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CONSOLIDATION OF THE PEOPLE'S POWER IN DELHI
Mahi Pal Singh

MAKE NO MISTAKE. THIS IS MODI'S DEFEAT
Siddharth Varadarajan

AFTER ALL IT'S A GAME
Kuldip Nayar

ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY: THE FIGHT FOR BREAD AND ROSES
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M.N. ROY'S FIRST MEETING WITH LENIN (1920)

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Editorial:

Consolidation of the People's Power in Delhi

When the Delhi Legislative Assembly elections were held in 2013 and the Aam Aadmi Party won 28 seats against most of the pre-poll predictions which did not give it much importance. However, with a wholly discredited Congress Party with a record of massive corruption cases against it, it was clear that the electoral fight was going to be between the BJP and the AAP. But as history has it, the BJP with 32 seats could not manage a majority of 36 MLAs to form a government and the AAP formed the government with the outside support declared by the Congress Party which had 8 MLAs.

Within days of coming to power, the Arvind Kejriwal led AAP government fulfilled its promises of halving the electricity rates, free 20,000 ltrs. of water wherever the Delhi Jal Board pipe lines were available and by an large the police department and other government departments were completely corruption free within 15 days. Though when Kejriwal resigned as the Chief Minister of Delhi after only 49 days when his government did not find any takers for its 'Delhi Janlokpal Bill', in the Congress or the BJP, he did not know that because of his resignation he was going to be labeled a 'Bhagora' by both his political rivals and also that his three achievements in the 49 day tenure as the CM were going to give him the massive support of the people in the next elections which were ultimately held on February 7, 2015. The Bharatiya Janata Party led by Narendra Modi, which had won 282 Lok Sabha seats in May 2014, a clear simple majority in the House with a mere 31 % vote share, getting the benefit of 'first past the post' principle which applies in our electoral system, though it was hyped as a massive mandate by the BJP and its supporters, had come to power at the centre riding the anti-

Congress wave which was evident everywhere even afterwards. However, the BJP leadership did not have the confidence and the courage to hold the Delhi elections even after winning the parliamentary and assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and to some extent in Maharashtra. Everyone was saying that if the Narendra Modi government of the BJP could fulfill some of its poll promises during the intervening period, it could easily win the Delhi election. But that was not to be. The BJP did not fulfill its poll promise of 30 % reduction in electricity charges in Delhi, the prices of essential commodities were out of control, corruption remained rampant even in the BJP led Corporations besides the police and other government departments and women were as unsafe as they were earlier. So far as the 'aam aadmi' is concerned, the new government was a complete failure in the eight months it was in power.

What the people of Delhi and the country as a whole had witnessed day in and day out, were the communal outbursts of the leaders of the Hindutva outfits and the saffron-clad brigade of MPs of the BJP - someone advising those opposed to the BJP to go to Pakistan and the other one naming the supporter of the BJP as 'Ramzade', meaning 'the children of Lord Rama' while calling those opposed to it as 'haramzade' meaning thereby 'bastards' even from an electoral platform, still another one advising the Hindu women to produce at least four children to keep their majority in the country intact. During the same time communal feelings were aroused in Kalyanpuri in Delhi and other parts of Delhi and many Churches were burnt or vandalized in Delhi itself, Country-wide religious conversions were organized and named

'ghar vapasi', meaning home-coming. One wondered where the development agenda the party had promised before the elections was.

Even the Prime Minister understood the importance of the Delhi election when he said that Delhi reflected the mood of the people of the country. That is why he plunged his whole cabinet, the whole BJP leadership and about 200 MPs in the poll fray. The party even parachuted down Ms Kiran Bedi, declaring her as their CM candidate, to contest the election, as they had no other clean candidate to take on Arvind Kejriwal and Narendra Modi himself and his party had failed to generate any credibility among the people of Delhi during the last eight months they were in power by default as the state was under the President's rule. Out of desperation, he himself called Arvind Kejriwal a 'bhagora', meaning 'a run-away' CM, an anarchist, a Naxalite, a liar and a corrupt person, a charge nobody else has been able to make against him so far, and calling himself a 'lucky' person and advising the voters not to vote for the 'unlucky' ones. The Delhi voter saw that the PM had put aside the honour of the post he holds and stooped so low in his election speeches out of his desperation to win. In the process he had put his own honour at stake and made the Delhi fight the fight between himself and Kejriwal, though the BJP spokespersons will not accept it after the results they have got.

The people of Delhi rejected everything

that Mr. Modi stands for and the BJP. They proved with a vote percentage of 54 % for AAP, all sections of society supporting the party unequivocally, that they have more faith and credibility in Kejriwal than him given the track record of both of them. As a result not only the Congress which did not even open its account in Delhi and all of whose candidates lost their deposits, the BJP was also routed completely with just 3 seats against the 67 of the AAP. It was undoubtedly a referendum on the 49 day performance of the AAP and the eight month rule of the BJP led by Narendra Modi at the centre in which he and his party were completely rejected by the people. It was as much a negative vote for the Congress and the BJP as it was positive for the AAP. If the 2013 Delhi Assembly results were 'The Rise of the People's Power in Delhi'*, the 2015 results are a consolidation of the people's power here. The Delhi elections are the beginning of the fall of the BJP and the rejection of its communal agenda and its own brand of governance in the country.

Massive mandate, as has truly been received by the Aam Aadmi Party in Delhi, brings massive expectations with it. It also means massive responsibilities and challenges for the AAP. One hopes that the Aam Aadmi Party government in Delhi will fulfill the aspirations of the people of Delhi and set new benchmarks in governance with transparent, corruption free, responsive and accountable government.

- Mahi Pal Singh

**An article written by the same author with this heading was published in The Radical Humanist, January 2014 soon after Arvind Kejriwal formed his earlier government in Delhi*

Search for Truth

Truth resides in every human heart, and one has to search for it there, and to be guided by truth as one sees it. But no one has a right to coerce others to act according to his own view of truth.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi

Current Affairs Section:

Make No Mistake. This Is Modi's Defeat

Siddharth Varadarajan on what has driven voters from BJP to AAP

Narendra Modi, as the saying goes, should have been careful about what he wished for. "Jo desh ka mood hai," he declared during the election campaign for the Delhi assembly, "wahi Dilli ka mood hai." Now that Delhi has given the Aam Aadmi Party 67 out of 70 seats and 54 per cent of the popular vote, the Prime Minister must be wondering what this means for the emerging mood elsewhere in the country.

To understand the scale of the defeat that Modi - who was not just the face and voice of his party's campaign but its totem as well - has just led his party to, consider this simple statistic: the 3 seats the BJP managed to win under his leadership this time represent a massive 95 per cent drop from the 60 assembly segments he delivered in the 2014 general election, and a 78 per cent fall from what the party's local leadership managed on its own in December 2013. In that election, Rahul Gandhi, by contrast, had at least managed 20 per cent of the Congress party's 2009 Lok Sabha tally. His MPs would fit in a bus, people joked at the time. Modi's MLAs can get around Delhi in an auto-rickshaw.

Had the BJP won, the party would have exulted in the potency of the Modi wave and the master strategizing of its president, Amit Shah. But now that the Great Leader has failed to get even the meagre waters of the Yamuna to make way for his juggernaut, this defeat will be pinned not on his "56-inch chest", or even on Shah, but on the drooping shoulders of Kiran Bedi and the party's city leadership. Success in the BJP has not many but only one father; failure, on the other hand, can never be his fault.

I have written elsewhere about the blunders the BJP committed in the run up to the Delhi election and the reasons behind the AAP's re-emergence. But the scale of AAP's victory -- and the BJP's defeat -- suggests some fundamental

shifts in the political tectonics of Delhi, and perhaps even of India as a whole.

Ironically, Modi's victory in 2014 was meant to represent that fundamental shift -- the arrival of a new "aspirational" India that wanted economic betterment and did not trust the "handout" politics of the past. When the voters of Delhi were exhorted to "move ahead with Modi", the BJP was trying once again to hold out the same promise of inclusive development that allowed it to increase its vote share in the capital from 33 to 46 per cent last year. The fact that the BJP's popular vote has fallen back to 32 per cent suggests the "aspirational" section of the electorate deserted it this time.

Why did these voters leave the BJP and go over to the AAP? Because eight months of Modi rule at the Centre have made it clear that while the BJP makes vague announcements for the poor, it delivers concrete results for the corporate sector. Like the ordinance which makes it easier for the land of farmers and adivasis to be acquired and made over to industry. Like labour laws and environmental reform which make it easier for industry to violate existing standards. The citizens of Delhi may not have experienced what these changes mean, but they are clever enough to realise the development being pursued isn't quite inclusive.

The aspirational voter also aspires to her vision of modernity, to a life in which the individual's right to live, dress, work, travel, love and enjoy life as she likes is as important as economic progress. For young voters, the Sangh Parivar's continuous attempts to dictate cultural and lifestyle choices are completely unacceptable; and while they are not moved by the traditional politics over "secularism", they are smart enough to see the dangers that the RSS's divisive sectarian agenda holds out for their city and

country.

Modi's complicity-by-silence with the book burners, film vandals and religious hate-mongers has not gone unnoticed among the swing voters he attracted just one year ago.

I argued earlier that the BJP's '3 M strategy' - Modi, Money and Mud-slinging - failed to cut any ice with Delhi's voters. One day before votes were cast, the party played a fourth M card, majoritarianism, by trying to whip up hysteria over the unsolicited support declared by the Shahi Imam of the Jama Masjid for AAP. No less a leader than Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was deployed in a last-ditch attempt to inject religious polarization, but the strategy failed when Aam Aadmi leaders rejected the Imam's offer and accused the BJP of activating him in order to communalise the campaign.

As we look beyond Delhi for the national implications of the BJP's spectacular defeat, two questions loom large: one for the BJP, the other for the opposition.

First, will Modi and the BJP learn from the Delhi result and put an end to the divisive politics of the Sangh Parivar? And will the PM realise he cannot carry the electorate on announcements alone, that sooner rather later he must deliver on the promises he made of mass employment, growth, sanitation and infrastructure? A rational leadership would read the Delhi result as a small-sample expression of the emerging national mood and put in place a major course correction. But my sense is that Modi and Amit Shah are not likely to act rationally. Already we see attempts to ring-fence the "national government" and its policies. In the absence of any change, there is also the danger that the BJP's negative, sectarian impulses may actually sharpen.

As for the opposition, the question on everyone's mind today is how easily the AAP's act of stopping the Modi wave be replicated elsewhere. The short answer, of course, is "not very easily". Looking at the 2014 general election and all the

major state elections we have seen so far -- Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir, and Delhi -- this "wave" needs two conditions in order to prevail. First, a ruling party discredited by corruption, poor governance and anti-incumbency. And second, the lack of a strong, clear alternative to the BJP.

In 2014, the UPA was discredited and there was no real 'national' alternative to the BJP. The same was true of Haryana, where the Hooda government was swept aside by the Modi wave. But the Modi factor showed its limits in Maharashtra because of the Shiv Sena, and in Jharkhand, where an alliance with the All-Jharkhand Students Union was needed to push the BJP over the finishing line. In Delhi, the AAP was unencumbered by negativity and was the obvious choice for anyone unhappy with the BJP. That is why the Modi machine was stopped in its track.

Can these circumstances be replicated in Bihar? Perhaps, if Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal and Lalu Yadav's RJD stay united and strong, and remedy the poor governance record of the past year. But in West Bengal, it is the BJP that is looking to play the same 'third alternative' role to the Trinamool and the Left that the AAP played in Delhi, and there it is likely to meet a measure of success.

The victory of AAP has galvanised non-BJP parties everywhere. In Jammu and Kashmir, the Peoples Democratic Party may feel tempted to drive a harder bargain with the BJP now about a coalition government. However, in its most essential sense, what has defeated the BJP in Delhi is not some tactical alignment of political forces, but the emergence of New Politics. Only if this New Politics -- whether under the leadership of the AAP or of other kindred forces -- begins to take hold elsewhere, will Modi's national supremacy come under serious strain.

Siddharth Varadarajan, Senior Fellow, Center for Public Affairs and Critical Theory, SNU, New Delhi, India

On International Women's Day: March 8

The Fight for Bread and Roses

Nandita Haksar

NEW DELHI: Rose (name changed) has been working in Delhi's posh restaurants for more than ten years. She had thought she would work hard and save enough to ensure for herself a comfortable life back in her village. She had found a job in a restaurant in a posh shopping mall in south Delhi. She was in the restaurant by eleven in the morning and worked till two; then she had a break for four hours but she could not afford to take an auto rickshaw back home. She wandered around the shopping mall window shopping looking with envy at the perfectly groomed models posing in branded clothes which she dreamed of buying one day. Rose returned to work and the employer provided transport for her return at around two in the morning.

