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PUCL interns interacting with Dr. Faroukh Abdulla, former Chief Minister of J&K, after a discussion on “J&K - The Road Ahead” at India International Centre, New Delhi on 8th December, 2018

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Editorial :

Beginning of the end of BJP rule

Mahi Pal Singh

Though the results of the five state Assembly elections which were declared on 11th December 2018 may be interpreted differently by political analysts and different political parties which contested the elections, there cannot be any doubt about the fact that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has lost the election in all the five states. In Chhattisgarh where it was in power for the last 15 years it got only 15 seats out of 90 with a vote percentage of only 33% as against the Congress which got 43% votes and 68 seats whereas in Madhya Pradesh, another state where it was in power for the last 15 years, it got 109 as against 114 won by the Congress. In Rajasthan, another big and important state where it had a huge majority in the 2013 elections, it could win only 73 seats against the 99 won by the Congress. In Telengana and Mizoram it could not even make its presence felt.

Come as they did in December 2018, just before the Lok Sabha elections coming in a few months at any time before May 2019, these election results do not portend well for the BJP. Though Amit Shah, the BJP president had been claiming that his party would win more than 75% seats in each one of the states, yet the voters who had ultimately to decide, did not agree with him. It were not Amit Shah and company who had suffered the pain of demonetisation and faulty implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) both of which resulted in the loss of jobs, living and even lives to the ordinary people. They had also seen the mob lynching incidents at the hands of the Hindutva goons belonging to the BJP fold and persecution of not the perpetrators but the victims and their families at the hands of the state machinery under the control of the BJP rulers. With no signs of the

‘achhe din’ (good times) promised by Mr. Narendra Modi and his party anywhere in sight even after five years of the state rule and about four and a half years of the central rule by the BJP, the voters decided to throw away these rulers, only the first half coming in December 2018 and the second half to follow in 2019.

The Congress leaders have started singing paeans for Rahul Gandhi and his leadership for winning these elections. The Congress has cause to be happy about only in Chhattisgarh where it won convincingly overthrowing the Raman Singh government though rampant corruption in the state in the purchase and distribution of ration and atrocities on the innocent tribal people of the state in the name of fighting Naxalism, apart from other common problems like unemployment, played a significant role in the downfall of the BJP rule.

All-round failure of the BJP government at the centre, and also in the states ruled by it, and the anger of the people against it is the sole reason for the rout of the BJP in the elections. Although the Congress will form governments in the two other remaining main states, namely Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan also, yet it will do so merely by proxy. Actually it has not got a majority in either of them. It has won 114 seats in Madhya Pradesh, two short of the majority mark in a house of 230 seats and 99 in Rajasthan, one short of the majority mark in the 199 seats for which the elections were held. Even its vote share in Rajasthan is 39.3%, which is only .5% more as against the BJP’s 38.8 and a bit lower at 40.9% than the BJP’s vote share of 41% in Madhya Pradesh. It only got the benefit of the negative vote against the BJP it being the only alternative in sight. In Telengana with 119 seats going to the polls the Congress+ got only

21 seats and the Telengana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) swept the polls winning 88 seats. And, of course, in Mizoram it got only 5 seats as against the 26 seats won by the Mizoram National Front (MNF) and lost its government there. In fact, as the BJP has said, the whole North-East is now 'Congress-Mukt' (free of the Congress).

These elections have given ample food for thought for both the Congress and the BJP. The Congress should not fall a prey to the misconception that people have decided to bring it to power and anoint its party president, Rahul Gandhi, as the next Prime Minister of the country. If pitted against Narendra Modi as a Prime Ministerial candidate, he would fall flat and his party would lose some seats which it could otherwise win. In the three states where it will be forming the governments there was no other alternative to the BJP and it got the benefit of being the only alternative there. Under Rahul's leadership it has not increased its acceptability in any manner because it has not come a bit closer to the people, their problems and their aspirations, and consequently to their hearts. Its leaders need to come closer to the people by working at the grass-roots level rather than looking towards the family and depending on them to get the party tickets and also popular votes, behaving like confirmed sycophants as they have been for about half a century. This will not work now because the family itself has lost its charisma among the voters, Rahul Gandhi being the worst representative of the legacy though his mother, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, is desperately trying to make him the Prime Minister of the country. The conviction and sentence for whole life for Sajjan Kumar, an ex-member of Lok Sabha from the Congress party, by the Delhi High Court for the killing of five Sikhs in Delhi Cantt Area of Delhi during the anti-Sikh riots of 1984, on 17 December, 2018, the day when the three Chief Ministers (including Kamal Nath from Madhya Pradesh, who is also alleged to have led crowds who killed

many Sikhs), from the Congress party are going to be sworn in, is going to create more difficulties for the Congress and Rahul Gandhi. Besides, Mamta Banerjee, Akhilesh Yadav and Maya Wati have already declared that Rahul Gandhi is not acceptable to them as the prospective candidate of the joint opposition for the post of Prime Minister.

At the same time these elections have provided even more food for thought for the BJP. It strongly and urgently needs to get over the narcissism it has been nourishing, thinking it is invincible. The story of winning the 2014 election with a majority in the Lok Sabha, though with a vote percentage of only 31, and the winning spree of one state election after another is now a matter of the past. Now it faces a disenchanted and disillusioned populace as it has realised through experience that the poll promises of the BJP were really '*jumlas*' as Amit Shah had himself admitted after the election. They know better than the BJP leadership that their promise of ending corruption and black money has utterly failed and both of them have grown in size on the strength of the new Rs. 2000 note because of which corrupt leaders and bureaucrats need lesser space to hide their ill-gotten money. This fact has also been confirmed by a former election commissioner of India only a few days ago. The farmers never got their promised 50% profit on their investment. Now the Ram temple bogey, again being raised with the help of one Hindutva group after another, does not seem to impress the people.

