

# janata

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**India–China Relations  
on Mend**

Kuldip Nayar

**Is Congress a Muslim Party,  
Is it Against Interests  
of Hindus?**

Ram Puniyani

**The CPM's 22nd Party  
Congress**

Mrinal Biswas

**Kasganj Fact Finding Report**

Centre for Study of Society  
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## Friend or Enemy of Dalits?

**Sandeep Pandey**

Dr. Ambedkar Mahasabha honoured the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath with Dalit Mitra or Friend of the Dalit award on the birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on 14 April 2018 in Lucknow.

This is the same government which had arrested Chandrashekhar Azad Ravan, the founder of Bhim Army which runs over 300 education centres for Dalit children in Saharanpur. On 2 November 2017 High Court described the four cases against Ravan and colleague Kamal Walia as politically motivated and gave them bail. As soon as Ravan was released National Security Act was imposed to arrest him again. This exhibits lack of faith of UP government in Dalits in general.

During the nationwide protests organised on 2 April 2018 against the perceived weakening of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, by the Supreme Court, the Yogi Government was involved in brutal suppression of the movement. In Meerut one dalit youth was killed in police firing, while cases were registered against 9,000 people, of whom about 500 were arrested. Locally manufactured pistols were

planted on some youth before their arrest so that Arms Act could be used against them. In Muzaffarnagar too a dalit youth was killed in police firing and cases registered against 7,000 people, of whom around 250–300 were arrested. In Saharanpur, cases were registered against 900 Bhim Army activists. In Allahabad, cases were registered against 27 students who participated in this movement. In the above mentioned cases, sections related to rioting, causing damage to public property, obstructing public servant from performing his/her duty, attempt to murder and Arms Act were used. In Meerut a former Member of Legislative Assembly Yogesh Verma, who is also the husband of Mayor Sunita Verma who belongs to the Bahujan Samaj Party, was first called to assist in controlling the law and order situation, but was later humiliated and arrested from the spot. Will such a government be considered a Dalit friendly government? According to retired Inspector General of Police in Uttar Pradesh, S.R. Daprapuri, cases against SC/STs have gone up in Bhartiya Janata Party ruled states.

In February 2018, in a village in Unnao district of Uttar Pradesh, a Dalit girl Moni was riding a

bicycle to the market when some people poured petrol over her and set her on fire. She tried to run to save her life but collapsed and died. Earlier in January, in Rasra town of Ballia district, two Dalit youth were caught by members of Hindu Yuva Vahini on the charge of cow theft. Their heads were shaved and they were taken around the village with placards hanging from their necks saying 'We are cow thieves.' In March, in Jajauli village of Ballia district, Sonu and Siddhu Singh burnt alive a Dalit woman, Reshma Devi. She had taken a loan of Rs 20,000, and even though she had repayed it, they continued to pressurise her to pay interest on the loan. When she did not acquiesce, petrol was poured over her and she was set on fire.

Many such incidents of atrocities against Dalits can be recounted during the Yogi Government. Two events which specially stand out are where Dalits were not allowed to install statues of Gautam Buddha and Dr. Ambedkar on Ambedkar Jayanti day in Barabanki and Sitapur this year.

In the police station Deva of district Barabanki, there is a village Sarsaundi in which 0.202 hectares of land numbered 312 in the Gram Sabha documents has been earmarked for Ambedkar Park. The villagers wanted to install a Ambedkar statue on the birthday of Dr. Ambedkar. Permission for the event was sought and obtained from the police and Member of Parliament, Priyanka Singh Rawat. But just before the event, Kamlesh Sharma, a village level Revenue department official (Lekhpal), filed a false report that the land in question is disputed and a case was pending with the Land Consolidation Officer.

Complainant Kanhaiyya Lal is owner of a nearby brick kiln but not a citizen of the Gram Sabha. Two residents of the village, Kabir Ahmed and Pramid Chauhan, have been shown as witnesses in the report; both now regret having signed the document. When an enquiry was made with the Land Consolidation office, no case was found to be pending there. Quite clearly the Lekhpal is affected by an anti-Dalit mentality.

The story of village Gumai falling in GS Ranipur Godwa and PS Thangaon of district Sitapur is even more interesting. A resident of the village, Gulshan s/o Banwari, wants to install statues of Gautam Buddha and Dr. Ambedkar on his personal land. On the adjacent piece of land four walls of an unfinished temple stand. The structure doesn't have a ceiling and there are no deities installed inside. This land belongs to Jagrani whose late husband Medilal was earlier the Gram Pradhan and she also agrees with the idea of installation of the statues of Buddha and Ambedkar. In fact, the two statues have already been procured and are kept in her house, which is the only permanent residential structure in the village. Some upper caste people under the patronage of BJP MLA Gyan Tiwari have opposed the idea of installation of these statues. None of them are residents of the GS Ranipur Godwa and in that sense are outsiders. Under their pressure, the police has filed a report that a dispute could erupt if Ambedkar's statue is installed next to the temple of a goddess. This, despite the fact that Jagrani, the owner of the land on which four walls of the incomplete temple stand, and Gulshan, on whose land statues are to be installed, have no dispute between them.

A situation has been created in these two villages that now the villagers seeking the installation of statues of Ambedkar and Buddha will have to seek the permission of the State government through their respective District Magistrates. In both cases the issue has been made a victim of unnecessary bureaucratic entanglement, in which an immediate solution may not emerge. The people may have to approach the court of law, which will be a costly affair. The anti-Dalit mindset of people in the party, government and administration of a 'Dalit friendly' CM are at naked play in both cases.

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# India–China Relations on Mend

**Kuldip Nayar**

It appears Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accepted China–dictated China–India border. The ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) can argue that it has accepted what was de jure. What is hailed as a historic moment is actually an abject surrender to Beijing. It is practically a defeat. Had the Congress Party done so, it would have been paraded as a force which had sold out India.

Modi, with his flowery speeches in Hindi, may go down well with people who cannot understand the intricacies of the border problem. But surprisingly, the party has the support from the Nagpur headquarters from where the RSS high command operates.

China and India have seldom agreed on where the actual border line is. The India-China border was demarcated by the British during the colonial period, and is known as the MacMahon Line. China does not accept this border line. Nehru asked the Indian army to oust the infiltrators and clear its territory. Since then the relations between the two have been more or less hostile.

