

THE RADICAL HUMANIST



Founder
M.N. ROY

ESTABLISHED : APRIL 1937

(Formerly in the name of 'INDEPENDENT INDIA'
since April 1937 to March 1949)

Vol. 81 Number 10

JANUARY 2018

Rs. 15 / MONTH

**THE RADICAL HUMANIST WISHES ALL ITS READERS, SUBSCRIBERS,
CONTRIBUTORS, DONORS AND WELL WISHERS A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR**

Do not, I beseech you, tamper with our Constitution.....

F.S. Nariman

Demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya on 6th December 1992

An Eye Witness Account

Qurban Ali

Gujarat Elections

(Justice) Rajindar Sachar

The third person

Kuldip Nayar

The Importance of a "Secular State"

K. Pratap Reddy

Revisiting the Idea of 'Violence' as Means of Achieving Political Ends

Dr. A. Raghu Kumar

Justice A.P. Shah Says 'Suspicious Death' of

Sohrabuddin Case Judge Needs Probe

Akhil Kumar

Agents of change: Dr. Ramesh Awasthi and Manisha Gupte

Philip Mathew

Stalin's Young Man: M.N. Roy and the Russian Revolution - 2

'Cover-up operation': NHRC holds Chhattisgarh guilty of
concealing Salwa Judum crimes

574

On behalf of The Radical Humanist fraternity I congratulate Dr. Ramesh Awasthi, Chairman of the Indian Renaissance Institute, and Manisha Gupte on being chosen THE WEEK's 'Couple of the Year'. We reproduce below two photos from the magazine announcing the selection and also an article.

- Mahi Pal Singh

AGENTS OF CHANGE



Cover Page of THE WEEK



Manisha Gupte and Ramesh Awasthi

THE RADICAL HUMANIST

Vol. 81 Number 10, January 2018

Monthly journal of the Indian Renaissance Institute
Devoted to the development of the Renaissance Movement and to the promotion of human rights, scientific temper, rational thinking and a humanist view of life.

Founder Editor:

M.N. Roy

Advisor:

Dr. Narisetti Innaiah

Editor:

Mahi Pal Singh

Editorial Board:

Ramesh Awasthi, Rekha Saraswat,
N.D. Pancholi, Dipavali Sen

Printer and Publisher:

Satish Chandra Varma

Send articles and reports to:

Mahi Pal Singh at E-21/5-6,
Sector 3, Rohini, Delhi- 110085.
(M) 09312206414, 09015020456, 07042548234

or E-mail them to:

theradicalhumanist@gmail.com or
mahipalsinghrh@gmail.com

**Please send Subscription/Donation
Cheques in favour of**

The Radical Humanist to:

Satish Chandra Varma, Treasurer IRI,
A-1/103, Satyam Apartments, Vasundhra
Enclave, Delhi- 110096. (M) 9811587576.
Email ID: scvarma17@gmail.com

Please Note: Authors will bear sole accountability for corroborating the facts that they give in their write-ups. Neither the IRI/the Publisher, nor the Editor of this journal will be responsible for testing the validity and authenticity of statements & information cited by the authors. Also, sometimes some articles published in this journal may carry opinions not similar to the Radical Humanist philosophy; but they would be entertained here if the need is felt to debate and discuss them.

CONTENTS :

Articles and Features:

	Page No.
We Remember: Roy on Himself (Justice) V.M. Tarkunde	4
Demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya on 6th December 1992	5
An Eye-Witness Account Qurban Ali	
Gujarat Elections (Justice) Rajinder Sachar	7
The third person Kuldip Nayar	9
The Importance of a "Secular State" K. Pratap Reddy	11
Do not, I beseech you, tamper with our Constitution..... F.S. Nariman	14
Agents of change: Dr. Ramesh Awasthi and Manisha Gupte Philip Mathew	15
Harishchandra Syndrome Ajit Bhattcharyya	16
Why Sonia Gandhi Matters In Congress? Gurdeep Singh Sappal	16
Democracy Cannot Exist Without Justice and Justice Cannot Exist Without Free and Fearless Judges	18
Exclusive: Justice A.P. Shah Says 'Suspicious Death' of Sohrabuddin Case Judge Needs Probe Akhil Kumar	19
Revisiting the Idea of 'Violence' as Means of Achieving Political Ends Dr. A. Raghu Kumar	21
Terrible Misreading Of Uttar Pradesh Local Body Polls' Results Faraz Ahmad	26
Humanists' Section :	
Building Humanism, Busting Myth and Privilege Adam Savager	28
Stalin's Young Man: M.N. Roy and the Russian Revolution - 2	31
Human Rights Section :	
Raising a unified voice against hate Hishma Tanseema Nazir	35
'Cover-up operation': NHRC holds Chhattisgarh guilty of concealing Salwa Judum crimes	36
Sharm Inko Magar Nahin Aati – Yet They do not Feel Ashamed: 41	
Meet Chhattisgarh jailer Varsha Dongre: Suspended for exposing torture and sexual abuse of Adivasis	42

Articles and Features:

We Remember

December 13/14 Ellen slain; January 25, 1954 Roy no more, going down like the setting sun. The two months merged into one to make a season. The January issue of the journal used to be a memorial number, commemorating the Roys. Later day compulsions led to the discontinuance of the practice. January, nevertheless, remains with us a moment of memories, reminiscences, regrets and resolves. As an aid let us hear Roy himself:

ROY ON HIMSELF

.... LET US HAVE a growing number of rational and moral men and women, and we will have no difficulty in building up good political and economic institutions. And in this connection, let us remember that example is better than precept. Let radical humanists themselves compose a society of rational and moral men. Their ideal is not something to be realised in the distant future, but it is to be lived here and now and to be growingly approximated. To educate the people by example and precept is the simple way of New Humanism.

I feel that I am peculiarly fitted to conduct such a cultural movement. No, I am not trying to praise myself. But I have worked in politics in different countries for the last forty years, and have acquired a rather unique experience. And, at the end of it all I have realised the futility of what they call politics. I am old now, but I shall devote the remaining years of life to this educative movement, which I am convinced will be of lasting value ...

From a speech at Dharwar,

Independent India, February 20, 1949.

(Reproduced from The Radical Humanist,

January 1983, Edited by (Justice) V.M. Tarkunde)

*Late Justice V.M.
Tarkunde, a relentless
crusader for Civil
Liberties and
Democratic Freedoms,
former Chairman, Indian
Renaissance Institute and
Editor,
The Radical Humanist*



SUSHMA MALIK IS NO MORE

(1931-2017)



Sushma Malik, a veteran radical humanist, died, on the night of 26th December, 2017 at New Delhi. She was suffering from bile cancer for some past which was detected only a few months back. She was specialist in Air and Space laws and had illustrious career in the Ministry of External Affairs. Both her late parents, namely Shri Ram Bhejla Malik and Smt. Vidya Malik, her father and mother respectively, were veteran freedom fighters, having served jail terms during British regime. Her elder brother late Shri S.C. Malik, senior advocate at Delhi, was fiery radical humanist who championed many social and political causes of far reaching public importance. Thus belonging to a distinguished family, she followed in the same footsteps and throughout remained a dedicated rationalist and radical humanist. She remained unmarried and supported large number of humanist causes. 'Indian Renaissance Institute' and its journal 'The Radical Humanist' is deeply indebted to her for her support and assistance which was readily available whenever required.

Indian Renaissance Institute pays its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and friends.

Ramesh Awasthi

Chairperson, Indian Renaissance Institute

On the 25th Anniversary of the Demolition of the Babri Masjid: Demolition of Babri Masjid at Ayodhya on 6th December 1992

An Eye-Witness Account

Qurban Ali

Revisiting decisive moments of your life is always a cathartic experience. I can never say the same about the day of 6th December 1992, which brings back a series of haunting memories - that I would rather not revisit. However, when my friend Vidya Subramanian of The Hindu policy centre called me and asked me to write down my memories of that tragic day and asked me how I felt as a Muslim at that time, I felt compelled to share the story as I had witnessed it 25 years ago.

I was working for the Hindi 'Sunday Observer' at that time and was also a stringer for the BBC. BBC Hindi and Urdu services often had telephonic interviews that were called 'Phono' or 'two ways'. On the 5th of December, I reached Ayodhya and checked-in at the

journalists' favourite accommodation, Hotel Shan-e-Awadh. Anticipation and excitement ran high in the hotel lobby that evening. The Sangh Parivar, specially one of its wing, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) had announced the "Kar Sewa" that day. It was quite evident that they were on their way to demolish the disputed mosque. After all, they had been feverishly practicing and rehearsing the demolition for days. The Kar Sewaks came prepared and equipped with all the logistics to demolish the enduring 460 year-old structure of Mughal era.

On the morning of 6th December, Ayodhya was caught up in a buzz. Journalists positioned themselves on an elevated platform near the Babri Masjid. At exactly 10 am, Kar Sewaks started gathering near the mosque and made

their way towards the barbed wiring of the security cordon. Within minutes, there was commotion, the storming into the mosque had begun. The Kar Sewaks could now be seen climbing the walls and holding fort on top of the tombs. At that time, BBC's then South Asia Chief Mark Tully decided to move to Faizabad so he could file the news of the storming of Babri Masjid. At that time there were no mobile phones and the only place to connect to the BBC headquarter in London was through central telegraph office (CTO) Faizabad. Mark's colleague Gillian Wright, Ramdutt Tripathi, a Lucknow-based journalist and I reached Faizabad around noon where Mark filed his first report. By 1 pm we were on our way back to Ayodhya where the demolition of Babri Masjid was on full swing, but were stopped by the crowd at the outskirts of the city. We went back to Faizabad and decided to follow the para military forces, i.e., Rapid Action Force (RAF) & Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), when they move to Ayodhya. However, the forces were stopped as well at a railway crossing between the two towns.

When all our efforts to reach Ayodhya were exhausted, a journalist friend Vinod Shukla, then resident editor of Dainik Jagran, suggested a way out. He told us that he knew a way through the city cantonment area and offered us a lift in his personal NE 118 car along with his wife and his local correspondent Saral Gyapte. In half an hour, we managed to reach the Babri Masjid to see all three domes of the mosque demolished. As soon as we got down from our car, a group of violent Kar Sewaks armed with Trident lathis charged at us. Most of them were local residents and were angry to see Mark Tully with us. They knew Mark was a journalist working with BBC and were quiet unhappy with his reportage on Ayodhya. As the mob gathered to beat us, perhaps even kill us, one of the agitated Kar Sewaks suggested that killing us would perhaps disturb the ongoing demolition.

He prescribed that it would be better if they locked us for the time being and killed us later. The five of us were locked in a room in a nearby building. For the next two hours, we were in a state of shock, waiting to be killed when demolition was over.

Saral Gyapte managed to free himself and rushed to the Mahant of Bada Sthan or Badi Haveli, a respectable figure in Ayodhya. When he came to know that the editor of Jagran along with some other journalist were being held hostage, he immediately came to our rescue and on his assurance and a sort of guarantee we were freed at around 7 pm. We were then taken to the local office of the VHP where prominent VHP leaders including Ashok Singhal, Praveen Togadia and some BJP leaders were celebrating the demolition. The statue of 'Ram Lala' was recovered from the mosque and was now at the VHP office where the leaders were performing 'darshan'.

Saral Gyapte asked them for cover so that we could be escorted safely to our hotel at Faizabad. The Mahant of Bada Sthan gave his shawl to Mark Tully so he could hide under it and we were all asked to tie a sort of headgear with the words "Kar Sewak" written on it. We were put in a UP Police truck and dropped at the Shan-e-Awadh at 8 pm.

When we reached Faizabad, the government controlled media, All India Radio and Doordarshan broadcasted the news that "Ayodhya main vivadaspad Dhanchey ko kuch nuqsan pahuncha hai" (the disputed structure in Ayodhya has been damaged).

My last sight of the Babri Masjid was at twilight. It wasn't damaged, in fact, it had been razed to the ground with the kar sewaks taking its rubble as souvenir. At 11 pm IST, I broke the news on BBC Urdu service's news bulletin that the Babri Masjid has been demolished completely.

(The writer is a senior journalist currently associated with Rajya Sabha TV) 

Gujarat Elections

Now that Modi has won Gujarat elections though with a much smaller margin, will he reflect on how low he took politics down when he made the wild charge that there is a conspiracy that Congress and elements in Pakistan may be working in cahoots to prevent B.J.P. victory in Gujarat.

I am troubled as to how could such a low political level to which B.J.P. can fall, all this because the dinner was held at Aiyar house, where S. Monmohan Singh, former Prime Minister, and high ranking former Indian diplomats and High Commissioner of Pakistan were also present. There is a certain amount of decorum and decency which are never crossed in politics. But this charge without any proof has hit the lowest.

There is certainty a banter and a serious dig at the competency of political rivals but never untrue charges. The banter between Gladstone and Disraeli are classic, when the later said; “If Gladstone fell in the Thames, that would be a misfortune. But if someone fished him out again, that would be a calamity.”

Previously such type of low level was never crossed even amongst sworn political rivals in India. It is well known that Dr. Lohia after coming back from Germany, had worked in the Central Congress office with Pandit Nehru who was the president of the congress party. When our socialist party walked out of the Congress in 1946 Dr. Lohia was the bitterest opponent of Nehru. But their relations never became low.

