering of the ordinary people. The ruling class does not fear the power of the ordinary people's vote, or that the suffering people could defeat it in the next elections. In any system when people are pushed to the brink of desperation, the result will be termination of life itself. In the era of neo-liberalism, as per the Crime Bureau record, around three lakh farmers have committed suicide. The situation continues. But it makes no difference to governments and politicians. Because elections are fought with black money in nexus with campaign companies, corporate houses, electioneering strategists and media. All these agencies decide when and which party and leader will form the government at the centre. In this era of neo-liberalism footloose specialists are directing political parties and governments in India. In

this situation, 'suffering of the public' provides the path for political verbiage and swindling. The prime minister and his specialists, claiming to end the difficulties of the public in 50 days, know very well that the public will suffer even after that.

Whatever the considerations may have been for demonetization six months back, the misery of the people was not one of them. The misery of the people is no longer a problem for politicians. The leaders know that their campaign machinery will win hands down against it. They will manufacture consent for themselves. The miserable people will again vote-in those whose politics favours only the corporates. The ruling class makes such arrangements that people view the pain of continuous miseries like suicide, displacement, unemployment, inflation, disease as inevitable adage to their religion, caste, region, etc. In this process the people get progressively a-politicized. The situation of 'there is no-alternative' is actually a result of the public's a-politicization. The consequence is that it ceases to ally with those parties and leaders who seek to build a political alternative that challenges the neo-liberal order. The situation gets further complicated when a majority of civil society and peoples' movement groups take on the role of brokers which overtly or covertly facilitates the established order.

The foreign-funded NGOs act as safety-valves in order to keep the neo-liberal order intact. They divorce

political workers from political work and promote the process of a-politicization. The proponents of neo-liberalism claim that there is no alternative to neo-liberalism, nor is it needed. If there are problems within neo-liberal system, they make NGOs sort them out. In the recent past the whole hearted support of the civil society and peoples' movement groups to the anti-corruption agitation sponsored by two NGO heads proved very damaging to alternative politics against neo-liberalism. That agitation was openly and actively supported by RSS, corporate houses and the likes of Ramdev, Sri Sri Ravishankar and General VK Singh. Anna Hazare had praised Narendra Modi then, and is not adverse to him even today. Not just this, the Aam Aadmi Party, born right from the womb of the corporate was supported by the secular progressive civil society, and still is, despite the fact that this party clearly advocates an anti-ideology stance for everything, including the ideology of the Constitution. For many of those people, if Rahul Gandhi cannot be the alternative to Modi, Kejriwal might.

Post-1991, it is not just the public that has been a-politicized, the civil society too is undergoing the same. Leaving aside a few exceptions, hardly any intellectual of stature took a decisive stand against Manmohan Singh's new economic policies. Those who claim that Modi is a calamity thrust upon the nation by idiots, need to stop and reflect on how genuine their concern for the public's suffering really is? Every era yields its 'yug purush' in its own true image. After Manmohan Singh, Modi is the aggressive representative of the Indian civil society cast in the neo-liberal times. It is a false reassurance that this was merely an

election won by 31 percent of the vote. Those greatly moved by the distress of the public in the wake of demonetization are searching for an opposition to register their protest. Post-1991 politics in India has progressively turned unilateral, which is neo-liberal. Nitish Kumar and Naveen Patnaik are supporting demonetization. Mamata Banerjee and Arvind Kejriwal, both support neo-liberalism and in this regard are guided by the imperatives to consolidate the Muslim vote bank.

In the debate on black money, nowhere does it get mentioned that it is the money looted from the wealth generated by the working class; and that the process of this looting is accelerated with the implementation of the new economic policies in 1991. In India, neo-liberalism is the name of the interminable and unrelenting sufferings of the working class. Even after 25 years of neo-liberal regime, there is unashamed assertions about the 'golden future' it is supposed to usher. That means farmers' suicides, displacement of tribals, the ever increasing army of the unemployed, and the lives of the crores of people working day and night on dams-highways-bridges-airports-mega buildings is the price to be paid for this 'golden future'. The working class will pay this price in the future too. Imagine how many generations of the working class will be sacrificed to build 500 smart cities? Who will be sacrificed in the conversion of the country to the digital/cashless mode? The responsibility of children's upbringing, education, health and entertainment in a democracy lies with the state. But there is no place for the children of the working class in neo-liberal India's present or future. What can be more damning

for the politics of the country than the fact that the public has come to consider its destiny to slog and die building the neo-liberal order?

