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Trumping up a New Warning

Kuldip Nayar

THERE may be a grain of truth in the statement by US President Donald Trump that his country has "foolishly" given \$33 billion in aid to Pakistan in the last 15 years. But he is wrong when he says that America has not got anything in return. Understandably, Pakistan could not repay in dollars. Nor did Washington expect that. But Pakistan offered bases in its country for the US to operate militarily.

President Trump is unnecessarily harsh when he says that his country got nothing in return except lies and deceit and also referred to leaders as fools. During the cold war when the world was divided into two blocs, Pakistan was on the side of America. Rawalpindi was a part of Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO), a least successful alliance made up of unlikely allies like Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey and the United Kingdom in 1955.

The purpose of CENTO was similar to that of the much better known and far more successful North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), mainly to contain the Soviet Union and prevent its expansion into the Middle East. Treaty members had

to agree to mutual cooperation and protection. But, perhaps most interestingly, given the then political situation many of these countries found themselves in, they also had to agree not to interfere in each other's internal affairs.

As the group's original name the Baghdad Pact suggests its first headquarters were in Baghdad. However, an Iraqi military coup in 1958 resulted in Iraq's withdrawal from the group, which in turn resulted in a name change to CENTO and the headquarters shifted to Ankara, a less fundamentalist Turkey. The organization stayed out of the Six-Day and the Yom Kippur wars, although Iraq was an active belligerent in the former and provided combat support in the latter. However, it had pulled out of the organization at that time.

CENTO also did not intervene in the India-Pakistan wars of 1965 or 1971, claiming that it was an anti-Soviet pact, not an anti-India one. The organisation was finally disbanded in 1979 after it was unable to prevent the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974 or the Iranian Islamic revolution.

Justifiably, Pakistan could not accept Trump's tweet and it immediately reacted when Foreign Minister Khwaja M. Asif tweeted: "We will respond to President's Trump's tweet shortly Inshalla...will let the world know the truth...difference between facts and fiction." Soon after, the Pakistan's foreign ministry issued a statement, saying, "Pakistan rejects such unfounded accusations that belie facts on ground and trivialize Pakistan's efforts for fighting terrorism and our unmatched sacrifices to promote peace and stability in the region."

China, who had long been waiting in the wings, made most of the situation and stepped in to defend Pakistan by saying that the world community should acknowledge its all-weather ally's "outstanding contribution" to counter terrorism, a day after the US President lashed out at Islamabad for providing safe havens to militants.

China, showering praises on Pakistan, said that Islamabad has made enormous efforts and sacrifices for the fight against terrorism and has made very outstanding contribution to the global cause of counter terrorism. "The international community should acknowledge that," Chinese foreign ministry spokesman GengShuang said in Beijing when asked about Trump's criticism of Pakistan. He also added that China was glad to see Pakistan engaging in international cooperation, including counter terrorism, on the basis of mutual respect so as to contribute to regional peace and stability.

"China and Pakistan are all-weather partners. We stand ready to promote and deepen our all-round

cooperation so as to bring benefits to the two sides," said Chinese foreign ministry spokesman. It was expected because China is currently investing heavily in Pakistan as part of the \$50 billion China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) over which India has raised objections as it passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. During the first ever trilateral meeting of the foreign ministers of China, Pakistan and Afghanistan last week, Beijing had announced plans to extend the CPEC to Afghanistan which shares close ties with India.

However, former President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai, has welcomed Trump's outburst, while calling for establishing a joint US-regional coalition to pressure the Pakistani military establishment to bring peace to not just Afghanistan but the entire region. Afghanistan, too, had accused Pakistan of sheltering Taliban militants, leading to a long running spat between the two countries. China is seeking to mediate between the two neighbours through the trilateral mechanism.

Yet, the analysts point out that the US was mounting pressure on Pakistan as it has firmed up an alliance with Beijing by allowing heavy Chinese investments in the strategic CPEC corridor providing China access to the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

But with common interests, it was natural for China and Pakistan and lately Afghanistan, to enhance communication and exchanges. After all, China believes that Pakistan and Afghanistan are closely linked geographically. Understandably, the three reached consensus on several issues, including enhancing cooperation on counter terrorism

and fighting against terrorism in all forms and manifestations.

It was expected that India would welcome US President's tough message to Pakistan on terrorism. "The Trump administration decision has abundantly vindicated India's stand as far as terror is concerned, as far as the role of Pakistan is concerned in perpetrating terrorism because end of the day terrorist is a terrorist... terror is terror and it does not spare any single nation, any single country, any single region," Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh said.

It is apparent that President Trump is unfolding a new American policy. This is far-right as compared to President Clinton's left-of-the-center. The old values are no longer relevant. And Donald Trump is taking Washington back to the conservative era. India may have to oppose the US President because its left-of-the-centre policy comes into conflict with what Trump is advocating.

Meanwhile, it remains to be seen whether or not Pakistan can sustain itself without the US aid. Islamabad has said that it is computing the total aid received from the US so as to return the amount. But it is obvious that Pakistan cannot.

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**JANATA WEEKLY
WISHES**

*Its readers A Happy
& Prosperous
New Year 2018*

A brief report of the

All India Socialist Women's Conference (AISWC), Pune December 2-3, 2017

By Manisha Gupte, on behalf of the Organising Committee of the AISWC

'Hum Samajwadi' (We, the Socialists), a national platform of socialist institutions with a membership of 40 organisations, was formed through the initiative of Dr. G.G. Parikh, Bhai Vaidya, Dr. Sunilam and Medha Patkar among others in order to strengthen socialist values and to resist fascism, casteism, communalism, neo-liberal capitalism and patriarchy. As a part of the numerous activities being organised by Hum Samajwadi to bring together the socialist groups all over the country, the platform decided to organise an All India Socialist Women's Conference (Akhil Bharatiya Samajwadi Mahila Sammelan) in Pune in December 2017. The responsibility of organising this was given to the convenors of Hum Samajwadi, namely Dr G.G. Parikh (on behalf of Yusuf Meherally Centre), Guddi (on behalf of Janata Trust) and Neeraj Jain (on behalf of Lokayat).

The Hum Samajwadi convenors delegated the responsibility of organising the conference to a committee composed of women representatives from six organisations, Janata Trust (represented by Guddi), Yusuf Meherally Centre (represented by Vijaya Chauhan), S.M. Joshi Socialist Foundation (represented by Manisha Gupte), Socialist Mahila Sabha and Abhivyakti (represented by Alka Joshi, Sayali, Neelima and Shraddha), Janamukti Sangharsh Vahini (represented by Razia Patel)

and National Alliance of People's Movements (represented by Suniti S.R.).