The McMahon Line demarcates Arunachal Pradesh to be a part of India; China refuses to acknowledge this and considers the region to be disputed. Any activity that takes place in this area is viewed by China skeptically. In April last year, when the Dalai Lama visited Arunachal Pradesh, China called his visit a “provocation.” It had warned India that the Dalai Lama’s visit would affect the normal relations between the two countries. The Chinese also

protested Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman’s visit to Arunachal in November 2017. Beijing has also been issuing stapled visas to residents of Arunachal Pradesh visiting China. China wants to indicate that it is a ‘separate territory’ and not part of India.

The relations between the two countries further reached their lowest point in recent years during the standoff over Doklam in June–August 2017. India stood its ground, and ultimately China had to withdraw its forces behind the present border.

Prime Minister Modi’s trip to China last September soon after the Doklam standoff for BRICS did reduce tensions between the two countries. The positive side of Modi’s trip then was the reiteration by the two countries to fight against terrorists, even though it is also true that the friendship between China and Pakistan continues to increase.

Now it seems that Beijing is trying to revive the India–China Bhai Bhai scenario. Soon after PM Modi’s recent April visit to China, a statement issued by the Chinese Foreign Ministry said that both sides possessed the “maturity and wisdom” to handle their differences through peaceful discussion and by respecting each other’s “concerns and aspirations.”

They also agreed to use the Special Representatives’ Meeting on the boundary question to seek a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable settlement. The two militaries will strengthen confidence-building measures and enhance

communication and cooperation to uphold border peace and tranquility, said the statement.

China and India have agreed to build a high-level cultural and people-to-people exchange mechanism between the two nations. The informal summit meeting between Prime Minister Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping also stressed on the need to strengthen the China–India Closer Developmental Partnership so that the relationship between the two will always keep to the right direction.

On the last leg of his two-day visit, the Indian Prime Minister and Chinese President walked along a sidewalk on the shores of the Wuhan’s East Lake and later sailed in the same boat for “peace, prosperity and development” in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. This augurs well.

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# Is Congress a Muslim Party, Is it Against Interests of Hindus?

**Ram Puniyani**

Currently there is propaganda from the BJP combine that the Congress is an anti-Hindu party. On every conceivable occasion, it states that Congress is insulting Hinduism. In the wake of the verdict of Mecca Masjid blast cases, as the accused got released, BJP spokespersons went hammer and tongs saying that Rahul Gandhi and Congress have defamed Hindu religion, they should apologise for that. In the ongoing campaign for Karnataka elections (2018), the BJP has taken out a Yatra against the so called 'anti-Hindu policies' of the Congress. The propaganda has gone to such an extent that even Sonia Gandhi, the ex-Congress President, had to say that Congress is perceived as a party for Muslims!

How should we understand the policies of a party for any religious community? BJP is propagating that it is a party which is taking care of Hindu interests. Is it true? It has taken up issues like Ram Temple, holy cow, article 370, love jihad, etc. Have Hindus at large benefitted from these issues? The claim that these emotive issues are for the benefit of Hindus is a pure make believe propaganda which has led to polarisation, increased hate and increase in acts of violence. The major victim of these policies are not just Muslims, but Hindus too in large numbers. At the same time, we also see an economic slide in the conditions of farmers and workers; atrocities against Dalits and Hindu women are on the rise.

What about Congress being anti-Hindu, being against Hinduism? Let's take the case of Mecca Masjid blast. The major part of the investigation was initially done by Hemant Karkare, who was killed in the 26/11 act of terror on Mumbai. Swami Aseemanand, the accused, himself had confessed to his crime in front of a magistrate, which was not under duress, and his confession was legally valid. Most of the investigations pointed fingers towards Aseemanand, Sadhvi Pragya, Lt. Col. Purohit and others. During the last four years of BJP rule, the case has been so badly presented by the investigative agencies that they have all been exonerated and the blame has been put on Maharashtra ATS for wrong investigation. When Karkare was proceeding with the investigations, Modi and Thackeray had called him anti-Hindu. Karkare felt so much pressured by these intimidations that he sought the advice of his distinguished elder, Julio Reibero, who advised him to carry on with his honest work, ignoring the pressures.

While the anti-Hindu image of Congress has been constructed around such issues, its pro-Muslim image has been constructed in the last few decades, more so after the reversal on the Shah Bano issue by the then Congress government, which was a flawed decision. The Congress had then yielded to retrograde elements within the Muslim community; the Muslim community as a whole did not benefit

from it. Dr. Manmohan Singh's statement that 'Muslims have a first claim on national resources' is yet another statement flouted to assert that Congress is pro-Muslim. What is hidden from public view is that this statement came in the wake of the Sachar Committee Report. This report had debunked the claim that Muslims have been appeased, it concluded that the economic condition of Muslims is worse than that of Dalits, they are also victims of communal violence, and that the only place they are over-represented is the jails!

Any attempt to walk down the path of secularism in our country, which has suffered the impact of 'Divide and Rule' policy of the British, is not easy. During the freedom struggle, with the rising Indian nationalism, the people from all religions joined the Indian National Congress. The Congress had Presidents from all religions. Badruddin Tybaji presided over the Congress session in 1887; the Congress also had Presidents who were from Parsi and Christian communities. The primary focus of Congress was Indian nationalism and it practised secularism, even though there were some slips here and there. During those days, the Congress faced criticism from Muslim communalists (like Sir Syed) of being a Hindu Party, while Hindu communalists (like Lala Lal Chand) criticised it for appeasing Muslims at the cost of Hindu interests. All through the

freedom struggle, the Congress had to face criticism from both these elements.

The criticism of Muslim communalists led by the Muslim League culminated in the formation of Pakistan. The Hindu communalist, especially Hindu Mahasabha and RSS, criticism was that Gandhi is appeasing Muslims; it is due to Gandhi that Muslims have raised their head, due to which Pakistan was formed. The sharpest articulation of this came in the actions of Nathuram Godse, who was a trained RSS Pracharak and also became the Secretary of Pune Branch of Hindu Mahasabha in 1936. In his statement in the Court ('May it please your honor'), he says that Gandhi is responsible for formation of Pakistan, he has

compromised the Hindu interests and been pro-Muslim!