Public suffering ought to be alleviated: no one can disagree with this in principle. One could begin working in this direction. Parties against Congress and BJP should come together and tell the public that they will root out the neo-liberal order and frame their policies according to the Directive Principles enshrined in the Constitution. If the resolve is honest, the 2019 election can be easily won. Black money of the corporates will not be needed for it. The endorser of neo-liberalism often turns out to be the endorser of neo-imperialism. The freedom of the nation, achieved after many sacrifices eventually turns into slavery in the clutches of neo-imperialism. One should hope that the supporters of Congress and BJP, especially the young ones, will not quietly witness this squandering of freedom. They can support the politics that opposes neo-liberalism. Or force their parties to desist from the path of neo-liberalism.

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Parliament disruptions: What has become of the Rajya Sabha

Harivansh

Nearly two-and-a-half years ago, in June 2014, I received the honour to serve as a Member of the theRajya Sabha, courtesy the Janata Dal (U) and its leader Nitish Kumar. I often see photographs of former Members and Chairmen, including of Dr S Radhakrishnan, Dr Zakir Husain, R Venkatraman and others on the walls of the hallowed corridors. I try to identify the faces of Bhupesh Gupta, Chandrashekhar, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Pilo Modi, Era Sezhiyan and many more whose enlightened, informed and excellent interventions and debates left a sharp influence and probed our conscience during my younger days. The ideological debates in Parliament inspired many of us to dream for the country and to stand for the values that had shaped independent India.

These photos on the walls of the Rajya Sabha, from where emanates the power of democracy, often haunt me. It has been particularly difficult these last few days to get past those photos. Till 1 December (15th day since the commencement of the winter session) no business has been allowed to occur in the House except on the first day when a good debate took place in the Rajya Sabha over demonetisation. Regular disruptions, chaos and high-pitched slogan shouting have resulted in complete pandemonium in the House. The continuous ruckus usually leads to the suspension of the House proceedings and, sadly, it has become a regular feature. I ask myself: is this the only alternative left to us to address the genuine grievances of the public, the states and the nation?

I have witnessed the Chairman and Deputy Chairman trying their best to run the House smoothly and peacefully; yet a sense of helplessness persists - I must acknowledge the efforts of the Deputy Chairman, Prof P J Kurien. He is often on his toes, pleading with members to exercise calm and allow the House to function. However, members in the well pay no heed to his words. I have great sympathy and respect for Prof Kurien and envy his patience, calmness, wit, humour, and above all, his commitment to run the House. The unabated slogan shouting disrupts normal activity and he is often forced to adjourn the House. I introspect at such moments, recalling that this is the Upper House of distinguished leaders and statesmen and valuable contributors to society.

In the Constituent Assembly debates, the Rajya Sabha was envisioned as a House for reflective and evaluative reasoning detached from the ordinary, mundane and routine engagements of everyday life.

N Gopalswami Ayyangar termed it as a House which may rein in the “passion of the moment” as reflective moment. Several members of the Constituent Assembly favoured a second chamber, as they believed that erudite members of this Rajya Sabha would be above the narrow and parochial political boundaries of the Lok Sabha. These members of the Rajya Sabha would be able to view legislations more dispassionately, and thus enhance the

efficacy of the overall process of law making. I am also reminded of Lok Nath Mishra who described this House as “a sobering House, a reviewing House, a House standing for quality and the members will be exercising their right to be heard on the merits of what they say, for their sobriety and knowledge of special problems; quantity, that is, their number, is not much of moment”.

M Ananthasayanam Ayyangar found this House to be a platform of reflective consideration: “the genius people who may have full play, and it can make place for people who may not be able to win popular mandate.” Dr Radhakrishnan stressed the significance of the RS and stated, “There is a general impression that this House cannot make or unmake governments and, therefore, it is a superfluous body. But there are functions which a revising chamber can fulfil fruitfully. We are for the first time starting, under the new parliamentary system, with a Second Chamber in the Centre, and we should try to do everything in our power to justify to the public of this country that a Second Chamber is essential to prevent hasty legislation. We should discuss with dispassion and detachment proposals put before us.”

Its late chairman Krishan Kant in his foreword to the book *Emergence of Second Chamber* in India had foreseen the possibility of a stalemate that our current parliamentary system is facing. He wrote, “the majority-minority party equation in the Council

of States (Rajya Sabha) changes at a much slower pace than in the Lok Sabha. There may be occasions when a party enjoying a majority in both the Houses is reduced to a minority during an election in the Lower House, but remains a majority in the Rajya Sabha. Some experts argue that this position is an anomaly because it derogates from the theory of mandate, which holds that popular mandate, at any given time, gives to the winning majority an untrammelled right to initiate legislations germane to that mandate. The need to carry the opposition majority in the Upper House is, by inference, an anomalous provision. There is the added danger, that the Opposition in the Upper House can use its majority to embarrass the government of the day.”