The 2018 assembly elections are going to prove a precursor to the 2019 parliamentary elections for the BJP. Raghuram Rajan, Arvind Panagariya, Arvind Subramanian, Urjit Patel and Surjit Bhalla, all of them economists of exceptional repute, quit working under the Modi Government prematurely, citing 'personal reasons.' However, the departure of these high profile personalities raises serious questions.

Perhaps they could not be convinced to let the Modi government highjack and manipulate the Reserve Bank of India's reserve of three lakhs and sixty thousand Rupees or India's financial system to gain political mileage by using that money. It was another dimension of political corruption the Modi government was trying to indulge in but these economists thwarted these attempts. The public at large is watching these events.

The BJP leaders may pretend not to be affected by the assembly election results but in their heart of hearts they too know well that they are doomed to fall in 2019. Some intelligent ones who perhaps feel the pulse of the people better than their leaders, like Sushma Swaraj and Uma Bharati, both central ministers, declared their intention not to contest the 2019 parliamentary elections citing one reason or the other even before the assembly election results were declared. Obviously, who would like to board a sinking ship? A BJP Member of Lok Sabha from U.P. Savitri Bai Phule has even resigned from the party alleging that the BJP is trying to "create divisions" in the society, a fact she realized after four and a half years after enjoying as a Member of Parliament. She has warned the Prime Minister saying, "I want to tell (PM) Narendra Modi, *sanvidhan laagu karo ya kursi khali karo* (implement the constitution or quit)." The lawmaker from Uttar Pradesh had earlier this year gone public against

her party leadership, alleging discrimination against Dalits. If such allegations come from its own MPs, the working of the Modi government can well be understood. Such allegations cannot remain without having their effect on the shape of things to come for the BJP in 2019. There is no hope for the BJP to recover its lost ground as it cannot come out of its Hindutva ideological bindings, caste and religious biases and its class leanings which largely and ultimately help and protect the interests of the super rich industrialists who fund its elections. Constitutional values like secularism, rule of law, democratic freedoms, economic, social and political equality of all etc. have no value for the BJP leaders but the people of this country love and cherish these values and they will do everything to protect them. They have time and again shown it. They will again show it in 2019. Alleged corruption in the purchase of Bofors guns from Sweden in 1986 had cost Rajiv Gandhi the loss of parliamentary elections to the Congress party led by him in 1989. Allegations of far greater size of corruption by the Modi government in the purchase of Rafale fighter planes has added to the woes of the BJP further and will certainly take its toll in the 2019 parliamentary elections. As Mamata Banerjee, the Chief Minister of West Bengal, has also said, the assembly elections of 2018 are the beginning of the end of the BJP rule in the country. 

"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)

Has The End of The Indian Democratic-Secular Polity Begun?

India, sadly, is witnessing the Hindutva juggernaut running amok crushing whatever was democratic, liberal and egalitarian in the Indian polity. The RSS as the charioteer is not ashamed of this vicious campaign, instead, taking credit for it. It was not long back that it used to claim apolitical status. Even when its cadres like Atal Bihari Vajpayee and LK Advani became rulers of India it would assure the nation that RSS was a socio-cultural organization and had nothing to do with politics. *Organiser*, mouthpiece of the RSS, in its editorial of February 6, 2000 went on to declare that, “the RSS is not a political party. It does not take part in elections nor its office bearers are supposed to become office bearers of any political party. The RSS has no election symbol nor its leadership or members have ever endeavoured to seek political office. It is a social-cultural organization trying to inspire all national activity.” In fact, it was the pledge RSS made to the first home minister of India, Sardar Patel as a condition for withdrawal of ban on it for playing a role in the assassination of Father of the Nation, MK Gandhi.

But since Modi’s becoming PM of India in March 2014, who describes himself as Hindu nationalist, situation has deteriorated for the worst. Now RSS sets the agenda and executes Hindutva politics which keeps democratic-secular India on the ventilator. Even the ventilators which include independent judiciary, neutral bureaucracy, Parliament and office of the President of the Republic have faltered in fulfilling their task of safeguarding our polity.

The President and PM neither talk to the media nor explain about burning issues faced by the nation. However, RSS boss, Mohan

Bhagwat as the ideologue of the ruling Hindutva group makes statements about the direction of the government. He has become the de-facto ruler of India. He is allowed to hold conclaves, as the only speaker, outlining the Hindu nationalist polarizing agenda, at institutions like Vigyan Bhawan which were meant to deliberate on strengthening our democratic polity. The latest *parvachan* or sermon was delivered at the RSS headquarters on the eve of *Vijaydashmi*, also the foundation day of RSS in 1925.

Abandoning any façade of respecting Indian constitutional polity and its processes he demanded that an ordinance should be brought in by the government for building the temple at Ayodhya at the place of demolished Babri mosque on December 6, 1992. It looked as if his *chelas* or cadres of RSS governing India had solved all critical problems like, violence against Dalits, hunger, poverty, unemployment, violence against women, absence of health and educational facilities and only issues like Ram temple are to be solved!

According to RSS, this mosque was built after demolishing temple at the birth place of Ram at Ayodhya in 1528-29 by a military commander of Babar (1483-1530). It is to be noted that this mosque was razed to ground by Hindutva goons despite RSS leaders’ undertaking to the then Parliament, the Supreme Court and the PM (Narsimha Rao) that mosque would not be touched. According



Prof. Shamsul Islam

to him “the construction of the temple is necessary from the self-esteem point of view; it will also pave the way for an atmosphere of goodwill and oneness in the country”.

Interestingly, the issue of destruction of Ram temple was never raised before 1881. RSS raised the issue of Ram temple only after 1949 and never during the British rule since its birth in 1925. Moreover, Tulsidas (1532–1623 during the times of Akbar) who penned *Ramcharitmanas*, the epic which popularized the story of Ram as God in northern India nowhere in his work in *Avadhi* language mentioned this destruction. Bhagwat’s call for a law for the temple is open denigration of the Supreme Court of India which is presently hearing the mosque-temple dispute.