Her home was a small rented room where she had a stove. She cooked herself a meal of boiled rice and made a hot chutney and dropped into her bed. And she had lived like that for ten years. Every month she sends money to support her old parents and younger brothers and sisters; she had helped to build a house for them; it will belong to her younger brother under customary law; she has no right to it. Rose has not been able to save any money so she had closed down her account. But she still hopes to make money if only she could get a job in Dubai or Singapore...

For Rose or thousands or hundreds of thousands of migrant workers in India International Women's Day has no meaning. They have not even heard of the Day or if they have they do not know its historic significance and relevance to their lives. There is no trade union in India to protect this generation of migrant workers; no political party looks upon them as an important constituency. For Rose

March 8 is just another ordinary day of drudgery and grind.

Migrant workers all over the world are working in horrific conditions without the protection of labour laws or trade unions. And the most articulate and dominant sections of the feminist movement has not make the demands of the migrant women workers a part of the feminist programmes. In fact a significant section of feminist movement has become a party to the imperialist agenda justifying wars and foreign occupation.

In its origins International Women's Day was a special day for women workers; an integral part of the Socialist and Communist movement. The historical origins of the Day can be traced to a three month strike in 1908 of almost 30,000 garment workers in the United States of America composing mainly of migrant women, in the garment industry. The women won most of the workers' demands, including the right to organise, to bargain collectively, and improved wages and working conditions.

A year later in 1909 the first national women's day was observed when the Socialist Party of America designated March 8th as "Women's Day" in honour of the garment workers.

A few years later in 1912 witnessed the strike of 20,000 workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts when workers walked out of the mills in spontaneous protest against a cut in their weekly pay. This caused the walkout which rocked the great New England textile industry. This is a contemporary account of the strike:

"It was a wonderful strike, the most significant strike, the greatest strike that has ever

been carried on in this country or any other country. And the most significant part of that strike was that it was a democracy. The strikers had a committee of 56, representing 27 different languages. The boss would have to see all the committee to do any business with them. And immediately behind that committee was a substitute committee of another 56 prepared in the event of the original committee being arrested. Every official in touch with affairs at Lawrence had a substitute selected to take his place in the event of being thrown in jail."

After ten weeks the strikers won important concessions from the woolen companies, not only for themselves but also for 250,000 textile workers throughout New England.

During one of the many parades conducted by the strikers some young girls carried a banner with the slogan: "We want bread and roses too." This inspired James Oppenheim to write his poem, "Bread and Roses," which was set to music by Caroline Kohlsaar.

As we come marching, marching in the
beauty of the day,
A million darkened kitchens, a thousand mill
lofts gray,
Are touched with all the radiance that a
sudden sun discloses,
For the people hear us singing: "Bread and
roses! Bread and roses!"

As we come marching, marching, we battle
too for men,
For they are women's children, and we
mother them again.
Our lives shall not be sweated from birth
until life closes;
Hearts starve as well as bodies; give us
bread, but give us roses!

As we come marching, marching,
unnumbered women dead

Go crying through our singing their ancient
cry for bread.

Small art and love and beauty their drudging
spirits knew.

Yes, it is bread we fight for-but we fight for
roses, too!

As we come marching, marching, we bring
the greater days.

The rising of the women means the rising
of the race.

No more the drudge and idler-ten that toil
where one reposes,

But a sharing of life's glories: Bread and
roses! Bread and roses!

The famous German socialist, Clara Zetkin and Russian writer Alexandra Kollontai took part in the most famous International Women's Day-the March 8, 1917, strike "for bread and peace" led by Russian women in St. Petersburg. Kollontai, a minister in the first Soviet government, persuaded Lenin to make March 8 an official communist holiday. During the Soviet period, the holiday celebrated "the heroic woman worker."

From 1909 to 1979 International Women's Day was a part of socialist and communist movement and it embodied a vision of a future society which would allow men and women to have equal opportunities and allow them to fulfil their aspirations in a world free from poverty and injustice.

The German Marxist, August Bebel (1840-1913) wrote a book on Women and Socialism in which he stated:

The Socialist Party is the only one that has made the full equality of women, their liberation from every form of dependence and oppression, an integral part of its program; not for reasons of propaganda, but from necessity. For there can be no liberation of mankind without social independence and equality of the sexes.

However, this history of International Women's Day is sought to be wiped out from the collective memories of men and women. It has now become a day when women are presented flowers and candy and is another Valentine's Day or sorts. It is true the United Nations has been celebrating the Day since late 1970s; it has held world conferences on varying themes relating to the issue of Women's Empowerment but the themes have increasingly focused on eliminating violence against women rather than focusing on the causes of that violence: unjust world order.

In 1999 the theme was World Free of Violence Against Women; 2000 Women Uniting for Peace; in 2001 Women and Peace: Women Managing Conflicts; in 2002 the theme was Afghan women today: realities and opportunities and in 2006 the theme was Ending Impunity Against Violence Against Women. A large part of the women's movement and the International Women's Day has been hijacked by imperialist powers to justify wars and foreign occupation.

A Pakistani feminist Hadia Akhtar has written an interesting piece on her blog about imperialist feminists who are being trained by the USA to justify the War Against Terror. It is worth quoting at length:

Aman-o-Nisa is a coalition of elite Pakistani NGO women leaders who were brought together, trained, funded and sent to DC by US-based organizations like United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Institute of Inclusive Security and the US State Department. After a two-year training, the coalition was sent as a delegation to Washington, DC for a week, where they met with US policymakers and made recommendations on how to make the War on Terror efforts more inclusive to the voices of elite NGO women. They lobbied for things like increased financial support for women's organizations working in support of the War on Terror and the induction of more women in the security apparatus. Ground breaking stuff, really.

Hillary Clinton is a renowned Imperialist Feminist.

As an elder sister (Hadia Baji), even though I have a fair share of stories of how complicated sisterhood can be, I find this bond of solidarity between our Imperialist Baji, Sister Hillary, and NGO-wallis a bit strange. For instance, why is Hillary so interested in taking fifteen minutes out of her very busy schedule (those wars don't plan themselves) to tell a bunch of NGO-aunties that they are her sisters? And why are these NGO-aunties so eager to go all the way to DC to meet with Hillary, Nancy Pelosi and other such important-types (other than from reaping the obvious benefits of foreign hotelling shotelling)?

This behanchara between an Imperialist Baji and her choti liberal NGO-walli behan doesn't just gloss over the lives and voices of all the women who have been killed and dispossessed by the American and Pakistan States, it explicitly supports these ventures. In fact, the drone attacks and military operations like Zarb-e-Azab are supported by the main women's rights and human groups: Aurat Foundation (who also happened to be the recipient of a \$40 million grant from USAID).... Most NGO-wallis I spoke to also support the US-led War on Terror. Many of them also downplay the atrocities of this war by arguing that 'at least something is being done' for women's empowerment in Pakistan because of the influx of development aid.

While many on the left recognize the complicity of Pakistani women's organizations in Imperialist ventures, some people I spoke to during my research were still hesitant in publicly denouncing their work because 'they've (Aurat Foundation etc.) done a lot for women, they are not the enemy.' I disagree. I think it's high time that we denounce the liberal feminist NGO-walli's support for her Imperialist Baji and her mischiefs."

In India the dominant section of feminist voices have focused on individual cases of sexual harassment or rape but there is no discussion on why these crimes against women take place. Rosie faces sexual harassment at her work place very often but there is no forum which would take up her cause. She feels that only rich women's cases get highlighted. She says she can handle the sexual harassment but it is the poverty and lack of a future that haunts her in her nightmares and waking hours.

The Black feminists, feminists of colour and socialist feminists have pointed out that there is a need to look at the totality of oppression based on class, gender and race have to be addressed. The migrant workers world over are the subject of abuse and humiliation; women workers like Rose are most vulnerable to violence based on class, race and sex. And yet

it is these migrant workers whose remittances sustain the lives of hundreds and thousands of families who are being driven into destitution by the State policies and big corporations.

The challenge before feminists is how to make International Women's Day relevant to migrant women workers in India and world over. We need to work towards compelling the United Nations to adopt 2016 as the Year of the Migrant Women Workers. In doing so the international organization would expose the real cause of violence and lack of development.

(Nandita Haksar is a human rights lawyer, teacher, activist and writer. She has set precedents in human rights and humanitarian law, evolved the country's first human rights courses and has been involved in the women's movement from the 1970s.)

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I, N.D. Pancholi, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

March 1, 2015

N.D. PANCHOLI, Publisher, The Radical Humanist

Towards The Dictatorship of 'Aam Aadmi'

Vidya Bhushan Rawat

Delhi has never made many of us proud as yesterday when the results of the local polls gave an the entire country and its already frightened people a new hope in the strength of democracy howsoever bad it might be, that at the end of the day it is the people who matter and that the most fascist and dictatorial persons too should be afraid of the people and keep their cool even on such occasions. One cannot take away the credit of committed volunteers of the AAP and their strategy which worked in Delhi for the victory of Arvind Kejriwal and his party. As far as 'national' perspective is concerned, we must not come to any conclusion that fast about the AAP as an 'alternative' to the BJP or representing 'secular' forces.

Why is Delhi election so important when it has merely 70 seats? Why the Congress got decimated in Delhi and how long will the party's failure continue? Will the AAP replace the Congress as a political force in India? Is the AAP really an 'innovative' and new 'left' outfit which is 'inclusive'? It is time for serious introspection of the situation.

Democracy may be a call for the people, of the people and by the people but it is in fact power of the powerful in India. It is oversimplification of facts that with the 'advent' of the AAP the 'caste' politics will be eliminated and a 'class' war has started.

We celebrate their victory because it crushed Modi and his loudspeakers. Most of India celebrated it that way only, yet there are powerful messages hidden behind this victory. Politics is a learning process and perhaps Arvind Kejriwal became much more sober and sensible after becoming a politician. The people in slums and resettlement colonies realized that he can 'deliver' to them. The real force behind the AAP

Tsunami in Delhi is the open and unambiguous support of Dalits, Muslims and the poor of Delhi. It is a massive mandate as the party got more than 54% of the total votes while the main opposition party, the BJP got only 32%. The Congress which had nearly 25% vote share last time was totally decimated and became irrelevant with merely 10% votes this time. The Congress's vote of Dalit-Muslims-Poor actually made the AAP's victory important. Will the AAP leadership realize it? Will they realize how much the people, particularly the Dalit Muslims, have trusted them? Why have the Dalit Muslims voted in such a large number to the AAP? Is it just 'bijali-sadak-pani' or their support is for the larger cause?

Today, the whole government seems to be working on vengeance towards political opponents. Minorities are feeling scary and disturbed. The Dalits who voted for the AAP actually were disturbed with regular threats to the Constitutional values like secularism, democratic freedoms etc. and obviously the persistent anti poor stand of the government, such as the ordinance on land acquisition and attempts to throttle anti poverty programmes. The friendship of the current regime with some of the 'big' and 'notorious' 'capitalists' is well known and needs no mention here.

The regular attacks on Churches on the eve of elections and attempt to communalise Delhi through 'Trilokpuri' 'experiment' boomeranged on Amit Shah and company who felt that they can redo a 'Muzaffar Nagar' in Delhi and reap the rich harvest later during the elections. The aggressive campaign, in which the BJP spend huge sum, violated all forms of decency and poll norms, created a contrary impression. The Election Commission sadly remained mute and helpless on all these issues

despite media attention. The BJP would never have thought that the response would be like this but the fact is that the people of Delhi have rejected their polarization bid.

It does not mean that the upper castes have left their caste identities. Will the Chhotoos and Chhottis working in the houses of the caste Hindus get a fair deal? Will Arvind Kejriwal and his team make a stronger 'domestic wage' act for 'workers' mainly trafficked from Chhattishgarh and Jharkhand? Yet, all of the slum dwellers of Jhuggi Jhopadi and resettlement colonies have different issues related to their daily lives and they need to be addressed.

The AAP has promised tall promises. Of course, some of the Dalits and Muslims got tickets in it and have representation in the party. However, the challenge lies ahead in fulfilling the promises and addressing the greater concerns of the Dalits, the Muslims and other poor, besides the safety of women. Next one year will

be important for the country.

Finally, the election results have thrown a big challenge to 'democracy' itself. Are we electing 'larger' than life leaders? There was a time when political leaders understood the importance of opposition and it was mutual understanding not to field candidates against good leaders. Today, things are changed and we want to 'liquidate' the opponents then and there. It is sad that political discourse has turned to such a level. Is it not a threat when we don't have an opposition in Parliament and the assemblies?

Lawmakers will have to think how can a party with 54% of votes get 95% of seats? Is it not highly disproportionate to their vote percentage? The BJP with 32% of votes could manage with 5% while the Congress with 9% vote did not get anything. We must shift to Proportionate Electorate System so that diverse groups have representation in our Parliament and Assemblies.