Our great leaders in the past assured that during stalemates, senior leaders of the political parties will engage in consensus building. Have we failed? Again I quote N Gopalaswami Ayyangar. While moving the motion for a second chamber (RS), he said in the Constituent Assembly: “After all, the question for us to consider is whether it performs any useful function. The most that we expect the second chamber to do is perhaps to hold dignified debates on important issues and to delay legislations which might be the outcome of passions of the moment until the passions have subsided and calm consideration could be bestowed on the measures which will be before the legislature; and we shall take care to provide in the Constitution that whatever on any important matter, particularly matters relating to finance, there is a conflict between the House of the People and the Council of States, it is the view of the House of the People that shall prevail. Therefore, what we

may really achieve by the existence of this second chamber is only an instrument by which we delay action which might be hastily conceived and we also give an opportunity, perhaps to seasoned people who may not be in the thickest of the political fray, but who might be willing to participate in the debate with an amount of learning and importance which we do not ordinarily associate with a House of People.”

This is what our sagacious leaders, our Constitution makers thought of the role of the RS. It is the sacred duty of all members of this House to maintain and carry forward this distinguished legacy. When I see the Deputy Chairman helplessly pleading with members and then adjourning the House time and again, I stare at the Visitors Gallery asking myself how I would respond to public queries about these successive adjournments.

Our great leaders as the architects of the world’s largest democracy have taught us that dissent and disagreement are non-negotiable democratic values. But even with our differences and dissent, dialogue is essential without which, people’s faith in the system can easily erode.

I entered this House with a dream to debate issues pertinent to our country. Joblessness or the era of jobless growth is the biggest challenge that the country is facing today. Since globalisation itself faces serious contestations, I often ask myself whether our economic growth model has failed. I am eager to hear the enlightened debates/ views of this House in the same spirit that I heard the debate on the GST Bill, in my view one of the best debates in RS so far, - it was marked

by eloquence, knowledge and full participation of members, above party lines and narrow partisan politics, keeping in view the interest and future of the country.

Today I feel agitated about several vital issues which need to be looked into earnestly and dispassionately. Many other members of the RS may share my views and sentiments. For instance, the most recent Indore-Patna rail accident must be discussed. It is important to note that approximately 3,000 railway bridges are more than 100 years old, 32 of these 3,000 have been classified as “distressed bridges” but their usage beyond their lifetime is not considered to be a serious issue. Indian railway tracks are hugely congested; some of the sections are running either at 100 percent or above of its carrying capacity. For example, in the Mughalsarai-Ghaziabad section, a train leaves the originating section every two minutes. This high density of train movement not only highlights the superhuman efforts of the railway employees but also underscores the pathetic situation of our railway infrastructure. The serious governance issues are not limited to railways alone but they have spread to the whole of our civil and defense transport and logistical infrastructure, urban development, defense preparedness, law and order, employment generation and to every other aspect of social, economic and cultural lives of our citizens. We have adopted this *chalta hai* or *jugaad* approach and in the last few decades this attitude has landed us in a serious trap.

I am at a loss to comprehend why these questions do not emerge as the most pressing matters in our Parliamentary debates.

We must dig deep, find the causes and suggest remedial measures. It seems the whole infrastructure has collapsed. Even the precarious financial position of the railways (a major part of their finances is taken up by salaries and pensions) needs to be debated thoroughly.

The situation on our borders after the surgical strikes against Pakistan needs to be discussed. The attacks against our soldiers continue as unabated cross border terrorism poses grave threats to the country. I feel pained and anguished when I read about how China has encircled us, having established ports in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Burma. Tibet is yet to acquire autonomy, and with each passing day it appears that its distinct cultural, social, religious identity is being subsumed within the dominant Han Chinese racial and cultural practices. In recent times the Chinese army has decided to safeguard and operate the Gwadar port in Pakistan. China and Pakistan have also launched a direct rail and sea freight service between Kunming and Karachi.

Russia is also warming up to Pakistan and US President elect Donald Trump has assured Nawaz Sharif of his cooperation and support. China has extended its influence in Central and South East Asia.

These issues bother me and I am sure also agitate the minds of other members as well.

The modernisation of the army needs to be discussed; we must initiate large-scale and fundamental reforms to our administrative, police and bureaucratic framework. The working conditions of paramilitary forces need to be debated at length.

The tussle between the judiciary and executive has been on the rise in the recent past. It is a serious confrontation that may well precipitate a constitutional crisis.

I have been equally disturbed when I see or read how our defence personnel guarding our borders are attacked and media headlines scream “lessons not learnt from past mistakes”.

The issue of climate change needs to be addressed. Delhi’s pollution problem and air quality is a matter of grave concern.

The on-going developments at Nalanda University need to be discussed.

The jailbreak in Nabha, Punjab had been meticulously planned. It was a high security jail from where the Khalistan Liberation Force chief was able to escape. It is being alleged that there was a deal of Rs 50 lakh for making this jailbreak possible. There is an urgent need to discuss all these serious issues and find long lasting solutions.