How RSS and its current boss, Bhagwat are out to undo the constitutional proprieties will be clear from their brazen opposition to the Supreme Court judgment on allowing women of all ages to visit Sabarimala temple in Kerala. Interestingly, the judgment was delivered by a the chief justice of India who enjoyed respect in the Hindutva circles. His argument was that “We [he meant Supreme Court] should have built consensus. The devotees should have been consulted...the premise of the tradition that has been accepted by society and continuously followed for years together was not taken into consideration. The version of heads of religious denominations and faith of crores of devotees was not taken into account”.

Interestingly, RSS always want strict execution of the Judiciary’s judgment whenever practices of minority communities, specially Muslim and Christians are judicially outlawed. Moreover, by the logic of Bhagwat that tradition that has been accepted by society and continuously followed for years together should not be violated, the *Sati*, widow-remarriage, Untouchability, child marriages and slavery would never have

been banned in history. It showed what side RSS is.

Unfortunately, the RSS opposition to the entry of women in the Sabarimala temple has not been verbal only. RSS, BJP and its open and hidden organizations have been involved in organizing aggressive protest against the Supreme Court judgment. These organizations have declared CPM led Kerala government as anti-Hindu and working overtime to turn Kerala into another Ayodhya.

BJP president, Amit Shah, perennial source of spitting communal venom criticized the verdict as ‘impracticable’. Thus he indirectly declared that ‘Hindus’ would not accept the Sabarimala verdict of the Supreme Court and turned this issue into Communists versus ‘Hindus’. According to NDTV, “BJP President Amit Shah’s speech in Kerala using, typical of his style, the language of a school bully, should be seen as a direct assault on the Supreme Court of India.” This call completely disregarded the fact that Kerala government was simply trying to implement a judgment of the highest court of India which was delivered by a Bench which was headed by a known ‘Hindu’ chief justice, Dipak Mishra. The Kerala Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan has rightly commented that

“It is obvious that both BJP and RSS want political capital out of it, and are instigating devotees. Their only intention is to polarize the society for a few votes...These forces have a long history of adopting such diabolical political games. Their only intention is to polarize society on communal lines. For this, they have gone to the extent of indulging in violence and creating strife. Even the abode of Ayyappa was used as a camp for anti-social elements and criminals. We have maintained restraint, considering the sanctity of the place. Let me make it very clear that the Government of Kerala will not tolerate any such acts henceforth. We will ensure that

the Supreme Court verdict is implemented in letter and spirit”.

This exposure comes from a CM who has not wilted under the mass frenzy of Hindutva organizations and vowed to implement the judgment of the highest court of justice of India.

The RSS which is talking of the sensibilities and beliefs of the Kerala Hindu devotees of Sabrimala has been genetically believer in gender discrimination. It does not allow women in RSS. It has a separate women’s wing which is known as *Mahila sevika samiti* (society of women servants) where as male RSS body is known as *swayamsevak* or volunteer force. Women RSS cadres remain identified as servants not volunteers.

So far as RSS love for Keralite Hindus is concerned we must compare it with the wretched ideas of 2nd boss of RSS, MS Golwalkar who also remains the most prominent of RSS ideologue till date. Golwalkar was invited to address the students of the School of Social Science of Gujarat University on December 17, 1960. In this address, while underlying his firm belief in the Race Theory, he touched upon the issue of cross-breeding of human beings in the Indian society in history. He said:

“In an effort to better the human species through cross-breeding the Namboodri Brahmanas of the North were settled in Kerala and a rule was laid down that the eldest son of a Namboodri family could marry only the daughter of Vaishya, Kashtriya or Shudra communities of Kerala. Another still more courageous rule was that the first offspring of a married woman of any class must be fathered by a Namboodri Brahman and then she could beget children by her husband. Today this experiment will be called adultery but it was not so, as it was limited to the first child.” [M. S. Golwalkar cited in Organizer, January 2, 1961, p. 5.]

The above **statement of Golwalkar** is highly worrying in many respects. Firstly, it proves that Golwalkar believed that India had a superior Race or breed and also an inferior Race which needed to be improved through cross-breeding. Secondly, a more worrying aspect was his belief that Brahmins of the North (India) and specially Namboodri Brahmanas, belonged to a superior Race. Due to this quality, Namboodri Brahmanas were sent from the North India to Kerala to improve the breed of inferior Hindus there. Interestingly, this was being argued by a person who claimed to uphold the unity of Hindus world over. Thirdly, Golwalkar as a male chauvinist believed that a Namboodri Brahman male belonging to a superior Race from the North only could improve the inferior human Race from South. For him wombs of Kerala’s Hindu women enjoyed no sanctity and were simply objects of improving breed through intercourse with Namboodri Brahmanas who in no way were related to them. Nobody on this earth can beat RSS in hypocrisy and double-talk.

What unshackled Hindutva zealots are doing in the largest State of the Indian Union would suffice to know what is happening to the minorities in UP led by a Hindutva zealot who hates secularism and democracy. The State is witnessing highest number of incidence of violence against Christians ever in history. According to a press report from the ground zero, “Uttar Pradesh, a most populous state in north India, considered to be the most populous country subdivision in the world and led by a sitting high priest of Gorakhpur temple, Chief Minister, Yogi Aditya Nath is witnessing the highest number of violence against Christians. What’s noteworthy is, it is happening in a district headquarters located to the northwest of the district of Varanasi, which is a parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister, Narendra

Modi...In September [2018] alone, UP has witnessed 25 incidents, out of which 20 were in Jaunpur. Overall, since January 2018, the state has witnessed 59 out of 190 incidents of violence against Christians in India...In these 190 incidents of violence against Christians in 2018 from January to September, 135 women and 115 children were either physically injured or mentally disturbed."