In May 1949, the Socialist Party under Dr. Lohia's leadership held a demonstration before Nepal embassy at Bara Khamba Road, New Delhi to protest against the takeover of Nepal govt. by Rana that forced fleeing of King. We were arrested (about 50 of us including Dr. Lohia) for violating Section 144 Cr.Pc. and so we remained in jail for over a month. During

that period Nehru sent a basket of Mangoes to Dr. Lohia in jail.

Sardar Patel was so annoyed and wrote to Nehru that while the government had arrested Dr. Lohia, he was sending mangoes to him. To which Nehru wrote back politely that we should not mix personal relations with politics.

In 1951 before Lohia's visit to USA he had come to Delhi. I remember that we were in the sitting room when someone told him that there was a phone call for him. Dr. Lohia went to the other room. When he came back I asked whose phone it was. He said, “Pt. Nehru”. “What did he say”, I asked. Dr. Lohia in half banter and annoyance repeated the conversation thus;

Nehru “Ram Manohar, I hear you are going to USA.”

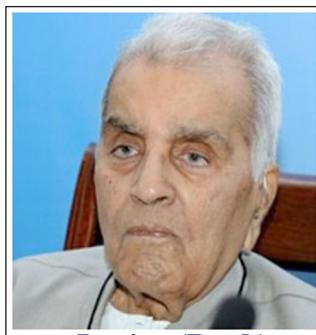
Dr. Lohia, “Yes.”

And there was a pause. Then again Nehru asked, “When?”

Dr. Lohia, “Next week.”

Pause, and then Pt. Nehru said, “Alright,” and switched off.

It was a curious talk and I asked Dr. Lohia what PURPOSE IN PHONING. Dr. Lohia in half anger said – you know he wanted to tell me. “Ram Manohar you are going abroad – do not criticize govt. when abroad, but did not have the guts to tell me.” And then Dr. Lohia in a half annoying anger said, “What strange behaviour – does he think that I will talk ill of govt. when abroad.” Such was their closeness, and yet so apart.



Justice (Retd.)
Rajindar Sachar

However when Dr. Lohia met Einstein he could not restrain and in answer to the latter's questions remarked that "politicians are liars". Einstein with all sobriety personified, still added warmly "that they were criminals". Would Einstein have been able to find adequate words for the politicians now – I doubt it.

One day before filing the election papers against Nehru in General Elections of 1962 Dr. Lohia wrote a letter to Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru.

"Dear President,

You would be surprised to read this letter. When I left the office of the Congress Committee forever I paid regards to that building. Aruna was with me. That was our last meeting. In these elections, your victory is certain. But if the certainty is turned into uncertainty and ultimately to your defeat then I would be extremely happy and it would also be beneficial for the country. Then you would get the opportunity to improve yourself and become a better person. In the end, I pray for your long life so that I may get the opportunity to reform you.

Yours truly,

Ram Manohar Lohia"

To which Nehru replied the followings:-

"Dear Ram Manohar

Received your letter without date and address. I am sending the reply at the address of Socialist Party, Allahabad.

"I am happy that a sober person like you is opposing me in the elections. I think in this election the discussion would be centred on the political programmes. Be cautious and ensure that the personal discussion should be curtailed. On my part I promise that I would not visit my constituency even for a single day.

Yours,

Jawahar Lal Nehru"

In 1964 Dr. Lohia was elected to the Parliament. Nehru made it a point to be present in the parliament on the day when Lohia was sworn as member. Though Dr. Lohia and Nehru continued to exchange lot of hard words yet they were only on policy matters.

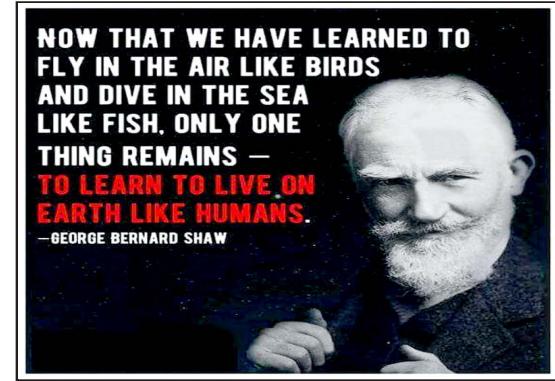
Modi should rather ruminate seriously the alienation of Muslims. That BP did not put up a single Muslim candidate when their population in Gujarat is over 8%.

Can one expect that Prime Minister Modi who took the oath of office will treat all communities equally. Is he in agreement with the statement made by Bhagwat, the RSS boss, that "All people born in India are Hindus", which is deliberately provocative and harmful to the harmony in the Country or the truth of Swami Vivekanand's exhortation that "Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expression of THE RELIGION, which is Oneness, so that each may choose the path that suits him best. I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body."

New Delhi: 22/12/2017

Justice Rajindar Sachar has been Chief Justice, High Court of Delhi and President, PUCL, India. rsachar1@vsnl.net; sachar23@bol.net.in) 

**NOW THAT WE HAVE LEARNED TO
FLY IN THE AIR LIKE BIRDS
AND DIVE IN THE SEA
LIKE FISH, ONLY ONE
THING REMAINS –
TO LEARN TO LIVE ON
EARTH LIKE HUMANS.**
—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW



The third person

In the rumble-tumble of election, the role of Congress president Sonia Gandhi has not been recognized. No doubt, the contest was between Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi but the real rivalry was between the Congress and the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). And here Sonia Gandhi was relevant.

All pollsters predicted victory for the BJP in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh. And this has come true. The Congress won 80 seats and BJP 99. There has been no surprise except the margin of victory. What has been noted is the improvement in the Congress tally. The party which has been in the wilderness in the last few years has come to be relevant again. The gap between the two has narrowed. It looks that Rahul Gandhi will give Prime Minister Narendra Modi a meaningful fight. The credit for this should go to Sonia Gandhi, who once again put life into the party.

I vividly remember the scene in the Central Hall of Parliament after she won the general election in 2004. Members unanimously wanted her to head the government. But she was reluctant to do so. Probably, in her mind was the pernicious propaganda that she hailed from Italy. On her part, she was conscious that the tag of being Italian might adversely affect her son, Rahul.

She deliberately put Dr. Manmohan Singh in the chair of Prime Ministership because he had no politics and no ambition. His tenure of Prime Ministership for ten years was eventless. Important files of Government of India would go to her place for processing and then to Manmohan Singh for mere signatures. Her political adviser Ahmad Patel took all the decisions. Sanjaya Baru, Media Advisor confirms this in his book "The Accidental Prime Minister".

Sonia Gandhi knew the charge which was made against her. But if she had to keep the

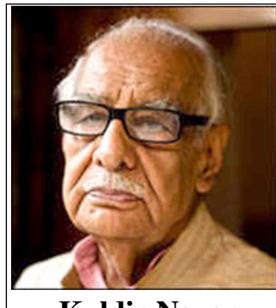
seat warm for her son, Rahul Gandhi, there was no other way. Manmohan Singh does not, however, accept the allegation. Even when asked to comment on the criticism, he merely said: Posternity will judge.

True, today's Congress party has the stamp of her mother-in-law, Indira Gandhi. But Sonia Gandhi is the one who kept the party united. Otherwise it would have split into many groups. To her credit, she had come to be recognized by all the groups as the leader in the party. She was, in fact, the meeting point for all the segments. There was no challenge to her in the party.

The ease with which she has put her son, Rahul Gandhi in her seat shows that she is in fact the party. Rahul is conscious of dynastic charge. He has said openly that there should be a better way to select a person for Congress presidentship. In any case, the dynastic rule ends with Rahul Gandhi.

The problem with the Congress party today is that it has not gone beyond the dynastic dependence. And, somehow, the people are not enamoured of the dynasty anymore. Rahul Gandhi doesn't sell although he passionately and honestly pursues the Congress principles laid down by his great grandfather Nehru. Priyanka, Sonia Gandhi's daughter, goes down well with the masses. This is probably because she reminds them of Indira Gandhi, who still enjoys pre-eminence in their thoughts.

All this are true, yet the Congress has lost its relevance and the party has to work hard to make people believe that it can provide an alternative. Prime Minister Modi is still acceptable in spite



Kuldip Nayar

of the steps like demonetization of currency. People believe that it was all for their good even though they have to face inconvenience.

It is a long haul for the Congress to push out the BJP from power. The biggest problem is that secularism is not a concept as attractive as it used to be once. The people themselves have been influenced by Hindutva thoughts. In fact, there is a soft-Hindutva in the country today. How to resell the idea of India, that is democratic and secular polity, is the arduous task which the Congress is facing today.

That may influence the parliamentary election in 2019 and give direction to the country, including the Congress. The party's problem is that it has not won any election since Modi has come into power. In Gujrat BJP has been able to retain power. This should worry the secular, liberal forces. The BJP is entrenching itself and the Congress loosing the importance it once had.

During the election, Rahul Gandhi went all over the country and faced the crowds all by himself. Sonia Gandhi was not there. This means

that the people have accepted Rahul Gandhi as a representative of the Congress. He too has gained confidence and addresses the people as if he has arrived. Sonia Gandhi can congratulate herself that when she put him in the gaddi of president, there was general acceptance. True, the badge of dynasty was there but the decision did not look dictatorial. Rahul Gandhi had worked with the party's cadre. He went to many places in the country where he sat on the ground with the ordinary members to discuss the challenges that the party faced.

Rahul may not have faced privations which the party men do. But he has got the feel of the values that the party has preserved for the last 150 years. This will stand him in good stead when he directs the Congress as its president. It is an arduous journey but he will have to cover it if he has to make the top.

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

THE RADICAL HUMANIST SUBSCRIPTION RATES

In SAARC Countries:

For one year - Rs. 200.00

For two years - Rs. 350.00

For three years - 500.00

Life subscription - Rs. 2000.00

(Life subscription is only for individual subscribers and not for institutions)

Cheques should be in favour of **The Radical Humanist**.

In other Countries:

Annual subscription (Air Mail) \$ 100.00; GBP 75.00

Note: Direct transfer of subscription amount from abroad may be sent to:

SWIFT Code: CNRB0000349, MICR Code: 110015012 in the Current Account Number

0349201821034 at Canara Bank, Maharani Bagh, New Delhi- 110014, India.

Cheques and money transfer details may be sent to: **Satish Chandra Varma, Treasurer IRI, A-1/103, Satyam Apartments, Vasundhra Enclave, Delhi- 110096. (M) 9811587576.**
Email ID: <scvarma17@gmail.com>

The Importance of a “Secular State”

K. Pratap Reddy

(Editorial Note: There has been continuous attempt by important members of Sangh Pariwar, especially some ministers, condemning and criticising the word ‘Secularism’ as enshrined in our Constitution. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath recently said that the word ‘Secularism’ is the “biggest lie” told post independence. Union Minister of State for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Anantkumar Hegde argued in a meeting of an organization of Brahmins in Karnataka that ‘secularists’ are persons without parentage, in other words bastards. And these ministers while assuming office took oath to uphold and safeguard the values enshrined in our Constitution! In this background the present article “The Importance of a Secular State” by K. Pratap Reddy is worth reading.: N.D. Pancholi)

The concept of a “secular state” is as old as beginning of the history of human civilization. I state without any fear of contradiction that even in the states or countries which were ruled by the kings of any particular religion, it was considered to be an essential obligation of the head of the state to not only respect but also allow the people of different faiths and religions to profess, practice and propagate their respective faiths and religions. In the most ancient political treatise written in the 3rd century BC, namely, “Arthashastra”, Koutilya emphasized this fact in the context of the controversies then existing among the brahmanical Hindus and Buddhists.

This concept of “Secular State” existed not only in India but it was accepted in almost all civilized societies even if they were all ruled by Monarchs. The best example is that of England where the Monarch is also called “The Defender OF FAITH” i.e., the Head of the Presbyterian Church of England, but the Government there remains to be secular. While that is the case of societies ruled by monarchical systems and Governments, it is more particularly and essentially necessary in Democratic Societies ruled by a system of “Constitution”, “Rule of Law” – Written or Unwritten.

With this brief introduction on the subject or concept of “A Secular State”, I must come to the Indian society to understand the concept of “Secular State” not only in its narrower sense,

but in its wider sense in order to maintain the integrity of the country.

A short glimpse of the historical growth of “India that is Bharat” will make us understand the importance, necessity and compulsion of maintaining not only the integrity of the State, but also the peaceful life of co-existence in the Society at Large.

Leaving the unrecorded ancient history of India, the recorded history gives us a clear picture how the Indian society has grown over the last 5000 years. While the history records, the first settlers of India were Aryans from Asia Minor and other countries, these were followed by Kushans, Huns, Zoroastrians, Arabs and many other peoples bringing with them different cultures and civilizations; they may not necessarily be called as “different religions”.

While Christianity dawns from in the 1st century AD, it is an accepted historical fact that Christianity came to India within the next half century, brought by saint Thomas, followed by Zoroastrians and Jews. While the religion Islam is recorded to have originated at the end of the Sixth Century, the Islamic scholars brought that faith to India almost the same time, i.e., about the beginning of the 7th century AD.