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Guests' Section :

After All It's a Game

Kuldip Nayar

SUPPOSE India had lost the World Cup cricket match against Pakistan at Adelaide, the reaction among its people would have been that of disappointment and remorse. But I do not think that they would have initiated scuffles with the Pakistani spectators. The Indians would not have destroyed television sets as some did in Karachi and elsewhere in Pakistan. Of course, there would have been a sense of humiliation, but it would not have poured on to the streets in the shape of fracas or demonstrations.

This is not to suggest that the Indian society is more sophisticated. But there is no doubt that it is more tolerant and accommodative. A multi-cultural society as it is, India has learnt to live with different communities. The largest Muslim population, next to Indonesia, has its dynamics. It has taught the Hindus that they have to adjust if they want the society to progress.

Unfortunately, the radicals among the community—they are increasing—want the country to be Hindu. The RSS, extremist Hindu body, is pushing the society all the time to become a Hindu Rashtra. But the majority of Hindus have rejected its parochial approach.

The BJP which is its political arm seems to have learnt that the saffronisation does not go down well with the people. Therefore, it has adopted development as its creed. It may well be a cover for Hindutva. Yet, it indicates the realization that communal outlook is counterproductive.

Probably, this explains why Prime Minister Narendra Modi has finally broken his silence while addressing the Christian community in New Delhi. In an unequivocal statement, he said: "My government will ensure that there is complete freedom of faith and that everyone has the undeniable right to retain or adopt the religion of his or her choice without coercion or undue influence. My government will not allow any religious group to incite hatred against others, overtly or covertly. Mine will be a government that gives equal respect to all religions." Apparently, he had the destruction of some churches in the country.

Modi, who has an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha, has been careful all these months in not pushing his party's agenda—common civil code and deleting Article 370 in the constitution that gives a special status to Kashmir. He may not have become really secular but he knows that the society would not budge from the pluralism which it has accepted as a fact of life in India.

True, the minorities may still be mollified because of the preponderant majority of Hindus. The situation becomes alarming when RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat says that "Ram Janmabhoomi and Sethusamudram are national issues. We can raise more such issues to send a message across about the real targets of Sangh." Yet he and the Sangh parivar know that the Indian society cannot be converted into a theocratic state. This is against the grain of the people.

In comparison, Pakistan is becoming more

and more radicalized. No doubt, the country was separated and constituted on the basis of religion. But its founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, said soon after its creation that religion and state would not be mixed. Yet the fact is that the minorities in Pakistan are only around five percent. In Sindh, where they concentrate, there are forcible conversions of women for marriage. And there is hardly any temple which has not been attacked.

According to a report by the Human Rights Watch (HRW), violent attacks on members of religious minorities rose significantly in 2014 as Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's government failed to ensure protection of religious freedom. The HRW has termed 2014 "a tumultuous year" for Pakistan in which sectarian attacks continued with impunity, military operations in North Waziristan displaced more than one million people.

In a statement attached to the report, Phelim Kine, the deputy Asia director at the New York based-HRW regretted that "the Pakistan government is failing at the most basic duty to protect its citizens and enforce rule of law. The Pakistan government did little in 2014 to stop the rising toll of killings and repression by extremist groups that target religious minorities."

Undoubtedly, many mosques in India have also faced the fury of fanatics. But here the media and a substantial number of liberals speak out and take both the society and the government to task. The minorities will continue to be under pressure until India and Pakistan bury the hatchet. Secular and democratic New Delhi is no less derogatory of Islamabad when tension comes to prevail. Muslims are dubbed as

Pakistanis although India is ruled by secular constitution, not by the Hindu majority. This ethos gets diluted when Pakistan is on the opposite.

It is a pity that there is not even an iota of realization, much less action, that ways should be found to minimize enmity between the two countries. Pakistan has more to answer because it has even distorted history to show Hindus in a bad light. A student in Pakistan is a product of hatred which is kept alive through falsehood or half-truths.

Generally, it is not the case in India although the society should be vigilant because the history is being saffronised by the ruling BJP. The society is not yet contaminated because the sweep of the Aam Aadmi Party at Delhi testifies the voters' abhorrence to caste and creed. This phenomenon should become an all-India theme. It all depends to a great extent on how India and Pakistan sort out their differences. The minorities will benefit if they do. The sooner, the better it is.

Cricket is, no doubt, a game of skill but it depends on how a particular team performs on a particular day. Take the example of Ireland that beat the two-time world champions West Indies. The important lesson to learn is that the game should be played in the spirit of the game and not tagged to other issues between the two nations. Players seem to be conscious of this but not the spectators.

(Kuldip Nayar is a veteran syndicated columnist catering to around 80 newspapers and journals in 14 languages in India & abroad. kuldipnayar09@gmail.com)

From the Writings of M.N. Roy:

Continued from the last issue...

Book: Historical Role of Islam

Chapter - VI

Islamic Philosophy

(Editorial Note : M.N. Roy was in jail between 1930 and 1936 under the charge of 'sedition' for inciting rebellion against the British Government which case is famously known as 'Kanpur Conspiracy Case'. During this period he wrote many books. One of them was a small book under the title 'Historical Role of Islam'. It was first published in 1939. In the opinion of M.N. Roy a better knowledge and more objective understanding of the History of Islam on the part of Muslims as well as non-Muslims would help in reducing lot of antagonism and misunderstanding between the two communities. The first paragraph of the introduction to the book written by Roy is :

"Introduction"

The apparently sudden rise and the dramatic expansion of Mohammedanism constitutes a most fascinating chapter in the history of mankind. A dispassionate study of this chapter is of great importance in the present fateful period of the history of India. The scientific value of the study by itself is great, and the meritorious quest for knowledge is sure to be handsomely rewarded. But with us, today in India, particularly with the Hindus, a proper understanding of the historical role of Islam and contribution it has made to human culture has acquired a supreme political importance."

In the above spirit we are serializing the said book in 'The Radical Humanist'.

Below is given the next installment.)

The distinctive merit of the Arab scholars was the zeal to acquire knowledge through observation. They discarded the vanity of airy speculation, and stood firmly on the ground

known to them. That great merit of Arabian learning is decisively evidenced in the following view of its Doyen Averroes: "The religion peculiar to philosophers is the study of that which is; for no sublimer worship can be given to God than the knowledge of his works, which leads to the knowledge of Mm and his reality. That is the noblest action in His eyes; the vilest is taxing, as error and vain presumption, the efforts of those who practise this worship, and who in this religion have the purest of religions." A religion which permitted the propagation of such irreligious views, though garbed in a pious phraseology, could not have its origin in intolerance and fanaticism. For this heterodox view, the philosopher, of course, incurred the wrath of the priesthood; but much more of the Christian than the Muslim.

After a short banishment, Averroes was restituted in his position in the court of the Sultan of Andalusia, and his books survived proscription in the Islamic world. But from their Latin version, the above and similar passages were expunged. Yet, the heretic movements of Europe, during the twelfth, thirteenth and fourteenth century, drew their inspiration from the suppressed teachings of the Arab philosopher; and it was the heretic movement that shook the foundation of the Catholic Church which had held Europe in spiritual subordination throughout the middle-ages. From the twelfth century onwards, until the triumph of modern learning, Averroism was analogous to heresy in the horrified eye of Christian holiness. And it was for nothing that it was so. For, alone the passage quoted above indicated the surest point of departure for the quest of positive knowledge

which eventually cleared away the debris of ignorance, sanctified as faith, and glorified as virtue on the authority of theological dogmas.

In this passage, Averroes stated the basic principle of the inductive method—the surest way to true knowledge. On the preconceived notion of a creator is set aside, and of is made to know him (as distinct from the blind faith in his existence) in his reality through the empirical knowledge of his works, that is, nature, the divine object recedes farther and farther, until it vanishes into nothingness,— the only demonstrable reality about his existence; and a religion which promoted that singular quest for the knowledge of God certainly represented the greatest advance of human ideology under the garb of religion. The latest of Great Religions, Islam was the greatest; and as such destroyed the basis of all religions. That is the essence of its historical significance.

The centre of Islam and Arabic learning was in those very historical regions where the older civilisations of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Jews, Persians and Greeks had arisen, clashed and fallen. The positive outcome of those earlier civilisations went into the making of the Arabian culture, and the remarkable Monotheism of Mohammad made its own the cardinal principles of the religion of those ancient peoples. It stands to the credit of the Arabian philosophers that they, for the first time, conceived the sublime idea of a common origin of all religions. Not only did they hold the view, singularly broad for the epoch, that all religions were so many efforts of the human mind to solve the great mysteries of life and nature; they went so much farther as to make the bold suggestion that the effort more reconcilable with reason was the greater, nobler and sublimer. This rationalistic view of religion attained the highest clarity in the mind of Averroes.

Thus, together with the invaluable metaphysical and scientific teachings of the

sages of Athens and Alexandria, the Arabs contributed something original to the foundation of modern civilisation. It was scepticism—that powerful solvent of all faith. As soon as criticism challenges credulity, a new light dawns on the perspective of human progress. A curious book, anonymously published with the title “Three Imposters”, occupies a prominent place in the early history of scepticism in Europe. The credit for that scandalous composition was attributed either to the heretical Christian Emperor Frederic Barbarossa, or the Muslim philosopher Averroes; The imposters were Moses, Christ and Mohammad. One of the suspected authors was a Christian and the other was a Mussalman. Religion certainly had fallen in bad days. There had been scepticism before the thirteenth century, but no real incredulity. This doctrine and that had been disputed or rejected; but the foundation of Christian faith had never been touched. It was this foundation which was assailed when the idea was conceived that all religions have a common ground. If all religions are essentially the same, then the doctrine and dogmas peculiar to each other should be discarded as pernicious obstacles to the realisation of the spiritual unity of mankind. But freed from doctrines and dogmas, religion has no leg to stand upon. Its rationalisation amounts to its destruction. The revolutionary idea of the common origin of all religions was conceived for the first time by the Arab thinkers.

Although Arabian learning reached its climax in Averroes, he was but the greatest and the latest of a long succession of great thinkers and scholars who flourished from the ninth to the thirteenth century. A brief reference to the substance of the teachings of the more illustrious of them will give some idea of the revolutionary significance of the learning which owed its origin to the cardinal principle of the Mohammedan religion, and was promoted by the staggering achievements of the “Sword of God.”

Having established unity, as the terrestrial reflection of their spiritual Unitarianism, and promoted economic prosperity in consequence thereof, the new Islamic nation devoted itself to the culture of the mind. For a hundred years, it modestly learned from others, particularly the ancient Greeks. Thus equipped, it began to produce independent and original thought in every branch of learning.

Al Kandi was the earliest of the great Arabian philosophers. He flourished in the capital of the free-thinking Abbassides, and leaped into fame in the beginning of the ninth century. For teaching that philosophy must be based on mathematics; that is, it should cease to be idle speculation: abstract thought should be guided by precise reasoning, based on concrete facts and established laws, in order to produce positive results. The teacher of this doctrine deserves the great distinction of having anticipated Francis Bacon and Descartes by seven hundred years as a forerunner of modern philosophy. Even today there are many ‘‘philosophers’’ and scholars who could be profited by the wisdom taught by the Saracen sage a thousand years ago.

Next to be mentioned is Al Farabi who lived in the following century, and taught at Damascus as well as Bagdad. His commentary on Aristotle was studied for centuries as an authoritative work on the subject. He also excelled in the medical science. Roger Bacon, learned mathematics from him.

In the latter half of the tenth century appeared Avicenna. He belonged to a rich Landowning family of Bokhara engaged in prosperous trade. He wrote on mathematics and physics, but went down in history for his contributions to the medical science.

The famous medical school of Salerno was a monument to his memory, and his work was the text book of medicine throughout Europe until the sixteenth century. The great

physician’s philosophical views were so unorthodox that even the free-thinking Emir of Bokhara could not resist the pressure of the Imams who were scandalized by the profanity of Avicenna. He had to leave the court of his patron, and travelled all over the Arabic Empire teaching medicine and preaching his philosophy at different seats of learning,

In the eleventh century lived Al Hassan who deserves a place among the greatest scientists of all ages. Optics was his special subject. Having learned it from the Greeks, he went farther than they, who corrected their mistaken notion that the rays of light issue from the eye. By anatomical and geometrical reasoning, Al Hassan proved that the rays of light came from the object seen, and impinged on the retina. There is ground for belief, held by many historians of science, that Kepler borrowed his optical views from his Arab predecessor.

In the same century also lived Al Gazali, son of an Andalusian merchant. He anticipated Descartes in reducing the standard of truth to self-consciousness. He stands out as the connecting link between the antique and modern scepticism. His memorable contribution to philosophy is better stated in his own words: ‘‘Having failed to get satisfaction from religion, I finally resolved to discard all authority, and detach myself from opinions which have been instilled in me during the unsuspecting years of childhood. My aim is simply to know the truth of things; consequently it is indispensable for me to ascertain what knowledge is. Now it was evident to me that certain knowledge must be that which explains the object to be known in such a manner that no doubt can remain, so that in future all error and conjecture respecting it must be impossible. Thus, once I have acknowledged ten to be more than three, if any one were to say: On the contrary, three is more than ten; and to prove my assertion I will change this stick into a serpent; and if he actually did

the miracle, still the conviction of his error would remain unshaken. His manoeuvre would only produce in me admiration for his ability, but I should not doubt my own knowledge.”