Sadly, Nobel Peace Prize winner and child rights activist **Kailash Satyarthi** was the chief guest at the event. He took along his wife there and told the RSS gathering that the future belonged to RSS. It is like Malala Yousafzai who was co-recipient of the Nobel with

Satyarthi going as chief guest to the foundation day programme of Lashkar-e-Taiba led by Hafiz Saeed in Pakistan. Some analyst thought that Satyarthi went to RSS programme as RSS/ BJP government has 'files' on him. It may not be the only reason. He has been a member of the 'sleeping cell' of RSS and when Hindutva politics is losing support, all such characters are being asked to come in open and help the organization. Earlier Pranab Mukherjee was asked to come to RSS graduation ceremony (June 7, 2018) for the same reason.

Shamsul Islam is a retired Professor of Delhi University. He is also a human rights activist. 

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Ayodhya: Mohan Bhagwat Wants Law For Ram Mandir, Lashes Out At Supreme Court

At a VHP rally, the RSS chief said the time for patience was over and there was no need to wait for a Supreme Court decision.

Nagpur, MAHARASHTRA — Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday gave a clear message to the Sangh Parivar in Nagpur that the time for patience on the issue of a Ram temple at Ayodhya was over and there was no need to wait for a Supreme Court decision on the disputed site.

Addressing the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's (VHP) "*Hunkar rally*", just a few kilometres away from the RSS headquarters in Nagpur, Bhagwat made visible his displeasure with the Supreme Court's attitude on the issue of Ram temple.

"It appears that this issue is not a priority for the apex court... The issues of people's importance should not be delayed repeatedly," the RSS chief told the gathering of RSS and VHP workers.

Bhagwat was not scheduled to address the rally but reportedly decided to speak a couple of hours before the programme was to begin.

Hinting that the Sangh Parivar is going to get more aggressive on the issue in the coming days, Bhagwat told RSS and VHP workers that there was no need to wait for the top court's decision.

"I am not asking you to have patience and wait for the court's decision. A year ago, I was the one who asked you to keep patience, but now I am saying that there is no need of keeping patience. Now we have to mobilise people. Now we have to demand the law. It's good to raise slogans, but do it at a proper place. People of this country, the saints, even those opposed to it, want a quick construction of the Ram temple. This has to be the decisive phase of our movement for Ram temple. Now make sure we make such a push that we stop only after the temple is constructed," he told the crowd from a stage

shared by VHP leaders and *Sadhus*.

He also asked the *Karsevaks* to be ready to go to Ayodhya in batches in order to participate in the construction of the Ram temple.

Throughout his 23-minute-long speech, the RSS chief repeatedly disapproved of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi's comments that the issue (of Ram temple) is not a priority for the Supreme Court.

"It is not the court's priority, maybe because it is busy or is not able to understand our society. In such a situation, the government should bring a law as soon as possible. This is our demand and remember what we have to do to fulfil this demand. Go and explain to every person about the present state of Ram Janmabhoomi. Now we don't need to fight, but have to be adamant. Take it to the people that the government has to make law.

"The government needs the pressure of people to make laws. Even if I don't want to construct the temple despite being in government, people's pressure can propel me to do so. People's pressure gives them strength. It's time for India to stand for the Ram Mandir. Don't think of politics, this issue has got nothing to do with it. We want a grand mandir at Ram Janmabhoomi and we will unite the society for it," Bhagwat said while also expressing regret that he had to participate in a rally on the same issue even after almost 30 years.

The programme saw communal and inflammatory speeches by several VHP leaders and *Sadhus*, castigating the Muslim community and the Supreme Court's "apathetic attitude" towards the issue of Ram temple.

Courtesy **Huffpost**, 26/11/2018. 

Pavan Dahat

There Is No Evidence Of A Temple Under The Babri Masjid, Just Older Mosques, Says Archeologist

Supriya Varma, one of the archeologists who has challenged the ASI's 2003 findings, explains why the ASI is wrong.

NEW DELHI—In August 2003, following a six-month-long excavation, the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) informed the Allahabad High Court that it had found evidence of there being a temple under the Babri Masjid, the 16-century mosque demolished by *kar sevaks* on 6 December 1992.

Two archeologists, Supriya Varma and Jaya Menon, accused the ASI of having preconceived notions ahead of the dig, and violating ethical codes and procedures during the excavation. Varma, professor of archeology at Jawaharlal Nehru University, and Menon, who heads the history department at Shiv Nadar University, told the court that the excavation did not find anything that supported ASI's conclusion. In 2010, they published a paper in the *Economic and Political Weekly*, challenging the methods used in collecting evidence and its interpretation.

The archeologists, who were observers during the excavation on behalf of the Sunni Waqf Board, a party to the tile suit in the Ayodhya dispute, say the ASI, then under the Bharatiya Janata Party-led (BJP-led) National Democratic Alliance government, was under pressure to reinforce the Hindu right-wing narrative that Mughal emperor Babur's general Mir Baqi knocked down a temple to build a mosque on the spot where Hindu god Ram was born.

Ahead of the 26th anniversary of the Babri Masjid's demolition, Varma spoke to *HuffPost India* about the three key pieces of evidence found in 2003, why she thinks the ASI felt compelled to fabricate its conclusion, and procedural lapses during the excavation led by

Betwa Sharma
B.R. Mani, who was later replaced on an order by the Allahabad High Court. In 2016, the Modi government appointed Mani as the Director General of the National Museum.

Is there any archeological evidence that the Babri Masjid was built over a temple devoted to Ram?

No, there is nothing. Even today, there is no archeological evidence that there was a temple under the Babri Masjid.

What is the evidence on the basis of which the ASI is saying there was a temple?