Around 470 participants from 10 states (Odisha, Bihar, Delhi, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra) participated in the two-day conference organised on December 2-3. The S. M. Joshi Socialist Foundation, offered its premises for the conference; holding the AISWC in a space that espouses socialist ideology, included in its name, rendered a unique importance and meaning to this vibrant gathering.

As a gesture of gratitude to women who espoused the socialist cause, the auditorium was named after Dr. Sulabha Brahme. Similarly, the first day was dedicated to the memory of Pramila Dandavate and the second day, commemorated Mrinal Gore. Their contribution was read out on both mornings by those who had had the opportunity to work closely with them—Vijaya Chauhan and Surekha Dalvi.

The conference, open to people of all genders who yearn for the constitutional values of democracy, secularism, equality, social justice and socialism, was a judicious mix of intellect and passion. Group discussions, display and sale of books, aesthetic cultural expressions (music, songs, dances and skits presented by the talented Lokayat

team as well as participants from various states), poster exhibitions, nutritious food, a rally through the streets of Pune and active participation by people of all ages generated immense hope and camaraderie among participants. Animated discussions continued over meals and in late evening after the sessions ended, continuing well beyond midnight hours. Especially heartening was the visible and able leadership of younger women activists who played a key role in organising the conference, especially Guddi, Shraddha, Sayali and Neelima.

A central theme of the conference, reiterated by most speakers, was the need to cherish and strengthen the Indian constitution to fight against growing fascist forces. During the inaugural session, Alka Joshi presented the broad framework of the conference within the current political context. Bhai Vaidya, the veteran socialist leader, cautioned that the current government was not of the BJP but of the RSS, which has its roots in cultural and religious nationalism. Prof. Pushpa Bhawe and Medha Patkar also graced the inaugural session. They stressed this issue further, highlighting the worsening deplorable situation of working class people, and the fact that women, in spite of leading struggles of people's movements through democratic means were the worst sufferers in the era of neo-liberal globalisation

and hate politics. They also acknowledged the immense resilience of women in asserting a life of dignity at the individual and collective levels in spite of class, caste and patriarchal challenges in the existing development model. At the end of the inaugural session, a book was released, written and published by Lokayat,, The Unemployment Crisis: Reasons and Solutions.

The first session of the Conference was taken by Dr. Manisha Gupte. She spoke on MOVING TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY. In her one hour talk, she emphasised that the artificial divide between the public and private domain had to be resisted and violence in both spheres had to be challenged and eliminated. She affirmed that socialist feminism, which believes in an intersectional approach, uniting women from all walks of life, and which calls for a redistribution of power and resources inside and outside the home, could offer alternatives while dealing with multiple patriarchies in our country. The session concluded with a very interesting question and answer session.

After lunch, Kalyani Menon-Sen from Delhi spoke on GROWING FASCISM AND WOMEN. Her chilling reminder of India becoming a fascist state was a sombre awakening for everyone. To prove her point of how a spectre of fascims was hanging over the country, she used a template of indicators of fascism, ranging from symbolic pseudo-nationalism to suppression of working class and protection of corporate interests, patriarchal controls over women, anti-intellectualism, disdain for human rights, suppression of media and freedom of expression, identification

of 'enemies' as an unifying strategy, over-glorification of army and militarisation and divisive hate politics, among others. Each one of these early warning signs of fascism actually exist in the current context in India. The growing influence of intolerance and fascism is evident in the way in which the judiciary and media have grossly violated 24-year-old Hadiya's right to practice her desired faith and choice of partner.

During the next session, Razia Patel and Manimala took this discussion further, stressing the fact that women from any minority or subordinated group suffer in multiple ways because they are a minority within minorities. Razia Patel spoke on PROBLEMS FACING MINORITY WOMEN, and the well-known journalist-activist from Delhi, Manimala, spoke on PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS AND DALIT WOMEN. They stressed upon the need to understand the caste system both within Hinduism as well as in minority religions in India, since the impact of multiple historical discriminations renders women from these communities vulnerable and without access to basic needs and rights.

The last session during the first day was Group Discussion. The participants broke up into groups for group discussion. Apart from talking about their work, and giving suggestions on what can be done after the conference to further the unity among the various groups and individuals who attended the conference, and what can of common activities can be taken ahead, the participants also discussed several theoretical issues facing the socialist women's movement. These included the issues of legal entitlements and the right to life with dignity for marginalised women,

including LGBT women, sex workers and women living with disabilities. Gender equality based on rights, freedoms, love and companionship among men and women was considered essential for women to enjoy constitutional and human rights. The vision for gender just laws was presented by Swatiya of Forum Against Oppression of Women; this presentation called for a secular framework that was not hindered by religion, culture or majoritarian politics and one that transcended marriage and heteronormativity.

The second day began spectacularly, with representatives from various people's movements working through a democratic socialist and constitutional framework sharing information about their work and strategies. Christina from Jai Kisan Andolan (Tamil Nadu) explained how the problems faced by farmers not only results in severe malnutrition and hunger for their families but also adversely affects the food security of all citizens. In spite of continuous agitation by farmers and filing of PILs, their efforts have not yielded any meaningful results because of State apathy. Anupama from KSWF (Karnataka) drew a parallel between attacks on women in a pub and communal attacks in the state. The assassinations of Prof Kalburgi and Gauri Lankesh have not weakened but strengthened joint campaigns in which intellectuals, artists, academicians, theatre groups, and socialist/left organisations working on rights of women and Dalits have actively participated. Jaya from Prachestha (Odisha) spoke of their collaboration with national workers' unions, their interventions related to vocational training and the threats they receive while fighting for rights of domestic workers. Vaishali Patil

of Konkan Vinashkari Prkalp Virodhi Samiti (Maharashtra) narrated the emotional experience of their activists when they visited the museum of the gas disaster in Bhopal. “If this can happen after a gas leak, what will happen to us if a nuclear plant leaks in our neighbourhood” was their shocked response. The valiant struggle in Raigad district has resulted in rejecting the SEZ of Ambani. Women have actively participated in the 14 year long struggle against the Jaitapur nuclear plant and have led a non-violent protest for the past six years. The struggle in the Lavasa region (Maharashtra) was a similar one, but Leelatai from the Lavasa Prkalp Grast Movement talked about women’s adamant position that land, forest and water belong to people who live there, and not to outsiders who covet these resources. Women would not be afraid to challenge and change a government that allowed projects to start without due legal process, she asserted. Jamila from Mumbai Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao campaign shared her anguish of seeing her home being demolished along with 9000 others, because of which five lakh people, mostly Dalits, Adivasis and migrants from minority religions were rendered homeless, and 14 children died in the process. “When we migrate to other states or big cities, we come with small dreams. Even those are trampled upon by the government in their effort to convert Mumbai into Singapore”. Affirming her commitment to fighting for a just cause and to collective action by local people, she went on to say that since a woman’s pain has no borders, she hopes for a world that has no dividing lines. Suniti S.R. summed up this empowering yet humbling session by saying that democratic socialism in India affirms the struggles of people’s movements who have been

collectivising local people to demand for an alternative and sustainable development model. When natural resources are snatched away from local inhabitants in the guise of mega projects, their right and access to water, land, forests, minerals and livestock are violated. Women are most adversely affected, and they are also the ones who are relentlessly fighting and leading peaceful struggles against anti-people projects in rural and urban settings, be they SEZs, POSCO, Vedanta, Enron, Sardar Sarovar, Nandigram-Singur, Lavasa or Vang-Marathwadi.