The principle of acquiring exact knowledge, stated nearly a thousand years ago, by the Muslim savant, still holds as good as then; and the scientific outlook which makes such knowledge possible, is still comparatively rare among the Indians, who even in these days of the twentieth century allow themselves to be imposed by feats of magical and “spiritual” charlatanism, and credit these as serious challenge to the reliability of scientific knowledge.

Al Gazali held that knowledge could not possess such mathematical exactness, unless it were acquired empirically, and governed by irrefragible laws established by experience. He was of the opinion that incontestable conviction could be acquired only through sense perceptions, and necessary truth, that is, casualty. In reason (self-consciousness) he found the judge of the correctness of the perception of senses.

One is amazed to find such unique boldness of thought in the atmosphere of a religion generally believed to be the most intolerant and fanatical. Yet, Al Gazali’s scepticism was avidly studied throughout the Muslim world of his time. His place in the history of philosophy can be judged from the opinion of the famous French Orientalist Renan, who thought that the father of modern scepticism, Hume, did not say anything more than what had been said by the Arab philosopher who preceded him by seven hundred years. The immensity of the historical significance of Al Gazali’s views is appreciated still more clearly when we remember that it was scepticism of Hume which gave impetus to Kant’s “all shattering critical philosophy” that laid a cruel axe at the root of all speculative thought. But Al Gazali’s views were a long way ahead of time.

Experimental science, as he visualised, was not yet possible. In the absence or infancy of technology, the nature of objects could not be so mathematically ascertained as the philosophers wished. Therefore, in his later years, Al Gazali fell into mysticism; but his fall was not more strikingly inglorious than of Kant, Objective drawbacks clipped the intrepid wings of the soaring spirit of the Arab thinker; whereas subjective pre-dilection of class interest overwhelmed the critical genius of Kant.

Abubakr, who lived in the twelfth century, was the first astronomer to reject the Ptolemaic notion regarding the position of heavenly bodies. He conceived of a planetary system, and celestial motion which tended towards the epoch-making discoveries of Giordano Bruno, Galileo and Copernicus. It is recorded that “in his systems all movements were verified, and therefore no error resulted.” Abubakr dies before having set forth his theory in a complete treatise. His pupil, Al Phetradius, popularised his teaching that all planetary bodies moved regularly. Throughout the middle-ages, the hypothesis was valued as a great contribution to astronomical knowledge. The teachings of a Muslim philosopher, which upset the biblical view of the Universe, penetrated the Christian monasteries. Not only Roger Bacon, but his illustrious opponent, Albertus Magnus, also acknowledged the indebtedness to the astronomical work of Al Phetradius in which Abubakr’s views on planetary movement were expounded.

The basic principle of the philosophy of Averroes, the greatest and the latest of the great Arabian thinkers, has already been outlined. He lived at the turning point of the history of the Islamic culture. By the twelfth century, the pinnacle had been reached, and the forces of reaction had gathered strength to overwhelm those of progress. Islamic culture was already on the decline

The freedom of thought permitted by the

simple faith of a nomadic people had attained such soaring heights of boldness as eventually clashed with the temporal interests of the “Commanders of the Faithful.” When the positive outcome of Islamic thought, developed so marvellously during five hundred years, was summarised in the highly revolutionary dictum of Averroes that reason is the only source of truth, Sultan Al Masur of Cordova, under the pressure of the priests, issued an edict condemning such heretical views to hell-fire, on the authority of religion. The denunciation of the noblest product of Islam naturally marked the beginning of its degeneration from a powerful lever of human progress to an instrument of reaction, intolerance, ignorance and prejudice. Having played out its historic role—to rescue the precious patrimony of ancient culture out of the engulfing ruins of two Empires and the blinding darkness of two religions—Islam turned traitor to its original self, and became the black banner of Turkish barbarism and of the depredations of the Mongolian herds.

Islam disowned its own. Averroes was driven away from the court of Cordova—the

home of free thought for centuries. His books were condemned to the flames, if not actually of fire, to those of the more merciless sacerdotal reaction. Rationalism came to be identified with heresy. The very names of Averroes and his master, Aristotle, became anathema. In course of time, reaction triumphed so completely that for an orthodox Mohammedan philosophy stood for “infidelity, impiety, and immorality.” But the standard of spiritual progress, admirably held high, and boldly carried forward by the Arabs during five hundred years, could not be lowered and trampled under the fury of vain religiosity any more successfully by Islamic intolerance than previously by Christian piety and superstition, Averroes was disowned by his own people, only to be enthroned by those to whom belonged the future. The fierce contest between Faith and Reason and between despotic ignorance and freedom of thought, which rocked Europe and shook the foundation of the Catholic Church from the twelfth century onwards, drew inspiration from the teachings of the Arab philosophers. Averroes and Averroism dominated the scientific thought of Europe for four hundred years.

To be continued ...

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— **Mahi Pal Singh**, *Editor, The Radical Humanist*

M.N. ROY'S FIRST MEETING WITH LENIN (1920)

M.N. Roy

{**Editorial Note:** In 1915 M.N. Roy had left India during First World War for procuring arms for Indian revolutionaries to enable them to organize armed revolt against the British. He visited various countries, could not succeed in his mission and evading British and American intelligence, landed in Mexico in 1917. He devoted to the cause of freedom and social justice in his host country, tried to bring together the fragmented and ineffective 'left' groups and trade unions into a strong and united organization. He was elected General Secretary of the Mexican socialist Party at a Conference held in December 1918. Soon thereafter Michael Borodin arrived in Mexico city from Moscow as an emissary of the Communist International which had its foundation Congress in Moscow in March 1919. Borodin contacted Roy and both quickly became close friends. The newly founded Communist International had resolved to organize communist parties in all countries of the world. But until the middle of 1919, no communist party had been formed anywhere, except that Bolshevik Party of Russia had converted itself into communist party of Russia. Most of the ruling regimes of the world were not prepared to tolerate birth of the communist parties in their countries. M.N. Roy and Borodin decided that Mexico should take the lead. Soon Socialist Party of Mexico was converted into the Communist Party of Mexico in an extra-ordinary conference held in November, 1919 in the city of Mexico. Carranza, President of Mexico, who was on friendly terms with Roy, approved the event to take place. So the first communist party in the world outside Russia was born. It was in this background that Lenin invited M.N. Roy to attend the second Congress of the Communist International to be

held in Moscow in July-August, 1920. Roy landed in Moscow in May 1920 and was given a copy of Lenin's 'Preliminary Draft Theses on the National & Colonial Questions'. Roy's had certain differences on some fundamental issues with the views of Lenin. Roy's Supplementary Theses was also adopted by the Comintern along with Lenin's theses. Roy, on behalf of the Communist International, played major part in formulating the policies and implementing the programme of building up communist movements in different countries of Asia, including India, till 1927 whereafter he had to part company on account of ideological differences. He also founded the émigré Communist Party of India on 17th October, 1920 in Tashkent.

We are publishing below the account of first meeting of Roy with Lenin as described by Roy in his own words which the readers will find interesting.)

THE entrance to the office of the President of the Council of People's Commissars was guarded by an army of secretaries headed by an oldish woman. Unassuming in behaviour, plain in looks and rather shabbily attired, she was evidently efficient with her unobtrusive authority. Pin-drop silence reigned in the large room occupied by Lenin's personal Secretariat, which was composed of about a dozen people. The grey-haired chief moved silently from one desk to another whenever she wanted to speak to any of her subordinate colleagues. They all spoke in the lowest possible whisper. None but the chief was privileged to enter Lenin's office. No ordinary person could occupy the position of great trust. The quiet and rather colourless Saint Peter of the Bolshevik heaven was a senior

member of the party, a well known figure in Moscow, and respected by all.

Lenin did not share the proverbial Russian disregard for time, which is a national characteristic the Bolsheviks had inherited. Punctuality seemed to be blacklisted as an abominable petit-bourgeois prejudice.

The way to Lenin's Secretariat lay through a well appointed ante-room which was always empty. No expectant visitor was ever kept waiting there. Lenin did not share the proverbial Russian disregard for time, which is a national characteristic the Bolsheviks had inherited. Punctuality seemed to be blacklisted as an abominable petit-bourgeois prejudice. The disregard for time was the greater the more eminent was the leader. It was justified by his manifold duties and engagements. Zinoviev beat all records. There were occasions when he kept sessions of a Congress of the Communist International or meetings of its Executive Committee waiting for hours.

Lenin was the only exception. As regards the attitude towards time, he was most un-Russian. That explained the emptiness of the ante-room of a man who received numerous callers every day. Generally, interviews were brief, often allotted unusual fractions of time, such as nine or thirteen minutes, and the limitation of time was rigidly enforced. A couple of minutes before a particular interview was due to end, Comrade Maria (the head of Secretariat) pressed a button and a small electric bulb flashed on Lenin's desk. But the latter was not given any chance to risk his reputation for punctuality. Having given the signal, Comrade Maria would usher in the next caller; if there was none to follow immediately, she would herself appear with some paper and lay it in front of Lenin. In the inner circle, it was said in joke that Comrade

Maria treated Ilyitch like a school boy.

Passing through the empty ante-room, I was escorted into the Secretariat. Engrossed in their respective preoccupation, the inmates took no notice of me. But St. Peter of the Bolshevik, heaven was always on the alert. She stood up, looked at the big clock on the wall, and silently came forward to take over the charge from the subordinate colleague who had escorted from the entrance of the palace. She conducted me towards a tall silver and gold door, pushed it open gently, just enough for one to pass, and with a motion of the head bade me enter. I stepped in, and the door silently closed behind me.

It was a vast rectangular room, with a row of tall windows giving on a spacious courtyard surrounded by other wings of the palace, The ceiling was so high as almost to touch the sky. The room was practically bare; only the floor was covered with a thick carpet. My attention was immediately attracted by the bald dome of a head stooping very low on the top of a big desk placed right in the middle of the room. I was nervous and walked towards the desk, not knowing what else to do. By silencing my footsteps, the thick carpet sympathized with my anxiety not to cause the least disturbance. It was quite a distance, from the door to the desk. Before I had covered hardly half of it, the owner of the remarkable head was on his feet and briskly came forward with the right hand extended. I was in the presence of Lenin.

Nearly a head shorter, he tilted his red goatee almost to a horizontal position to look at my face quizzically. I was embarrassed, did not know what to say. He helped me out with banter: "You are so young! I expected a grey-bearded wise man from the East." The ice of initial nervousness broken, I found words to protest against the disparagement of my seven

and twenty years.

In the most crucial moment of his life and also of contemporary history, Lenin acted as a romanticist; and that one act of extraordinary audacity raised him to the pinnacle of greatness, and won for him a place amongst the immortals of human history.

Lenin laughed, obviously to put an awe-struck worshipper at ease. Though much too overwhelmed by the experience of a great event to observe details, I was struck by the impish look which often relieved the severity of the expression of a fanatic. It belied the widely held view that in Lenin's personality the heart was choked in the iron grip of a hard head; that the great revolutionary was a willful machine without the least touch of humanness. The impish smile did not betray cynicism. Lenin was the most unmitigated optimist. Not only was he convinced unshakably that Marxism was the final truth, but he believed equally firmly in its inevitable triumph. He combined the fervor of the prophet with the devotion of the evangelist. Otherwise, he could not advocate capture of power, single handed, as against the stubborn opposition of all his followers, when there appeared to be very little chance for the Bolsheviks to hold it longer than a few days or weeks. At that juncture, Lenin was guided more by faith than by reason; and it was faith not in the secular Providence of historical determinism, but in man's unlimited capacity to make history. In the most crucial moment of his life and also of contemporary history, Lenin acted as a romanticist; and that one act of extraordinary audacity raised him to the pinnacle of greatness, and won for him a place amongst the immortals of human history.

Danton and Lenin are the two greatest revolutionaries of modern times, and Danton was

also a romanticist. The soul of the Great French Revolution was killed when jealousy of the hypocritical High-Priest of Reason sent Danton to the guillotine. Like his great predecessor, Lenin also had the audacity to call for moderation before the cup was drained to the dregs, before it was too late. He had no rival, though Trotsky might pretend to imitate Robespierre's fanaticism after Lenin's death, if he had the chance. Therefore, had not the cruel hand of a natural death removed him prematurely Lenin might have turned the course of the revolution to a more fruitful direction. The New Economic Policy was the signal. Its unfoldment might have headed off the subsequent relapse into terrorism and coercion, which destroyed the utopian ideal of Communism. But Trotsky's Left opposition compelled Stalin to kill the Dantonist spirit of Lenin. The two contenders for the succession to Lenin together did for the Russian Revolution what Robespierre had done for the French.