There are three things. What the ASI has excavated is not evidence there was a temple underneath the mosque. One is this western wall, the second are these 50 pillar bases and third are architectural fragments. The western wall is a feature of a mosque. It is a wall in front of which you say *namaaz*. It is not the feature of a temple. Temple has a very different plan. Underneath the Babri Masjid, there are actually older mosques.

Now, as far as these pillar bases are concerned, these are completely fabricated and we filed many complaints to the court about it. Our argument is that if you look at what they are claiming to be pillar bases, these are pieces of broken bricks and they have mud inside them. There is no way a pillar can even stand on it, it is so unstable. It's a completely political issue. They wanted that report to say there are pillar bases and it said there are pillar bases.

Underneath the Babri Masjid, there are actually older mosques.

What about the architectural fragments?

The third piece of evidence is these architectural fragments. They say there are

some 400-500 fragments, which are pieces of architectural buildings. Of these, they say 12 are the most important. Of these 12, none of these were found during the excavation. These were recovered from the debris lying above the lime floor of the masjid. There is this one particular sculpture, which is closest to some kind of image, which they called a 'divine couple.' But even that is just one man and a woman and is half-broken. There is nothing else. A temple, a stone temple—supposedly this is a stone temple—has much more sculptured material than what they have found.

There is no archeological evidence that there was a temple under the Babri Masjid.

Can this sculpture not be dated?

The stone cannot be dated. What you date in archeology is the deposit, the layer in which the particular artefact has been found. In that also, you can date organic material. So, for example, a bone or a shell or charcoal. The ASI have got some dates. But this sculptured piece has not even come from a stratified deposit.

It could have come from anywhere?

It could have come from anywhere. There is no way of dating it. In other words, there is no evidence for a temple.

Can you date the pillar bases?

You can date those floor levels. They clearly belong, in my opinion, to the period from the 12th to the 15th century at different levels.

Does the ASI date the temple it claims was under the mosque?

No. They don't say that. They just say there was a temple underneath. That's all. They give it no precise date.

Doesn't the report say the temple is from the 10th century?

On the one hand, they are claiming a massive temple with more than 50 pillar bases, but they are also saying that there is a circular shrine under these pillar bases, which is much smaller in size, about three to four meters in diameter, which they claim belong to the 10 century. But

I have examined walls next to the circular structure, and the information mentioned in the site notebook of that particular trench, which mentions these walls belong to the Gupta period. And that is why this circular structure would also belong to the Gupta period around 4th-6th century AD.

How many excavations have there been in Ayodhya?

There is Alexander Cunningham who is the first Director General of the ASI, who, in 1861-62, does some kind of survey around Ayodhya region, and he mentions three mounds. And of these three mounds, two have some kind of Buddhist Stupa and one of them has a Vihara. He also said that there are oral traditions that say that three temples were destroyed, but in his account, there is no mention of a temple being destroyed on the site of the Babri Masjid.

That is the first time that archeologically some kind of survey had been carried out. Now, in terms of excavations, the story begins in 1969-70. The first excavation is carried out by the Department of Archaeology, Banaras Hindu University. They did not really conduct the excavations close to the Babri Masjid, but in the near vicinity. The only report that we have is in what we call IARs, which is the *Indian Archeology Review* published by the ASI, every year. It is not a very detailed report. There is a one-page description of what they found. They say it looks like it was inhabited in what we call the early historic period, which is about 6th century BC to 6th century AD. And they say that there is some medieval occupation, but they don't really get into the details. That's the end. Then, what happens is from about 1975 to about 1980, there is a project by B.B. Lal.

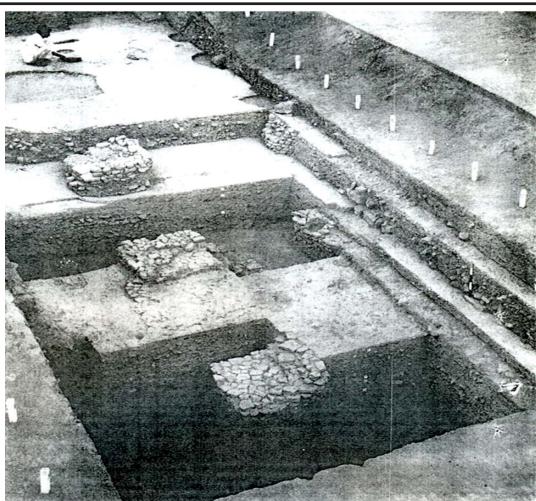
Who is B.B. Lal?

BB Lal was also the director general of ASI and he took early retirement in 1972 and joined the Archeology Department of the Jiwaji University in Gwalior. And from there he went as a fellow to the Institute of Advanced Studies

in Shimla. And he came up with this project on the archeology of Ramayana. He also had a project on the archeology of Mahabharata. As part of the archeology of Ramayana, he excavated Ayodhya and a couple of other sites, which have been mentioned in Ramayana. He carried out excavations for a period of five years but a report is only available for two years in the IAR. He pretty much substantiates what is mentioned by the BHU. That there are occupations in the early historic period and there is some sign of desertion and you also find some floors from the medieval period. That's all there is.

Then it is only in 1988, by which time the VHP has picked up this whole issue of temples having been demolished at three sites—Ayodhya, Mathura and Varanasi—and in 1988, B.B. Lal takes a photograph of pillar bases, which he says was taken and excavated at Ayodhya between 1975 and 1978, and publishes it in *Manthan*, which is the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) journal. He also presented the photograph at the World Archeological Congress in Croatia, saying that if excavations are to be carried then they will find evidence of a temple.

What does the photograph show?



Courtesy Supriya Varma Pillar bases excavated by B.B. Lal (1970s).

The photographs are what he calls pillar bases, which are pieces of bricks put together in a half-squarish, half rectangular, half circular forms. There are three pillar bases that he marks out in that photograph.