The present criticism of Congress that it is a Muslim party and is against Hindu interests seems to be a continuation of the above arguments. This criticism, which began with Hindu communalists in 1880s, and then increased with the articulations of the Hindu Mahasabha and RSS, has become intensified during last couple of decades. The reality is that the condition of Muslims has worsened during the last several decades, and during last four years, gone into a tailspin. Despite that, those who are indulging in anti-Congress propaganda and accusing it of appeasing Muslims are having a field day, raising all kinds of emotive issues in which Hindus are as much losers as other sections of society.

Walking the secular talk is becoming more difficult by the day. Gandhi was killed for this and his disciple Nehru is subject of much vilification and calumny for the same. The Muslim communalists rejoiced the formation of Pakistan, where development and amity is missing. With Congress–Gandhi–Nehru, we could make a small beginning towards fraternity and progress. The criticism of Congress as being Muslim party, as being against Hindus, reflects more the sectarian agenda of those propagating this rather than the nature of Congress, which despite several flaws has on the whole been trying to protect secular values!

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## **Supreme Court Should Decide Ayodhya Case — No Scope for Mutual Settlement**

**Justice Rajindar Sachar**

The Chief Justice of India J.S. Khehar has suggested that he can act as a mediator in the pending Babri Masjid demolition case. The expression of concern is a little odd as it comes at the instance of an "inter-meddlor", and without the parties being present in Court. No wonder the suggestion on negotiations towards a mutual settlement has caused a flutter in the political roost. In my opinion, the Babri Masjid demolition case is not a matter that can be settled through a compromise. This case has constitutional implications. The Constitution states clearly that India is a secular republic.

I was in Geneva attending the UN Human Rights Commission meeting when I was informed that the Babri Masjid had been demolished. On television, I watched the gory spectacle of BJP stormtroopers climbing up the walls of the Masjid and breaking it down. The BJP Chief Minister, Kalyan Singh's assurance to the Supreme Court that he would take steps to prevent the demolition was belied. The Supreme Court by a majority just accepted his apology instead of sending him to jail for contempt of court. But this was a relatively minor issue compared to the ominous conspiracy of the Congress Prime Minister,

Narasimha Rao, who suddenly became inaccessible to senior journalists, his Home Secretary and even his colleagues.

I feel ashamed to admit the complicity of the judiciary, which despite the injunction since 1949 to bar people from entering the area, did not proceed against the public. Even the higher judiciary did not intervene; rather, it seemed to ignore the trespass.

The magnitude of the danger should have been grasped by all parties. The battle for secularism should have been reflected in the determination to nip the canker of communalism in the bud. As it

turned out, nothing was done.

At that point of time, I had made a public statement, saying that the government should have announced December 6 as a 'National Repentance Day' when people will fast and pray for the unity and welfare of all communities. But the non-BJP parties analysed the situation as merely a law and order problem and thus acquiesced in this dastardly action.

Whatever the history of the controversy, all parties let the matter be referred to the Allahabad High Court. Both sides were aggrieved with its decision. The BJP is insisting that it will build a temple on the site where the Masjid undoubtedly stood for over 500 years. The Muslims cannot obviously agree to a shameful compromise on the sanctity of the Masjid. The matter is before the Supreme Court; it cannot avoid a decision which may not make everyone happy. It is its constitutional duty and it has no other option.

Going by precedents, the case in favour of Muslims is invincible. I say this on the precedence of the Shahidganj Masjid case in Lahore. It was decided by the Privy Council in 1940. The Supreme Court need not decide on the merits of the argument whether Babri Masjid stood where the Ram Temple once existed. This is of no consequence as it is not relevant to the judiciary's ultimate decision.

It is obvious to the meanest intelligence that it is impossible to prove that the birthplace of Lord Ram was beneath the Masjid. It may be a matter of faith, genuine or contrived, but that is no proof. Nor for that matter can it ever be cited as a legal ground to take away the land from the mosque.

If the finding is that the mosque was not built on Ram's birthplace, then the Muslims can get the land back. They will be free to use it in any way, including the construction of the mosque.

Alternatively even if it is assumed that there was a temple on the land of Babri Masjid, the suit filed by the VHP/RSS has to be dismissed. Admittedly, Babri Masjid existed for over 500 years, till it was demolished by the activists of the VHP/RSS on 6 December 1992. From the legal perspective, the Sangh Parivar would have no right even if a temple had been demolished to build the Babri Masjid. I say this in view of the precedent of the case of Shahidganj Masjid. There was a mosque dating back to 1722. But by 1762, the shrine came under Sikh rule and was used as a gurdwara. It was only in 1935 that a suit was filed claiming the building was a mosque and should be returned to the Muslims.

The Privy Council observed that "their Lordships have every sympathy with a religious sentiment which would ascribe sanctity and inviolability to a place of worship. However, they cannot under the Limitation Act accept the contention that such a building cannot be possessed adversely. The property now in question, having been possessed by Sikhs, was adversely given to the waqf and to all interests thereunder for more than 12 years. The right of the mutawali (caretaker) to take possession for the purposes of the waqf came to an end under the Limitation Act".

On a parity of reasoning, even if a temple existed prior to the construction of the Masjid 500 years ago, the suit by the Hindu outfits like Nirmal Akhara VHP / BJP etc

lacks basis.

There is another reason why in such a situation, the suit will fail because in common law, even a rightful heir, if he kills his ancestor, forfeits his right of inheritance. In the Masjid case too there was a "murder most foul", and hence the killer cannot be allowed to take the benefit of his own dastardly deeds, whatever the factual position may be.

Of course, it is the privilege of the Chief Justice of India to constitute the Bench. With respect, I submit that it might be more reassuring if a Bench of seven or nine judges hears the appeal.

Courtesy : Mainstream, April 8, 2017

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

by  
**Rohini Gawankar**

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# The CPM's 22nd Party Congress

**Mrinal Biswas**

At the 22nd Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the party's highest policy making body broke the embedded practice of echoing and approving anything coming from the top leaders sitting in Politburo or Central Committee, and forced an alteration in the draft political resolution of the Central Committee.