Jawaharlal Nehru in his celebrated Book “The discovery of India” in chapter VI Page 244 referring to the growth of Hindu-Muslim culture and Indo – Arab relationship wrote as follows: I

quote “There were no invasions: contacts between India and Arab world grew by Travel to and fro; embassies were exchanged; Indian Books, especially on Mathematics and Astrology were taken to Bagdad and were translated into Arabic. Many Indian physicians went to Baghdad. These trade and cultural relations were not confined to North India. The southern states of India also participated in them, especially the Rashtrakutas, on the west coast of India, for purpose of trade....” These frequent intercourses inevitably led to Indians getting to know the new Religion Islam. Missionaries also came to spread this new faith and they were welcomed; mosques were built. There was no objection raised either by the State or by the people; nor were there any religious conflicts. It was the old tradition of India to be tolerant to ALL faiths and forms of worship. **THUS ISLAM CAME AS A RELIGION TO INDIA SEVERAL CUNTURIES BEFORE IT CAME AS A POLITICAL FORCE.**” (Emphasis is mine).

In this context and of historical background of the growth of our Nation, INDIA THAT IS BHARAT, we must understand the importance of the concept of a “SECULAR STATE”, A “SECULAR SOCIETY” and the meaning of “SECULARISM” itself.

It is, no doubt, true that in the long course of historical growth of our nation, India that is Bharat, there were several conflicts leading to several wars not only between the “INVADERS” and the already established Rulers, but also among the people living here purporting to support their respective religions or faiths, as the case may be.

We must realize and appreciate the fact that the growth of our Indian Nation comprises both pleasant and unpleasant truths. While the wars between the political rulers was for the purpose of expanding their territorial rule and acquiring wealth, the religious conflicts were for expansion of their respective religious faiths or beliefs, both of which weakened the State and the society

always resulting in the conquest of foreign invaders. While the very first invasion on India by Alexander in the 3rd Century B.C. was with the connivance of the political rivals of Porus, the 2nd invasion on India by Mohammad Bin Quasim in 712 A.D. was with the aid of Buddhist monks living on the western bank of river Indus to where they were driven away by the Hindu Brahmanic rulers. A study of our Indian history will disclose such successive instances of treachery and connivance of either political or religious conflicts, always leading to the victory of the invader, whether it was Mahmood Gazni or Mohammad Ghori, or Taimur Lung or Baber and ultimately leading to the colonial and British Rule. It is a tragic part of our Indian history that the Britishers who came to India as TRADERS in the name of East India Company slowly occupied the whole of India and ruled us for about two centuries. While it is no doubt a tragic part of our history but it must awaken us to realize how to maintain the unity and integrity of our Nation, India that is Bharat. At the same time we must also have a deep study of our long struggle to gain our independence from the foreign colonial power.

I am afraid that we may not really understand the necessity, importance and in fact the CUMPUSSION OF SECULARISM being a part of our SOCIO – POLITICAL EXISTENCE as a united integrated Nation unless we have a DEEP, REALISTIC, COMPREHENSIVE AND OBJECTIVE STUDY of the Historical growth of our Nation. Our Nation is UNIQUE NATION comprising of ALL RACES, RELIGIONS, AND CIVILIZATIONS existing in the world. No other nation or country in the world comprises of so many multiple numbers and natures of Races, Religions and Civilizations as our country has. While this DIVERSITY of RACES, RELIGIONS, and CIVILIZATIONS was the pride of our nation, the colonial British Imperialists took advantage of this diversity and continued their Rule by continuously keeping us

divided. DIVIDE AND RULE was the DIVINE THEORY of British colonial Rule, more than their political or military power. Does it not show a very sad, - nay a shameful picture that a mere Forty Thousand British People continued to rule Four Hundred Million People of India.

It was in this context, Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of our Nation, awakened the whole nation and brought ALL the people of India on to one common front and made the British imperialists to realize the fact that they cannot continue to rule India anymore and were ultimately forced to leave. But even while leaving they were successful in diving the country into India and Pakistan by reviving and resorting to their weapon TWO NATION theory.

While Pakistan has chosen to become an Islamic Religious State, into which controversy we may not go, - nor is it necessary for the context of the present subject, WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA chose to become and remain as a SOVEREIGN, DEMOCRATIC, SOCIALIST, SECULAR, REPUBLIC, with constitutional guarantees of not only All Fundamental Human Rights but also Freedom of Religious Belief, Faith, Worship and to freely profess, practice and propagate their respective Religions. While these aspects are the essentials of any and every modern CIVILIZED SOCIETY, they are much more necessary essentials of a multi Racial, multi Religious and multi Civilizational society of India that is Bharat.

The largest ever constituted “constitution Bench of 13 Judges” in Keshavananda Bharati’s case, the Supreme Court of India in 1973, declared that SECULARISM is one of the essential and fundamental basic structure of our Constitution.

“WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA” must realize the fact that even after creation of a separate state of Pakistan on Islamic religious basis, there are more Muslims in India than in Pakistan and in fact more than in any Muslim or Islamic country as they called themselves.

As stated above, apart from this large number

of Muslims, there are living in India, the people of other faiths and religions like Christians, Zoroastrians (*parsis*), Jews, all of whom have not only settled in India, but have accepted this India that is Bharat as their OWN NATION and are treated as citizens of India with all guarantees of Fundamental Rights enshrined in Part III of our Constitution.

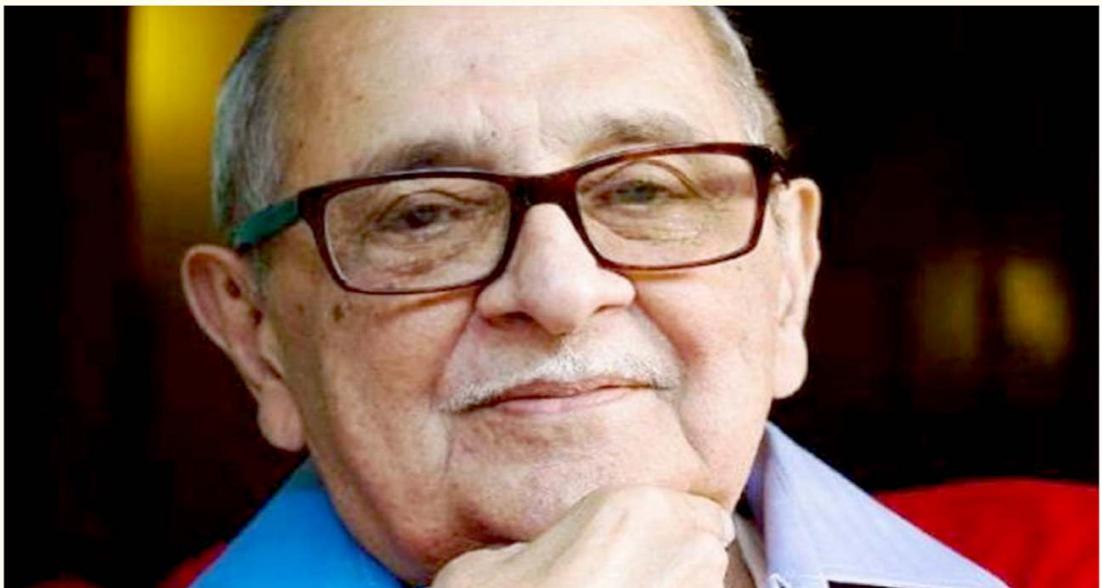
It must also be realized by the majority community who called themselves as Hindus, there is no uniformity in their religions, faiths beliefs customs or rituals. Although, the three codifying laws, namely, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955, the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 and the Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act, 1977, expands the definition of the word “Hindu” as including Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists, but the fact remains that their religious faiths, beliefs and worship are not common. In fact, they do not accept themselves as belonging to the Hindu Religion.

Now coming to those people who called themselves or could be defined in law as Hindus (leaving Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists), there are several diversities among the said so called Hindus both in faiths, beliefs and worship. The Vishnavite Hindus treat themselves as different religion than the Shrivates. Even among the variant sections of Hinduism, Vishnavites, Shrivites, there are further divisions, details of which are not necessary here inasmuch as the matter is known to and recognized by every Indian and more particularly, by every Hindu. The factor of division among the Hindus itself is very much enshrined in Articles 25 to 30 of our Constitution.

Apart from the religious diversities, there is also linguistic diversity amongst WE THE PEOPLE OF INDIA as recognized in various provisions of the Constitution necessitating the SECULARISM not only in the state but also in the society at large without which India cannot remain as one united and integrated state.

K. Pratap Reddy is Senior Advocate of Andhra Pradesh High court at Hyderabad. 

Do not, I beseech you, tamper with our Constitution..... F.S. Nariman



“During 1999, when first NDA government was in power at the Centre, there was a strong demand by RSS and its allies to take over all review of the Constitution - casting doubts over its basic values. Mr. F.S. Nariman, eminent jurist and senior advocate of Supreme Court, while delivering the ‘M.N. Roy Memorial Lecture 2000’: “DOES OUR CONSTITUTION REQUIRE TO BE REVIEWED?” made fervent appeal against such attempts. An excerpt from the said Lecture is given below: N.D. Pancholi:

.....There is a story (probably apocryphal) told of the time when United States of America (like India) was a young, struggling Republic, rid with dissension (as India is today), ultimately leading to the conflict of North and South America which nearly destroyed the nation. It was during this period that the American Ambassador to the Court of St. James in London was asked (somewhat patronizingly) by the French Ambassador:

“Tell me Mr. Ambassador, tell me,
How long will your United States last?”

The answer was as courageous and courteous, and as it was prophetic:

“Sir, so long as our leaders live up to and cherish the ideals of its Founding Fathers.”

I would humbly say to our leaders in governance - Put aside your election manifesto. Cherish the ideals of those who framed our Constitution. Do not, I beseech you, tamper with our Constitution by undertaking an overall review- such a venture can only lead to rising expectations, then dissatisfaction and disillusionment, followed by frustration, and perhaps even (God forbid) ultimate disintegration. When occasion arises, add to and alter -as has been done in the past fifty years -using the amending power and procedure provided for in the Constitution itself, always taking care to safeguard the cultural diversity and political unity of this great country. Only then will you be truly worthy of the Founding Fathers. 

Agents of change

Philip Mathew

NOW, THAT WAS a surprise! And, to read it today of all days. The fifth paragraph of our cover story says that Dr Ramesh Awasthi—one half of THE WEEK's Couple of the Year—printed and distributed an underground newspaper, Satya Samachar, during Emergency. What Awasthi did appeal to me so much because the Malayala Manorama newspaper edited by my grandfather was sealed by the Travancore government on September 10, 1938. The presses rumbled to life nine years later, in 1947, on the day that I am writing this letter—November 29.

During those nine years, the daily was printed underground in the neighbouring, princely state of Kochi. My father wrote in his autobiography: "Banned in its own town, locked up in its own house, the Malayala Manorama appeared in Kunnamkulam as a refugee." A newspaper as a refugee!

Internationally, there are different genres of refugees now. And then there are those who are refugees in their own country. This issue of THE WEEK is the annual special on our person of the year. Very rarely do we have a couple, as we do this year. Drs Awasthi and Manisha Gupte founded the Mahila Sarvangeen Utkarsh Mandal (MASUM) in Malshiras, Pune. They sum up their philosophy in one line: "We are only the agents who are there to bring about a consciousness that life can be much better if there is an equal, democratic society with no violence, disparities or discrimination." There will be no refugee, economic or otherwise,

where this is a reality.

MASUM also empowered women to fight abuse and discrimination. A major story in this issue is the story of Akhila, and her journey to Hadiya. As I write this letter, all angles of the case, from personal liberty to conversion, are being discussed threadbare. While the Supreme Court's decision will be final, the perception war will not end in the near future. Deep down, I feel the case has divided Kerala. And, there are vultures waiting in the wings.

This issue also carries a pictorial story of how one of the last narrow gauge passenger trains in India empowers two districts of Vidarbha, Maharashtra. Interestingly, a close relative of mine used to work for Killick Nixon, the British company that built and owned the train. I had even forgotten the name of the company, until Senior Photographer Amey Mansabdar brought it up.

The three-coach Shakuntala Express runs from Achalpur to Murtizapur. People who depend on this train to get to work would, perhaps, be forced to migrate, if it were to stop running. In the cover story, Gupte says the highlight of every evening in Malshiras would be a question: "ST aali ka? (Has the state transport bus arrived?)" The arrival of the bus signalled the official onset of night. Two live examples of how crucial transport is for our rural population. Does this matter to the India of metro trains and Uber?

Courtesy Letter from the Editor, The Week, December 10, 2017

Swami Vivekananda on sectarianism, bigotry and fanaticism

"Sectarianism, bigotry and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful Earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization, and sent whole nations to despair."

Swami Vivekananda
Chicago, Sept 11, 1893.