Next year will be the one that marks the centenary of the Champaran Satyagrah, which gave a new direction to the anti-colonial struggle in India and an enduring political legacy to the world. It is the duty of the government and the opposition as well to discuss how the country should commemorate this momentous occasion and revisit the ideals of the satyagrah.

Being a witness to such anarchic scenes in the House, I recall my old friends who believed in the Naxal ideology and always had derogatory adjectives for our democratic system. Those days we would

debate for hours to convince them about the democratic virtues of our Parliamentary debates.

This is clearly a question of governance and efficiency. This government was elected on the promise of providing an efficient and effective administration which is responsive to the aspirations of the country. But time and again whenever there have been attacks, there are headlines questioning the efficiency of the government. Responsibility must be fixed. This country has a great tradition of quality and moral leadership; resignations were tendered even for minor incidents by taking moral responsibility. Do our Ministers introspect their utterances, roles, efficiency and governing capacity?

We are familiar with the axiom that time and tide wait for nobody. The world is changing at an unprecedented pace and there are multiple anxieties and insecurities. If such serious issues are not debated even at a time when the duration of the Parliament session has been gradually shortened since Independence, then what future do we promise to the younger generation? We owe something to our great leaders who sacrificed their lives for this country and gave us this House so that our democratic traditions can remain vibrant and inspire the future generations.

I have been asking myself why a silent member like me (and there are many silent members in all parties in RS who adhere to rules and procedures and completely respect the words and instructions of the Chair) remains unheard. How do we, who do not rush to the well of the House, navigate through this crisis, restore our faith in the great

parliamentary traditions of this country?

There is a demand now that the Prime Minister should sit through the discussions on demonetisation. It was reminded by a senior Congress leader that when the 2G scam broke out in 2013, the same BJP wanted the then Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh to remain present in the House during the entire debate. There is a widely acknowledged saying that as you sow, so shall you reap. The BJP is facing the same past karmas. But it is my view that the Congress has been a party of great leaders which include Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and many others known for their magnanimity and vision. They would not have appreciated the current discourse and disruptions. The Congress leaders often make us feel that they have the monopoly over Gandhi's legacy. Gandhi had once said that an eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind. It is a great opportunity for the Congress to offer a lesson on good parliamentary behavior to the BJP by allowing the House to run smoothly.

We must appreciate the PM's position as the head of the government, while demanding his continuous presence in the House as we desire. It is possible that his presence is needed elsewhere than at the Parliament always.

However, the PM should also find time at regular intervals to be present in the House when important issues are being debated. There should be a full-fledged debate on demonetisation with a particular focus on black money, benami properties, bullion and gold, real estate, drugs and even prohibition.

It must be reiterated that there is a direct connection between the black money and the liquor and drug mafia. More than 40 committees have been constituted in the past to deal with the problem of black money but without success.

The Indian bicameral parliamentary system may find comparable legislative set up around the world and it would be quite informative to compare the functioning of the Indian parliament with the systems abroad. In the United Kingdom the members of parliament have a right to be heard without overwhelming background noise, and unparliamentary language is not allowed. In the British House of Commons, when grave disorder breaks out, the speaker has the power to suspend or to adjourn the sitting. That power was exercised very few times and was enforced last time in 2004. In the House of Lords, unworthy conduct by Members has hardly ever been reported. In the entire history of the United States Congress, 20 Members have been expelled: fifteen from the Senate and five from the House of Representatives. All these expulsions have been triggered by political reasons, treason charges or scandals, hardly for bad behaviour or disrupting the Congressional procedures. In the Australian Parliament the Speaker can direct a disorderly member to withdraw from the House for one hour. However, if a member fails to leave the Chamber immediately or continues to behave in a disorderly manner he may be named and the House can then suspend him.

I come from a party which draws from the legacy of Gandhi, Lohia, Jayaprakash and is presently headed by Nitish Kumar who has been in

public life for the last four decades. He has held many distinguished posts at the centre and has been the Chief Minister of Bihar for the last 11 years (except the tenure of Jitan Ram Majhi for a brief period). There is intra-party democracy in the JD (U) and Kumar gives opportunities to all its members to raise people's concerns. It may be worth mentioning that, following his example, none of the members from JD (U) has indulged in creating ruckus or pandemonium in either of the two houses of the parliament.

I ask myself every day before I head to the Rajya Sabha about what I would do in the House. As an MP how do I repay the people for the privileges and facilities I enjoy if I am not able to raise their issues in the House? Is it not an unnecessary and unacceptable burden on the exchequer if we are not able to raise the problems of the people in the House? I can only hope that the great parliamentary traditions of this country are restored and as Members of this privileged House we recognise our responsibilities and accountability to the people of this great country.