Where does he find the pillar bases?

This excavation was carried out near the wall of the Babri Masjid.

What happened after Lal's photo?

Then, the BJP picks up the Ayodhya movement and it becomes a political movement. In 1992, the mosque is demolished and they have paved the way for excavations. The title suit, that case of who owns the land, is carrying on in the Lucknow Bench of the Allahabad High Court. Once NDA comes to power, which is in 1999, the court orders that now possibly we should excavate. In 2002, they would order the ASI, the government body, to carry out a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey. Certain signals are sent through a machine and if there are structures underneath the mound then it bounces back. On the basis of that report, the court ordered excavation be carried out. In March 2003, the excavations began and they ended in August. Then, they submitted the report.

How did you get involved?

Once the excavations began, there were a lot of apprehensions because the ASI comes directly under the Ministry of Culture. And also, because archeology as a discipline is fairly technical. At that point, the Sunni Waqf Board people thought that they should have an archaeologist who would be present and point out in case there are any procedures that are not followed the way it should be in terms of methods and recording. They contacted Irfan Habib, who is a professor of medieval history at Aligarh Muslim University, and he contacted us.

I, and I think I can speak for my colleague Jaya Menon, we were both quite keen. We both wanted to know what exists under the mosque. It is not as though we had any kind of bias either way. We went with an open mind. For us, it was

an academic issue. We knew that we probably would never be able to get the chance unless we go there ourselves. It was at the cost of our professional careers as well. As an archaeologist, if I have to excavate any site, I have to get permission from ASI. So, if you antagonise the ASI, chances are that you are not going to get a permit, and that is why very few archaeologists were willing to even go.

You went as observers because the Sunni Waqf Board were petitioners in the title suit?

Just to note whether correct procedures were being followed or not. The NDA was in power. There was fear that the data would be manipulated. There was even fear that outside material would be planted over there. In fact, some of us also thought they would try and do it if they don't find evidence for a temple. They might bring material from outside, some idol, some image, and put it there.

There was fear that the data would be manipulated. There was even fear that outside material would be planted over there.

Did you face any kind of backlash?

We were lucky that they lost the elections, and we went on to excavate two sites (not connected to the Ayodhya dispute). Today, if I apply, I'm not certain whether I will get permission.



Courtesy Supriya Varma Pillar base excavated by ASI in 2003.

What does the ASI say in the report?

If you read the entire report, there is no mention of any temple. It is a standard report. You have a chapter on the trenches, you have a chapter of chronology, you have a chapter on different structures, you have a chapter on pottery. What is missing is a chapter on bones and human skeletal remains. That is what they also found but they never published it.

What you will also find is that the names of the people who wrote those chapters is mentioned. But in the conclusion, there is no name mentioned. And in the conclusion, in the last paragraph of the report, they say that given the evidence of this western wall, and pillar bases, and some architectural fragments, there was a temple underneath the Babri Masjid. It is literally written in three lines. Otherwise, nowhere in the discussion, is there any talk of a temple being found. With the same evidence, we have interpreted that there were actually two or three phases of smaller mosques underneath the Babri Masjid.

With the same evidence, we have interpreted that there were actually two or three phases of smaller mosques underneath the Babri Masjid.

In your expert opinion, as of today, there was no temple under the Babri Masjid? What was under it?

There was no temple under the Babri Masjid. What there was, if you go beyond the 12th century and you come down to the levels of the 4th to 6th century, i.e. the Gupta period, there seems to be a Buddhist stupa. So, there was Buddhist occupation here, and that is something even Alexander Cunningham has said. Outside the Babri Masjid, there are several other archeological mounds which seem to be sites of Buddhist stupas as well as monasteries. There was clearly a Buddhist community here, in the period, roughly from the 2nd century BC to 6th century AD. To us, it looks like this was then abandoned and reoccupied sometime around the 11th-12th century and possibly

because there was a Muslim settlement that came up. And they had a small mosque, which was expanded as the community increased, in size and finally a much larger mosque was built by Babar in 1528.

So, there is no evidence of this narrative that Babar's general Mir Baqi knocked down a temple to build a mosque?

There is no evidence but there is oral tradition that starts coming up in the late 19th century and it is recorded in a colonial period gazetteer. Even when Alexander Cunningham, he goes in 1861-62, he is traveling around and he does record oral traditions. He does not mention a temple being underneath the Babri Masjid. He talks about three temples, there is oral tradition of three temples being destroyed, but these are not underneath the Babri Masjid. They are some other temples in Ayodhya.

What impact did the report have on the title suit?

The bench comprised of three judges, two Hindus and one Muslim. The Muslim judge, S.U. Khan, clearly did not go into the archeological evidence. There was a strong viewpoint that this is a title suit and it does not matter who lived here before the present occupants. It is immaterial. And many of us also felt that they should have never dragged in history and archeology into a title suit. They should have just gone by what was the status when the first suit was filed in 1950. But the other two judges, D.V. Sharma and Sudhir Agarwal, much more Sudhir Agarwal, he did say that the ASI is saying a temple was there under the mosque and therefore we have to accept what the ASI is saying because they are the experts.

A generic temple?

Yes. Some generic temple. They don't get into whether it was a Ram Temple and they don't date it.

In the EPW report, you write about being concerned about certain procedures?

Yes. They are claiming that this is the site of Ram Temple, which is a Vaishnav temple, where generally, you would not expect to find any bones because of this vegetarianism etcetera, but when they started excavating, they started finding a lot of bones, animal bones. How do you explain finding animal bones in a Vaishnav temple? They clearly did not want that recorded. So, we noticed that the labour they had hired were just throwing the bones away. The other thing they were also doing, there is a certain pottery, ceramic type, which is known as glazed ware, which is generally associated with Muslim communities. They were finding a lot of this glazed ware. Those again were being thrown. So, we made a complaint, and they had to be recorded. You would not expect glazed ware in a Vaishnav temple. Procedurally, there was violation of an ethical code.