There was nothing of a dictator in his physical bearing or manner of speaking. Nor was his remarkable modesty an affectation - a repulsive demonstration of the consciousness of superiority. He was frank in speech and friendly in behavior.

These ideas about Lenin's personality and his place in the history of revolution took shape in my mind gradually, years after I met him for the first time. But their roots can be traced to the initial impression. The man whose ominous shadow was cast athwart the capitalist world, in reality, did not at all live up to his frightful reputation. The crown of dictatorial power sat on his head very lightly. There was nothing of a dictator in his physical bearing or manner of speaking. Nor was his remarkable modesty an affectation - a repulsive demonstration of the consciousness of superiority. He was frank in

speech and friendly in behavior. For years he had been the undisputed leader of the Bolshevik Party. More than once, a majority of the Central Committee of the party disagreed with him. But none ever dreamed of replacing him as the leader of the party. He was more than a leader, he was the preceptor - High Priest of Bolshevism. He was friend and philosopher for the old cadre of the party. They loved him.

He expounded the dangerous theory that the party of the proletariat must be an iron cohort of professional revolutionaries. But his behaviour inside the Bolshevik Party was always democratic.

Since the early years of his political career, Lenin had fought bitter factional fights inside the Russian Social-Democratic Party and the Second International. His polemics against the right-wing leaders were charged with brimstone and fire. He expounded the dangerous theory that the party of the proletariat must be an iron cohort of professional revolutionaries. But his behaviour inside the Bolshevik Party was always democratic. Whenever he failed to persuade the Central Committee to agree with his view, he referred the issue to the rank and file of the party, and in those days, there was no bureaucratic machinery to manipulate the party and manufacture a rank and file endorsement for the opinion of the leader. In July 1917, a majority of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party rejected Lenin's proposal that it should call for an armed insurrection preparatory to capturing power. He returned to his place of hiding in Finland, and wrote a series of articles in the party organ, Pravda, expounding his thesis. Within a couple of months the All-Russian Soviet of Workers', Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies met to issue the slogan "All Power to the Soviets!"

In discussions inside the party, Lenin used to drive his point home with picturesque

arguments. He backed up his view that the newborn Soviet Government should sign the Brest-Litovsk Treaty with the argument that the soldiers had voted for peace with their feet. How? By running away from the fronts. While defending the New Economic Policy in the All-Russian Congress of Soviet, he pleaded: "We must now learn the housekeeping of the Revolution." Expounding in the Second World Congress his thesis that the movement for the liberation of the colonial peoples was a revolutionary force, he warned: "But don't paint Nationalism red."

Having helped me out of the initial embarrassment and nervousness, Lenin returned to his seat at the desk and asked me to take a chair across it. As he turned back to walk to his seat, I had good glance at the man. I had by then recovered my wits and poise. The height of the room accentuated the shortness of the man, so much so that he looked almost like a dwarf. His big head was quite appropriate to the deceptive picture. The picture was deceptive because Lenin was not a dwarf, being well above five feet. He was 5 ft. 4 inches, I believe. Another habit made him look shorter than he really was. He walked with a stoop, without turning the head either in the left or to the right; nor did he raise his eyes to see that was ahead. The posture suggested that he was engrossed in thought even when walking; and the quickness of his steps seemed to synchronise with the swift rhythm of his mind. He seemed to be always in a great hurry as if keenly conscious of the magnitude of his mission and the inadequacy of time at his disposal. One may wonder if he had a premonition of early death. He was so very impatient to get things done quickly that he restricted the freedom of the tongues of the members of the all-powerful Politbureau. In his time, it had only seven members. In its weekly meetings, none was allowed to speak more than

twice, fifteen minutes for the first time and five for the second. Though he thought quickly, his speech was deliberate and sometimes even slow. Except when addressing the masses, he spoke like a teacher lecturing in the class room or an advocate arguing a case in the law court.

The impish smile lit up his face, I felt completely at ease, as if I was accustomed to sitting by the desk, not in the presence of a great man, a powerful dictator, but in the pleasant company of an old friend.

Having resumed his seat, Lenin leaned forward on the desk and fixed his almond-shaped twinkling eyes on my face. The impish smile lit up his face, I felt completely at ease, as if I was accustomed to sitting by the desk, not in the presence of a great man, a powerful dictator, but in the pleasant company of an old friend. Indeed it might be that of a benevolent father smiling benignly on a son who has made good and promises to do better. The remembrance of Balabanova's congratulation made me somewhat dizzy, but her motherly admonition was also fresh in my memory.

Lenin's voice disturbed my introspection. Borodin had reported my activities in Mexico. I must give a more detailed account. It was a highly interesting experiment in revolutionary strategy. Surely I was reluctant to leave the work so well begun. But there were more urgent revolutionary tasks which must have priority. It would be long before revolutions could succeed in the New World. Conditions might mature in Mexico and other Latin American countries in the near future. But American Imperialism was on the alert to intervene as it had done in the past. We must for the present concentrate on the old world; and the oppressed and exploited masses of Asia have to be mobilized in a gigantic revolutionary movement. My experience in Mexico was extremely valuable for the purpose.

In practice, I had anticipated the theory of revolutionary strategy in colonial and semi-colonial countries outlined in the draft theses for the Second World Congress. Had I read them? No, I apologized. Because the document was given to me just before I was to see its author; but I would study it as soon as I had the time. Then we must meet again to discuss it. Lenin added, and proceeded to plead his ignorance of the conditions in the colonial countries. Therefore he needed my cooperation in the preparation of a document which was destined to be a landmark in the history of the revolutionary movement. My understanding of Marxism was sure to throw a new light on the history and the present conditions of the colonial countries.

The little electric bulb gave the signal - Lenin sat back and remarked that the interview must end on Maria's order. The impish smile returned in his eyes. I got up to say good-bye, and found Lenin by my side. Taking me by the arm, he conducted me towards the door which opened to let in a man with a shock of black hair, a sensitive face and a little paunch. He was dressed in baggy trousers and a soft white shirt, its collar held together with a black silk string instead of a necktie. He was carrying a bulging leather portfolio under one arm. Lenin introduced me to the newcomer. It was Comrade Zinoviev, who took my hand in a limp grip. His was small and soft like a woman's. He spoke a few words in a high pitched voice and desired me to see him soon.

Outside in the Secretariat, a young man was standing guard on three big suitcases, each of which contained, as I learned later, important papers pertaining to one of the three high offices held by Zinoviev.

(Published in the 8th June 1952 issue of 'The Radical Humanist')

From: INDEPENDENT INDIA (FEBRUARY 22, 1948)

(NOTES OF THE WEEK)

THE KASHMIR AFFAIR

THE Kashmir affair has reached a very delicate stage. Military operations are proceeding in the State, but they do not appear to lead to any decisive result. They have already cost India very heavily in men as well as money. Casualties suffered so far number about a thousand - and the financial cost is mounting at the rate of Rs. 4 lakhs a day. In the forum of the United Nations, India has suffered a severe defeat. The Indian delegation is back in the country for consultations with the Government. There can be no doubt from whatever has happened so far in the meetings of the Security Council that its verdict will not be in favour of the line of action suggested by India. At the last meeting of the Security Council, before it adjourned the discussion of the Kashmir question on the request of India, the leader of her delegation Mr. Gopalaswami Ayyangar said: "The impression has been growing that my great country and its Government have not elicited at the hands of the Security Council the consideration that they are entitled to". This expresses pithily the disappointment of the Indian delegation at the turn of events in the Security Council. It will be very easy to attribute this unexpected result to the machinations of England and America and to their supposed partiality for Pakistan. It will be equally easy to decide to make up for the political and diplomatic reverse in the Security Council by more vigorous operations in the military field. It will not be at all difficult to whip up popular sentiment and secure popular support to the policy of settling the Kashmir issue purely on the basis of military operations.

The crucial question is: will that be useful? Will that be wise and will that be in consonance with the policy of Mahatma Gandhi to whom so much homage has been paid during the last three weeks? We are of the opinion that the Government of India should reconsider their policy on the Kashmir affair. The tragic assassination of Mahatma Gandhi renders such reconsideration necessary as well as appropriate. The trend of discussions in the Security Council should convince the Government that they cannot expect international support to the line of action that they propose following. It should be further clear that there is no point in securing accession on the strength of arms. Why not then accept the obvious conclusion following from the communal composition of the State's population and settle the issue on that basis through friendly negotiations with the Government of Pakistan? That would certainly be a much more dignified course than to wash the dirty linen before the Security Council and in the end accept foreign intervention in a domestic affair. That is creditable neither to India nor to Pakistan. A solution on this line may appear to be a retreat, but it is a retreat that will enhance the moral position of the Indian Government as well as pave the way for an abiding friendship between the two sister Dominions. That is a solution which is in keeping with the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. The return of the Indian delegation for consultation provides an excellent opportunity for trying a solution of the Kashmir affair on that line."

IRI/IRHA Members' Section:

'Vandematarm', 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and 'Inquilab Zindabad'

N.D.Pancholi

After the spectacular electoral victory of AAP on 10th Feb. 2015 in the Delhi assembly election, Harsh Kapoor, a staunch believer in secular values and a dedicated activist in the struggle for democratic rights for the last about four decades, was overwhelmed by the fact that the citizens of Delhi belonging to diverse backgrounds and identities had put their faith in AAP by inflicting a crushing defeat on BJP which, in his opinion, had ridden to power in 1914 in large parts across India in by whipping up religious sentiments and a socially divisive politics. Kejriwal was going to take oath on 14th February and Kapoor thought that oath taking ceremony was the most opportune occasion which could be utilized to further strengthen secular values in the country if Kejriwal takes oath of office by not invoking his private faith and religious belonging. On the last occasion he had taken oath in the name of 'God' but this time he could chalk out a liberating path. He therefore made a fervent appeal to Kejriwal requesting him to swear by secular principles while taking oath so that a message goes to all in Delhi and in India that he and his government represents people of all origins and is free from any communally divisive agenda.

Harsh Kapoor circulated copies of the appeal on the internet and I immediately supported it with the additional suggestion that Kejriwal should avoid using slogans 'Vandemataram' and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' on the occasion, which he had used last time, as such words hurt religious sentiments of certain communities. Soon a comment signifying disagreement came that slogans 'Vandemataram'

and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' should not be viewed as having any religious connotation. I responded that such slogans do have Hindu religious colour and that when a leader raises these slogans in a public speech, members belonging to Muslim, Sikh, Christian, Parsi faiths etc. would not join. I suggested that the slogan 'Inqilaab Zindabad' was most appropriate one in which all participants would join.

Then a comment, amongst others, came from an important member of the Aam Aadmi Party, having 'left' background, that 'Vandemataram is no longer linked in the public mind with Bankim's novel'. He further asked, 'What is wrong with 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai?' and wrote, "We also use 'Inquilab Zindabad'. Have to be inclusive." I did not reply to it immediately and decided to write my views in detail. Hence this article.

It can be safely argued that for Hindus 'Bharat Mata' is a national personification of India as mother goddess. For them it is another name of goddess 'Durga'. During the freedom struggle against the British its image as a four armed Hindu goddess wearing saffron colored robes, holding the Vedas, sheaves of rice, mala and a white cloth was an icon to create nationalism in Indians. The depiction of India as a mother goddess implies that devotion to it is not only a patriotic but also a religious duty. Its temples also exist at many places in India.

'Vandemataram', was used by Bankim Chandra Chatterji in his novel 'Anandmath' published in 1882 wherein he glorified the Hindu rebellion against the Muslim rule and depicted

Muslims in poor light. In the said novel the Sanyasins, who fight against the Muslim invaders with "Bandemataram" on their lips, dream of the day when they would be able to destroy all mosques and build temples in their place.

In 1920 when Gandhi launched the 'Non-cooperation Movement', he included the 'Khilafat' issue (to restore status of the ruler of Turkey) as one of the main demands in the agitation, though it had no direct concern with the demands of the Indian freedom struggle against the British. He did so to draw Muslims in large numbers in the freedom struggle. Khilafat Committee which had been formed by the leading representatives of the Muslim community to fight for the cause of Khalifa of Turkey joined the Non-Cooperation movement. Muslims in large numbers joined the Non-cooperation movement whole heartedly with the cry of "Allah Ho Akbar". Secular minded leaders dreaded the development. Mohd. Ali Jinnah deplored the Khilafat agitation and lamented that the Hindu leaders had not realized that this (Khilafat) movement would encourage the Pan-Islamic sentiment that Sultan of Turkey was encouraging to buttress his tottering empire. Lala Lajpatrai privately confided that it would fan Muslim fanaticism. Nevertheless the 'Khilafat issue' was put up as first item in the Charter of Demands on the insistence of Gandhi while burning issues like Jalianwala Bagh massacre and Rowlett Act, became secondary. Slogans "Bande Mataram" and "Allah Ho Akbar" were in frequent use during agitation. These slogans also used to be raised by the respective communities on earlier occasions, especially during agitation against the Partition of Bengal (1905).