This was followed by a presentation by Surekha Dalvi on WOMEN’S STRUGGLES FOR CONTROL OVER RESOURCES. She reminded the gathering that we were currently living in an undeclared Emergency, where rights, people’s struggles and freedom of expression—even through peaceful and constitutional means—are being blatantly suppressed. Gandhi had said that democracy lies in the minds of the people. He also believed that agricultural production should first provide for the needs of the tiller and local population, but land, which was a source of revenue for the State at one point has now become a source for corporate investment. India is an agricultural country only on paper, and increasing capitalist and imperialist control over land has resulted in women being marginalised from agriculture.

Thereafter, Neeraj Jain spoke on ECONOMIC ROOTS OF FASCISM. He started with giving facts about the cuts made in allocation for women in the four budgets presented by Arun Jaitley so far, and explained that this was not because the government had no money, but was a part of the

neoliberal policies being implemented in the country as a part of the conditionalities imposed by the World Bank on India due to India’s huge foreign debt. It was in consequence of these conditionalities that the government was running the economy solely for the benefit of giant foreign and Indian corporations. On the one hand, the government was desperately trying to invite foreign investment into the country, and for this was even implementing the most absurd and destructive projects. Simultaneously, it was doling out lakhs of crores of rupees as subsidies to the rich. And on the other hand, it was making sharp cuts in its social sector expenditures, such as food, education and healthcare. This had led to a huge increase in the wealth of the rich, while leading to a huge increase in poverty and unemployment in the country. The growth of fascist forces in the country is a consequence of this growing economic crisis.

The importance of the Indian constitution which extols values of equality, social justice, democracy, socialism and secularism was emphasised by Prof Nitish Navsagare in his talk on CONSTITUTION AND WOMEN. Juxtaposing this document which respects the human rights of all people against the patriarchal and casteist Manu Smriti, he cautioned the audience about the possibility of the present egalitarian constitution being replaced by a theocratic and hierarchal one. This presentation set the tone for the future action plan of the AISWC, presented by Manisha Gupte on behalf of the organising committee in the final valedictory session.

Prof Subhash Ware and Comrade Shanta Ranade were the main speakers in this concluding session.

Prof Subhash Ware's shared his experience about his efforts to spread awareness about the Indian constitution all over Maharashtra. He stated that he had got excellent response and support everywhere, which was reassuring for all participants. The need to resurrect the values of the freedom movement and to hold the State accountable in fulfilling the promises made to the citizens of our country was underscored by Comrade Shanta Ranade of the National Federation of Indian Women, affiliated to the CPI. She reiterated the urgent need for all progressive organisations to expose the hypocrisy of the RSS and its affiliates, and to be wary of their tactics of appropriating Ambedkar and Gandhi on the one hand and dismantling the social welfare policies of the Nehruvian era on the other.

The two-day conference concluded with an energising rally taken out through the streets of Pune, accompanied by drums and songs and slogans.

FUTURE ISSUES AND PROGRAMMES ARISING OUT OF THE ALL INDIA SOCIALIST WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

Small group discussions of 20-25 people each, held on the evening of 2nd December helped not only in identifying the current social, economic, political and cultural challenges, but also in thinking of ways to move forward.

Based on the suggestions received from the various participants during these group discussions, the organising committee of the AISWC drafted a proposal for future activities. The highlights of the same

are presented below:

a) Strengthening the alternative narrative through the Constitution of India:

The values of the freedom struggle, namely democracy, equality, secularism and gender concerns are enshrined in the Constitutional duties section of the Indian Constitution. This section of the Constitution helps us reiterate an alternative definition of nationalism that goes beyond symbols and popular rhetoric that targets minorities, Dalits, women and the poor.

The exhortation to rise above caste, religious, regional and other dividing lines in the real spirit of brotherhood / sisterhood can be an effective call to young people who can reclaim the Constitution to make India inclusive.

The Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution give an economic agenda (such as education, health care, employment, housing and so on) for the country, and emphasise State obligations towards fulfilling the basic needs of the people so that they can lead a life of quality and dignity. In fact, the Directive Principles talk of a decent living wage that includes leisure and recreation. Since the Constitution is binding on any government that comes to power, emphasising the Directive Principles could be built into a campaign, with or without using the term socialism.

The AISWC made it clear that the present government, which has its roots in cultural and religious nationalism, which thrives on divisive and hateful politics, whose agenda is to replace the Indian Constitution

with a religious and theocratic one, and simultaneously was implementing economic policies oriented solely towards the profiteering of giant foreign and Indian corporations, has to be actively countered. It is unfortunate that other political parties in India are soft on issues of democracy, secularism, equality, inclusion and socialism; yet, the conference was hopeful that a minimum agenda of promising to implement the Indian Constitution could become a pressure point for parties as a political campaign in the forthcoming elections. In reality the implementation of the Constitution in letter and spirit is the duty of every elected government.

During the past couple of years, it has been observed that people, especially youth are interested in learning about the Indian Constitution. This has been validated through the efforts of Subhash Ware on behalf of the the S.M. Joshi Socialist Foundation. He has given more than 250 talks on the Indian Constitution during the past 3-4 years, and his book on the Constitution has sold more than 18,000 copies. This was also the experience of the campaign initiated in Pune this year by Lokayat and S.M. Joshi Socialist Foundation to spread awareness about the Constitution under the banner of Samvidhan Jaagar Abhiyan; this campaign drew massive public response in Pune, and also spread to many cities and towns of Maharashtra this November.

The organising committee of the AISWC proposed that workshops and campaigns be organised by the various participants all over the country to spread consciousness about the Indian constitution.

The fact that the idea of socialism was becoming more easily acceptable through the constitution renewed hope and optimism towards strengthening an anti-fascist strategy among activists and citizens of the country.