The official resolution moved by the Central Committee, while stating the need to fight the menace of the Bharatiya Janata Party said, "However, this has to be done without having an understanding with the Congress party." Hardliners led by Prakash Karat saw to it that CPI(M) avoided the touch of the Grand Old Party to keep away any impurities from invading their party. But Karat's successor and the present party general secretary Sitaram Yechury wanted to keep CPI(M) afloat in the country's political mainstream, and by dint of his wider support among the rank and file, threw down the gauntlet against the hardliners successfully. The broader forum, the Party Congress, modified the Central Committee's resolution, and removed the words "without having an understanding with the Congress Party" and replaced them by "without having a political alliance with the Congress Party". The Yechury line opened up the possibility of an "understanding" with the Congress party and with any coalition the Congress party may forge in the 2019 general election for the Lok Sabha.

There were interesting fallouts

of this pathbreaking political line within the CPI(M) itself. Prakash Karat's wife and influential politburo member Brinda Karat refused to accept defeat and said that any repetition of an understating with the Congress party that had happened during the 2016 West Bengal Assembly polls was "not permissible". Actually, the resolution adopted by the CPI(M) says just the opposite.

The most emphatic statement for the Yechury line came from nonagenarian party founder member V.S. Achuthanandan, who was formerly Kerala Chief Minister. "We will reach an understanding with all secular opposition parties, including the Congress in Parliament on agreed issues. Outside the Parliament . . . we shall work for a broad mobilisation of people against communalism. This has to be done without a political alliance with the Congress."

V.S. has elucidated further the meanings and implications of the alteration of the CPI(M) Central Committee's draft resolution in the context of compulsion of the party in combating fascism. The Third International of the Communist parties, he said, gave the world the concept of a united front against fascism. This has helped India and other countries fight imperialism on the one hand and fascism on the other. The RSS was born along with the Italian Fascism and German Nazism. Its leadership and cadre have had decades long experience of fomenting communal extremism in India. And so V.S. stated that

the need of the hour is not to waste time focussing on neo-liberalism as followed by the Congress but to form a broader front with Congress and others to fight the communal-fascist threat. Incidentally, this founding member of the CPI(M) has long been thrown out of the Politburo and Central Committee as well as the Kerala State Committee by hardliners in the CPI(M).

V.S., even though sidelined in important bodies of his own party, sensed correctly the wishes of his comrades assembled in the Party Congress to have some kind of an alliance with the Grand Old Party, contrary to the dictates of the ruling coterie. This significantly tilted the balance in favour of the Yechury line. The unprecedented demand for secret voting on the draft political resolution was itself an expression of disapproval of the hardliners' much advertised anti-Congress views and showed weakening support for the Karat leadership which had held CPI(M) under leash for so many years.

The CPI(M) under a stronger Yechury leadership will no doubt find a more meaningful place in the mainstream of Indian politics. It has to be seen how Yechury plays his cards and how far he can tame the strongly entrenched Karat majority in the Politburo.

Kerala will pose the toughest task. Political understanding with the Congress party remains out of question; there is only a remote possibility of electoral seat adjustments between the two parties

as they are the only adversaries in the poll battle. The recently lost battle in Tripura has only hardened the local CPI(M) which would not like to share the anti-BJP space with the Congress. West Bengal is the best place where the local leaderships of both Congress and CPI(M) are eager for joint efforts to fight the dominance of Mamata Banerjee's Trinamul Congress which threatens to make them irrelevant. Of course,

the Congress high command's attitude is the big question. Even then, the CPI(M) can keep hope for some gains in the all-India electoral battle if a broad front emerges with Congress at the top—that will open up the possibility of the CPI(M) making some dent in the three States of Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura.

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## **Obituary: Justice Rajinder Sachar**

**Pannalal Surana**

Son of a great freedom fighter and first Chief Minister of the undivided State of Punjab, Bhimsen Sachar, Rajinder Sachar had imbibed the values of our national freedom struggle. He was deeply impressed by the thoughts of Dr Ram Manohar Lohia.

While he was practicing at the bar, he also participated in organisational and agitational activities of the Socialist Party.

Being impressed by his great legal acumen, Rajinder Sachar was invited to serve as a judge of the High Court. His long career as judge and later as Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court was marked by many path breaking judgements.

On retirement, Sachar again plunged into social work. He joined the People's Union of Civil Liberties founded by the late Jayaprakash Narayan. He took up many issues. Most noteworthy among them is that of the arrest and harassment of Dr Vinayak Sen, a medical doctor with a brilliant academic career, who had gone to the rural areas of Chhattisgarh State to render medical aid to the Adivasis. The

police arrested him and booked him under draconian laws so that he was not able to get bail. Sacharji and his PUCL colleagues fought many legal battles right up to the Supreme Court and finally won his release as a free man. At the instance of Sacharji, PUCL had extended legal aid to those who were alleged to be involved in Naxalite activities. Sacharji personally and PUCL as an organisation are committed to peaceful methods of public activities. They wanted to help those innocent men and women who were falsely implicated and must be given credit for securing liberty of so many honest social workers.

Another field of Sacharji's special interest was Electoral Reforms. He succeeded in securing 'None Of The Above' (NOTA) option for voters who find that none of the contesting candidates appear to qualify for their vote.

It was found that some MPs and MLAs continued to enjoy all their rights and privileges even after getting convicted by the Courts. On a move initiated by the PUCL, the Supreme Court ruled that if MPs and

MLAs are convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than two years, they would lose their membership of the legislative body. Further, such persons are debarred from contesting elections for the next six years.

Sacharji had been campaigning against the provision in the Companies Act which permit the corporate houses to donate huge amounts to political parties of their choice. He also advocated that a system of Proportional Representation (PR) be adopted in place of the 'first past the post' system. Sacharji had participated in the day-long Dharna at Jantar Mantar by Socialist Party (India) on 10th August 2016.

Sacharji had extended support to many popular movements like NAPM and programs to popularise Panchayati Raj.

Justice Rajender Sachar will be remembered for long for his sterling services to strengthening Indian democracy.