Harishchandra Syndrome

My Message of the Year

Ajit Bhattcharyya

This is my 19th message through my New Year's Greetings. A famous Bengalee Professor of Economics has commented that all GOVTS— State & Central are acting as “Danchhartas” (Doles Houses). They are doling out to the poor in cash & kind spending huge amount of tax money. It does give instant relief, no doubt, but does not create jobs. Practically no Govt. aims at making the poor financially self- sufficient. They treat the poor as beggars, which he terms as “the Harishchandra Syndrome.” Here he comes very near to M, N, Roy's idea of the Self-sufficient Man.

He adds that Political Parties thrive on “Tollas”, that is, extortion money.

It is only the mushrooming Real Estate Industry which is visible as a sign of big

development all over India. It is a good target of extortion also. But it is basically non-productive & it does not create long term jobs. As a cost it, on the other hand, guzzles up huge amount of non- renewable materials, vast quantity of energy, while blocking tremendous amount of financial resources. We must not forget that not long ago, many South East Asian financial giants, called the Financial Tigers, got heavily bruised for such miss adventures.

This calls for a new equitable & sustainable Housing Planning - both urban & rural.

Ajit Bhattcharyya is a senior Radical Humanist and Life Trustee of the Indian Renaissance Institute. He may be contacted at: bajitrh@gmail.com—M-9433224517 

Did you know? Why Sonia Gandhi Matters In Congress?

Gurdeep Singh Sappal

14 March, 1998 Sonia Gandhi took over as Congress President. At that time it was in government in only in four states, viz. Mizoram, Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh and Orissa.

It had lost all other states and was in opposition at the Centre.

It was actually close to ‘*Congress-mukt Bharat*’!

The Congress party had split into several factions:

1. All India Indira Congress (Tiwari); 2. Karnataka Congress Party; 3. Tamizhaga Rajiv Congress; 4. Karnataka Vikas Party; 5. Arunachal Congress; 6. Tamil Maanila Congress;

7. Madhya Pradesh Vikas Congress; 8. All India Trinamool Congress; 9. Tamil Nadu

Makkal Congress; 10. Himachal Vikas Congress; 11. Manipur State Congress Party; 12. Goa Rajiv Congress Party; 13. Arunachal Congress (Mithi); 14. All India Indira Congress (Secular);

15. Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi;

It was after Sonia Gandhi took over as Congress President, that the process of split reversed. All factions came back under her leadership, except Trinamool Congress and Manipur State Congress (which merged with RJD) and Goa Rajiv Congress (merged with NCP). Tamil Manila Congress was suspended.

Within months of her taking over, Congress started winning elections. In the same year Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan were won, retrieving the party back from oblivion.

It is in this background, the importance of Gandhi family in the Congress Party can be understood.

After independence, Congress Party has had 16 Presidents:

1. Pattabhi Sitaramaiyya; 2. Purushottam Das Tondon; 3. Jawaharlal Nehru; 4. UN Dhebar; 5. Indira Gandhi; 6. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy; 7. K. Kamaraj; 8. S. Nijalingappa; 9. Jagjivan Ram; 10. Shankar Dyal Sharma; 11. Devkanta Barua; 12. Indira Gandhi; 13. Rajiv Gandhi; 14. PV Narasimha Rao; 15. Sitaram Kesri; 16. Sonia Gandhi

These were towering personalities. Of these the following left the party at different points of time:

1. Purushottam Das Tandon; 2. Neelam Sanjiva Reddy; 3. K. Kamraj; 4. S. Nijalingappa; 5. Jagjivan Ram; 6. Devkanta Barua

They all tried to own up the Congress legacy and give a different policy and philosophy direction, as opposed to that of Nehru and Indira Gandhi. But all of them failed to impress the people of India!

It certainly can't be termed as the fault of Nehru and Indira Gandhi that their vision of Congress won and survived in a democracy.

After Rajiv Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi kept away from the party for eight long years. Party had an all powerful Prime Minister and Party President in PV Narasimha Rao. It is wrong to allege that during this period, Sonia Gandhi kept her tight hold on the party from the back stage. The fact remains that at the highest political levels, this period was long enough to create an alternative leadership, which didn't happen. The party sunk to all time low of just three state governments and 15 factions. Sonia Gandhi retrieved it back. She just didn't bring it back to power, but also left an indelible imprint on the philosophy and policy outlook of the party. She ensured a rights-based and a distinct pro-people orientation to the government

It is for such reasons that Sonia Gandhi matters in Congress.

Rahul Gandhi has been elected as Congress President in this background. It's now over to his leadership to reinvent the party, take forward the progressive, liberal, secular thought within the party, as well as, convince the public of the value of such thought.

#GurdeepSappal

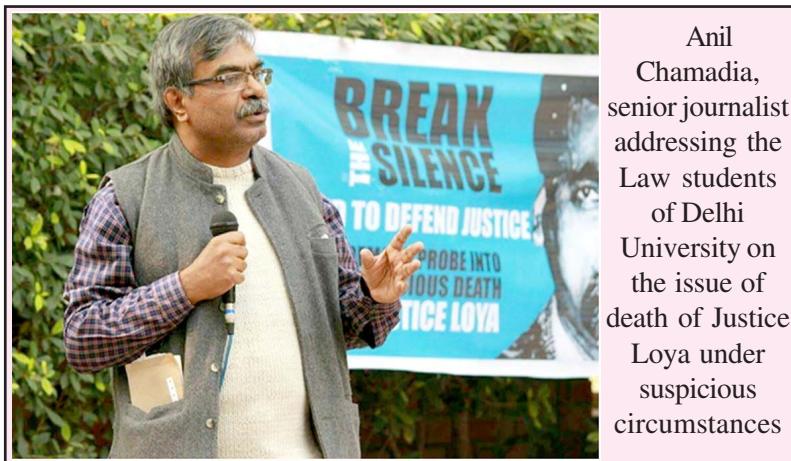
Gurdeep Sappal is former CEO of Rajya Sabha TV. 

The Radical Humanist Rates of Advertisement/Insertion

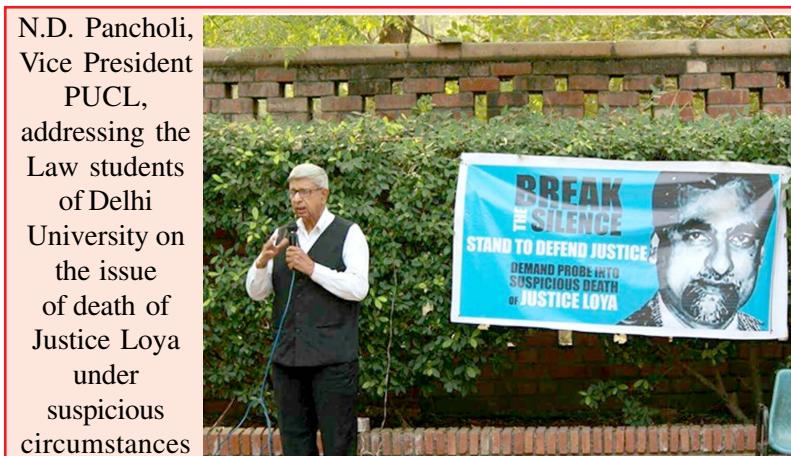
Journal size: 18cmx 24 cm- Print area: 15cmx20cm

	Ordinary	Special		Ordinary	Special
Second Back cover	Rs.2,500	Rs.3,000	2nd Back Cover		
Third Back Cover	Rs.2,500	Rs.3,000	3rd Back Cover	Rs.20,000	Rs.30,000
Last Cover	Rs.3,000	Rs.3,500	Last Cover	Rs.20,000	Rs.30,000
Ordinary page:			Ordinary page:	Rs.20,500	Rs.30,000
Full page	Rs.2,000	Rs.2,500	Full page		
Half page	Rs.1,500	Rs.1,500	Half Page	Rs.15,500	Rs.20,000
Quarter page	Rs. 600	Rs. 900	Quarter page:	Rs.10,500	Rs.15,000
For One year				Rs. 6000	Rs. 9000

Democracy Cannot Exist Without Justice and Justice Cannot Exist Without Free and Fearless Judges



Anil Chamadia, senior journalist addressing the Law students of Delhi University on the issue of death of Justice Loya under suspicious circumstances



N.D. Pancholi, Vice President PUCL, addressing the Law students of Delhi University on the issue of death of Justice Loya under suspicious circumstances



Law students of DU attending the Public Meeting "Break The Silence - Stand with Justice" on the issue of Death of Justice Loya under suspicious circumstances. (Please also read the article by Akhil Kumar in this issue.)

*Hundreds of students from Law faculty and Delhi University joined a Public Meeting: **Break the Silence, Stand with Justice**, on 30th Nov.'17 to demand investigation into the suspicious death of Justice Loya. Around 500 postcards written by students of Law Faculty, DU were posted to the office of CJI demanding high level SIT to be formed to probe the issue. The students of other universities are also following.*

The public meeting, at Arts Faculty, Delhi University, was addressed by Journalist Anil Chamadia and ND Pancholi, Advocate & Vice President PUCL It was held against the backdrop of the serious charges raised in the Caravan Magazine where a news story of the mysterious death of a CBI Judge, Justice Loya of Mumbai Court, who was hearing the case in which BJP President, Amit Shah was one of main accused in Shaikh Soharabuddin encounter case, had appeared.

Exclusive: Justice A.P. Shah Says ‘Suspicious Death’ of Sohrabuddin Case Judge Needs Probe

Akhil Kumar

Speaking to The Wire, the former chief justice of the Delhi high court feels it is ‘absolutely necessary’ to order an enquiry as the allegations can ‘stigmatise’ the judiciary.

New Delhi : Former Delhi high court chief justice A.P. Shah on Thursday became the first senior member of the judiciary to speak out about the allegations of foul play in the December 2014 death of Brijgopal Harkishan Loya, the special CBI judge presiding over the trial of BJP president Amit Shah and several top Gujarat police officers for the encounter killing of Sohrabuddin Sheikh and his wife Kauser Bi.

Apart from referring to the grievances of Loya’s family members regarding the suspicious circumstances of his death, Justice A.P. Shah also expressed concerns regarding allegations of corruption as the late CBI judge was allegedly offered a bribe of Rs 100 crore for a “favourable” judgment in the weeks and months running up to his sudden demise, ostensibly because of cardiac arrest.

“It is necessary that the chief justice of the high court or the Chief Justice of India himself should look into this material and decide whether to order an enquiry, because if these allegations are not investigated it causes serious stigma on the judiciary,” Justice Shah told The Wire in an exclusive interview at this residence here.

Justice Shah stressed the need to maintain the confidence of the people in the integrity of the judiciary. Calling Loya an honest and upright judge, he added, “Not enquiring into the allegations made by the family would send a very wrong signal to the judiciary, particularly the lower cadre.”

In an implicit reference to the medical college bribery scam, he said that there have been several self-inflicted wounds on the judiciary recently and such matters should be investigated

to maintain the confidence of the public in the judiciary. He further added that, “In such cases where *prima facie* material is available to investigate, it is ‘absolutely necessary’ to order an enquiry.... The judiciary is the tallest institution of the country and people have tremendous faith in it. Any misgivings of the family of a member of a judiciary should be addressed.”

The following is the transcript of Justice A.P. Shah’s comments:

I have read two articles in The Caravan Magazine about the death of judge Loya in December 2014. I have also seen the video recorded testimonies of his family members. I think his two sisters gave their versions – one is a teacher and the other is a doctor. His father, an 85-year-old man, also appears in the video. It seems that Loya has a son who must have been very young at that time. His letter is given to the journalist. The letter shows that the son of judge Loya requested the then chief justice of the Bombay high court to carry an investigation into his unfortunate death in Nagpur.

Now the official version is that judge Loya died of heart attack, cardiac arrest they said. He was in Nagpur and he passed away there. He was taken to some hospital called Dande hospital and then to some other hospital. His body was brought to his native place. His family says, and particularly the sister who is a doctor, that there were blood stains on his clothes and that there was something odd about the way in which the body was found. She also points out that the post-mortem examination report is signed by some unknown person as the cousin of the deceased judge. They don’t have any

cousin residing in Nagpur. Another circumstance which, according to them, is suspicious is one Mr. Baheti who had no concern with the family and is a complete stranger. He came on the scene, was there all along and returned the mobile phone of the judge three to four days after his death. According to the family, the messages in the mobile phone had been deleted. The family claims that a message was sent to the judge that he should be cautious, some sort of a warning to him. This was also deleted; the family knew about it. It appears that the judge was handling a very high profile case against an influential politician during that time. According to the family, the judge during that time was rather stressed because according to them, he was being pressurised to decide the manner in a particular way. The family claims that it was a high functionary of the Bombay high court who was pressurising him and influencing the outcome of the case and also that he was offered a huge bribe. It was also said that he was asked whether he would like to have a flat or land in Mumbai.

This is what the family claims that the judge shared with them, particularly he told his father that he would not succumb to the pressure and perhaps would quit and come back to their native place and start farming. This is what the family claims. This occurred in 2014, and perhaps at that time if the son had made a request for an investigation then some sort of an investigation ought to have ordered.

Now, with these allegations, I feel it is very necessary that the chief justice of the high court or the Chief Justice of India (CJI) himself should

look into this material and decide whether to order an enquiry, because if these allegations are not investigated, it causes serious stigma on the judiciary. As it is, in recent times there are several self-inflicted wounds on the judiciary and I feel that such matters should be investigated.