With the passage of time the slogan 'Allah

Ho Akbar' by the Muslims during the freedom struggle began to be resented by the Hindus while 'Bande Mataram' continued to be regularly used by the latter. How the slogan of Bande Mataram contributed to the growing division between the two communities is better described in the following excerpts from an article:-

".....The decisive setback for Congress came when, after their electoral successes in 1937, they launched a great "Mass contact" campaign in the villages, carried on largely by Hindu students from the towns, to win the Muslim peasants for Congress. The propagandists went round indulging in hysterical hero-worship of Gandhi and singing the Bande Mataram song which-doubtless only with poetic intention -identifies the Indian "Motherland" with Hindu goddesses. The effect of this campaign was exactly the opposite to what was intended. The Muslim clergy, thoroughly alarmed and provoked, did their best to set the faithful against Congress; the Muslim peasants, seeing the shadows of cow protection and Brahmin domination in the eyes of the youthful preachers of Indian nationhood, turned to the Muslim League, which was still at that time a comparatively weak organization; as a result, the power of the League grew by leaps and bounds and its policy became more and more extreme and uncompromising."

('The Concept of India' by Jonathan Grant, published in 'INDEPENDENT INDIA' Feb.22, 1948 issue, reproduced from 'The Tribune' London)

So far as the slogan 'INQUILAB ZINDABAD' is concerned, a little background

is necessary. After the success of the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 in Russia, the revolutionaries hoped that similar revolutions would erupt in other parts of Europe. But the attempts made in this direction were violently resisted by the respective ruling capitalist regimes and were suppressed. The second Congress of the Communist International (1920) met in depressing mood. It was decided to turn the 'Revolution' eastward. In order to buck up the drooping spirit of the Bolsheviks Lenin declared that Europe was not the whole of the world; that 'London' and 'New York' might fall on the 'Ganges' or the 'Yangtze'. Lenin prepared a draft of thesis titled 'National and Colonial Question' in which the strategy of the Communist International to support national revolutionary movements of subjugated nationalities and colonies was charted out. He gave a copy of the draft to M.N. Roy for his suggestions. Roy had his disagreement with the draft. Lenin was of the view the National Liberation Movement had the significance of the Bourgeois Democratic Revolution. Every stage of social evolution being historically determined, the colonial countries must have their bourgeois democratic revolution before they could enter the stage of proletarian revolution. The communist, therefore, must help the colonial liberation movement under the leadership of nationalist bourgeoisie, regarding the latter as objectively revolutionary force. However Roy pointed out that the bourgeoisie even in the most advanced colonial countries, like India, as a class, was not economically and culturally differentiated from the feudal social order: therefore, the nationalist movement was ideologically reactionary in the sense that the triumph would not necessarily mean a bourgeois democratic revolution. The role of Gandhi was the crucial point of

difference. Lenin believed that, as the inspirer and leader of a mass movement, he was a revolutionary. Roy maintained that Gandhi, a religious and cultural revivalist, he was bound to be a reactionary socially, however revolutionary he might appear politically. Roy was in fact deadly against Gandhi using religious idioms in the freedom struggle. In his memoirs Roy writes, "A faint echo of Indian Khilafat movement reached Moscow to encourage the view that Pan-Islamism was a revolutionary force and, as such should be welcomed and supported as an ally of the proletarian world revolution. I disagreed. ." After days of discussion between the two, Lenin advised Roy to draft his alternative thesis. Roy named his thesis as 'Supplementary Thesis'. Lenin saw to it that Roy's Supplementary thesis was also adopted by the Second Congress of the Communist International along with the main thesis of Lenin on the "National and Colonial Question".

Roy in his memoirs writes, "..It was perhaps the most valuable experience of my life until then. I had the rare privilege of being treated as an equal by a great man who proved his greatness by doing so. He could refuse to waste his precious time in discussing with a youngman of no importance. I would have no chance to make myself heard in the International Congress".

Soon 'Central Asiatic Bureau' of the Communist International was set up at Tashkent to support national revolutionary struggles in Asia. Sokolinkov, Safarov and M.N. Roy constituted members of the Bureau. An Army of Liberation of the Comintern, named as the 'International Brigade of the Red Army' was sought to be formed at Tashkent to help revolutionary movements by recruitment from

frontier tribesmen, deserted soldiers of the British Indian Army, Persian revolutionaries, Russian communists and thousands of 'muhajirs' who had left India at the call of the Khilafat committee to join the army of Kamal Pasha in Turkey to fight the British but could not make to the destination and had been stranded in Kabul, Bokhara, Tashkent etc. in Central Asia. Many of the muhajirs had become destitute and were brought to Tashkent with the effort of Roy and provided accommodation and food. Some of them joined training programme of the Military School of the Red Army. In the military training camp they were taught to adopt revolutionary slogan 'Inquilab Zindabad' in contrast to any religious slogan. Émigré Communist Party of India was founded at Tashkent on 17th October 1920 and one of the muhajir, Mohd. Shafiq Siddiqui became its General Secretary. Some of the Muhajirs turned out to be very ardent communists. One of them was Shaukat Usmani who after returning to India got actively involved in promoting Communist Party and was one of the accused in the Meerut Conspiracy case. Roy writes in his memoirs about these muhajir trainees:

"They had left India with the purpose of fighting for the Khilafat. Most of them were not even nationalists. They were anti-British, but had no idea of what would happen when the British were driven out of India. So it was felt that a measure of elementary political training was necessary before the majority of the emigrants could be armed. The plan was not to convert them to Communism, but to awaken in them the minimum measure of political consciousness. They might be easily persuaded to abandon the slogan "Khilafat Zindabad" for the slogan

"Inquilab Zindabad." But they should have some idea of revolution, and how it would be brought about. And for that purpose, first of all they should become loyal soldiers of the revolution. Then we were thinking in terms of a national democratic revolution. But if most of the emigrants were not nationalists, none of them had any idea of democracy."

Maulana Hasrat Mohani, eminent freedom fighter, has been credited by some for raising the slogan 'Inquilab Zindabad' for the first time in India during a workers' strike in Calcutta sometime in 1921. Maulana was actively engaged in Khilafat movement and was influenced by the communist ideology; he was one of the organizer and President of the Reception Committee when Communist Party was founded in Kanpur in 1925 in a conference. Shaheed Bhagat Singh threw bomb in the central assembly with the slogan of 'Inquilab Zindabad' on his lips. He and his two other colleagues also raised the slogan 'Inquilab Zindabad' when they boarded the gallows. It is to the credit of these communist revolutionaries who popularized the slogan of 'Inquilab Zindabad' which has socially liberating content and is inclusive and cohesive in nature.

Slogans of 'Bharat Ki Jai' and 'Vandemataram' encourage jingoist nationalism, create national frenzy and mass hysteria. Tagore characterized the cult of nationalism as 'organized selfishness.'

Arvind Kezriwal during his oath taking ceremony raised the slogans of 'Vandemataram', 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' along with 'Inquilab Zindabad'. Raising such slogans simultaneously is a contradiction in terms, exhibits the lack of historical understanding and shows bankruptcy of socially liberating vision.

Mrs. Ellen Roy: On Emancipation of Women

Jawaharlal Jasthi

After settling in India, Ellen also became a part of the Indian society, willingly so to say. She understood the place of women in the society here in contrast to what she saw in the West. She mingled freely with the local women and was also in contact with some of the activists in the feminist movement. She was invited to address the women in the All India Women's Study Circle organized in Dehradun in 1943. By birth Ellen was not an Indian. According to her own experiences, she did not belong to any particular country. In one sense she was a citizen of the world. Naturally her opinions and ideas in regard to women were not confined to any particular country or region. Even then, she applied her experiences to what she observed in Indian society after analyzing the circumstances here.

The Center was filled with educated and progressive women of the society at that time. The main question raised by Ellen in the course of her lecture was whether intelligence could be different for men and women. When both men and women are equally intelligible, where is the need to organize this meeting particularly for women, she asked. In her opinion the only fundamental differences between men and women are only physical and caused because of the women's responsibility to bear children. It is the main intention of all movements of women to acquire equal rights with men in all other respects. Biologically speaking it is the most reasonable demand, she said. In spite of any differences in the bodies consequent to the procreative responsibilities, there is practically no difference between men and women, particularly in their mental capacities. When necessary even women were doing physical work on par with men. They could acquire any skills. But historically the mental and physical

capacities of women are being underestimated. That necessitates the movements like this.

At any time the place of women in the society depends on the social system prevailing at that time. Because of that it is not possible to improve the position of women without reference to the other aspects of the society. Time is past for such movements that were tackling the problem with such a narrow outlook. When the questions of human rights were raised at the time of French Revolution, the rights of women also were part of it. At the present juncture we don't find anybody who denies equality of men and women. In spite of political backwardness of this country the women here are enjoying better status than what our grandmothers enjoyed in Europe. But the anachronistic traditions and habits are instrumental in suppressing the women. The present responsibility is to search for a way out of these traditions and habits.

The problem of women in India is linked to the problems of society in general. If we want to spread the rights that are now available, we have to take the entire society into consideration without restricting to women alone. The reason for neglecting women's education is the failure to implement the compulsory education and the refusal of governments to recognize it as one of their primary responsibilities. Because of that failure not only women but everybody in the society is deprived of some advantage. Thus it turned out to be a political problem.

The traditional joint family also has become a hindrance to women's education and advancement. In fact, this joint family is a remnant of the feudal society. Because of it, along with women, even other members of society are suffering. Women had no relief from domestic responsibilities and had no time to

think of other aspects of life. Poverty and ignorance are the main causes of it. This also is a problem troubling the entire society. It means that all the restrictions, disabilities and troubles are being experienced by everybody in the Indian society - men, women, Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. To solve this problem it is not enough to limit our efforts to emancipation of women only. We have to strive hard to solve the social, political and economic conditions now prevailing in the society.

Because it is the problem that is troubling the entire country, it cannot be expected to be solved by somebody else. Half the society consists of women. When they want equality with men we cannot put the entire responsibility for it on men alone. Those activists who want to improve the conditions of women have to participate in the movements to change the society at large. They must take responsibility for it. Then only they will be able to realise the dream of equal rights and equal opportunities. The world has not yet realized the ideals of the days of French Revolution. When those ideals are accepted universally, women also will get equality and respect on par with men. All the responsibilities of men and all the domestic responsibilities of women are not equal to the responsibilities towards children. The social serfdom does not affect men as much as it affects women. Because of that women entered very late in political movements. Women suffered despair as they did not find a way to realise their higher ideals and aspirations. It affected their self-confidence. The feeling of inferiority caught hold of them. In that situation they tried to grab the minimum opportunities that were available and used it for revolt imitating men. That is not so respectable an attitude. Women have the opportunity to present themselves as different from men, and more respectable than men. Women have the capacity to clear the political stage. It is not necessary to wear pants only to

be a good speaker and effective orator. To propagate an idea it is not necessary to resort to blame and abuse. It is not necessary to roll in dirt to practice an ideal. There are many things that women can do better than men. For that purpose we have to discard the feeling of inferiority that we have inherited from our grandmothers. There is no use of struggling with our femininity all the twenty four hours. It will not help us to participate in social life. When you look at the history of women's movements you will find times of valour and failures. Many of the great women will stand before us. But none of them were confined only to women's problems. They have been great because they have given solutions to human problems. Radical changes in society are bound to come. But we should not wait for it to come. We can establish the place of women in the society by participating in social movements and proving that we too can achieve progress. The injustices in society cannot be changed overnight. You have to influence others by your conduct and individual culture. Those who know you and acquainted with you must be tempted to emulate you. They must be made to crave to adopt your ideals and values in life.

The main purpose of today's meeting is to decide on what women should do, how they should think and act in the present day society. My only answer to that is that we should rise as political powers. We have to help progress in the society. We have to pass on a better society to our children. But remember, we have to do it not merely as women, but as responsible citizens of the society. Instead of being witnesses to the movements, we shall run the movements. Such a movement is historical necessity and it is bound to succeed.

That was the opinion of Ellen Roy regarding the place and responsibilities of women in our society. Even leading a movement itself was a walk on razor's edge in those days. Whatever you write in support of women was not

appreciated. Particularly any discussion of problems like birth control was also anathema. It was used as an excuse to keep women in bondage. In 1947 Ellen wrote an essay advocating birth control. It was translated into Telugu language and published by late Alapati Ravindranath in one of his monthly journals titled "Jyothi" from Tenali in Andhra. A great savior of society went to court alleging that it was obscene and it was a crime to publish it. It was a herculean task for a reformer like Ravindranath to come clear of it. Such were the conditions prevailing in 1948 in Andhra. Later

journals for sex education were also published from Tenali. It was a different story. The pity is that the so-called progressive society of America is still reeling under the same illusion as India suffered in 1948.