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*Press Release***Placing the Red Fort on Mortgage is a National Crime**

The Socialist Party considers the BJP government's recent decision to place the Red Fort on mortgage with Dalmiya business house to be a crime against the nation. The party opposes this decision of the government and, in this regard, would like to place four points before the citizens of the country for their kind consideration:

1. If the priceless resources—water, forest, land—of the country including education, health, defense, railways, etc. are to be sold into private hands, then what is the need and role of governments in the country? Are the governments in power only to contest elections with the help of uncountable amount of money collected by corrupt methods and, after winning elections, to enjoy luxurious life during and after their tenure at the cost of peoples' hard earned money?
2. Is there no opposition in the country which would raise a decisive voice against the sale of the national heritage? Is there an inherent consensus in favour of privatisation and corporate houses among the ruling and the aspiring political parties? Otherwise, why do they just issue hollow statements on the harm caused by selling off national assets and heritage to corporate houses?
3. Today, on the occasion of the Labour Day, the Socialist Party would like to state that the huge amount of money in the hands of a few corporate houses has been accumulated through the

exploitation and the loot of working classes and through corruption done in connivance with the politicians / bureaucrats.

4. The Socialist Party, which does not believe in ensnaring voters with baits of false promises and communal–caste agendas, cannot hope to be too popular during election times. Therefore, it has no political power to oppose such moves of the

government in a incisive manner.

The party has decided to hold a symbolic dharna at Gandhi Samadhi Rajghat on 3 May 2018, at 5 pm. All Indian citizens who are proud of country's national heritage and are against the government's decision are cordially invited to take part in the sit-in.

**Dr. Prem Singh,**  
Socialist Party (India)

***Letter to the Editor***

In his article in Janata dated April 1, 2018, Kuldeep Nayar ji has said “In all probability, as things stand today, Modi looks good enough to returning to power.”

In my opinion, the prevailing conditions in the country do not warrant that kind of conclusion.

In the first place the farmers in almost all States are suffering due to Modi Government’s acts of commission like demonetisation, connecting Aadhar to bank accounts, ration cards etc., and acts of omission like not putting in place mechanisms to ensure implementation of guaranteeing MSP to farmers for most crops.

Student community is being put to many hardship by incessant flow of GRs by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, and failures of agencies that are charged with conducting examinations and declaring results in good time.

Backward class students are not getting their stipend money for months together. The conditions that forced Rohit Vemula to commit suicide still prevail in almost all universities and schools.

The Modi Government has effected a number of amendments to labour laws, because of which labourers are being thrown out of jobs and/or being deprived of humane services conditions.

Instances of gory atrocities on women and the Dalits are hitting the headlines almost daily.

Increase in fuel prices is making things difficult for the labour and lower middle classes.

Then who would vote for Modi?

If he is banking solely on money-pots, that can also prove illusory.

*Yours Sincerely,*  
*Pannalal Surana*

# Is May 1968 About to Happen Again, or Be Surpassed?

**Gabriel Rockhill**

In anticipation of the 50th anniversary of May 1968, the Macron government had been making plans to commemorate this historic uprising by celebrating how it had purportedly contributed to the liberal “modernisation of French society”. Allied with the mass media and the ownership class, what better way for the relatively young neoliberal government to lay claim to the future than by taking over the past, using the ritualised burial rites of state-honored commemoration to spin a teleological tale according to which the legacy of ’68 was alive and well in contemporary ‘liberalisation’? According to a spokesperson for the French President, this was of course to be done “without dogmas or prejudice”, in order to show that “’68 was the time of utopias and disillusion, and we no longer truly have utopias.”

Apparently, many French students and workers disagree with this peremptory judgment. Massive uprisings have pre-empted Macron’s plans, and they continue to build momentum by directly challenging a government that projected to rule over the past as well as the future. Halting in its well-trodden tracks the politics of commemoration—which would sever ‘68 from the deep history of anti-capitalist struggles and the broad internationalism of anti-imperialism in order to put it in the service of the current world order—a radical politics of rejuvenation has risen up to challenge Macron’s ‘non-dogmatic’ anti-utopianism. Although the

international press is still largely ignoring these developments (as it did with the Nuit Debout movement in 2016), and the French mass media regularly mischaracterise them, a vast uprising is underway that is consistently growing, and there are already clear signs of a convergence of struggles.

Like other major social movements, it is impossible to identify a single beginning point. However, the student protests and occupations began early in 2018 against the Macron government’s proposed changes to the baccalauréat (the French high school diploma) and its restrictions on access to the university. To address the problem of the growing number of university students and the simultaneous reduction in the number of teaching positions, the government has chosen to exclude more students instead of investing in more education. More specifically, rather than providing more resources for a university system that is—at least in principle—open to all who complete the baccalauréat, the current administration has opted for a system of exclusion and selection that provides preferential opportunities for those from privileged backgrounds and areas. In so doing, the university would thus be made to further conform to the reigning dictates of a competitive system of social triage and vocational training.

The State’s response to student resistance has not been unlike that of Charles de Gaulle’s administration

in 1968: the way to deal with non-violent protesters and student occupiers organising peaceful general assemblies is to brutally attack them with billy clubs. Every day that goes by there are more cases of students being beaten by the French riot police and malevolently provoked to react in self-defense. On March 22, which was the same date on which the ruthless police crackdown on students occupying the University of Nanterre garnered more media attention for the ’68 movement, armed academic black shirts were unleashed on students in Montpellier under the watchful and protective eye of the French police (who assured the fascist band, which included professors, safe escort out of the building). The bloody footage and the complicity between the administration, the security staff, right-wing students and the police led to an increase in mobilisation. Meanwhile, the inquiry opened by the State has not led to the prosecution of some of the professors identified by students, and the police have been recorded harassing witnesses to encourage false testimony.