Now, how can one decide about the investigation or appointing a commission? That's a matter to be decided by the chief justice of the high court or the CJI.

I made some enquiries and was told that he was a very honest and upright judge. He was a senior member of the district judiciary and not enquiring into the allegations made by the family, not addressing their grievances would send a very wrong signal to the judiciary, particularly the lower cadre. Recently, there have been several incidents which have dented the image of the judiciary. In all such cases where *prima facie* material is available to investigate, it is absolutely necessary to order an enquiry. It is also necessary for even the persons against whom the allegations are made because it's necessary to clear their names also. I am making it very clear that I am not expressing any opinion on the allegations made by the family but they are serious enough to be investigated into. How the investigation is to be done, whether any commission should be set up for that, is to be decided by the judiciary. Judiciary, I feel, is the tallest institution of the country and people have tremendous faith in it, so any misgivings of the family of a member of a judiciary should be addressed. There should be some investigation into it.

Courtesy **The Wire**, 23/11/2017 

The Radical Humanist on Website

'The Radical Humanist' is now available at <http://www.lohiatoday.com/> on Periodicals page, thanks to Manohar Ravela who administers the site on Ram Manohar Lohia, the great socialist leader of India. - Mahi Pal Singh

Revisiting the Idea of ‘Violence’ as Means of Achieving Political Ends

Dr. A. Raghu Kumar

The murder of senior journalist and activist, Gauri Lankesh in Bengaluru on September 05, 2017 created a great debate in the minds of many liberals and even among the so called neutrals. It’s not an isolated incident, as we all know, and it is one, in a series of such bizarre incidents that have been occurring since long, but the phenomenon appears more pronouncedly almost since 2013. The vicious game got the public attention with the killing of Narendra Dabholkar on August 20, 2013 followed by the assassination of Govind Pansare on February 16, 2015 and M.M. Kalburgi on August 30, 2015. Communists, rationalists, liberals and many people left of the centre – are victims. There is uproar. There is a confluence of thought and action. The dominant theme is “**You may kill a person, but not an idea.**” In the meanwhile, the BJP and RSS also joined the debate on the killing of its cadre in Kerala. The recurrent theme in Indian political dialogue now is ‘**violence**’. Both sides are conducting competitive protest rallies. They demand all the people to join the issue, and any neutrality might be a reason to be labelled as an enemy or an incompetent.

Dante said: “*The hottest places in Hell are reserved for those who in a period of moral crisis maintain their neutrality.*” Is neutrality such a dangerous position? Are we necessarily to join this nauseating duality? Did not the wise men all through the history take to silence, contemplation and time to relocate their responses as a reflexion in tranquillity when two opposing and dominant groups pose wrong questions as morally urgent ones, compelling others to take sides? Whether this “**within or without**” – a choice-less dichotomy? Neutrality does not always mean running away

from moral choices, and in fact there was always a case for *positive neutrality*.

The present times present before many of us some apparently moral questions, but by unveiling the mask it might be found that the case is somewhere beyond. All sides to the dispute dominating the debate have their hands stained in blood. Both are shouting down their opponents though. The choice of the present is not just a choice of ‘wrong’ and ‘right’. We are in a dilemmatic duality of extremes as documented by Dickens’s opening lines in “*A Tale of Two Cities*”. “*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we are all going direct the other way - in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only*”.

The left is crying ‘foul’. The right is claiming ‘right’. It’s the time to reflect on the very idea of ‘violence’ as a means of achieving the political ends. Violence is a remnant of our archaic instinct, and readily finds its space either in our individual or group behaviour. In the colonial State, and as well in post-colonial nation-states it is expressed as an apparatus of State or authority. It is proactive and retroactive in its manifestations, and on most occasions as spontaneous response to a fact situation. It is not that we can immediately analyse and resolve all forms of violence. But the need of the hour

is to reflect on political violence, and the stand of various political parties or their ideologies on the ‘**means and ends**’. The basic ethical question in any social dialogue has always been: Whether ends justify the means, or ends and means need to be negotiated on equal terms. Let’s examine these basic tenets of the ideology of each moral claimant to the present dispute.

In the Theses on Feuerbach, Marx comes out with the eleventh thesis that “**The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point, however, is to change it**”. In fact, by the time Marx made this thesis, he thought that a lot of the physical or mental phenomenon of the world is revealed. But as the unfolding of historical events informs us the very understanding of the noumenon and phenomenon world was at its initial stages. Interpretation has not yet begun. Marxism can only be understood as one of such few attempts in interpreting the revealing world. It was a time when people across the globe started meeting, and even now, there is a lot left out to be understood in the world, leave about interpreting it. The idea of nation-state and nationalism, studies of religion and its influence on human beings, regional aspirations and their relations with global orders, the question of man-woman relations, the stress within family, the language movements, caste questions, human psychology – both individual or group etc., cannot be said to have received any reasonable understanding or interpretation by that time of this thesis. The effect of these factors on the international workers’ movements is now felt by all. Unfortunately, this thesis has advanced the idea of action and activism, right at the movement and right at the instance, and thus has also conquered the space of the contemplative activity. Most of the Marx’s disciples viewed the very process of thinking as “inaction” or ‘ineffective’. This idea has influenced sufficiently not only Marxists but a good number of other branches of intellectual activity.

Marx in an 1848 newspaper article is said to have written: “*There is only one way in which the murderous death agonies of the old society and the bloody birth throes of the new society can be shortened, simplified and concentrated, and that way is revolutionary terror!*” [per Stephen Hicks Ph.D., Philosopher at www.stephenhicks.org dated 18.02.2013]. The last paragraph of the Manifesto of the Communist Party says: “*The communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling class tremble at a communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.*” Adam Schaff [in a Journal Article “Marxist Theory on Revolutions and Violence” in journal of the History of Ideas Vol.34, No.2 9April – June, 1973 pp. 263 – 270, Published by University of Pennsylvania Press, presented at the Conference of the International Society for the History of Ideas held at the Temple University Sugar Loaf Conference House, June 16, 1972] quoting the above statement of Marx and Engels in the Manifesto contend that:

“This by now classic formulation includes two statements:

- a) that the existing social and political system is to be changed by a revolution;
- b) that the social revolution is to be identified with an overthrow of that existing social system by violence.”

The later requirements of revolutionary politics prosecuted by the Marxists, Leninists, Maoists in various countries, including India, have blurred the subtle boundaries of these philosophical considerations devolving into elimination of individual class enemies. In India the concept further descended to the most problematic concepts of killing a person in the name of even an ‘informer’, where the prosecutor, judge and the jailor merges into one. The world has

witnessed enough of its ugly shades in the statecraft of communist countries in USSR, East Europe, and China and in many more so called New Democracies. Sometimes inevitability, sometime historical or ideological necessity, sometimes the nature of dialectics, and even an urgent tactical line of action justifies violence, against both the enemy class and an individual.

Religions or religious philosophies also never rejected violence, and in fact, good number of wars, and executions of human beings were conducted without remorse in the name of God or religion or faith. Hands of all religions are blood-stained. Wars in the name of Jesus, in the name of Allah, in the name of Vishnu or Shiva! Buddhists are no exception as we have seen in the past or even in the recent past. In feudalism and in capitalism, violence is not a matter of abhorrence; rather it is venerated as a **value**, of heroism of a great masculine ethic. Every religion claims that it is meant for peace and prosperity of the human beings in this physical world and the way of ultimate liberation from the ordeal of life on earth. But the experience of human beings over thousands of years has always been that many wars were conducted and millions of people died in the name of religion. In an Article titled "**Religion, Violence, Crime and Mass Suicide**" [© 2017 Vexen Crabtree, Current Edition:2009 Aug 31, Last Modified:2017 Jan 14, Originally Published 2008 Sep 28, http://www.humanreligions.info/violence_and_crime.html, Parent Page: Religion and Morals] the author quotes public opinion (in USA) where in the perception of US public the most violent religions were said to be Islam [64%], Christianity [9%] and Hinduism [4 %]. According to the author three factors lead believers into uncivil behaviour – (1) The irrationality of belief, (2) the legitimization given to actions by beliefs in higher authorities, without the teaching of any critical and sceptical way of judging between claims as to what those higher authorities would want,

and for some people voices in their heads are all that are required as long as they believe in god(s) which have authority to speak for them, and (3) an otherworldly idealism and fixation with the corruptness, evilness or immorality of this world which often pushes groups into extreme isolation where they cease to consider outsiders to be worthwhile human beings.

In a paper titled "**Religion and Violence: Social Process in Comparative Perspective**", prepared for the Handbook for the Sociology of Religion, Michele Dillon, Editor, John R. Hall [available online as 569_jhallreligionviolence11_01.pdf] while considering the commonly prevalent public opinion that 'religion is often held up as a vessel of peace, both inner and social', in the post-September 11, 2001 scenario, however notes that 'A moment's reflection attests that religion and violence are often woven together in history's tapestries'. He concludes saying: "Even when violence is 'internal' to religion, it is subject to the same forces that operate more widely – competition, social control, rebellion, and revolution. And religiously infused violence is often externally connected to broader social conflicts. Precisely because of religion's capacity to mark socially sacred, social struggles that become sacralised continue to implicate religion in violence, and in ways that make the violence much more intractable. To sever this connection between religion and violence is an important yet utopian goal that will depend on promoting peace with justice. More modestly, sociological studies of religion should develop reflexive knowledge that can help alter the channels and trajectories of violence, and thus, mitigate its tragic effects. These are both tasks worth our intellectual energies and our social commitment."

In India – violence or the elimination of the 'other' is not abhorrent to any ideological group, either to the left or to the right. There is not even a great debate over it before Gandhi's

forceful argument for non-violence. It appears that the concept of ‘non-violence’ was accepted by the Indian society in general and the political leadership in particular during the freedom movement out of certain political and practical consideration, temporarily during the aura of Mahatma, and all the parties slowly relapsed into their old practices of violence. As the charisma of Mahatma faded, the inclination towards invoking violence seems to take the path of ascendancy. Some Hindutva scholars have long started questioning the very understanding and interpretation of the sloka containing the great statement of inspiration to Gandhi “Ahimsa Paramo Dharma” as ‘half-truth’. The website article at <http://www.sankritimagazine.com> relies on the full text of the sloka from Santi Parva of Mahabharata: *Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah I Dharn himsa tadhaiva ca II* [Non-violence is the ultimate dharma, so too is violence in service of dharma], and argue that violence in service of dharma is an equally great prescription. Even presuming that the religious diktat allows or even mandates violence in certain situations, can we still rely upon only on these archaic prescriptions available in all religious texts in some form or the other, at this stage of human advancement and civilization to justify violence?

In fact both the right and the left even today concede that violence is heroism and non-violence is timidity and cowardliness. All hues of the left and the right, in principle, accept ‘violence’ as a necessary evil at the least, and from time to time, one or the other excelled in its execution. The international experience of communism, whether it is in USSR, or in East Europe or in China, testifies for violence as the weapon and also as statecraft. “Class-enemy”, “agent of a class enemy”, “informer”, and “State violence” etc., - a wide range of states and situations, justify the killing of the “other”. It is not just the ‘States’ in existence, and even the ‘State’ in the womb – all variations of

extreme left and right groups etc., justify violence and base their course of action primarily on violence. What kind of democracy we can foresee in such future ‘State’ is an enigmatic question.

Until the emergence of Gandhi on the world scenario of political struggles, ‘killing’ the opponent for any reason is justified on the historical necessity, or as a reaction to an action, or as a moral value to defend the right of an ideological group. . It is this element which was seriously challenged by Gandhi. For him, ‘non-violence’ is not a strategy. ‘Non-violence’ and ‘truth’ are two inseparable expressions of the one and the only **Supreme Reality**. Without ‘non-violence’, ‘truth’ cannot exist, and without ‘truth’, ‘non-violence’ also cannot survive. Truth and non-violence are the secular version of the God to him. The genuineness of his ‘non-violence’ was subjected to critical analysis. But there is no disjunction in his conceptualization of non-violence, as tried to be made out by some critics.

Whether the experiment of the Mahatma is just a onetime phenomenon, possible of realization only in the persistent hands of Mahatma or his likes, or is it a phenomenon establishing itself as a dominant discourse in many other struggles of the people in opposing the evil State is now put to severe test. Can we recreate an argument for absolute non-violence, now and immediately? Violence may happen on several situations – as natural element in the animal world, or a spontaneous reaction to a situation, but the issue is how we could rein in these forces of violence and how far we can journey in the direction of peaceful resolution of contradictions. As we travel from the caves and transcend tribal instincts, as we get civilized, we need to reduce the proportion of violence progressively. We may find that violence is available in nature, but it is an avoidable or reducible animal or tribal instinct. As we slowly advance in the process of civilization, we go on

controlling or reducing many such remnants of animal instincts within us. We can consciously make a choice in favour of nonviolence with all its conceptual difficulties, and strive towards organizing the human societies on that basis.