It was heartening to note that participants from Karnataka, Rajasthan and Odisha immediately agreed to explore the possibility of organising such workshops / seminars in their respective states.

b) Helping Various Groups with Resources:

All participants of the AISWC would be added to the mailing list of the Yuva Samajwadi group. The Abhiyakti / Lokayat activists would add all names to the Hum Samajwadi Sansthayein social media group as well. Issue based resource material in the form of films, pamphlets, exhibitions and power point presentations (PPTs) would be uploaded on regular basis, so that everyone has access to relevant information. A recent example was the preparation of a half hour film culled out from three feature films on Ambedkar (for democracy), Gandhi (for secularism) and Bhagat Singh (for socialism).

At this point in time, there was no plan of setting up another Forum. The younger activists have already formed a Yuva Samajwadi forum, this forum would continue to take the initiative in organising activities at the national level to build unity amongst the various socialist groups active all over the country and build a movement against the growth of fascist forces in the country.

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Bits of Coins

J. L. Jawahar

XY Ltd issued fifteen lakh shares of one rupee each at an issue price of ten paise. They wanted the company to be broad based and encourage more investors to purchase their shares. Out of the 15 lakh shares, the promoter, MrX retained five lakh shares for himself and offered the remaining ten lakh shares to the public. Naturally many people applied for them and were allotted the same. About three lakh shareholders entered the company. As the initial offer was made at a heavy discount, some people hesitated and did not apply. But some people thought differently. Even if the company was not a sound one, the risk is too small to be afraid of, they thought and took more number of shares. After all, no investor puts all his eggs in the same basket. They put only a small amount in each company. Those who do not worry about the risk only enter the share market. But once the issue was closed, many people regretted not applying and wanted to get it in the open market. Those who had the shares offered it at double the price they paid. That is, at 20 paise per share. Those who now decided they wanted it, felt even that is small amount to risk and took the shares. Thus the price started to increase gradually over time and finally, after six months the price reached the nominal value of one rupee. It means it became ten times the issue price. Ten times increase in six months! It is fantastic. People started to clamour for it.

Small traders were also watching the developments. If they took shares instead of money for the goods they sold, the increase in the

price of the share would add to their profit. So they offered to sell their wares against shares of the company instead of legal money. Shares acquired the character of money. The demand for the shares increased. So also the price. None of them asked what the company is doing. There was no need. After all, how many companies are there, where the share price depended on performance of the company? It is the reputation that matters. Talk of the town is the measure of reputation.

In fact there is no company. Only the promoter MrX is there. He has substantial number of shares in his name. He was watching the market situation. The price was now Rs10 per share. It was a 100 fold increase. It is tempting, but Mr.X has his own plans. If he wants to encash his holdings, he should unload his shares. If such heavy number of shares are put into the market, the share price would necessarily come down. He won't do it. There would be only ten lakh shares in the market. As demand increases, the price also increases to the benefit of all those who were good enough to take the shares when offered initially. So nobody complains. As each of the shares gets more money now, even the purchasers did not complain.

But why should there be any demand at all? It is because the price is expected to increase. Why is the price bound to increase? Because the demand is there to increase. It is like the dog trying to bite its own tail. That is what the investors want. In fact they are not the investors. They are traders in shares. They do not intend to stick to the company

forever. When the price reaches the expected level they just dispose of the shares, pocket the profit and go away. What is the risk in it? The demand is entirely dependent on the market and not on any intrinsic value of the share. There is nobody to manipulate the price. There are no assets supporting the share. Strictly speaking, what is the asset that is supporting the legal currency? If all those who hold money go to the bank and demand payment, can they pay? It is the same with the shares too. Currency has value as it is accepted by all. But all are bound to accept it as there is law behind it. Legal currency shall not be rejected. But in this case it is just the individuals playing in the market that create the demand. What happens if they stop asking for it? If somebody desists, some other person will come to fill the gap. All the people do not think alike. It is only great people that think alike. All are not great people! MrX is just watching the market. His worth is increasing day-by-day. What is Ponzi scheme? What is money circulation scheme? It runs as long as there are people willing to join. Then why are they banned? Because there would be a stage when there would be no one to join. The last entrants would suffer. How can you say that? Why should you presume that? On the same logic cryptocurrency also should have been banned long time back.

As transactions were increasing, MrX could not cope up with the work. He told the shareholders to get all the shares dematerialised and digitalised. He would keep them in virtual state and maintain the account ledgers for each of the shareholders. It would avoid brokerage charges which they are obliged to pay on each transaction. They were happy and complied. The shares took virtual birth. When the shares are in paper

form, the names of all purchasers are recorded on the back of the certificates. Now the purchasers are given a code name which is entered on each share in the ledger whenever any change of ownership is effected. MrX entrusted the work of maintaining the ledgers to another organization calling it the exchange. Each share is now designated as a token or coin. But it is not physical. It is in the form of encrypted software programme kept under safety key.

As it has become popular, it has become the topic of discussion in the town. Somebody pointed out that the issue itself is not approved by the SEBI and so it is all a fraud. That is the allegation against the Sahara group of companies. But they issued with consent of the government. SEBI said the government is not the authority to permit the issue. So the company is now asked to pay back the amount to all the subscribers. Naturally, the money will not be in the same form for a long time. It is becoming difficult for the management to realise the money. That is a different problem. But MrX did not have the problem. He said that what he issued was not real money share. It is virtual token that he issued and has nothing to do with legal currency. So it is not subject to SEBI laws. As long as it is not a company and as long as it is not a security in the market, SEBI has nothing to do with it. There is no other law that dictates what it is. It is not real. It is virtual. It is a virtual commodity created by him. Those who want can take it. If somebody is using it as currency, it is just a barter deal. It does not make the token money. It is not illegal.

Meanwhile the price rose to Rs 500 per share. Everybody was happy. The share of Maruticompany

reached Rs10,000. Even then the management refused to split it to facilitate transactions. But there were difficulties in using the token as cash for purchases. Investments also were made difficult as it needs more amount to purchase the shares, which are now virtual coins. If the coin is like a share it is indivisible like a share in the company. It cannot be divided. Two or three people may be allowed to hold a share jointly. But they cannot ask for division of the share among themselves.

An atom may be divisible, but not a share in a company. But the coin issued by MrX is not a share. It can be divided, he said. A fraction of the coin is allowed to be transacted. Those who want to invest less amount or those who want to use it as a currency with lower value, they can take a fraction of the coin. If you want just one hundred rupees, you can take 20 per cent of the coin. If you want just fifty rupees, you can take 10 per cent of the coin. The problem is solved. The traders and coin holders were all happy. The demand increased and the circulation as well.

The price of the coin could be brought down by releasing more of the coins into the market. But that is not the intention. The value of the coin has to be maintained. The price of a share in the HiawathaCompany of Warren Buffett is around 4000 dollars (not rupees). He refuses to issue more shares to bring down the price or to split the share. He expects to maintain the status of the share and also of the shareholders of his company. So let the price of the coin increase as long as it can. It is allowed to be traded in bits. It is the Bitcoin. Its value exceeded \$10,000.