Procedurally, there was violation of an ethical code.

Did the ASI date the bones?

No, they did not.

Would it help to have a foreign team of archaeologists excavate the site?

As far as foreign archeologists are concerned, they know it is a political issue and they would not want to get entangled in it. If they wish to do any other archeological work in India, they would not want that to be jeopardised. And it is a political issue, it is clear to everyone.

Isn't six months very short for this kind of excavation?

As far as the ASI, and the archeologists of the ASI are concerned, they really are now no longer considered to have any kind of expertise. They haven't kept up to date with the latest methods, the recent theoretical developments, and they really just see it more as an administrative job than as an academic discipline.

Betwa Sharma is Politics Editor, **HuffPost India**

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Continuous Controversy over Ram Janma Bhoomi and Babri Masjid – Affecting the Integrity of India

K. Pratap Reddy

The continuous controversy over Ram JanmaBhoomi and Babri Masjid is gravely affecting the National Integrity and unity of the Nation, India that is Bharat.

In my humble view, this controversy is totally baseless and IS NOT based upon any historically available data, knowledge or information. While the majority community is trying to base its claim on MYTHOLOGY, the minority community is trying to base its claim on non-historically based belief that the first Mogul King, Baber has built it. While it is no doubt true that Baber established his Kingdom after defeating Ibrahim Lodhi in the first Panipat War in 1526 A.D., there is NO AUTHORITATIVE HISTORIC EVIDENCE available in any recognised History Book, that Baber built a mosque in Ayodhya in his name at the place where Ram is believed to have been born.

It is, therefore, obvious that both the claims i.e., the claim of the majority community based on mythology and the claim of the minority community NOT based on any recognised History Books are totally untenable. It is unfortunate that not only these two contending communities – majority and/or minority, but the successive Governments run by different parties over the last 70 years after Independence, are not only NOT trying to solve the problem by trying to reconcile both the contending communities, but are appearing to use this communal DISHARMONY for their respective political purposes.

What is more surprising – Nay regrettable is that even the Higher Judiciary with ALL respect thereto, i.e., Lucknow Bench of Allahabad High Court and the Apex Court, the Supreme Court of India, who are the custodians

of the Constitution, the PREAMBLE whereof eloquently and mandatorily declares that UNITY AND INTEGRITY OF THE NATION is the foremost important Factor for saving our SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC do not appear to be realising the basic concept of Civil Law, or Civil dispute, as the case may be

Section 9 of the Civil Procedure Code, which is the basis of ALL CIVIL DISPUTES to be entertained by ANY CIVIL COURT, from the lowest to the Apex Court declares:-

“The Courts shall (subject to the provisions herein contained) have jurisdiction to try all suits of CIVIL NATURE, except suits of which their cognizance is either expressly or impliedly barred.

Explanation I: Notwithstanding that such right may depend entirely on decision of questions as to religious rites or ceremonies.

Explanation II of Section 9 is not relevant here.

It cannot be denied that any CIVIL SUIT to be entertained by any CIVIL COURT, be it the lowest or even the highest the SUIT MUST BE OF CIVIL NATURE, and “is subject to the other provisions of the Civil Procedure Code” which relate to the laying of Evidence, either oral or documentary, and other procedural mandates laid down in “The Civil Procedure Code”. While it is no doubt true, that some Presidency Towns High Courts are vested with powers of “Civil Original Jurisdiction” apart from the “Extra-ordinary CIVIL Original Jurisdiction” under Article 226 of the Constitution, but it cannot be denied that the exercise of such Original Jurisdiction should ALWAYS BE ACCORDING TO PROCEDURE LAID DOWN BY LAW”

including the Civil Procedure Code, and other relevant laws such as The Limitation Act, etc.

I am not aware, whether the High Court of Allahabad (including its Lucknow Bench which decided the matter in 2010, leading to the present Appeal pending in the Supreme Court) had “ORIGINAL CIVIL JURISDICTION” like the other High Courts mentioned above, or whether it had withdrawn the matter from the District Court and tried and disposed off the matter. The fact of the matter is, that it is now pending before the Supreme Court. It does not, therefore, matter as to how the matter and in what manner, and according to which Jurisdiction, the matter had been initiated, inasmuch as, the Supreme Court of India is the ULTIMATE ARBITER OF ALL DISPUTES, either coming to and/or pending before it.

Clauses (1) of Article 142 declares:-

“The Supreme Court in the exercise of its jurisdiction may pass such decree or make such order as is necessary for doing complete justice IN ANY CAUSE OR MATTER PENDING BEFORE IT, and any decree so passed or order so made shall be enforceable throughout the territory of India in such manner as may be prescribed by or under any law made by Parliament and, until provision in that behalf is so made, in such manner as the President may by order prescribe.”

It is thus clear that since the matter is now pending before the Supreme Court, the Supreme Court should dispose off the matter as soon as possible and it shall be the duty of ALL THE CITIZENS OF INDIA whether belonging to the MAJORITY COMMUNITY OR MINORITY COMMUNITY to follow and abide by the same in order to TO MAINTAIN THE UNITY AND INTEGRITY OF INDIA.

At the cost of repetition, which may kindly be excused, I wish to state without any fear of contradiction, that the claims of the BOTH OR ALL the parties to the dispute, that is to say, the claim of the Majority Community about the

existence of Rama Janma Bhoomi Temple, or/ and the claim of the Minority community of Baber building any Masjid at the same place, are absolutely untenable, inasmuch as, the former is based on a mere mythological belief, the latter is Not based upon any historically available text book. While it is, no doubt, true that an old and dilapidated building existed at the DISPUTED PLACE NOT BEING USED BY ANY PERSON OR COMMUNITY either as a TEMPLE OR AS MOSQUE. The dispute appears to have started for the first time in 1949 and culminated in its demolition on 9th December, 1992, with the UNFORTUNATE AND UNIMGINABLE CONNIVANCE of the then Government of U.P lead by BJP and the then Union Government lead by Congress Party, which lead to the present continuous communal disharmony threatening the integrity and unity of the Nation.