Coming back to the present, the murder of four activists, leftists, or those who are somewhere around the left of the Centre, who earned the ire of the religious bigots for things they have done or not done has virtually shaken all the thinking persons. Violence in the Marxist ruled states, or in those places where the Maoist cadres claim to be conducting revolutionary practices also needs to be subjected to intellectual scrutiny seriously without any hypocrisy or duality. All of us are saddened, including those liberals, who have nothing to do with the Left or the Right. Gandhians, and all types of peace lovers are agitated. Until and unless, we commit ourselves to the civilization project of humanity, national and international brotherhood and peaceful co-existence, and to the goals of collective development based on peace and prosperity of all, this blame game goes on, and we are always forced to take sides in this moral crisis. Until and unless we unshackle ourselves from these adamantine chains, and ask both these parties, the right and the left, to stop this *danse macabre*, and exercise our moral indignation against both to bring back to the centrality of the virtues of

non-violence and truth, we cannot justify the unique freedom struggle of this nation and the messages of the Mahatma.

Engaging all the social partners in a meaningful and purposive dialogue is *sine qua non* of this civilization project. We cannot afford to allow this fragmentation of the society. It is the moral duty of the persons with wisdom to stop and contemplate a while on what is going on, and not to allow the things to drift away according the wishes of the dominant forces of time. The present stage of human evolution demands considered choices and primacy of the will, to understand and respond to the currents. All political parties and individuals may have to spell out their stand on the utility of, and the invoking violence, as a method of conducting politics. ‘Violence’ is not a virtue, nor represents any value of ‘heroism’. It’s the weapon you hold and its advanced technology, on many occasions that decide the result of the war, and not the logical strength of your argument or theory *per se*. ‘Violence’ is an archaic ethic which the modern societies can no more afford to accept or to tolerate. It’s in fact cowardice. It’s misanthropic. “Non-violence” does not need any scriptural justification, it’s justified on its own, and in terms of the larger goals of the civilization.

Dr. A. Raghu Kumar is a practicing advocate. 

Articles/Reports for The Radical Humanist

Dear Friends,

Please mail your articles/reports for publication in the RH to: **mahipalsinghrh@gmail.com**, or **theradicalhumanist@gmail.com** or post them to: E-21/5-6, Sector- 3, Rohini, Delhi- 110085.

Please send your digital passport size photograph and your brief resume if it is being sent for the first time to the RH.

A note whether it has also been published elsewhere or is being sent exclusively for the RH should also be attached with it.

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

Terrible Misreading Of Uttar Pradesh Local Body Polls' Results

In UP urban local body polls, BJP vote share fell by 10%, lost 87% of *Nagar Panchayat* member seats and 82% of *Nagar Palika Parishad* seats

Faraz Ahmad

Contrary to media hype in the last two days over a “BJP sweep” in the Uttar Pradesh (UP) urban local bodies elections, the results demonstrate considerable waning of the pro-BJP mood that helped it win Uttar Pradesh assembly elections barely eight months ago.

True, the BJP which fought the *Nagar panchayat*, *Nagar Palika* and *Nagar Palika Parishad* elections stood first among all the other political parties that contested, including the former ruling party Samajwadi Party (SP), the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Congress and the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD).

But then the party alone won 71 of the 80 Lok Sabha seats in the 2014 general elections, which is roughly 89%. Then in the February assembly polls, the BJP won 312 seats in a House of 403, which works out to 77%. In percentage terms in the assembly polls, the BJP percentage of votes had then jumped from less than 15% to around 40%, a quantum jump. Given this background, the BJP performance in local body polls is a let-down.

The only major victory the BJP and its drum beaters are gloating about is the Mayor elections where it succeeded in getting its mayors in 14 out of 16 towns, with the surprising exception of the communally surcharged Aligarh and Meerut towns, where Mayawati’s BSP nominees won. These were the only elections where the electronic voting machines (EVM) were deployed and the media could not help report at least a couple of instances of the machines malfunctioning. It’s also a mystery why the Election Commission chose to introduce EVMs for mayoral polls when all the other categories were held through ballot paper.

The fact that chief minister Yogi Adityanath led his entire contingent of 48 ministers plus the 100-strong UP BJP state office bearers that spread out to every nook and corner of the vast Uttar Pradesh to campaign for these polls show the urgency of the party to project a victory in these elections. Some of them openly threatened Muslims to vote for the BJP or face the consequences.

Yet the results of the *nagar panchayat* members, *nagar palika* members, *nagar palika parishads* and their chairpersons clearly show a growing disenchantment with the BJP even in this new saffron fortress, to the extent that 71.31% *nagar panchayat* members are independents and still the BJP could get only 100 of the 438 chairpersons elected. With one result yet to be declared, 337 chairpersons are non-BJP, for in this election there were no alliances and each party independently fought against the main adversary BJP.

The state has a strength of 5,434 Nagar Panchayat members of which the BJP won only 662 and lost 4,728 to others, including an overwhelming majority of independents as also SP, BSP, Congress and RLD.

Naturally, then it also lost the *Nagar Panchayat* chairperson elections too also held through ballot papers. There were total 438 seats. Results declared: 437. BJP won 100 and lost 337.

Same was the case with *Nagar Palika Parishad* where of the 5,261 seats—with results declared for 5217—the BJP won 914 and conceded as many as 4,303. As a corollary effect, the BJP managed to win only 68 *Nagar Palika Parishad* Chairperson posts and lost

127 of the 195 declared (total 198).

We say lost because unlike other smaller players the BJP contested for all the seats.

BJP president Amit Shah gave an interview mocking the Congress party and Rahul Gandhi for the poor show in these UP local bodies polls. But the Congress has not been a significant player in Uttar Pradesh for over two decades now and so its poor showing is no news.

The BJP managed to win mayoral polls in Rae Bareli and Amethi, the pocket burroughs of Congress president Sonia Gandhi and vice president Rahul Gandhi. But Amit Shah won't disclose this and no one would mention it but

the fact remains that the Congress percentage of votes this time improved considerably compared to the February assembly elections when it got only 6.2 per cent. This time it went up to 10 per cent. No consolation to the Congress no doubt.

But then it is contrary to what the BJP propagandists are shouting from the rooftop. What they are not saying is that the BJP vote share has come down approximately by over 9 per cent from 39.7 to 30.8. It seems then that what the BJP lost in these eight months, the Congress gained.

Faraz Ahmad is a journalist. 

POSSIBILITIES GALORE!! WONDER OF PERU & BRAZIL

Duration:- 14 Nights / 15 Days (Group Tour)

Highlights:- Lima, Sacred Valley, Machu Picchu, Lake Titicaca, Iguazu Falls & Rio

The New Journey begins with Excellent Overview of Lima and its most astonishing facets – Ancient, colonial and Contemporary. In Cusco and the sacred valley, all the iconic INCA sites are included with a spectacular rail trip to Machu Picchu followed by a journey across the Puno, Lake Titicaca. Explore the island on the lake with great joi-de-vivre. Next zoom around at Iguazu Falls -One of the planet's most awe-inspiring sights, the Iguazu Falls are simply astounding. A visit is a jaw-dropping, visceral experience, and the power and noise of the cascades – a chain of hundreds of waterfalls– live forever in the memory. Rio- View sprawling Rio from the base of Christ the redeemer statue on Corcovado, Immerse yourself in the art of precinct of Santa Teresa and dance with the beat of samba. Sip Capirinhas and sunbathe like a local Copacabana.

Price starting from: 3,95,600 RS Per adult with all inclusive.

Inclusions

- International and Domestic Airfare, Brazil and Peru Tourist Visa
- Overseas Insurance , All renowned sightseeing at the respective places
- Sumptuous breakfast and Dinner with local touch

Ask More, **Contact:**

INDO ASIA HOLIDAYS

Indo Asia House, 56 Institutional Area, Sector 44, Gurgaon-122 002

Mbl: +91 9718682901, Tel: +91-124-4534500.

E-Mail: info@indoasiaholidays.com / **Web:** www.indoasiaholidays.com

An ISO 9001: 2008 Company (A Division of Indo Asia Leisure Services Ltd.)

Humanists' Section:

Building Humanism, Busting Myth and Privilege

ADAM SAVAGE is, broadly speaking, a maker of things, having built everything, as he's characterized it, "from ancient Buddhas to futuristic weapons, from spaceships to dancing vegetables, from fine art sculptures to animated chocolate—and just about anything else you can think of." A special effects expert who worked on over 100 TV commercials and a dozen feature films, Savage is best known as the co-host (with Jamie Hyneman) of the popular Discovery Channel show *Myth Busters*, on which the two scientifically tested the validity of all manner of rumors, myths, movie scenes, internet videos, and news stories. The show premiered in 2003 and ran for fourteen years, or, as Savage puts it, after "1,015 myths, 2,950 experiments, eight Emmy nominations, and eighty-three miles of duct tape."

Today, Savage stars in and produces digital content for Tested.com, including *One Day Builds*, *Inside Adam's Man Cave*, and *Untitled: The Adam Savage Project*, a podcast with Will Smith and Norman Chan. He also lectures widely, makes appearances at events like Comic-Con, Maker Faire, and w00tstock, and pursues his talent for sculpture. On June 9, 2017, Adam Savage appeared at the American Humanist Association's conference in Charleston, South Carolina, to accept the Humanist of the Year Award. The following was adapted from his remarks.

When I look at the list of intensely accomplished people who've received the Humanist of the Year Award before me and see how many intellectual giants as well as people I love and admire are on that list, I am

Adam Savage, 2017 Humanist of the Year

moved more than you know. I humbly thank you for the privilege of addressing you all.

I'm speaking to you during a tumultuous time. And I'd like to speak to some subjects that I think are relevant to what's going on today, and that are close to my heart. Like you, I seek a better world through clear vision, deeper understanding, and building communities of trust for the betterment of all life. And when I say it's my privilege to be here, I mean this in the deepest possible sense. I am privileged to have been born white in the United States to upper-middle-class, intellectual artistic parents, who provided me with tremendous love and support both financial and emotional. As I bounced around in my adolescence, late teens, and early twenties before figuring out what the hell I was good at, the leg up that they gave me was real, and I will benefit from it for the rest of my life.

I have eighteen-year-old twin boys, "Thing One" and "Thing Two" I call them. And there is this thing about eighteen. Raising kids feels like the directions you put into your GPS when you first had children: you think, "let me just get them to eighteen. How do we get there?" And so, you're driving along and at seventeen you think, "Whoa, we're almost there."

Then they turn eighteen, and it's like the GPS is recalculating, and it turns out there are hundreds of miles left to go. I've raised these two boys in even greater privilege than I was raised in, but I've worked hard to teach them how to see their place in the world for what it is—to see the wider world more clearly for all of its wonders and its faults. I've tried to instill in them a set of humanistic values with which they would be productive citizens of the planet. And when I say productive, I don't just mean having a good life for themselves and their

families, but also the act of aiding and abetting the improvement of life for all.

When I first started making *MythBusters*, after the show had found some traction, I noticed that when we went to experts and scientists and engineers, they treated me differently than I expected. They were talking to me as if I were a peer. (I have a high school diploma, by the way. And a package design class at the School for Visual Arts.) Anyway, the scientists we encountered were talking to me as if I were a peer, taking my insights seriously and sharing theirs with me openly and with enthusiasm. This gave me both tremendous delight and real confidence. It was like I had unlocked a new level to a game I didn't even realize I was playing. It's important to point out that in the beginning of making *MythBusters*, we didn't think of it as a science show. We were just trying to answer the questions that were put before us. (And I guarantee you, we were not "thinking of the children.") I considered myself a science geek, but with my high school diploma and my crappy educational work ethic, I was far from a scientist in my mind. I placed science in the category of things that smart people did, and by doing that, I placed myself outside that category. This was my own personal bias. And with that bias, I was limiting myself and what I could contribute to the world. Spending fourteen years making *MythBusters* with Jamie and my amazing crew, I've come to understand that I am, in fact, a scientist, and this realization has changed me fundamentally.

Privilege and bias. We talk about these things cursorily and often defensively these days, but without the depth that I think is necessary for the lasting and ultimate benefit of our planet. When we talk about bias, for instance, we often center upon personal bias. When people encounter the subject of racism, they do a double check on themselves, remind themselves that they're not racist, and thus, the problem's probably solved. They move on.

I did this. When confronted with ideas of privilege, many in the privileged categories feel defensive and look at the myriad, crushing difficulties of their own lives—financial, emotional, familial. And they conclude that privilege is ephemera, a false construct. My friend, the wonderful science fiction writer John Scalzi, puts it this way: privilege doesn't mean you get a free pass, but in the video game of life you get to play with all the settings on easy. This means you can still lose. And you will suffer because this is the first noble truth of the Buddha: we will all suffer. Nobody escapes, but truly, nobody suffers like the poor and the really marginalized communities.

Years ago, I came across a wonderful longitudinal study about nuns in a convent. They had all taken their vows at roughly the same age, between eighteen and twenty-two years old. And they were studied for decades. I think this study began in the 1930s. These were women who lived in identical conditions, eating the same food, enduring the same weather and schedule with each other for the majority of their lifetimes. And yet, the study found that the single greatest predictor of their late life health and longevity was their socioeconomic status at the moment they took their vows. And that's also what I mean by privilege. It is systemic.