Dealers in forbidden goods like drugs found it convenient and

profitable. They can carry on their business without the knowledge of authorities. As and when they want real legal money they can convert the coins into money. As long as that possibility is there, there is nothing to stop the validity of the virtual coin. Then how is it different from black money? The money that is hidden from circulation is called black money. It could be used for any illegal transactions. So it is made an offense. But this coin is allowed to stay. Why? Finally it has to be converted into legal money to enjoy the benefits. Then it can be taxed. Whatever might be the transactions and profits earned, it has to come out as legal at some stage. Then it is subjected to tax. So it is found to be acceptable. But what about the illegal trades? Is it legal to allow a parallel currency running in the economy? Black money is also legal money but runs underground. It is made illegal. But this virtual currency is allowed to stay. Because it is not legal money. It is not competing with the fiat currency. To avoid any complications they called it a commodity. If it is used by some people as money, it amounts to a barter deal which need not be forbidden. The fact that it is not real, not legal and that it can be converted into legal money whenever required gave the coin its life. That is Bitcoin. Many other virtual cryptocurrencies started to come into existence.

It tempts even authorities to digitalise, or virtualize their legal currencies. Even RBI is reported thinking of digitalising the currency. That is, issuing fiat cryptocurrency in place of the real official rupee. Is it an alternative to rupee or a different form of it? Digitalising legal currency is one thing. Legalising digital (virtual) currency is an entirely different thing. What is it that the RBI wants to do? But

once the currency is in virtual form, that is, digitised, it is exposed to the many risks of hacking. There is no guarantee against it. Hackers are intelligent enough to cross the firewalls of software programmes.

We find a tendency to compare this bitcoin to Tulip bubble. But when the Tulip bubble burst there was at least a tulip flower to look at and get satisfied. But when this cryptocurrency bubble bursts there would be nothing to look at. The coin is virtual and not real. The failure of all countries to forbid it has given a spurious legitimacy to it in spite of it being used for illegal transactions. On the other hand there is always a

talk of some country making it legal. As Gita Gopinath, the Harvard Professor has stated, "I don't believe that it will be a medium of exchange or become a currency." Its life depends on the possibility of exchanging it into legitimate currency of some country. It brings the bitcoin into legitimate flow. The moment that possibility is closed, its utility even for clandestine transactions would be lost. It would be like the share certificate of a liquidated or non-existent company.

The more basic question is whether we accept the parallel crypto currency underground.

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Press Release

Do Not Make Triple Talaq a Criminal Offense

The BJP is feeling triumphant that it has got the Instant Triple Talaq Bill passed in Lok Sabha making the practice a criminal offence. In the view of the Socialist Party, it is motivated by BJP's communal approach, especially prejudice against the Muslims of India. It seems that the Modi Government is doing this under mindset of RSS. Mr. Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS chief, has atrociously said that all persons born in India are Hindu. This mischievous statement by him is anti Muslim and anti Christian and in violation of the Preamble to the Constitution which unambiguously directs that India is a secular country and thus all citizens have the same rights for their religious identity.

The Supreme Court having declared Triple Talaq at one sitting as unconstitutional there is no need to make it criminal. Under Hindu Marriage Act, a Hindu cannot have more than one wife, with the result

that the second marriage is a nullity. This is specially provided by Sec 8(1) of the Act. This has not been made criminal and will only have civil consequences. So also will be the position in law of Triple Talaq at one go after the Supreme Court judgment.

The Pakistan law on this subject is more progressive. It provides that any man seeking to give Talaq to his wife will have to inform the prescribed authority every month for 3 successive months. It is only then that Talaq is recognized as legal. The authority is also directed to fix maintenance for the wife, and other facilities.

Therefore the Socialist Party demands removal of the criminality clause from the law on Triple Talaq.

**–Rajindar Sachar
Senior Member, National Executive
Socialist Party (India)**

Protect Young Minds from Wrong Values and Superstition

Chandra Bhal Tripathi

In a thought-provoking article captioned 'The Dark Side of the Comics that Redefined Hinduism' published elsewhere in this issue of the Janata Shaan Amin, whose father migrated to the US and who was fed on the stories and cartoons of Amar Chitra Katha, has described how this series of Amar Chitra Katha, whose 100 million copies have been sold, wrongly indoctrinates the young minds about the history of India and Hinduism. So the vast network of the Saraswati Bal Mandirs of the RSS throughout India are not the only agency engaged in distorting Indian history, spreading an anti-scientific temper and superstition and, beyond the role of ACK, injecting communal virus into the young minds.

I entirely agree with the views expressed in Shaan Amin's article with admirable restraint. These comics based on the stories passed on from generation to generation by oral tradition and even written texts are full of many dark sides. Here I would like to mention only the naked truth that these scriptures are rabidly anti-Dalit and anti-tribals. Both the Epics are full of instances to prove this. The Brahmanical society was so racially biased that even the important tribal commanders and collaborators of Bhagawan Ram were relegated to sub-human status as monkeys, bears, etc. It is impossible to make not only the villagers but even city-dwellers addicted to watching the Ramleela understand that Hanuman and Sugreeva were not monkeys with regular features of monkeys and tails but were tribals whose totem was monkey. Even today a clan of

the Oraon tribe of Chhota Nagpur which migrated from Karnataka to this area in Jharkhand in historical times treats monkey as its original ancestor and follows totemistic practices. Around 1970 during my tour in the interior tribal region of Visakhapatnam District I discovered that Jambawant (portrayed as a bear) is the original ancestor and totem of the Bhagata tribe. Why should our comic books not educate our young children about these facts? The Aryan idea of racial superiority, a forerunner of Nazism, is too well known to need elaboration here. Our villagers in the Hindi belt fed on the enactment of the Ramleela even in the 21st century believe that Lanka was not inhabited by human beings but by a sub-human species known as Rakshasas. In 1956 I went to Peradeniya University near Kandy in Sri Lanka to represent India at the Sixth International Student Conference being held in Asia for the first time. On my return from Sri Lanka I happened to visit my ancestral village in Basti District of eastern UP. I was surrounded by the villagers whose curiosity made them ask me such questions: Do human beings like us live in Lanka these days or only Rakshasas live there? Are they all black, very tall (10 *haath* or 15 feet high), with big teeth and ferocious looks? I only hope and pray that the utter ignorance and racial prejudice among these people have significantly reduced in the last six decades. There are instances galore in both the Epics testifying to the eating habits of the people and the lecherous character of several sages (rishis). But in the present atmosphere surcharged with a total