According to an interactive map published by Libération, there are now 25 cities in France where there have been university occupations, general assemblies and/or protests. Beginning in the Southwest with Toulouse, Bordeaux and Poitiers, the movement spread to Nantes, Lille, Paris, Montpellier, Grenoble and beyond. Far from simply blocking a significant percentage of France’s

73 universities, the movement has insisted on opening them, meaning seizing the means of intellectual production to hold public seminars, debates, film projections and general assemblies with thousands of people, some of which have had to move outside in order to accommodate the large crowds. In taking universities away from their neoliberal administrators, students have organised critical discussions of the Macron government, capitalism, fascism and the military assault on the 'ZAD' (see below), as well as alternative courses on political strategy, struggles in the banlieues, revolutionary history and grassroots organising. Although the violent incursions of the riot police and their fascist allies persist, forcing the students to regroup and sometimes change locations, the struggle continues unabated and is spreading. Three new attempted occupations occurred in Paris just this week (Paris 3-Censier, EHESS, Paris Nanterre), which is in addition to ongoing occupations at Paris 1 (Tolbiac and Saint-Charles), Paris 8 and Paris 4 Clignancourt. High school students have joined the movement, and more than 400 professors have denounced the government's plans as absurd and full of misleading propaganda.

In addition to the students seizing the means of intellectual production, French rail workers have announced three months of rolling strikes to protest Macron's pro-business privatisation campaign against the public sector. The latter proposes to cut worker's employment rights so that new hires would not have the same job security or retirement provisions, and he aims to transform the public railway

system (the SNCF) into a publicly listed company in what is seen as the first step toward privatisation. Participation in the strikes has been very high among train conductors (75%) and controllers (71%), and the Macron government has been constantly shifting and changing its 'reform' project, creating obscurity and dissension in the Parliament. In 1995, the former Prime Minister Alain Juppé was forced to abandon his project of changing rail staff's benefits due to strikes that paralysed France for weeks.

Striking rail workers have been collaborating with students, and their actions have been accompanied by other strikes in the public and private sectors, including garbage collectors demanding a national public service for trash collection, Air France pilots, and electrical and gas workers. There are numerous calls for coordinated actions in the near future, and a number of dates have been chosen for convergent struggles. The General Confederation of Labor (CGT), one of France's largest confederations of trade unions, has called for a general strike on April 19 in order to bring together public sector workers and many others affected by the Macron government's liberalisation projects (to which one could add his draconian immigration policy and the hardline policing powers ushered in as 'anti-terror' measures). Moreover, there is an increased mobilisation around the ongoing military-style expulsion and attempted destruction of the ZAD de Notre-Dame-des-Landes. This autonomous 'Zone to Defend' or ZAD is a collectively run region that not only succeeded in throwing off the yoke of the French state, and its project of seizing land to build

an airport, but also established a collectively self-managed society. If the elected representatives of France are bent on a top-down war against the autonomy of the ZAD, many are asking, is it not time for a bottom-up insurrection and a ZADification of France to clear out those who seek to govern the people by eliminating governing people?

Every historical conjuncture has its own specificity, and there are, of course, plenty of important differences between France in 2018 and in 1968. With students and workers rising up across the country, however, there is a combined and growing struggle against the relentless privatisation of the world, and this raises urgent questions for the future, as well as for the past that it will have remade. The events that are currently unfolding could lead to a politics of placation in which the government stalls and then makes minor concessions in the hopes that the activists, tired out from weeks of occupation and assaults, will accept them as a symbol of success. Their stalling will also bring us closer to the dormant summer months, with the anticipation that movements often fizzle out in France around the vacation period in July and August.

There could be no better time, then, for intensifying current struggles, developing new strategies and pre-empting setbacks that have regularly occurred in the past. If the movement ends up being primarily focused on minor changes to the educational system and the public sector, or if it simply concentrates on Macron and electoral politics, the bar will certainly be set too low. If anything changes, it will only be a matter of time before similar measures return, perhaps in

a slightly different form. If, however, the project of mobilisation is one of building alternative communities of critical public education, free and ecological public transportation, as well as other collectively run social services, political organisations and autonomous councils, then we could have the beginning of a future unmoored from the stagnation of the past. By having struggles converge not only around the particular content given to the general form of capitalism in contemporary France, but around the general form itself, whose content is always shifting, it is possible to construct—as many are already doing—a new social order in which reactive resistance to particular initiatives is transformed into proactive collectivist organising

and the building of anti-capitalist communes that will persist and grow in the coming years. Mobilising all of the organisations and associations already in place—while drawing on historical experiences such as Nuit Debout, the protests against neoliberal French labor laws, the organised support of the *sans-papiers*—such a movement could also further cross-pollinate with movements abroad, developing an internationalised front of coordinated anti-capitalist communities.

It is unclear what has become of Macron's anti-utopian plans to recuperate the spirit of '68 for the purposes of liberal modernisation. Whatever becomes of them, they have already been powerfully pre-empted by a politics of rejuvenation

and transformation that many hope will outstrip '68. Much remains to be seen and done, however, and the past political education of all of those involved will now confront the immediacy of a situation in which it is forced to be actualised. The past is only truly alive in the future, after all, meaning in the future perfect that it will have become. The best way to commemorate May 1968 would not only be to rejuvenate it, bringing it back from the dead as it were, but to surpass it. Tearing it out of the mausoleum of consecration by making it into a living transformation, May will only be what it will have become in its future perfect after 2018.

**Courtesy : Counterpunch**

## Kasganj Fact Finding Report

The dominant discourse on nationalism in the country today has narrowed down to superficial parameters and litmus test of chanting of slogans like Vande Mataram and organising aggressive bike rallies by Hindu supremacists in Muslim majority areas as a show of strength and assertion of their supremacy. This recently took place in Bhagalpur on the occasion of Ram Navami and was followed by communal violence. This is not the first and the only time such provocation was made. This is also largely the story of the violence that unfolded in Kasganj on 26 January 2018. The youth from Sankalp Foundation in Kasganj organised a bike rally on 26th January 2018 without the necessary permission and insisted on passage through a Muslim dominated area where the Muslim residents had organised a

flag hoisting event on the occasion of Republic day. In the violence that ensued, a youth called Chandan Gupta was shot and succumbed to his injury. One Naushad too was shot in his leg. Violence was orchestrated on 26, 27 and 28 January by Hindu supremacists in which shops belonging predominantly to Muslim owners were burnt down.

A fact finding team visited violence-hit Kasganj near Etah in Uttar Pradesh on 2 February 2018 and released its report to the media on 5 February. The fact finding team consisted of Irfan Engineer, Director of Centre for Study of Society and Secularism (CSSS), author and social activist, Neha Dabhade, Dy. Director of CSSS and Akram Akhtar Chowdhary, social activist, Afkar India Foundation. The team spoke to the family of Chandan Gupta, the family of Salim, shop owners in the

area where the shops were attacked and vandalised, journalists, residents in Badu Nagar, the police (SP), the Congress chief from Kasganj, Shashilata Chauhan, BSP leader Rajeev Sharma, and a businessman Anupam Sharma.