Many have claimed that we are in a post-racist society and that all is a level playing field. Being able to see the world in this way is itself a form of deep privilege, because the long tale of our damaged past is buried deep within the societal constructs that we've built into our countries and governments and our cultures over the past few millenia. Systemic and institutional bias and privilege are, in my opinion, currently the greatest threats to human progress. My personal commitment to myself, to the betterment of the people around me, and my desire to see more clearly the bias and privilege that occurs both for myself and in the world is what makes me a humanist.

I have, in recent years, purposely distanced myself from the specific categorical words “skeptic” and “atheist.” In both cases, I conclude that it isn’t useful for me to define myself by what I don’t believe, but also because of the problems I’ve encountered with some who identify as such. To be clear, I’ve made some of my most important friendships and deeply important collaborations within these communities and the people steeped in them. And I am the better for it. But I’ve also encountered just as much blind privilege, idiocy, small thinking, sexism, misogyny, racism, and bias as anywhere else in the world. When famous atheists outright deny their own privilege when it’s pointed out to them or advocate for profiling dark-skinned people as sound security policy, I choose to run in the opposite direction and find my own path. If you follow me on Twitter, you know that I’m not afraid to speak my mind. I voice my opinions about the current political situations around the globe with passion and all the articulacy and data I can bring. But I also bring love. I have, in fans of *MythBusters*, many who vehemently disagree with my politics. But I might have their attention and so I seek to speak to them and to reach them, and I am rigorously polite and loving in my disagreement. Let me pause here and say that I enjoy some privilege in this regard. Because when I tweet political stuff, people are polite back to me, even those who strongly disagree. It is the very rare comment that is quite insulting to me, which is appalling when I think about someone like Skepchick founder Rebecca Watson who received rape and death threats for years from those who disagreed with her.

I take it as a given that most of the people I might disagree with are still starting from the same basic principles that I am, that we want to leave a better world for ourselves and our kids and our loved ones. That our disagreement is one of method and that we can find common ground if we are civil, balanced, and thorough

in our desire to share our opinions and to help each other and ourselves see clearly the world’s delights as well as its warts.

James Baldwin famously said, “Not everything that is faced can be changed. But nothing can be changed until it is faced.” I choose to face my own biases (as a recovering mansplainer), with privilege as a starting point to help myself and others face it where it exists most perniciously and in the cultural and temporal institutions we have often inadvertently and sometimes intentionally built to benefit a few, at the expense of the many. I’m not advocating a specific political system or party or ideology. This is simply my definition of humanism, and I am grateful beyond measure to be able to share it with you. Thank you.

Published in the November / December 2017 Humanist



Adam Savage has spent his life gathering skills that allow him to take what’s in his brain and make it real. In 1993, Adam began concentrating his career on the special-effects industry, honing his skills through more than 100 television commercials and a dozen feature films. In 2002, Adam was chosen along with Jamie Hyneman to host *MythBusters*. Fourteen years, 1,015 myths, 2,950 experiments, eight Emmy nominations and 83 miles of duct tape later, the series ended in March 2016. Adam Savage is the **2017 Humanist of the Year**. 

Stalin's Young Man: M.N. Roy and the Russian Revolution - 2

A century after the Russian Revolution, we look back at those tumultuous events through the eyes of M.N. Roy, a remarkable Indian witness to the making of an epoch

Continued from the last issue....

First meeting with Lenin

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. Pindrop 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.

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 was occasions when he kept sessions of a Congress of the Communist International or meetings of its Executive Committee waiting for hours.

The high point in M.N. Roy's turbulent political life was when he rubbed shoulders with the most important leaders of the international communist movement, Lenin, Stalin, Trotsky and Borodin.



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 a 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.

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 fervour 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.

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.

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 new-born 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.

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 documents 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.

To be continued in the next issue...

Courtesy **LiveMint**, 7 November 2017. 

Human Rights Section:

Raising a unified voice against hate

Hishma Tanseema Nazir



Kin of victims of mob lynching demand justice, action against cow Vigilantes

Members of the United Against Hate campaign held a public meeting on Monday to voice their protest against communal fascism and mob lynching, following the recent killing of Mohammad Umar Khan and the attacks on Tahir and Jabba on November 10 in Rajasthan.

The organisers said they have come together against “the impunity enjoyed by cow terrorists” and “the need to rise against Hindutva terror”.

Organised response

Banu Joshna, a member of the group, said it was important to have organised and channelised responses to the killings, which are “organised as part of a larger propaganda”. The meeting was addressed by family members of Junaid, Umar and Tahir, victims of the recent mob attacks in Haryana and Rajasthan.

“Communal attacks did not begin in 2014, however, they are receiving State patronage since 2014. Words like “secular” and “socialist”, which are used in the Preamble of the Constitution have become a joke. India is on the path to becoming a fascist country,” said Urmilesh Singh, senior journalist.

“Muslims are being subjugated in this country,

but the message is one of terror which is meant for everyone,” said Hartosh Singh Bal, political editor, Caravan magazine. He questioned the acquittal of Amit Shah from the Sohrabuddin Sheikh and Tulsiram Prajapati fake encounter case. “The discharge itself came after one judge was transferred and one died. The family members have now sought an investigation into

what was otherwise believed as natural death. This speaks for the kind of people we have in the government,” he added.

“The roots of fascism in India can be traced back to the year 1948 when Gandhiji was assassinated. The only change since 2014 is that these communal and hate forces which were earlier in power through the police and bureaucracy are now a part of the government,” said Mohammad Salim Engineer, Secretary General, Jamaat-e-Islami. He further added that the issue at hand is not just to punish the accused “but to end the political impunity enjoyed by such terrorists.”

“The victims make no demands but plead to not be charged by the police. The criminals, on the other hand, are confident of their safety. They know they’d be pedestalised as the *bhakts* and *rakshaks* of the nation,” said Anil Damodia, member of the campaign.

“The whole politics of lynching is an art in Rajasthan. Even the Panchayat does not raise these issues because they’re all serving the purpose of the government,” said Kavita Srivastava, member People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). She further accused the Congress of not having played the part of an

effective opposition.

The family members of the victims alleged that the police were one with the attackers.

“Dairy farming is our only source of income and now we are scared of continuing with this profession. The police are party to this crime and have still kept Tahir behind bars while the murderers are still free men,” said Abdul Wahid, brother of Tahir.

‘Junaid was just 16’

“Junaid was a 16-year-old boy. What crime

could he possibly have done? He did not even know who the PM is but now every kid who is aware of the communal policies of this government knows who the PM of this country is,” said Qasim, brother of Junaid who was killed by a mob on a local train near Ballabgarh.

The families of the victims reiterated their demand for a compensation of 1 50 lakh for those killed in mob violence and 1 25 lakh for the injured.

Courtesy **The Hindu**, November 21, 2017



Human Rights Abuses:

‘Cover-up operation’: NHRC holds Chhattisgarh guilty of concealing Salwa Judum crimes

The state-backed militia torched 95 homes in 2006-’07 and killed seven villagers in 2009-’10, as per testimonies gathered by People’s Union for Civil Liberties.



People’s Union for Civil Liberties team record the villagers’ testimonies

The National Human Rights Commission has once again made scathing observations against the Chhattisgarh government for its complicity in human rights abuses. In an order on October 26, the commission held government officials guilty of “deliberately turning a blind eye to the killings and incidents of arson” in Sukma district during the years that Salwa Judum was active in the state.

Salwa Judum, launched in 2005, was a state-supported civil vigilante campaign that targeted

villages seen as harbouring Maoists. Backed by the police, armed vigilantes torched homes and forced villagers to flee to government-run camps. The violence often went undocumented and with the villagers having no recourse to justice.

One such case was brought to the commission’s attention in 2013, when the People’s Union for Civil Liberties submitted a complaint to it along with testimonies of the residents of Kondasawali gram panchayat in Konta block of Sukma. The residents alleged the vigilantes had torched at least 95 homes across Karrepara, Kamaraguda, Kondasawali and Parlagutta villages in 2006-’07, and subsequently killed seven villagers in 2009-’10.

Led by then sarpanch Sundam Sannu, a group of villagers filed a complaint with Sukma’s collector in July 2013, identifying the slain villagers as Madvi Bhima of Kondasawali; Barse Nanda, Barse Suklu, Kunjam Boda of Karrepara; and Sundam Bhima Mangdu, Sundam Bhima Goga, Midiam Aiti of Parlagutta.



Madvi Bhima's widow Masa. Photo courtesy: PUCL

One of the complainants was Barse Nande, who alleged her husband Barse Nanda was murdered by Salwa Judum in 2007. Nande, along with the other villagers, sought justice as well as compensation for the loss she had suffered as a result of arson and loot by the vigilantes. The villagers offered to testify to the police to aid an investigation into their complaints.

But within a month of the complaint being filed, Nande was murdered. Sannu was forced to hide in the forest when Salwa Judum leaders came searching for him.

The People's Union for Civil Liberties wrote several letters through 2013, 2014, 2015 to the human rights commission as well as to senior officers in Bastar division, seeking safety for the complainants.

The commission, in turn, wrote to the state government, asking for a response.



Barse Suklu's son Barse Nanda. Photo courtesy: PUCL

'Cover up operation'

In a letter dated September 9, 2014, the police informed the commission they had filed a First Information Report on November 19, 2013

against unknown persons, charging them with rioting with weapons, unlawful assembly, murder, robbery, use of explosive substance to destroy houses, and under the Arms Act. But despite the complainants' willingness to testify, no testimonies were recorded.

To the commission's query about the sarpanch's safety, the police said he had not given them a written complaint, nor had he received threats from Maoists. Disregarding the fact that the villagers felt threatened by the police and not by the Maoists, the police expressed its inability to provide security to the complainants because the area was "Naxal sensitive" and it would require a contingent of 150-200 armed personnel. Instead, the police suggested shifting the villagers to a government camp in Jagargunda.

As for paying compensation, the district administration claimed it could not do so "as the names of five deceased from the seven do not appear in the voter list of 2009-10".

To break the stalemate, the commission formally requested the People's Union in June this year to visit the villages and submit a report based on testimonies gathered from the villagers. The report, based on field visits on August 21 and 22, was submitted in early October.



Mangdu lost his son and nephew, both named Sundam Bhima, to Salwa Judum. Photo courtesy: PUCL

The commission has now concluded that the investigation conducted by the Sukma district administration and the police was a "cover-up operation". Its October 26 order stated:

"A mere reading of the enquiry report of

Tehsildar Konta and the statements recorded by the I.O. [investigation officer] shows that his objective is not at all to dig out the truth and that he is only conducting a cover up operation. These acts of omission by the public servants of State of Chhattisgarh constitute a gross violation of human rights of the deceased residents of village Kondasawali, Kamaraguda and Karrepara and of those residents of these villages whose houses/huts were burnt.”

This is not the first time the Chhattisgarh government has been in the dock for serious human rights violations. In October 2016, the Central Bureau of Investigation held the state police responsible for torching over 200 homes and granaries in three Adivasi villages – Morpalli, Tadmetla, Teemapuram – of Sukma district in March 2011 in the course of an anti-Maoist operation. In January this year, the human rights commission found *prima facie* evidence that 16 women from Bijapur district had been sexually assaulted by police during anti-Maoist combing operations in October 2015.



Joga's father Kunjam Boda was among the seven people killed in 2009-10. Photo courtesy: PUCL

People's Union report

Kondasawali village is located about 450 km from the capital Raipur and 94 km from Sukma district headquarters. In their report, the People's Union for Civil Liberties team noted that they reached the villages from Dantewada via Aranpur after great difficulty, making precarious bike rides and covering long distances on foot. The seven-member team comprised Adivasi activist and Aam Aadmi Party leader Soni Sori,

researcher JK Vidhya, video documenter Lingaram Kodopi, local journalists Pushpa Rokde and Nitin Rokde, Aam Aadmi Party member Sukul Prasad, and interpreter Danti Poyim.

They recorded testimonies of the family members of the seven slain persons as well as of villagers whose homes were burnt in 2006-07. People in Karrepara, Kamaraguda and Kondasawali described watching their houses and granaries go up in flames as they ran into the forest. Salwa Judum vigilantes also looted valuables, including gold and silver, and confiscated their cows, buffaloes and goats. The villagers said they lived in the forest for four years, surviving on wild roots and food provided occasionally by people from nearby villages. They began returning in 2009-10 and started to rebuild their homes. But they were again attacked by Salwa Judum members, who had now become special police officers. The villagers identified by name the officers who, accompanied by the security forces, shot dead their family members. The attacks took place while the villagers were returning from their fields, or from collecting mahua flowers in the forest. They were chased, fired upon, even stabbed.

Two young men were held while they were working in their fields and taken to Jagargunda police station, the villagers said, and presumably murdered because they never returned. A young girl, Midiam Aiti, who had gone to the forest to collect bamboo shoots, was shot. Her body too was never returned.



Malla's niece Midiam Aiti's body was never returned. Photo courtesy: PUCL

About 10 kilometres from Kondasawali lies Jagargunda and 58 kilometres further away is Dornapal, sites of two of the government camps set up during Salwa Judum years. The Jagargunda camp housed about 2,000 people forced to leave their homes, while the one in Dornapal housed about 25,000 villagers.