misrepresentation of Hinduism it is blasphemous even to hint about such facts if you want to save your head in one piece from the lumpen elements who have NEVER seen a page of our scriptures. It is incumbent upon our writers and artists to present our ancient tales in the light of modern thinking and archaeological evidence - instead of writing about palaces, aeroplanes, TV, etc., existing at a time when the archaeological evidence indicates only presence of mud houses that existed in several old civilisations across the globe in contemporaneous times. But can we really expect such a scientific approach from people like Narendra Modi who misguides the people by saying that in ancient India there was a high degree of cosmetic surgery and as proof he quotes the example of Ganesha. Should he not explain the symbolism of the Ganesha story to the gullible Hindus and not perpetuate superstition? For that matter we must stop projecting Ravana as a ten-headed monster and tell the young children and students that Ravana was a Dravidian devotee of Siva who composed the immortal *Sivamahimnastotra*. Similarly Praveen Togadia should be asked to desist from spreading the myth that Ram was born 7,75,000 years ago. This seemingly uneducated man should know that at that point of time the *homo sapiens* as we see them today did not even exist anywhere in the world. Thus, the battle against false history, mythology, superstition, racial and caste prejudice is very difficult and likely to last long in the conservative Hindu society.

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The Dark Side of the Comics that Redefined Hinduism*

Shaan Amin

Beloved by generations of Indian children like myself, the illustrated-book series *Amar Chitra Katha* also reinforced many forms of intolerance.

Fifty years ago, a junior executive at the *Times of India* named Anant Pai watched Indian children on a TV quiz show fail to answer a basic question about the Hindu epic *Ramayana*. Concerned that young people in his country had lost touch with their cultural heritage, Pai acted. He eventually teamed up with the publisher *India Book House* to launch an educational comic series that presented kid-friendly Indian religious and historical stories. The comics, titled *Amar Chitra Katha* (also known as *ACK*, or *Immortal Illustrated Stories*), slowly became a massive hit. While schools and shopkeepers initially hesitated to stock the issues, *ACK* was a household name in India by the late 1970s. Today, the series has sold 100 million-plus copies of more than 400 comics in upwards of 20 languages, primarily English and Hindi.

Pai revolutionised children's entertainment as much as he did religious education. *ACK* was the first major indigenous comic-book series to sell within India, and its success also heralded the development of a broader domestic comics industry. *ACK*'s first successors were primarily Western-inspired action and adventure series, but by the 1990s Indian institutions like *Diamond Comics* and *Raj Comics* were publishing mysteries, funnies, and science-fiction works. Even within this crowded field, *ACK*

remained beloved and novel for both its edutainment value and its role as the grandfather of an industry.

And yet, since its debut in 1967, *ACK* has also helped supply impressionable generations of middle-class children a vision of "immortal" Indian identity wedded to prejudiced norms. *ACK*'s writing and illustrative team (led by Pai as the primary "storyteller") constructed a legendary past for India by tying masculinity, Hinduism, fair skin, and high caste to authority, excellence, and virtue. On top of that, his comics often erased non-Hindu subjects from India's historic and religious fabric. Consequently, *ACK* reinforced many of the most problematic tenets of Hindu nationalism - tenets that partially drive the platform of India's ruling *Bharatiya Janata Party*, currently under fire domestically and internationally for policies and rhetoric targeting religious minorities and lower castes.

Yet millions of children - myself included - revered "Uncle Pai" for creating a popular avenue to an Indian heritage, however limited. Like many other Indian diaspora kids, my mother brought her own collection when she immigrated to the United States as a 9-year-old in 1973. My family had built a library of some 90 issues by the time I began to read them, tattered from decades of swapping between cousins. When I was a boy growing up in upstate New York, my parents had no Indian friends or nearby relatives. We only spoke in English and ate burritos more often than *dal bhat*.

The heroes of *ACK* became my superheroes long before I discovered *Spider-Man* or the *Flash*. They also became my first window into a culture I barely knew. I didn't care that the protagonists I was reading about were drawn with white skin. I was unaware of the broader, ongoing effort by Hindu nationalists to define a doctrine devaluing lower castes, women, tribal populations, and religious minorities. I didn't understand how ideals of obedience to authority - something the comics taught - can feed systemic inequality. I was just reading about heroes who made me feel stronger than I was, and who would teach me, I believed, how to be Indian.

ACK defines Indian identity via stories - which naturally appealed to a bookish child like me who constantly escaped into the worlds of Philip Pullman, Garth Nix, and C.S. Lewis. Most histories in the comics feature virtuous Hindus who fight against evil rulers, an encroaching Muslim horde, or arrogant British imperialists. The religious stories are drawn from (usually Hindu) epics, sacred texts, and folktales, and they frequently weave the same gods and heroes among minor vignettes and massive story arcs. Though many *ACK* issues could stand alone, roughly 30 pages at a time the series constructed a limited and tonally consistent India sanitised through a distinctively Hindu lens.

While many scholars reject the notion of a single Hindu doctrine, they have some opponents. In 2008, Hindu nationalist students at Delhi

University protested the inclusion of A.K. Ramanujan's landmark essay "Three Hundred Ramayanas" in the history syllabus. The protestors alleged that it demeaned Hinduism to imply nonclassical versions of the epic were equally legitimate. Under a renewed wave of dissent in 2011, the university dropped the essay from the syllabus.

But outside the Ivory Tower, ACK's panels bring the power struggles, great feats, and sacrifices of Hindu lore and Indian history to life. With simple brushstrokes, illustrators evoke spare landscape backgrounds or classical architecture. Though light-hearted folktales like Panchatantra or Jataka Tales often tend toward caricature, ACK illustrators typically draw both mythological and historical protagonists in the image of Hindu deities of Indian classical sculpture. With characters' dramatic facial expressions and body postures, the lessons, political scheming, and battles become captivating.

For his part, Pai said "his comics had helped foster the 'integration' of India, which is made up of hundreds of ethnic groups, by teaching children about its history and legends," according to a 2011 New York Times story about the creator's death. Still, these dialogues, plot arcs, and illustrations often erase or negatively portray many groups. ACK largely omits religious minorities, including Christians and Sikhs, from its extensive "Makers of Modern India" collection. Muslims fare the worst among these groups. In the series' medieval histories, adherents of Islam often play the boogymen, a menacing, green-clad horde threatening brave Hindus.

ACK also upholds popular, but

regressive beauty standards by representing nearly all the stories' "good" characters as fair-skinned, lithe women or fair-skinned, muscular men. (Canonically dark-skinned gods are shaded blue.) By contrast, demons, "ruffians," and "ruthless killers" are given dark brown or black skin. In Issue #67 *The Lord of Lanka* (1974), Pai even distinguishes a demonic family's virtuous members from its evil members by shading them white. In Indian culture, where dark skin is frequently associated with lower castes, colourism fuels casteism.