The findings of the committee very clearly point towards the communal politics that is encouraged and brewing in Uttar Pradesh and which seeks to render the Muslim community as second-class citizens. Uttar Pradesh, once known for its *ganga jamuna tehzeeb*, has today become infamous for communal violence. It has an interesting chequered political history of mobilisation and counter mobilisation around the Ram Jannabhoomi movement. The issue has been manipulated to polarise communities and project a single consolidated 'Hindu' identity,

taking in its fold Dalits and other oppressed castes by invisibilising their exploitation, for electoral benefits. There is a steady but unfortunate shift from the politics of social and economic justice to politics of communalism. The Aligarh, Meerut and Muzaffarnagar riots are some of the recent riots that took place on very large scale. Post-2014, no riots have taken place on such large scale, but there has been continuous, sub radar, low intensity violence. The issues of cow slaughter and inter religious marriages are being exploited to spread hatred and violence in different forms, including lynching. This has made the State volatile and the marginalised sections in the State like Dalits, Muslims and women very vulnerable.

### **Different narratives in Kasganj**

There are two narratives that emerged from the interactions of the team with the different individuals. The first narrative is that of Sushil Gupta, father of the deceased Chandan Gupta. According to Sushil Gupta, Sankalp Foundation was an organisation of youth which engaged in charity activities like distribution of food, clothes and blankets to the poor. Chandan Gupta was very active in serving the poor, particularly through blood donation. He donated blood thrice and all three times to Muslim recipients, as claimed by his father. He fixed the blame for the violence in Kasganj squarely on the Muslim residents of Badu Nagar. He explained the happenings on the fateful day with the help of a video shot on that day.

He narrated that Sankalp Foundation planned a bike rally to be taken out on 26 January. He claimed that the youth were carrying Indian

flags. The rally went to Badu Nagar and there were chairs organised there at the Veer Abdul Hamid Chauraha. The youth insisted that the chairs be removed and they be given passage through the Chauraha. According to Sushil Gupta, there was no flag hoisting taking place there, since no flag hoisting takes place so late at 10 am. Pointing to one man in the video, whose name he wasn't ready to disclose, he accused him for the violence. He said there was stone pelting by the residents on the unarmed and helpless youth which forced them to abandon their vehicles and flee from the area.

In the video shown to them by Sushil Kumar, the fact finding team noticed that the youth in the rally were very aggressive and were carrying saffron flags. They were aggressively shouting slogans. There were very few Muslim residents waiting at the Veer Abdul Hamid Chauraha, and none of them had arms. The video doesn't show any attack by the Muslim residents. While Sushil Gupta refrained from blaming the whole Muslim community for the violence, he believed that some 'bad elements' from the community were responsible for the violence.

The Congress leader in Kasganj, Shashilata Chauhan attributed this violence to personal enmity between the youth from both the communities. And this fight was given a communal hue. She rued that innocent youth from both Hindu and Muslim communities had been arrested by the police. But she strongly pointed out to the speech of the BJP MP, Rajveer Singh on the evening of 26 January after the death of Chandan Gupta and how it deteriorated the atmosphere and fanned violence. Rajveer Singh said, "I myself with the force have come

amongst you. The incidence which has happened cannot be forgotten in any case. I haven't seen such kind of anger in Kasganj before this. In this incident, there's no mistake of 'our people'. This fight has happened in a preplanned fashion in which 'one of us' has died. I have gathered the information that Chandan Gupta, 'one of us', has died in this fight. The investigation of this matter would be done without in any delay."

### **Narrative by Muslim residents**

The second narrative is that of the residents of Badu Nagar. Dr. Asif Hussain has a house at the Abdul Hamid Chauraha in Badu Nagar and the rally that day passed outside his house. He said that this was the first time a flag hoisting program was organised at the chauraha. Every year, the Muslims organise flag hoisting in schools. But this year the community wanted to demonstrate to the government and people that Muslims too hoist flags and are patriotic, in contrast to the popular stereotypes that Muslims are disloyal to India. In the past, the RSS wanted the madrasas in the State to provide video documentation to prove that they hoisted the Indian flag on Republic Day. And so, elaborate preparations were made, and one Mufti Kubeb was invited to hoist the flag at 9.30 am. School children were also invited. Chairs were arranged at the small chauraha for the audience to sit.

He also furnished several videos for the fact finding team which were essentially footage of the CCTV. It can be seen in the video that approximately at 10 am on 26 January, 60 to 70 bikes in the rally came to the chauraha and started demanding aggressively that the chairs be removed and the

rally be allowed to pass through. The organisers of the flag hoisting program requested the youth to attend the flag hoisting and assured them that after the flag hoisting, the chairs will be removed for the rally to pass. The youth in the rally were carrying saffron flags, and were aggressively shouting slogans like “Hindustan mein rehna hoga to Vande Mataram kahana hoga” and “Radhe Radhe”. The residents refused to chant these slogans and instead raised their own slogans of “Godse murdabad”. One of the youth from the bike rally pulled a stick and attacked one of the residents. The residents then threw chairs on the youth. More residents also came out in the chauraha. The youth got intimidated and fled the chauraha to regroup at Tehsil Road.

The residents noted down the registration numbers of all the bikes left behind and called the police and handed over to them the list of the bikes left behind. The police came to the chauraha after the youth had fled and removed the bikes.

Meanwhile, the youth regrouped at Tehsil Road. They were armed with pistols and sticks. They started attacking the Muslims on the road and vandalised their shops. In the ensuing violence, Chandan Gupta received bullet shots and one Naushad was shot in the leg.