Footprints of A Crusader (The Life Story of Mrunal Gore)

by

Rohini Gawankar

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Equal Opportunity Commission

The Prime Minister's High Level Committee, headed by Justice Rajindar Sachar, was constituted in 2005 by the then Prime Minister of India Dr. Manmohan Singh to prepare a report about social, economic and educational status of the Muslim community in the country. The findings and recommendations of the report immediately became a topic of sharp debate in political, social and intellectual circles as it was presented in the Lok Sabha on 30 November 2006. The report has completed 10 years of its release on 30 November 2016. To mark this occasion Socialist Yuvjan Sabha (SYS), People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) and Khudai Khidmatgar organized a one-day seminar in Gandhi Peace Foundation, Delhi, on 22 December 2016. Scholars from various disciplines including some representatives of the Muslim community participated in the deliberations and reviewed the progress of the report, particularly the implementation aspect of its recommendations, carried out by central and state governments in the last 10 years.

Following resolution was deliberated upon and passed at the end of the seminar{

The minorities, especially the Muslims, have been the ignored factor by all Central Governments. Amongst the various recommendations, the Prime Minister's High Level Committee Report had recommended the establishment of Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) as an instrument to prevent discrimination against

minorities in the private sector like housing, employment (since courts cannot interfere in cases of discrimination in private sector). This recommendation has been inexcusably violated and also remained in cold storage.

The EOC can be set up by the state governments without taking permission from the Central government. Hence this seminar resolves that the present state governments run by secular parties should immediately establish the EOC in their respective states.

A very urgent recommendation of the Prime Minister's High Level Committee Report dealt with the unfairness of divisions of electoral constituencies which results in lesser number of Muslims in the legislature to which they are broadly entitled based on the population. This anomaly arises from the irrational demarcation of seats in the legislature.

Thus in U.P. there is abundant potential for substantial number of Muslims to win seats. For instance, in U. P. that sends the largest number of members (80) to Lok Sabha, there are 25- 52%, Muslim's in 18 seats, in 23 seats Muslims are 15- 24% and in another 18 seats Muslims are 10- 14%. Similar is the demographic – electoral reflection in most of the states." It was further pointed out that delimitation of constituencies in a fair manner is essential. But on the contrary the constituencies with substantial number of Muslims have been reserved for S.C., and constituencies with substantial number of S.C. voters are unreserved. This is unfair to both Muslims and S.C. electorate.

The Committee had hoped that it would receive the attention of the Government immediately because the Delimitation Commission was at that time engaged in this exercise and evidently any suggestion or any exercise to be done by it had to be undertaken during the current term of the then Delimitation Commission.

The Committee had concluded that Muslims were thus denied benefits in politics since assembly constituencies where the voter population from the community was substantial were reserved for scheduled caste candidates for election. In all fairness it would have been more equitable to reserve those constituencies for SCs where their voter population is high rather than those where it is low and the Muslims presence is higher.

But, the High Powered Committee's suggestion was ignored during the delimitation. This anomaly is a reason for low representation of Muslims in the legislatures. How inequitable that important issues related to the community are ignored or don't get the desired priority. Somebody has to take the responsibility for not taking concrete action in order to remove this anomaly. Mere lip sympathy is a façade. The seminar resolves that a concrete action should be taken in this matter.

–**Niraj Singh**
President SYS
Ravikiran Jain
President, PUCL
Faisal Khan
President, Khudai Khidmatgar

Demonetisation: yet another huge fraud on the people

Neeraj Jain

In a televised address at 8 pm on November 8, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that currency notes of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 denominations would no longer be legal tender from midnight that night. He stated that people holding Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes could deposit them in their bank and post office accounts till December 30. He further announced that new notes of Rs 500 and Rs 2,000 will soon be introduced. The Prime Minister stated that this step was being taken to curb counterfeiting and funding of terrorism with fake notes, and most importantly, to crack down on black money in the country.

The total currency in circulation in the country is around Rs 17.9 lakh crore. Most of this is in Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes, these accounting for 86% of the currency in circulation. Therefore, till the government replaces the abolished currency with new currency notes, for the present, 14% of the currency has to serve the task of the whole. The total value of the Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes in circulation is around Rs 15.44 lakh crore, and these were printed over a span of 15 years.¹ To prevent the economy from collapsing, the government has to quickly replace them. Even though the Prime Minister claimed that the step was being planned for more than nine months,² the monumental inefficiency of the Modi government becomes evident from the fact that it made no advance preparations for quick replacement of the old notes with new notes. According to a newsreport that quoted former