Low-caste and tribal individuals are sometimes valorised in ACK for self-sacrifice with disturbing overtones. In one scene of the epic *Mahabharata*, a boy named Ekalavya who's from a disparaged hill tribe is denied instruction by a teacher of arms. After building a statue to practice in front of, Ekalavya becomes a fearsome archer. When the teacher discovers this, he demands the boy sever his thumbs in payment. Ekalavya's obedience is framed as a model of deference toward elders.

ACK similarly establishes women as collaborators in their own oppression. As Issue #71 *Indra and Shachi* (1974) proclaims from the inside cover, even goddesses cheerfully demonstrate "unselfish subordination of their own selves and service to their husbands." Men receive virginal wives as gifts from other men—or heroically kidnap them. At their most shocking, some ACK comics venerate women's suicide as a means to inspire or defy men. Many heroines choose sati, a long-banned practice in which widows like Padmini and Ranak Devi burn alive on funeral pyres.

Some readers and critics might blame Hinduism as a whole for these inequalities. But Hinduism lacks a central authoritative text like the Bible or Qur'an, and the sprawling canon of Hindu stories means there are many divergent messages on the subject of inequality. Rather than offering a more neutral take on Hinduism, ACK excluded subversive viewpoints from many stories. For instance, ACK's *Valmiki's Ramayana* does not challenge the caste system. By contrast, some folk traditions identify the divine Lord Rama, who spent 14 years cast out of society in the forest, as a symbol of low-caste peasants or tribal groups. In southern states like Tamil Nadu, some narratives lionize Lord Rama's dark-skinned foes as representatives of the Dravidian population.

As an adult returning to the series after many years, I struggle to reconcile ACK's recurrent bigoted portrayals with my enduring affection for the characters whose selflessness and courage left me in awe as a child. I idolised Ekalavya. I wanted to be determined like Dhruva, the child who worshipped so intensely the heavens could not breathe. Most of all, I loved Karna—the adoptive son of a charioteer in the *Mahabharata*. Facing abandonment, insults, emotional blackmail, and two different curses, Karna gave to the world with a generosity it rarely returned. On the eve of the battle that claimed his life, Karna relinquished the armor and earrings that provided him the protection of his divine father, the sun god Surya. Handing the jewelry over, Karna said, "Never let it be said that Karna refused anyone anything."

To ACK's credit, many of its comic issues occasionally

complicated the norms it establishes. For example, Ghatotkacha is a virtuous character with dark skin. In the Issue #89 Ganesha (1975), the goddess Parvati proves to be more powerful than the collective might of all male gods. Though the (Muslim) Mughal emperor Akbar the Great typically plays second fiddle to his Hindu minister Birbal, he is still portrayed favourably. Furthermore, he and several other Mughal rulers are the protagonists of their own comics. Originally christened “the great Mughal” in Issue #200, ACK’s newer Issue #603 praises Akbar as “a visionary monarch.” The series positively profiles the Dalit (or untouchable) leader Bhimrao Ambedkar, as well, although that issue sanitises his anti-Hindu politics to better align with the comics’ platform.

ACK’s form and rhetoric have also evolved since its heyday in the 1970s and 1980s. (Pai died in 2011.) Some classically inspired panels have given way to a dynamic style of illustration resembling Western graphic novels, and the comic series even has its own app. More substantively, the ACK executive editor Reena Puri acknowledged in 2016, “It is so easy to fall into the trap of stereotyping. ... We are changing some of that.” Though several issues have been pulled from circulation entirely, many regressive comics from the old canon (like Padmini and Indra and Shachi) are still published.

Academics, writers, and social-justice advocates have criticised ACK’s myriad prejudices for years. Yet, it remains a hallowed institution in India for providing millions of children a path to their heritage, however fraught. As for my family, my parents have given many of our

comics away to my younger relatives. When I visited one cousin earlier this year, she had just read an issue her father brought from India. Her parents made sure to discuss with her the story’s

dangerous assumptions about colour, caste, gender, and religion. And then, they read the next one.

*The article originally appeared in *The Atlantic*, December 30, 2017

Petition : The Bill Criminalising Instant Triple Talaq is Against Gender Justice

Gender Justice and Minority Rights Citizens Concerned, Mumbai, India

We, citizens concerned with gender justice and minority rights, are deeply disturbed with the manner in which a Bill criminalising instant Triple Talaq, was introduced and passed in the Lok Sabha on 28th December 2017 (The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017).

The Bill aims to protect the rights of Muslim women, but we believe it will cause more harm to them if it is passed in its present form. We urge you to call for consultations from a wide section of people working with Muslim women so that the aim of securing gender justice is truly achieved.

Our concerns with the current Bill:

- a. It has many contradictions and anomalies.
- b. It pushes Muslim women into a new statute which will incarcerate their husbands.
- c. It gives power to a third person to file a criminal charge, which can be extremely dangerous.
- d. It does not specify the time period for the case to be concluded.
- e. It does not specify who will provide sustenance to the woman when her husband is in jail.

Utterance of the words “talaq”

three times has been invalidated by the Hon’ble Supreme Court in August, 2017, which means that her marriage remains intact. Since the marriage is intact, Muslim women, like all other women, have a recourse in law both criminal (S. 498A of IPC – cruelty to wives) and civil (the Protection of Women Domestic Violence Act (PWDVA), 2005 which secures the rights of all women facing domestic violence to maintenance, residence, protection from violence and to custody of their children). We believe that Muslim women must take recourse to these two laws to protect their rights.

We, the undersigned, urge that the Bill should be sent to a select committee to discuss its pros and cons in the true spirit of democracy.

Adv. Flavia Agnes, Women’s Rights Lawyer, Founder of Majlis
Prof. (Dr) Faizan Mustafa, Vice-Chancellor, NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad

Prof. Abusaleh Shariff, Chair, Maulana Azad Urdu University, Hyderabad

Prof. S Parasuraman, Director, Tata Institute of Social Sciences

Ms. Uzma Naheed, Director, Iqra Foundation, Vice President, All India Muslim Majlis-e Mushawrat, Former member, Muslim Personal Law Board

Adv. Irfan Engineer, Director,
Centre for Study of Society and
Secularism

Ms. Audrey D'mello, Director,
Majlis Legal Centre

Ms. Sujata Lawhande and Ms.
Mumtaz Shaikh, CORO for Literacy,
Mumbai

Prof. Apooranand, Delhi
University

Dr. Nasreen Fazalbhoj, Retd
Reader, Mumbai University

Prof. Farrukh Waris, Retd. Vice
Principal, Burhani College, Mumbai

Prof. Farida Lambay, Retired,
Nirmala Niketan, Mumbai

Prof. Shahida Murtaza, Women
Education, Maulana Azad Urdu
University, Hyderabad

Dr. Vibhuti Patel, Chairperson &
Professor, Advanced Centre for
Women's Studies, School of
Development Studies, Mumbai