In her message to the women's movement Ellen demonstrated how she was herself bound by the ideals in which she believed. She conducted the Humanist Movement with the same spirit. It showed her clear understanding of social problems. She never conceded a place for narrow outlook. That was how she dedicated herself to the New Humanist Movement.

An Appeal to the Readers

Indian Renaissance Institute has been receiving regular requests from readers, research scholars, Rationalists and Radical Humanists for complete sets of books written by M.N. Roy. It was not possible to fulfil their demands as most of Roy's writings are out of print. IRI has now decided to publish them but will need financial assistance from friends and well-wishers as the expenses will be enormous running into lakhs. IRI being a non-profit organization will not be able to meet the entire expenses on its own. Initially, following 15 books have ordered for print: New Humanism; Beyond Communism; Politics, Power and Parties; Historical Role of Islam; India's Message; Men I Met; New Orientation; Materialism; Science & Philosophy; Revolution and Counter-revolution in China; India in Transition; Reason, Romanticism and Revolution; Russian Revolution; Selected Works - Four Volumes; Memoirs (Covers period 1915-1923).

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We make an earnest appeal to you to please donate liberally for the cause of the spirit of renaissance and scientific thinking being promoted in the writings of M.N. Roy.

Thanking you.

IRI Executive Body;

Subhankar Ray
President

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Secretary

S.C. Jain
Treasurer

Phone No. 01202648691

Secularism Revisited

Justice R.A. Jahagirdar

(Since the BJP led government has taken over at the centre, the forces of Hindutva have started raising their communal agenda. On more than one occasion, Mohan Bhagwat, the RSS supremo, has said that Hindustan (and not 'Bharat' as the Constitution calls us) means the land of the Hindus and all those living in it are Hindus. A few days after asking why all Hindustanis (Indians) should not be referred to as "Hindus," the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) Sarsanghchalak again on Sunday, 17th August, minced no words in stating that "Hindutva is the identity of India and it has the capacity to swallow other identities." "We just need to restore those capacities," he added. More than one minister in various BJP governments in the States has said that the Modi government will lead the nation towards the formation of the 'Hindu Rashtra'. M.P.s of the BJP belonging to the Hindutva outfits advise Hindu women to produce four children each to overtake supposed faster growth of Muslims; Conversions are being conducted in the name of 'Ghar Vapasi' through allurements, inducements and bribes by them; burning of Churches is taking place: all under the very nose of the Prime Minister who neither condemns them nor stops them from doing so. Nathuram Godse, the murderer of Mahatma Gandhi, is being glorified and projected as a patriot and hero by these very people. The forces of intolerance have become more aggressive and the secular fabric of our multi-cultural society has come under serious threat. Hence the debate on the secular character of our country, as mandated by our Constitution, has again begun afresh. It has become all the more important for us to understand what

secularism really means and how we can protect it.

Late Justice R.A. Jahagirdar, a leading Radical Humanist like Justice V.M. Tarkunde, both of whom valued secularism as an essential ingredient of a truly democratic society, gave three enlightening lectures on Secularism. As part of the ongoing debate, we are going to publish all the three lectures. The following is the first one, which was delivered as the Eighth Smt. Bansari Sheth Memorial Lecture delivered under the auspices of The Asiatic Society of Bombay on Wednesday, 26th April 2000 - Editor).

Continued from the last issue...

Let me briefly refer to the experiment of Turkey under Mustafa Kamal Pasha. After the break up of Ottoman Empire following the First World War, the institution of Calipha became incongruous. I will avoid the tortuous and bloody events that preceded the rise to power of Kamal Pasha who, in 1924, abolished the Caliphate. Earlier Indian Muslims in cooperation with Gandhi had agitated for the protection of the Caliphate and against the threat of its abolition. It is also necessary to note that Kamal had become distrustful of Indian Muslims because the then Aga Khan and the former Judge Amir Ali sent a joint letter to Kamal Pasha protesting against the treatment given to the Caliph and asking him to treat the Caliph with dignity and respect. In this letter they claimed that they were speaking on behalf of millions of Indian Muslims. Kamal Pasha was firmly against Turkey being entangled with Arabic countries or with India. For this reason and also for the reason that he wanted no religion in public affairs, he refused to become Calipha

himself when beseeched to do so by, among others, Indian Muslims.

What did Kamal Pasha then do? He proceeded to secularise the Turkish society and State. By this time he had become a dictator having throttled the opposition in the National Assembly. He attacked the fez cap which was associated with Turkish Islam. Wearing a fez cap was made a criminal offence. Nehru rightly points out that the fez cap was inoffensive and when it was banned, riots broke out and they were ruthlessly suppressed. "It sounds rather silly to attach so much importance to a headdress. What is much more important is what is inside the head, not what is on top of it." (Glimpses of World History by Jawaharlal Nehru, p.708)

I will only enumerate some other steps taken by Kamal Pasha for secularising Turkey.

- 1) He encouraged the wearing of European dress - he himself wore European suits and a hat.
- 2) All monasteries and religious houses were abolished and their wealth confiscated for the State.
- 3) Muslim religious schools were abolished and State non-religious schools were started.
- 4) Shariat Law was replaced by Swiss Civil Code, the Italian Penal Code and German Commercial Code.
- 5) Polygamy was abolished.
- 6) A Society for the defence of women's right was established; purdah was abolished and women were persuaded to enter into the professions.
- 7) Latin script replaced Arabic script.
- 8) Turkish language was purged of Arabic and Persian words, partly because those words could not be

written in Latin script.

All this undoubtedly made Turkey a strong State compared to other Muslim nations. Some of the changes made have endured to this day. Turkey is even today a secular State. A woman wearing skirts, Ms. Chiller, had for some time been the Prime Minister of Turkey.

But the secularism of Kamal Pasha was based upon dictatorship and was not brought about by discussion and persuasion - a course Nehru would have adopted. In the ordinary course, a system which has been imposed upon people with force would be overthrown by the people at some stage. But the secular state has survived for 60 years after Kamal Pasha's death. Of late, Islamic Fundamentalism is raising its head in Turkey but the Turks who have tasted the fruits of secular life are not accepting a course which may lead them to an Islamic State. It may, therefore, be regarded that the majority of Turks have accepted secularism. Despite a couple of coups, Turkey has now retained the democratic framework.

Digressing slightly I wish to refer to another Muslim ruler. Some historians think that Akbar's was also a secular State. Akbar's confused religiosity has been equated with secularism by some historians. He received members of Jesuit Mission to find answers to his theological doubts. On the promptings of a flattering theologian, Akbar promulgated what has been described as "Infallibility Decree" under which the Emperor alone could with finality decide any question concerning the Muslim religion. Akbar also partly indulged in the rituals of as divergent religions as Zoraastrianism and Jainism. At one stage he propounded a new religion called Din-e-Ilahi (Faith of God) which by necessary implication rejected the claim of Mohamed being the seal of prophethood. By no stretch of imagination this could be called secularism. (See Oxford History

of India by Vincent Smith, 4th Edition, edited by Percival Spear, p.346 et seq.)

S. Gopal rightly points out that his marriage with a Hindu Princess, partaking of "Gangajal" etc., showed, apart from his love of Hinduism, his anxiety to hold his empire together and to prevent his Hindu subjects from becoming restive. His "Sarvadharam Samabhav" made him worship Virgin Mary and other deities on different days according to rites of different religions - thus infuriating the followers of Islam which prohibited idol worship. (A Historical Perspective of Secularism in India by S. Gopal, pp.7 and 8, People's Reporter Publisher, Bangalore).

A brief reference to the position in England should be in order. In England there is a close alliance between the Church and the State. The Church of England became independent of the Pope in the Sixteenth Century and is the official Church of England. The monarch of England is the head of the Church. Though there is religious freedom in England, the Church of England has a special status inasmuch as the monarch of England must join in communion with the Church of England. A Catholic or anyone who marries a Catholic cannot be the monarch of England. It is probable that a Catholic may not even be Lord Chancellor.

The Church of England by certain internal measures can constitute a General Synod consisting of clergy as well as laity and this assembly can put forth proposals regarding religious matters -- such as communion, baptism etc. These proposals do not have the force of law unless the Parliament has approved them by a simple resolution and have received the Royal assent thereafter. This is a simplified account of the relationship between the Church and the State in England. (For a detailed discussion, see 'Constitutional Law' by E.C.S. Wade and Godfrey Phillips). The Established

Church in Scotland is the Presbyterian Church and the General Assembly of that Church is the supreme legislative and judicial body.

The provisions touching the form of worship are of the authorship of the Church but become binding only under the authority of the Parliament, which may consist of Christians of any denomination, non-Christians and atheists. To this limited extent it can be said that there is no theocratic polity in England.

It is time we turn to the Constitution of India. Is the State envisaged under the Constitution a secular State? Is there a wall of separation between the State and religions? Our twin-sister State - Pakistan - is an Islamic Republic. Pakistan's Constitution proclaims that sovereignty over the entire world belongs to Allah. No law which is repugnant to Holy Quran and other sacred books can be enacted by the State.

It is contended by many that India is a secular State because -

- (1) no particular religion is prescribed as the State religion;
- (2) no preferential treatment is envisaged for any religion or for people professing any religion;
- (3) the right to worship is given to followers of all religions.

It is further stated that active or direct promotion or propagation of any religion by the State is not provided for in the Indian Constitution. But is it prohibited?

Equality before law (Article 14), prohibition of discrimination on the ground of religion (Article 15) and equality of opportunity in public employment or for holding any public office (Article 16) are all healthy provisions indicating democratic and secular credentials of Indian polity.

Let us now turn to other relevant provisions.

Article 27 provides that "no person shall be compelled to pay any taxes, the proceeds of which are specifically appropriated in payment of expenses for the promotion or maintenance of any religion or religious denomination". (Emphasis provided)

This Article is only a ban against the State from collecting taxes, part or whole of which could be utilised for the promotion of any religion. Two consequences follow from this. First, if there is no direct connection between a tax and the promotion of religion, the ban does not come into force. Amounts from the general exchequer can be appropriated for religious purposes. Secondly a tax may be levied for the religious and spiritual upliftment of the citizens and the proceeds can be utilised for the promotion of all religions - a la Akbar.

This is good news for 'Sangha Pariwar'. Ram Temple can be constructed at Ayodhya, with, partly at least, the heap of funds from the State exchequer. Haj pilgrims' tours may be subsidised; contributions can be made to Waqf Boards; payment of stipends to Imams may be considered, as the Supreme Court itself has suggested. A secularist may only bemoan that there is no total prohibition against the use of State funds for religious purposes.

Article 28(1) lays down that no religious instruction shall be provided in any educational institution wholly maintained out of State funds.

It is well known that almost all educational institutions receive grants from the Government or a Governmental body like University Grants Commission. It is generally accepted that few schools, even religious schools, can survive without grants-in-aid. (See *In Re Kerala Education Bill*, AIR 1958 S.C.956 @ 980). These grants cover 100 per cent of the

salaries of the teaching staff and 90% of the salaries of the non-teaching staff. A small proportion of the expenses is met by other sources including tuition fees. Such institutions are not institutions wholly maintained, though largely maintained, out of State funds. The ban of Article 28(1) will not apply to such educational institutions. Elphinstone College is covered; St. Xavier's College is not.

We have seen how under the secular Constitution of U.S.A. a State-aided school cannot impart religious education. Article 28(3) permits a State-recognised or a State-aided school to give religious instruction or to hold religious worship (Satyanarayan Puja) provided no student is compelled to attend the instruction or the worship. It is very difficult for unwilling students to abstain from such classes. Willy-nilly such students will attend religious instructions which may not be educative and which may be propagandist. This is not secularism.

As originally enacted the Preamble to the Constitution did not contain either the word secular or the word socialist. It began with -

"We, the people of India,
having solemnly resolved to
constitute India into a sovereign
democratic republic"

By the 42nd Amendment, the opening words were replaced by the following:-

"We, the people of India,
having solemnly resolved to
constitute India into a sovereign
socialist secular democratic
republic ..."

The words in emphasis were added. Nothing else in the Constitution was changed to invest the Constitution with secular character. By putting on a Gandhi cap one does not become Gandhi or a Gandhian. That is the only

comment I can make on this change.

But what is secular? The leaders of the Janata Party, which came into power, noticed that the word secular had not been defined. By the 44th Amendment, an attempt was made to define 'secularism' by saying that it meant 'Sarvadharm Samabhav' (Equal regard for all religions). Incidentally, socialism was also sought to be defined as society free from exploitation. During the discussion of the Amendment Bill in the Rajya Sabha, after its passage in the Lok Sabha, the definitions were deleted. But the phrase 'Sarvadharm Samabhav' sounded and tasted sweet and our politicians have been rolling it on their tongues ever since. But does this not mean that the Parliament in its constituent jurisdiction did not accept that secularism meant 'Sarvadharm Samabhav'? As a lawyer I insist that the meaning of the word must be found in the dictionary. One can also see how historically the word has been used, especially by those who were instrumental in bringing that word into currency.