Finance Minister P. Chidambaram and also a former RBI Deputy Governor, even if the government prints note for note, given the capacity of the four currency note printing presses in the country, it is going to take at least six to seven months for these printing presses to print new notes to replace all the scrapped notes.³ The printing of such a huge quantity of notes requires large quantities of paper and ink, which are largely imported. Such an elementary step of importing the required quantity of ink and paper was also not taken in advance - ink is already in short supply and the government recently floated a tender for importing it.⁴ Once printed, the notes must reach granular India - 5,93,731 inhabited villages, 4,041 towns, 3,894 census towns and 1,456 urban patches.⁵

The sudden move without adequate preparation for its consequences has led to chaos across the country. With 86% of the currency sucked out of the system, even though a month has passed since the demonetisation announcement, there is still no cash with the banks. People were first forced to queue up outside banks for hours to exchange/deposit their old notes. After that, they now have to stand outside banks almost daily in long queues to withdraw their money, because even after standing in line for hours, at the most people are able to withdraw only Rs 2,000–4,000 at a time. The worst hit are the daily wage workers as they are forced to forego a day's wages in order to stand in the queues. Dozens of

people have actually died waiting in these queues.

Adding to the woes of the people are non-functioning ATMs. Initially, the problem was that the ATMs were not calibrated to distribute the new Rs 2,000 and Rs 500 notes. It was only by early December that nearly 90% of the ATMs got recalibrated. But even after that, the problem of standing outside ATMs in long queues has not reduced, as there is not enough cash, and so either one can withdraw only small amounts at a time, or the ATMs run dry just 2–3 hours after being refilled.

The situation is worse in the rural areas, where the banking network is not so widespread and one bank branch caters to several villages. Banks often have no cash for 2–3 days, and even when they get cash, it is so insufficient that people often have to go home empty-handed after standing in line for hours.

Another proof of the government's inept handling of demonetisation is the decision to first introduce the Rs 2,000 note rather than the Rs 500 note; it again shows how much our policy makers are cut off from the people. After standing in queues for 3–4 hours, people are still getting most of their withdrawals in Rs 2,000 notes. This does not ease their financial difficulties one bit, as the shortage of lower value currency notes has made it virtually impossible for them use cash to buy essential items like milk and vegetables, as shops have no change to pay back.

BJP-RSS activists have put up banners all over the country, asking people to patiently wait in the long queues as a sacrifice for the country and claiming that Modi's demonetisation policy will soon end black money and give the economy a big boost, leading to a fall in housing and food prices. Many people too think that this step will indeed end terrorism and curb black money, and so the troubles being faced by them are worth it.

Examining the government claims

Let us examine the claims of the government about the benefits of demonetisation one by one.

i) Will demonetisation overcome the problem of terrorist financing?

Terrorists need financing. They use both banking channels and fake notes. The major part of their financing is done through banking channels, using various innovative techniques. That cannot be curbed by demonetisation. And so far as fake notes are concerned, to the extent that terrorism is financed from abroad, state actors are involved in printing these fake notes. That too cannot be curbed by demonetisation. So, we are only indulging in self-deception if we believe that demonetisation is going to curb terror financing.⁶

ii) Will demonetisation overcome the problem of counterfeit notes?

According to RBI, there is only Rs 400 crore worth of counterfeit currency in circulation in the country - a tiny amount of the total currency in circulation of Rs 17.9 lakh crore.⁷ Is it really worth attempting to eliminate such a small amount

(0.022%), while giving so much trouble to the ordinary people? And very soon, the new notes will be faked too. In the USA also, there are a large amount of fake dollars in circulation; the dollar is in fact among the most counterfeited currencies in the world.⁸

iii) Will demonetisation significantly curb the black economy?

People think that black money means bundles of notes tucked away in suitcases or pillows or lockers. That is not the case. Then what is black money? For this, it is important to understand the difference between three terms: black money, black income and black wealth. All three are different, and together comprise what can be called the 'black economy'. People mix up these terms, and use them interchangeably.

First you earn income; out of this, you consume one part, and save the rest. This saving, you invest in various assets. That gives you your wealth. Wealth is held as a portfolio - you can put it in real estate, gold, share market, etc. or hold it as cash. Thus, cash is only one component of your wealth. It can be as low as 1% of your wealth, or even less.

Coming to the black economy, here, first, black income is generated through a whole range of activities. These activities can be entirely illegal, such as the drugs trade or the manufacture of fake medicines or arms trade and so on. Or they can be activities which are completely legal, but are undeclared (either wholly or in part) as people want to avoid taxes. These can include: under-reporting of income by doctors or lawyers to save taxes; under-

reporting of profits by industrialists by means such as overstating costs (for example, by showing purchase of raw material at higher than actual prices) or understating production; and under-invoicing and over-invoicing in international trade.