A report by the Human Rights Watch in 2008 recorded testimonies of special police officers who had helped set up the Jagargunda camp. “About 40-45 of us would go each time and bring people to the camp,” they said. The report also recorded villagers recounting the killings of at least 55 family members, friends and acquaintances, but the state’s investigators later found it “difficult to verify each case”.

One villager told the Human Rights Watch that Salwa Judum members and the police had burnt 50 huts in his Kamaraguda village in Kondasawali gram panchayat. As the villagers fled, the police caught three of them – a 70-year-old man and two young men. When the villagers returned, they found the bodies of the three men in the forest, their throats slit.

Reliving their trauma 10 years later to the People’s Union team, the villagers collectively demanded justice. They put together a list of the names of special police officers who they said had killed their family members and asked for their dismissal as well as action against them.

To ensure their safety and free movement, they asked that the police and the paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force must not be allowed to enter their villages and harass or arrest them.

Another demand was that no security forces camp be set up near the villages. Women were especially apprehensive. “The camp people come to our village and give us a lot of trouble,” they said. “They threaten us and sexually molest

and rape us...If the camp is set up in the village, they will catch us, beat us and rape us.”

The People’s Union report noted that security forces have allegedly raped at least 50 women, and killed some of them, in Kondasawali panchayat. The team requested the human rights commission for a wider mandate so that these atrocities against women could be recorded at a later stage.



‘If a security forces’ camp is set up in the village, they will catch us, beat us and rape us.’ Photo courtesy: PUCL

That the villagers agreed to give video testimonies demonstrates “their courage and touching faith in the NHRC”, said Sudha Bharadwaj, general secretary of the People’s Union for Civil Liberties.

The union has asked for a comprehensive investigation by the human rights commission given the complete “apathy, harassment and outright hostility” from the district administration and police.

“So far, the record of the state of Chhattisgarh has been of repression against all complainants,” Bharadwaj said. “We hope that at least in this case where the NHRC had to step in, the state will perform its constitutional duty.”

The Chhattisgarh government still has a chance to demonstrate to Adivasis that as citizens, they are entitled to justice, even if it is delayed, she added.

Courtesy **Scroll.in**, November 13, 2017.

“Where a society has chosen to accept democracy as its credal faith, it is elementary that the citizens ought to know what their government is doing.”

Justice P N Bhagwati, former Chief Justice, Supreme Court of India, (1981)

CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRACY INVITATION:

SEMINAR: Party-Less Participation in the Electoral Process

- Power to the People

Dates: 24th March, 2018, Saturday: 10 to 5 PM

25th March, 2018, Sunday: 10 to 1 PM.

**Venue: Gandhi Peace Foundation,
223, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002**

How those who are not attached to any political party but are deeply concerned about the growing deterioration in the political, social and economic life in the country can influence electoral process and political developments to make them meaningful for the common people?

Detailed agenda will be published in the next issue.

Those who wish to participate may mail to:

(i) ndpancholi44@gmail.com (ii) sinhaa43@gmail.com

N.D. Pancholi, Anil Sinha, Secretaries

(M) 9811099532, 9968777158

An Appeal For Donations

For Republishing books written by M.N. Roy & other Humanist Literature

Indian Renaissance Institute has embarked upon republishing/reprinting the large amount of books & other material written by M.N. Roy as most of them have gone out of print, though requests for these books continue to pour in into our office. Connected humanist literature will also be published. Following books, at the first instance, require immediate publication:

‘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(1917-1922), (1923-1927), (1927-1932) and (1932-1936); ‘Memoirs’ (Covers period 1915-1923).

We request readers and sympathizers to donate generously for the above project as this literature will go long way in enriching the humanist and renaissance movement in the country.

Cheques/Bank drafts may be sent in the name of ‘Indian Renaissance Institute’ to: Satish Chandra Varma, Treasurer IRI, A-1/103, Satyam Apartments, Vasundhra Enclave, Delhi- 110096. (M) 9811587576. Email ID: <scvarma17@gmail.com>

Online donations may be sent to: ‘Indian Renaissance Institute’ Account No. 02070100005296; IFSC Code: UCBA0000207, UCO Bank, Supreme Court Branch, New Delhi (India)

Rekha Saraswat

Secretary

Satish Chandra Varma

Treasurer

Sharm inko magar nahin aati : Yet they do not feel ashamed:

1. NHRC raps Yogi govt. for ‘openly endorsing’ encounter killings

Lucknow, Nov 23: The recent controversial comment made by Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on encounter killings has come to haunt the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in the state.

In fact, the Yogi government has been issued a notice by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), “asking it to come clear within six weeks on the recent police encounters in the state”, reported *The New Indian Express*.

A few days ago, the priest-turned-politician claimed that the law and order situation was improving in the state and said that criminals will be either jailed or killed in encounters. It is Yogi’s open endorsement of encounter killings that caught the attention of the NHRC.

The human rights watchdog has sent a copy of the notice to the UP chief secretary Rajive Kumar seeking a detailed report from the government on encounter killings.

“The NHRC has taken suo moto cognizance of media reports about the government of Uttar Pradesh, allegedly, endorsing killings in encounters by police seeking improvement in law and order situation in the state,” the human rights body said.

“The reported statement of the chief minister tantamounts to giving the police department a free hand to deal with the criminals at their will and, possibly, it may result in abuse of power by the public servants,” it stated.

The Yogi government has been hogging the

limelight for the number of encounter killings that took place since the CM took over the reins of the state early this year.

According to reports, at least 22 “criminals” were gunned down by the police since the BJP came to power in the state on March 18.

The NHRC said that as per official statistics, as reported on the 5th October 2017, 433 encounters had occurred over a period of six months starting from March 2017 when the present government in UP came into existence.

“A total 19 alleged criminals were killed in these encounters and 89 injured. Apart from this, 98 officials were also injured and one died.

Another news story of the 16th September 2017 says that 15 persons had been killed in encounters since the new government came to power in Uttar Pradesh. The State government has, reportedly, described the encounters as an achievement and a proof of improvement in the law and order situation. The Chief Minister was quoted, in a newspaper on the 19th November 2017, saying that ‘Criminals will be jailed or killed in encounters’.

The Commission has noted that it has also received intimation about 22 encounter deaths from the State police authorities in the year 2017 till date, as per its standing guidelines,” the NHRC said in its statement.

Courtesy [Times-Mumbai](#),
November 23, 2017 

“The people of this country have a right to know every public act, everything, that is done in a public way, by their public functionaries. They are entitled to know the particulars of every public transaction in all its bearing.” Justice K K Mathew, former Judge, Supreme Court of India, (1975)

2. Meet Chhattisgarh jailer Varsha Dongre: Suspended for exposing torture and sexual abuse of Adivasis

'The government is highly upset with me,' says the civil servant, because of old hostility – for exposing its 'corrupt face'.

Facebook Post by Varsha Dongre:

"I have seen 14-16-year-old Adivasi girls being stripped naked in police stations and tortured. They were given electric shocks on their wrists and breasts. I have seen the marks. It horrified me. Why did they use third degree torture on minors?"

This Facebook [post](#) by Varsha Dongre on April 26 was insider confirmation of the widespread abuse of human rights by the security forces battling Maoist insurgency in the tribal heartland of Chhattisgarh. Naturally, it infuriated the state apparatus

that has done everything in its power to keep such shameful conduct from being exposed. So, the 35-year-old deputy superintendent of Raipur jail was duly suspended, and then "attached" to Ambikapur jail about 350 km away. 

Readers' Comments

Dear Shri Mahi Pal Singh, this is to express my appreciation for regular and upto date despatch of the R.H. In the Nov. issue of the RH all the articles are good, especially your editorial on the outcome of 2019 elections which is incisive and excellent. If Yadavs and Mayawati join hands in U.P. and Nitish Kumar in Bihar naturally they can get their candidates elected to the parliament. BJP will then be in a crisis.

The exercise of demonetisation was undertaken for the following purposes as I could understand from the events that followed:

1. To allow further replenishment of PSU banks with sufficient funds to allow further grant of loans to the vested interests for conversion to the NPA status at a later date.
2. To allow hassle free conversion of black money and fake currency into white conveniently in mint fresh notes of Rs. 2000 denomination.
3. To enrich bank managers at all levels from rural to metropolitan areas to keep them loyal for future necessities (e.g., in a Moffusil town like Tanuku in Andhra Pradesh, it appeared in the papers that the local PSU branch manager arranged the exchange of over Rs. one crore to only one party overnight while the said amount was meant for the whole town and while the populace was in queues outside the banks to exchange only Rs. 4500/- of their old demonetized notes with the new ones. - P.A.S. Prasad

Dear Mahi Palji,

My hearty congratulations for the good editorials and good articles in RH that is keeping me in touch with the happenings in my beloved country. Not too happy. Things here are not very good either.

Also thanks to Varmaji. Got the latest December issue of RH.

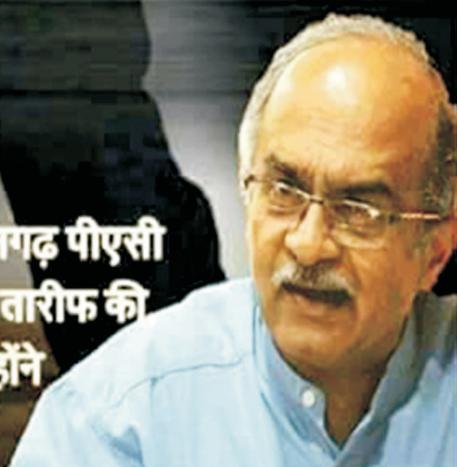
My Warmest regards,

Kameshwar (from the U.S.)

फैने स्वयं बस्तर में 14 से 16 वर्ष की आदिवासी बच्चियों
को देखा, जिनको थाने में प्रताड़ित किया गया था.
उनकी क्लाईंस्यों और स्तरों पर करेंट लगाया गया था
मैं भीतर तक सिहर उठी थी कि इन छोटी-छोटी
बच्चियों पर थर्ड डिग्री टार्चर किस लिए....?
हम सभी को अपना गिरेबान झांकना चाहिए,
दोनों तरफ मरने वाले अपने देशवासी हैं
पूँजीवादी व्यवस्था को आदिवासी क्षेत्रों में
जबरदस्ती लागू करवाना, उन्हें जंगल-जमीन
से बेदखल करने के लिए उनके गांव जलवाना,
आदिवासी महिलाओं के साथ बलात्कार,
आदिवासी महिलाएं नक्सली हैं या नहीं, यह देखने
को उनके स्तन निचोड़कर दुध निकालकर देखना
आखिर ये सबकुछ क्यों हो रहा है....?
नक्सलवाद खत्म करने के लिए... लगता नहीं...?

वर्षा डॉगरे
डिप्टी जेलर, रायपुर

यह शर्मनाक है कि जिन वर्षा डॉगरे जी की छातीसगढ़ पीएसी
घोटाले को उजागर करने के लिए हाई कोर्ट ने भी तारीफ की
उन्हें सरकार इसलिए तंग कर रही है क्योंकि उन्होंने
आदिवासियों पर हो रहे जुल्मों का विरोध किया



- **RENAISSANCE PUBLISHERS PRIVATE LIMITED**
15, Bankim Chaterjee Street (2nd Floor), Kolkata: 700 073.
Mobile : 09831261725
- **NEW FROM RENAISSANCE**
● **By SIBNARAYAN RAY**
Between Renaissance and Revolution - Selected Essays: Vol. 1- H.C. 350
In Freedom's Quest: A Study of the Life and Works of M.N.Roy:
Vol. III H.C. 250.00
Against the Current - H.C. 350
- **By M.N. Roy**
Science and Superstition - H.C. 125.00
- **AWAITED OUTSTANDING PUBLICATIONS**
● **By RAVINDRANATH TAGORE & M.N. ROY**
Nationalism - H.C. 150.00
- **By M.N. ROY**
The Intellectual Roots of modern Civilization -H.C. 150.00
The Russian Revolution - P.B. 140.00
The Tragedy Of Communism - H.C. 180.00
From the communist Manifesto - P.B. 100.00
To Radial Humanism - H.C. 140.00
Humanism, Revivalism and the Indian Heritage - P.B. 140.00
- **By SIVANATH SASTRI**
A History of the Renaissance in Bengal
Ramtanu Lahiri: Brahman & Reformer H.C. 180.00
- **By SIBNARAYAN RAY**
Gandhi, Gandhism and Our Times (Edited) - H.C. 200.00
The Mask and The Face (Jointly Edited With Marian Maddern) - H.C. 200.00
Sane Voices for a Disoriented Generation (Edited) - P.B. 140.00
From the Broken Nest to Visvabharati - P.B. 120
The Spirit of the Renaissance - P.B. 150.00
Ripeness is All - P.B. 125.00
- **By ELLEN ROY**
From the Absurdity to Creative Rationalism - P.B. 90.00
- **BY. V.M. TARKUNDE**
Voice of a Great Sentinel - H.C. 175.00
- **By SWARJ SENGUPTA**
Reflections - H.C. 150.00
- **Science, Society and Secular Humanism - H.C. 125.00**
- **By DEBALINA BANDOPADHYAY**
The Women-Question and Victorian Novel - H.C. 150.00