Prof. Donald E. Smith, Professor of Political Science in Pennsylvania University, provided what he regarded as a working definition of a secular State. This was in his book "India as a Secular State", 1962 (Pub. Praveetan University Press, Princeton):

"The working definition which I suggest is as follows:

The secular State is a State which guarantees individual and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion, is not constitutionally connected to a particular religion nor does it seek either to promote or interfere with religion". (p.4)

There is not enough space here to examine in detail the views of Prof. Smith. It is sufficient

to mention that Prof. Smith himself finds that there are several instances both in the Constitution and the laws which, contrary to his definition, have amounted to interference by the State in religious matters. My criticism of Prof. Smith's approach is that it sweeps away the basic and historical meaning of secularism. I say: Back to basics. You cannot have one meaning of secularism in one country and another meaning in another country. The proper name for Indian polity is probably what Dr. Rafiq Zuckaria has called "accommodative pluralism" ('The Widening Divide', Penguin, p.314).

(For an interesting debate on Prof. Smith's book, please see the last three Chapters of "Secularism in India", Ed. by Prof. Sinha, Pub. Lalvani. For a more detailed analysis of the provisions of the Constitution, see Prof. S.P. Sathe's "Secularism - Law and the Constitution of India", Pub. Indian Secular Society).

In fact, some commentators and even the judgments of the Supreme Court have equated pluralism envisaged in the Constitution to secularism. But the difficulties one would encounter if 'Sarvadharm Samabhav' is accepted have not been appreciated. If you accept 'Sarvadharm Samabhav' as the foundation of Indian Constitution, you cannot bring about any religious reform.

What I have said about the non-secular character of the Indian Constitution is not shaken by whatever has been said by the Supreme Court in some of its judgments. I will refer to one case which can be taken as the most authoritative pronouncement by the Supreme Court on secularism. The interpretation of the word secularism was directly involved in S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (AIR 1994 S.C.1918). I will refer to this case as Bommai's case.

President's rule had been imposed in four

States in the north in the wake of the demolition of Babri Masjid and of the disturbances that followed. In those four States BJP was in power and the dismissal of the four Governments was sought to be upheld on the ground that the governments of those States could not be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution because those governments were acting against the secular principles which were an integral part of the Constitution of India. The President's order was challenged by the governments who had been dismissed. Bommai came in the picture because his JD Ministry in Karnataka had been dismissed, though on another ground. All the petitions challenging different Presidential orders were heard together and disposed of by one set of judgments by a bench of 9 Judges. For a non-lawyer going through all the judgments and finding out the exact law pronounced by the Court may be a difficult, if not a Herculean, task.

Let me assure you that you can safely rely on me on the understanding of the law laid down in Bommai's case. For the present purposes I will only refer to what has been said in relation to secularism. For the sake of arithmetic, one can say that Justices Pandian, Ahmedi, Jeevan Reddy, S.C. Agarwal and K. Ramaswamy agree with Justices P.B. Sawant and Kuldeep Singh who gave the leading judgment to which I will be referring now.

In the light of the contentions raised before the Court, the Judges were required to examine the concept of secularism under the Constitution. Sawant, J., proceeding to refer to Articles 14, 15 and 16 and Articles 25 to 30 said :

"These provisions by implication prohibit the establishment of a theocratic State and prevent the State either identifying itself or favouring any particular religion or

religious sects or denomination. The State is enjoined to accord equal treatment to all religions and religious sects and denominations" (Emphasis mine)

The last sentence, with great respect, is not warranted by the provisions considered. Sawant, J. proceeds to quote at length Mr. M.C. Setalvad, from his 1965 Patel Memorial Lecture on Secularism, and accepts the fact that Mr. Setalvad said that our Constitution lacks a complete separation between the Church and the State but asserted that it could not be said that the Indian State did not possess some important characteristics of a secular State. Justice K. Ramaswamy has quoted authors and authorities in several paragraphs (with a number of inaccuracies in the printed report) and after saying that the Supreme Court has not accepted the wall of separation between the Church and the State, proceeded to agree with Justice Sawant. He concluded:

"Secularism, therefore, is a part of the fundamental law and the basic structure of the Indian political system. ..." (p.2020)

The Indian attempt at redefinition of secularism demands of an Indian acceptance of the values of other religions while permitting him to practice his own religion. "The Indian concept of secularism is full of contradictions and therefore is unable to provide a clear unambiguous guideline either to the individual or to the State. As a consequence, the religious values continue to dominate the day to day affairs and in the process generate tension because of plurality of religious views" (Prof. H.Y. Siddiqui in "Quest for Secular Society - Challenge and Response" in 'Secularism and Indian Polity', Ed. Bidyut Chakrabarty, p.233 - Segment Book Distributors, Delhi).

....to be continued

Human Rights Section:

NO to the 'Development', YES to 'Justice'

Stan Swamy

NO to the 'Development' that enriches a few and impoverishes most. . . YES to 'Justice' that preserves natural resources and shares them equitably

When all the trees have been cut down,
when all the animals have been hunted,
when all the waters are polluted,
when all the air is unsafe to breathe,
only then will you discover you cannot eat money.

(~ *Indigenous People's Prophecy* ~)

Everybody is speaking of growth and development these days. The Lok Sabha election was won by the ruling party on 'sab ka vikas' slogan. The more recent State election in Jharkhand was again fought on 'development of Adivasis' preaching. The electronic and print media have become the messengers of this 'development' magic. The proof of this is the rising Sensex & Nifty, several MoUs being signed by the Indian govt. and national & international corporate houses, the promise of unbelievable amount of investments that are going to pour into the country and that the growth rate will be up to 6-7% shortly etc.

But the contrary is the reality of the poorest of the poor. As the country is supposedly developing by leaps & bounds, poverty of the Adivasi, Dalit people is deepening by the day. Their land which is the only source of their sustenance is being forcibly snatched from them for a pittance. The rich minerals in their land are very much wanted but the Adivasi people are not

wanted any more. In fact one can say that all the show-pieces of development such as mines, factories, dams, highways are built with the blood of the Adivasi people.

In a study done by the Centre for Environment and Food Security (CEFS) on "Hunger in Adivasi Areas of Rajasthan and Jharkhand" in 2005, the following disturbing facts came to light in Jharkhand State [<http://www.cefs-india.org/pressrelease.html>]:

- **Adivasi population has dropped** from around 60% in 1911 to 27.67% in 1991
- **Mostly dependent on agriculture:** 76.8 per cent are agriculturists, 17.6 per cent daily wagers, 1.8 per cent MFP gatherers, 0.4 per cent handicapped & aged and 3.4 per cent belonged to other occupations. **Housing:** Only 0.4 per cent had pucca house, 3.2 per cent semipucca, 89.8 per cent had mud-houses and 6.6 per cent were living under thatched roofs
- **Literacy:** 61.2 per cent were illiterate, 3.8 per cent barely-literate, 8.6 per cent had received primary schooling, 13.2 per cent had middle schooling, 10.2 per cent had received education up to high school and 3 per cent of Jharkhand respondents had received college education.
- **Migration:** 26.2 per cent of surveyed households said that at least one member from each family had migrated to some town or city in search of livelihood.

- **Chronic hunger:** A staggering and shocking over 99 per cent were facing chronic hunger .Out of the total 1000 households asked as to whether they had eaten two square meals on the previous day of the survey, only four respondents (0.4 per cent) said that they had eaten two square meals on the previous day.
- **Displacement:** After Independence, over 10 million Adivasis have been displaced in the country to make way for development projects such as dams, mining, industries, roads, protected areas etc. Though most of the dams are located in Adivasi areas, only 19.9 per cent (1980-81) of Adivasi land holdings are irrigated as compared to 45.9 per cent of all holdings of the general population
- **Adivasis and Forests:** Adivasi people in India have been an integral part of the forests. But little is being discussed at the international level about protecting the indigenous peoples of the forests. Coupled with this is the systematic approach of the state in India which presumes that control over forests and wildlife can be best attained by getting the adivasis out of the forests. The state supported vested interests feel that adivasis are an impediment to the free operations of the forest and mining mafia...
- **Loss of traditional livelihood systems:** The core of this problem lies in the structural changes in Adivasi economy in the last five decades that have depleted and destroyed the traditional livelihoods and food system of these communities.
- **Disastrous impact of industrialization:** Immediately after independence the Nehruvian development paradigm embarked on building “temples of modern India”. The social and ecological costs of this development were largely borne by country’s Adivasi communities in terms of physical displacement, destruction of sustenance base and gradual alienation from natural resources. It is these starving, hungry and poor Adivasis who were made to pay the “price of progress”.
- **Poverty and Unemployment** According to government estimates, around 23.22 lakh families in the rural areas of Jharkhand live below the poverty line, out of which 3.91 lakhs belong to SCs and 8.79 lakhs to STs. It is estimated that almost 61.57per cent of the families living in the rural areas are below poverty line.
- **Poor Status of Health and Nutrition** The nutritional status of people in general and women and children in particular is very low in Jharkhand. According to National Family Health Survey (NFHS-II), during 1998-99, amongst the under-3 age group children, 54.3per cent were under-weight, 49 per cent were stunted and 25per cent were wasted.
- **Infant & Child Mortality** The incidence of anemia in adolescent girls was 72.5per cent, amongst pregnant

women was 63.9 per cent and among the lactating women it was almost 76 per cent.

- **Alienation of Adivasi land**

Jharkhand's agriculture is almost completely dependent on the monsoon; only 8 per cent of cultivable land is irrigated. Agricultural and forest lands are the sole sources of sustenance for the Adivasis.

- **Forced to migrate:** Apart from the forced involuntary displacements caused by large projects, several lakhs of Jharkhandis have migrated to the tea plantations in Darjeeling and Assam. Several thousands, especially young women, are migrating to large cities and towns. A recent report says that about two lakh Adivasi young women from Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal are presently working as house-maids in middle-class homes. Employment opportunities in Jharkhand are nil. During the last five decades, it is estimated that

as many as 40 to 45 lakh non-Tribals from neighbouring states have in-migrated into Jharkhand and have taken over the whole economy and greater part of job opportunities.

Undo the injustice done to indigenous people: acknowledge and implement their constitutional, legal and judicial rights and safeguards. Foremost among them are (1) the Vth Schedule of the Constitution, (2) the CNT/SPT Acts, (3) SC and the ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, (4) PESA Act 1996, (5) Forests Rights Act 2006, (6) Samata judgment 1997 of the Supreme Court, (7) 'Owner of the land is also the owner of the sub-soil minerals 2013' judgment of SC.

Our ultimate aim has to be to work towards a cosmic harmony to which justice and peace are closely interrelated. If you want to cultivate peace, protect cosmos.

February 2015

Discussion on M.N. Roy on Lok Sabha TV

Watch a very good discussion which was organized by Lok Sabha TV on 3rd February, 2014 on the occasion of the 60th death anniversary of M.N. Roy under its weekly programme "A Page from History".

Participants were Prof. Subroto Mukherji, Political Science Deptt., JNU (Retd.), Prof. Rakesh Batabyal, noted Historian, JNU and N.D. Pancholi, Secretary, Indian Renaissance Institute.

Anchor: Nilanjan Mukhopadhyay

It is available on Youtube. The link is given below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJFqtbaK1oU>

Readers are requested to send their comments to The Radical Humanist at: theradicalhumanist@gmail.com

– Mahi Pal Singh

Dharna in Support of Teesta Setalvad and Javed Anand

Today various Organizations/members of civil society staged a symbolic Dharna at Janatar Mantar in support of Teesta Setalvad and against Modi led Administration and Govt. of Gujarat. The Dharna was staged on being seriously aggrieved on account of registration of a false case against Teesta, which in fact is an outcome of vengeance against Teesta Setalvad for her agitations and Legal war against Modi led Govt. and for Massacre of thousands of innocent people of Gujarat in the year 2002.

After the Dharna a Memorandum was also submitted to the President of India seeking therein his intervention in the matter and to order for quashing of FIR registered at the instance of Modi Govt. in order to take revenge.

The participants were PUCL, PEOPLE'S GREEN PARTY, UNITED MUSLIMS FRONT, SDPI, SAMAJWADI NYAY MORCHA, DELHI NAGRIK PRERNA SAMITI.

N.D. Pancholi: 17.02.2015

NOTICE OF CHANGE

The following changes have taken place in the official set-up of The Radical Humanist w.e.f. February 2015:

1. Advisors :

The following veteran radical humanists have given their kind consent to be advisors of the Radical Humanist.
Dr. R.M. Pal, Dr. Narisetti Innaiah

2. Editor : Shri Mahi Pal Singh.

3. Editorial Board:

Sarvshri Ramesh Awasthi, Dr. Deepavali Sen, Vidya Bhushan Rawat, Qurban Ali, N.D. Pancholi (Ex-officio).

4. Office address - For sending articles, reports etc.

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5. Office address for sending subscription/donation :

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