It is not the case that black activity or black business is carried out with cash, and white or normal activity is carried out by cheque or credit card or other such means. Normal business also requires cash. So, normal cash holding and black cash holding are not two different things. One may ask: that may be so, but is it not that black business is more dependent on cash transactions than white? The answer to this also is no. In both black and white business, cash is held for shorter or longer period, and then thrown into circulation, and this is equally so for both types of business. Therefore, if currency is demonetised, both normal and black cash holdings are affected equally.

To put the same argument in another way, black businessmen are as much capitalists as white businessmen. It is only misers who hoard money; capitalists believe in investing money to earn more money. And so, black money holders, like white money holders, also try to expand their business by investing their black money/income. Therefore, just like white money holders, black money holders also will be holding only a small fraction of their total income as cash at any point of time.

The point we are trying to make is, only part of the black income generated is held as cash. Most black money holders invest their incomes in assets that yield returns, such as buying land or shares with

it, or send it abroad through various means. A recent *Hindustan Times* report has also given several arguments to show that black money hoarders keep very little of their earnings as cash. It goes on to quote a finance ministry official as saying that ill-gotten wealth mostly enters the formal economic system through real estate and shell companies.⁹

That part of *black income* which is kept in cash is actually *black money*; while that invested in assets is *black wealth*. Demonetisation at the most affects black money; it does not affect black income generation, not does it affect black wealth one tiny bit.

Let us consider a concrete example of black income generation to understand this in greater detail. An especially important sector where black incomes are generated, and where black incomes are invested in a big way, is real estate. Funds are taken out of the country through various illegal means such as hawala channels, or under-invoicing of imports, or over-invoicing of exports, or transfer pricing. They are then brought back into the country as foreign investment or FDI (this is known as “round-tripping”) through channels such as the infamous Mauritius route. Sham corporations are registered in Mauritius, through which funds are routed into India, often through a mechanism called P-notes (participatory notes, where the ultimate investor is not identified to the Indian market regulator Sebi). The earnings on such investments are not taxed in India because India and Mauritius have a double tax-avoidance treaty, while at the same time the investors pay little or no taxes in Mauritius too because of the

tax structure there. The amendments to the Indo–Mauritius Treaty done earlier this year will not really have much of an impact on this “round-tripping” of funds, as firstly, P-notes are exempted from this amendment, and secondly, there are other routes through which such funds can be routed into India without attracting much tax, such as through Netherlands.¹⁰ FDI flows into the real estate sector have zoomed in recent years. Between 2005 and 2010, FDI in India’s real estate and housing market jumped 80 times. In 2010, nearly \$5,700 million of foreign funds were invested in the sector. It is this infusion of black money into real estate that has contributed to the sharp and sustained rise in land prices, which is making housing unaffordable for an overwhelming majority of Indians.¹¹

We have discussed the round-tripping of black money in some detail to explain how a major part of black incomes is invested via phoney legal means, through banking channels. And that is not going to be affected by demonetisation. That will only be curbed if the government takes steps to curb the illegal parking of funds abroad and round-trip back to India.

Myth about black money

Before we go ahead to estimate the size of the black economy, it is important to discuss an issue being raised by persons like Baba Ramdev, who have these days donned the mantle of “economics experts”. They are claiming that the central problem of the Indian economy relates to “black money”, and are trying to create the impression that if this problem is solved, poverty would vanish,

unemployment will decline and so on. This view is wrong for a number of reasons:

(i) Firstly, capitalism is all about making profits. And therefore, under capitalism, the line between what is legal and what is illegal, the line between ‘white capitalism’ and ‘black capitalism’, is a tenuous one. Thus, when the government gives tax concessions to the rich, the savings made by the rich are considered legal, but when ordinary people do not declare their incomes to save on taxes, that is considered illegal; when the government transfers land at throwaway prices to the corporate houses, that is considered legal, but when ordinary people buy land out of their hard earned savings to build a house and under-report the land price to save on taxes, that is considered illegal; when pharma companies through their network of Medical Representatives encourage doctors to prescribe unnecessary medicines to patients, this is plainly unethical, and should be labelled as black activity, but it goes on in a big way. And so on . . .

(ii) Then again, the definition of what constitutes ‘black activities’ varies from country to country! Thus, banks investing people’s savings in the stock market is considered illegal in India, but it is perfectly legal in the United States.

(iii) Finally, even if there were no black economy, the inherent law of capitalism, which produces wealth at one end and misery at the other, would still operate. And this is becoming worse in today’s era of neoliberalism. The people who are blaming the black economy for the misery of the masses are actually doing so to hide from the people the

real reasons for their poverty and unemployment.

All this is of course not to argue that steps should not be taken to curb the black economy. That should be done. But it should be clear that this is only one of the many problems gripping the Indian economy, and furthermore, is not the most important problem. The most important problem today is the economic policies being implemented under the name of globalisation-privatisation-liberalisation. It is these policies that are responsible for huge rise in poverty and destitution, the worsening unemployment situation, the rising inflation, and the worsening agricultural crisis which has pushed more than 3 lakh farmers into committing suicide over the past decade.