Sr. Noella de Souza, President,

Indian Christian Women's
Movement

Maulana Shoaib Koti, Iqra Darul
Qaza

Mufti Inamullah Mazahiri, Chief
Qazi, Al Hira Darul Qaza

Prof. Tanika Sarkar, Historian,
Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi

Prof. Sumit Sarkar, Professor of
History, University of Delhi

Nasiruddin Haider Khan,
Journalist, Lucknow

Gandhi and Roy: The Interaction of Ideologies in India

Dr. Dennis Dalton

Dr. Dennis Dalton has taught at the school of Oriental and African Studies, London, and in the United States, and written on ideology in modern India. The interpretation of Roy's intellectual development vis-à-vis Gandhi offered here may seem controversial, especially to those associates and students of Roy who find the differences between Gandhi and Roy even in the last phase much more fundamental than the similarities, but there is no doubt that the position very ably presented here deserves serious consideration. The essay was originally published in Sibnarayan Ray (ed.), 'Gandhi, India and the World: An International Symposium' (Melbourne, Hawthorn Press; Bombay, Nachiketa Publications; Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1970), and has been slightly shortened by Sibnarayan Ray himself.

Manabendra Nath Roy (1887–1954) was born into a Bengali brahman family in a village outside of Calcutta. Twenty-eight years later, as a terrorist revolutionary, he left India for an adventurous career in the Communist international movement. These initial twenty-eight years in Bengal were decisive for the shaping of his personality and thought. Three components of this early experience deserve mention. First, there was the influence of Roy's brahmanical family background and outlook. This inspired and reinforced his penchant for theory, his elitism, and his strong moral temper. Second, there was Roy's early, intense belief in

Hindusim. His religious frame of mind, like the brahmanical spirit, never left him, but prodded him on in his quest for 'those abiding, permanent values of humanity.' Third, in this first generation of his life, the ideology of Indian nationalism exerted an immense influence on Roy as it did on many of his contemporary Bengali intellectuals and students.

'An ideology', writes Edward Shils, 'is the product of man's need for imposing intellectual order on the world. The need for ideology is an intensification of the need for a cognitive and moral map of the universe . . .' Roy's quest for an

adequate ideology began during his youth in Bengal. It continued throughout his next phase as an orthodox communist and later as a Marxist revisionist. Then, still later, having abandoned Marxism for what he called 'Radical Humanism', his search intensified for 'a cognitive and moral map of the universe'. It ended not in satisfaction, but only with his death in 1954. Yet, in this last phase of his thought, Roy had come closer to the fulfilment of his needs, to realisation of his identity though the construction of an ideology, than he had ever approached in his earlier phases. The outlines of Roy's cognitive and moral map had been determined in

his youth by the combined influences of a brahmanical outlook, a Hindu creed, and the nationalist experience in Bengal. Yet, unlike Gandhi, Roy never came to terms with the demands of his early formative period; unlike Gandhi, he remained alienated until the end from large segments of his own tradition. It is for this reason that the evolution of Roy's thought, which represents a continuing response to the demands of the Indian nationalist tradition, forms an important part of the analysis.

The year 1915 is a key one in the Gandhi–Roy story. In that year, Roy, a terrorist schooled under Jatin Mukherjee and Aurobindo Ghose, left Calcutta on a revolutionary mission to obtain German arms for the struggle against the Raj. In that same year, Mohandas Gandhi returned to India after twenty-one years in South Africa. He soon began his extraordinary rise to power in the Congress. By 1920 he had come to dominate the Indian nationalist movement with a sure sense of leadership that reached a dramatic peak with the Dandi Salt March of 1930. During these fifteen years of Gandhi's eminence, Roy acquired his reputation of being 'undoubtedly the most colourful of all non-Russian Communists in the era of Lenin and Stalin'. From 1915 until December 1930, Roy moved about on various revolutionary missions, Mexico to Moscow to Berlin, and then Paris, Zurich and Tashkent. In Mexico, Roy was converted to Communism and helped form the first Communist Party there. In Moscow, he contributed to revolutionary strategy for communist activity in the colonial areas. In Europe, he rose to a position of authority in the Comintern, published a series of books and

pamphlets on Marxist theory, and edited a communist newspaper. Therefore, the achievements of both Gandhi and Roy during this period were spectacular. Yet, for all their respective achievements, there was never anything like a balance of power between these two figures. It was Gandhi and never Roy who dominated the Indian nationalist movement with his unparalleled genius for mass leadership. Whereas Roy would struggle long and hard to gain a standing in India, Gandhi acquired authority with ease and kept it. While Roy necessarily remained, throughout this fifteen year period, preoccupied with Gandhi's power, the latter never mentions Roy in his writes or speeches. Even after Roy's return to the political scene in the late 1930s, he remained both a cultural and political outsider; Gandhi took scant notice of him. Gandhi, after his return to India in 1915, became rooted in the nationalist tradition and developed a style of political behaviour which gained for him personal confidence as well as political power. On the other hand, Roy, even though he never ceased in his effort to become secure in his surroundings, remained out of touch with his tradition and thus remained aloof. In this sense, a consideration of Roy's view of Gandhi becomes part of a larger problem, that of the relationship of the Indian intellectual to his tradition.

The first detailed Marxist critique of Gandhi appeared in Roy's first major book, *India in Transition*, which was written in Moscow in 1921. The book grew out of discussions which Roy had with Lenin and other communist figures at the Second Congress of the Communist International. At this Congress, Roy had argued against

Lenin that communist policy in the colonial areas must be to support proletarian rather than bourgeois movements. Lenin contended that bourgeois nationalist organisations like the Indian Congress could be considered revolutionary, and since no viable Communist parties existed, these organisations deserved the support of the International. Roy replied that the Congress and similar agencies could only betray the revolution: an Indian proletariat existed, and must be mobilised behind a communist leadership. The Roy–Lenin controversy was clearly over fundamental issues, and had innumerable implications for communist strategy in the future.

Roy later reflected upon his differences with Lenin and concluded that 'the role of Gandhi was the crucial point of difference. Lenin believed that as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement, Gandhi was a revolutionary. I maintained that, a religious and cultural revivalist, he was bound to be a reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically.' In Roy's view, 'the religious ideology preached by him [Gandhi] also appealed to the medieval mentality of the masses. But the same ideology discouraged any revolutionary mass action. The quintessence of the situation, as I analysed and understood it, was a potentially revolutionary movement restrained by a reactionary ideology.' 'I reminded Lenin of the dictum that I had learnt from him: that without a revolutionary ideology, there could be no revolution.' These arguments formed the basis of the position on Gandhi that was developed by Roy in *India in Transition*.

(To be concluded)



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