When the team visited Veer Abdul Hamid Chauraha, it saw how small the chauraha is. The roads in Badu Nagar leading to and in and around Veer Abdul Hamid Chauraha are narrow lanes, not broader than 8 feet. These lanes are flanked with open sewages on both the sides and have small shops and houses on either side with their stairs and platforms jutting out on to the street. The lanes are so narrow that

it's impossible for two motorcycles to cross each other from opposite directions. One single bike can pass at any given point of time after great manoeuvring with the pedestrians and other obstacles. In the best of times, the bikes can navigate at a speed of less than 10 kmph with frequent breaks to negotiate with the people walking on the lane. With chairs arranged for the flag hoisting, the lanes were temporarily blocked. Any prudent citizen wouldn't want to ride on bikes through these lanes in a rally even without the chairs temporarily kept there. The only purpose behind demanding passage on bikes through these narrow lanes can be to create mischief or to provoke the Muslim residents. The other probable reason can be the arrogance that the Muslim residents of the area mean nothing and the Hindu youth can ride rough shod over them, to demonstrate that they wield superior strength / power as it is their government which is in power.

### **Role of the Police**

The role of the police has been shameful. The police action was biased and served the political agenda of the ruling regime in UP. The SP of Kasganj made an irresponsible statement saying that it was not possible to control the riot since there are never as many police personnel as rioters! And thus he shirked away the responsibility of the security forces to contain the violence. The police also dismissed the communal angle to this violence by blaming anti-social elements for the violence, and in this way protecting the wrong doers. The police complicity in the riots is on many accounts.

Firstly the police, in spite of

having prior information about the rally, didn't take any steps to stop it. Police conceded that Sankalp Foundation didn't have the permission to take out this rally. The shops and other property belonging to Muslim owners, a mosque and hawker stalls were attacked for three days in different places in Kasganj. The police could have taken strict action against the youth since they didn't have the necessary permission and their bikes were seized. The registration numbers of the bikes could have easily led the police to the perpetrators of the violence. But the police released the property used in the crime (bikes) without pressing any charges!

A reading of the FIRs filed show deliberate lapses on the part of the police which will deny justice to the victims. In the FIRs filed by the Hindus against Muslims, names of the accused are mentioned. However, no names have been mentioned in the FIRs where Muslims are victims. In fact, the names of the Muslim owners or the names of the shops which were attacked are not named in the FIR, making it very vague for any proper investigation and prosecution.

Most of the arrested are innocent Muslims who were arbitrarily arrested by the police. Those arrested are innocent and happened to be on the road when the police were making arrests—some had come out to shut their shops after the violence or some were buying daily supplies like milk. One of the arrested is a Muslim youth with 70 percent disability. One is a senior citizen whose wife passed away while he was incarcerated. The sections slapped against them are stringent like murder, rioting, etc., while there are very few Hindus

named and all the other accused are “unknown”. However, the arrested Hindus are also innocent and mere scapegoats, perhaps under political pressure to save the real culprits. The real culprits who were in the rally are absconding; they have been neither named nor arrested. The police refused to take the FIRs of the Muslim residents and thus they are compelled to send their complaints in forms of application to the courts.

Salim who is the main accused in the case of Chandan Gupta’s death has a strong alibi. His brother Shamim showed the fact finding team a video which shows that Salim who is reputed businessman in Kasganj was in a flag hoisting programme in a school at around 10 am on 26 January. The other shopkeepers vouch for his good character. It is important to note that Sushil Gupta filed the FIR about his son’s death after more than 13 hours of his death, naming 20 Muslim residents including Salim, without even being present there! This indicates that there is a strong possibility that he was tutored by persons having vested interests and the death is being used as a political tool to implicate innocent citizens. Instead of taking Chandan Gupta to the hospital after being shot, which would have been the natural reaction to save him, he was taken to the police station first. Yet the FIR was not filed at that time.

### Conclusions / Findings

There are many lessons to take from this incident of communal violence. The incident is reflective of the dominant discourse in the country where Hindu supremacists, due to the political patronage they enjoy, are openly displaying their arrogance and power. The bike rally

through a majority Muslim area was a demonstration and reminder that the Hindu supremacists and their ideology have legitimacy with the coming to power of the BJP. The aim is to render the Muslims as second class citizens and make them submit to the BJP political ideology of exclusion, inequality and hatred. The State is criminalising the victims and protecting the perpetrators and thus encouraging this violence and hatred. The fact finding team recommends that investigation be made into the role of the speech made by Rajveer Singh in this

violence. Compensation should be given to the victims in adherence to international standards. And lastly, that civil society organisations collectively create platforms for dialogue and better understanding between communities. The team was relieved to see that this violence hasn’t deepened the communal divide and polarisation. The Hindu community in Kasganj had sympathy for the Muslims and their losses and condemned the violence. All is not lost in Kasganj!

– Centre for Study of Society  
and Secularism

### Invitation

## Convention to Celebrate Foundation Day of Congress Socialist Party and Release of Draft Socialist Manifesto for 2019

Mavlankar Hall, New Delhi • May 17, 2018 • 10 am to 5 pm

Organised by:

We the Socialist Institutions (Hum Samajwadi Sansthaeyin)  
and Socialist Manifesto Group

Dear All,

As a part of the National Campaign launched by We the Socialist Institutions on 'Save the Constitution, Save the Nation', a meeting of socialist thinkers and leaders was held at HMS office on April 20, 2018, under the Chairpersonship of Harbhajan Singh Sidhu.

At this meeting, it was decided to organise a Convention in New Delhi to celebrate the Foundation Day of Congress Socialist Party on May 17, 2018. It was decided that on this occasion, a draft SOCIALIST MANIFESTO would be released. Various socialist thinkers and experts from across the country are being consulted for drafting this manifesto.

The Convention would be organised under the banner of We the Socialist Institutions and Socialist Manifesto Group.

We, on behalf of 'We the Socialist Institutions', invite you to attend this Convention being organised in Delhi. The detailed programme would be sent out in due course. This is just to inform you in advance so that you can book your dates and make your travel plans to attend the Convention.

### Invitation issued on behalf of:

We the Socialist Institutions and Socialist Manifesto Group  
Dr. G.G. Parikh, Prof. Rajkumar Jain, Harbhajan Singh Sidhu, Vijay Pratap, Arun Srivastava, Dr. Prem Singh, Qurban Ali, Manjoo Mohan, Dr. Anil Thakur, Amar Singh Amar, Rakesh Kumar, Dr. Sunilam, Subhash Ware, Neeraj Jain and Guddi.

More more information, please contact:

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