Size of black economy

It is very difficult to make estimate of the size of the black economy. Estimates of the black income generated every year vary from 25% to 75% of the GDP.¹² An authoritative analysis has been made by Prof. Arun Kumar, an eminent economist who was Professor at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning at Jawaharlal Nehru University. He estimates the black income generation in India to be 62% of the GDP. This is fairly close to the estimate made by a report of the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy in 2014 that estimated domestic black money as being equal to 70% of the GDP.¹³ The GDP in 2016 was about Rs 150 lakh crore, so 62% of that would be roughly Rs 93 lakh crore. This then is the size of the black income generated in the economy in 2016. Black wealth would be several times this amount, as it has been

Remembering Viswambharan

In the morning of Sunday last, I received a call from Rajashekharan that “Viswambharan expired this morning.” I was speechless for a while. I knew that Viswambharan had crossed 90 years. But a few months back we had met and he was standing erect and was talking so energetically about the happenings in the country: “We should pay more attention to the problems of the unorganized workers. This globalization is bent upon finishing cooperative movement. We will have to put a determined fight to save the cooperatives....Most important thing is to build up devoted and disciplined chain of cadres. The boys today don’t like to be lectured about the importance of disciplined...” How could he say goodbye so soon?

It was in the seventies of the last century when I met him in the office of the Indian Cooperative Union at Delhi. I was commissioned by an apex cooperative body in Maharashtra to write a book on ‘Democratic Socialism and Cooperative movement.’ Running through such a senior comrade in a co-op outfit was a pleasant surprise for me. Most of our leaders were active in trade unions and a few only on parliamentary front. “Yes, a few of us in Kerala are very active in the cooperative institutions of the fishermen as also of other handicrafts” he said.

During the dictatorial rule of Indira Gandhi, who had thrust censorship on the press and put behind the bar all political activists opposed to her (1975-77), I was touring different parts of the country to coordinate the struggle for restoration of democratic rights of the people. As there was a warrant against me, I had to change my name and appearance. While on a visit to Thiruvananthapuram, I went to the Kovalam beach to meet Viswambharan but had no idea about exact location of his house. After alighting from a bus at the last stop, I started enquiring. Somebody took me to a fisherman who was squatting on the ground and vending the fish and said, “He is Viswambharan”. I got perplexed. As I could not speak Malayalam, making enquiries was so difficult. At last, I loudly uttered the words “socialist leader”. Another elderly person waived me to follow him. When I knocked on the door indicated by him, the old comrade himself opened the door and greeted me very warmly. After a long chat followed by a delicious lunch I took my leave.

It was after a long interval that we received him at Kurduwadi station. He had travelled a long way to attend a meeting of the Socialist Front. While welcoming the idea of rallying all the socialists together, he cautioned us that it was an uphill task but we should put in hard work. From there, he went to Barsi to meet Shaikh Abbas who had participated in the Shanti Yatra from Kanyakumari to Rajghat. Viswambharan had helped a lot to make that Yatra a success.

It was in May 2013 that he visited the second conference of the Socialist Party (India) to extend greetings to the delegates.

And now, this sad news.

—Pannalal Surana

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accumulating over the years. Even assuming a low figure of say three times, black wealth would be around Rs 300 lakh crore.

Let us now make an estimate of the black money in the economy. It is this black money that is circulating in the economy as cash that the government is attempting to curb by demonetisation of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes. The Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes in circulation in the economy total Rs 15.44 lakh crore. But not all the notes in circulation are a part of the black economy, are not generated as black income. Thus, for instance, a significant proportion of our GDP - around half, according to current CSO

estimates - is produced in the informal sector, and around 85% of the population relies on it.¹⁴ While the incomes in this sector are mostly unrecorded, the dominant part of this is not 'black'. It is true that the incomes in this sector do not fall into the direct tax net, but then these incomes are too small to pay direct taxes; on the other hand, due to the tax structure of the Indian economy which collects more revenue from indirect taxes rather than direct taxes (70:30), they anyway are subject to indirect taxes.¹⁵ In this sector come the income of farmers and small traders and daily wage workers and small service providers and other such sections of the population. Most of the

transactions in this sector are in cash. Apart from this informal sector, a significant portion of the cash in the economy is also in businesses, like petrol pumps, railway stations, airports, etc., and this too is not black. Therefore, of the total currency in circulation, assuming that half is in the informal sector, and of the remaining, at least half is in businesses as legal currency, that leaves just around Rs 3 lakh crore as black money.¹⁶ Indeed, a former governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), D. Subbarao, a supporter of the demonetisation move, has also mentioned this as the maximum amount that can be rendered worthless by this move.¹⁷

(To be concluded)

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