As stated above, the Lucknow Bench of Hon’ble High Court of Allahabad should not have at all entertained the dispute even as a suit, inasmuch as, it was not a suit of a Civil Nature in any sense, and inasmuch as, while the claim of one party was based upon mere mythological belief and the claim of the other party based upon mere belief NOT based upon any authoritative historic TEXT BOOK. In that context, the Lucknow Bench of High Court of Allahabad should have called upon BOTH OR ALL the parties to the dispute for a mutual settlement or should have referred it to a LOK ADALAT.

In any case, now that the matter is pending before the Supreme Court of India, vested with a comprehensive and All Pervasive Jurisdiction under Article 142 of the Constitution, as referred to above, ALL the parties thereto should await and abide by the FINAL DECISION of the Supreme Court, in order to maintain the UNITY AND INTEGRITY of the Nation.

I do not know, and much less is there any indication expressed so far by the Supreme

Court, as to on what material will the Supreme Court give its Final Judgment, Decree or Order, but it shall be BINDING ON ALL THE CITIZENS OF INDIA irrespective of their Religions, Faiths or Beliefs and it is the DUTY OF ALL CITIZENS OF INDIA to Accept, Follow and Abide by such Judgment, Decision, Decree or Order of OUR SUPREME COURT NOT ONLY on account of its FINALITY as laid down in Article 142 of the Constitution BUT ALSO on account of the FUNDAMENTAL DUTIES OF ALL THE CITIZENS, as ORDAINED in Article 151A of our Constitution and accepted by ALL OF US – WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, as our Fundamental duty to maintain UNITY AND INTEGRITY OF OUR NATION – INDIA THAT IS BHARAT.

Before concluding, I wish to emphasize the fact that even the Judgment of the Supreme Court may not satisfy the expectations or wishes of any community – Majority or Minority, it should be realised by all the people that no Judgment, decision or adjudication of any Court or even the law laid by the Parliament comprising of our own elected people, will ever be to the expectation of the people at large.

Nevertheless, it is the duty of all its citizens to abide by the judicial decision of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and follow the law laid by the Parliament. It is, of course, true – nay, the Fundamental Rights of the people to express their views either on the judicial adjudication or the law laid by respective legislatures that is Parliament at Centre or the Assemblies in the States. I also wish to remind the people at large that the Supreme Court itself had declared that there is no guarantee that its pronouncements are always correct, but at the same time they are final and binding. These pronouncements may be either changed by a Larger Bench of the Supreme Court or by any valid law made by the Parliament.

I, therefore, very humbly request the readers, at the cost of repetition, that it is always better to abide by the final decision of a Supreme Court irrespective of personal beliefs and expectations, in order to maintain the UNITY AND INTEGRITY of the Nation.

K. Pratap Reddy is Senior Advocate of Andhra Pradesh High court at Hyderabad. He is a regular contributor to **The Radical Humanist**. 

Angelina Jolie on Nationalism and Patriotism

“We see rising tide of nationalism masquerading as patriotism and re-emergence of policies encouraging fear and hatred of others. We are grappling with a level of conflict and insecurity that seems to exceed our will and capabilities with more refugees than ever before with new wars erupting on top of existing conflicts, some already lasting for decades. I am a proud American and I am an internationalist. I believe any one committed to human rights is. It means seeing the world with a sense of fairness and humility and recognizing our own humanity in the struggles of others. It stems from love of one’s country, but not at the expense of others, from patriotism, but not from narrow nationalism.”

Babri Masjid Demolition: Narasimha Rao Failed Muslims But So Did Congress, Says Former PM's Biographer

Vinay Sitapati, who wrote 'Half Lion: How PV Narasimha Rao Transformed India', says there is "zero" evidence that Rao was involved in the plot to demolish the mosque.

Speaking to *HuffPost India* last month, Santosh Dubey, a Shiv Sena leader who was one of the main accused in the Babri Masjid demolition case, claimed that former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao was involved in the plot to demolish the 16th century mosque in Ayodhya on 6 December 1992.

This was not the first time that a *kar sevak* or a leader of the Hindu right had made such a claim. Last year, R.V. Vedanti, a former BJP lawmaker, told the media that Rao was involved. In 2014, Hindu right leaders said that same in a film secretly recorded by *CobraPost*.

Vinay Sitapati, who wrote *Half Lion: How P.V. Narasimha Rao Transformed India*, a biography of the former PM and Congress leader which was published in 2016, told *HuffPost India* there was "zero" evidence that Rao was involved in the plot. However, he adds that there is no question that Rao prioritised personal and political ambition at one of the gravest moment's in India's post-independence history, and made a serious error of judgement in trying to negotiate with the Hindu right instead of imposing President's Rule in Uttar Pradesh.

As the 26th anniversary of the demolition of the Babri Masjid approaches, the demand for a Ram Temple is gathering steam once again. Sitapati spoke to *HuffPost India* about why rumours of Rao's involvement in the plot started and still persist, the Congress's role in singling him out as the villain in the tragedy, and the deeper question of prioritising secularism over electoral democracy in times of crisis.

When did rumours about Narasimha Rao's involvement in the conspiracy begin surfacing?

Betwa Sharma

I would trace it back to 1998, when Sonia Gandhi comes back to the Congress after unseating Sitaram Kesri (as party president). They are grappling with two problems. The first is how to get rid of Narasimha Rao's legacy from the Congress party. Here, Narasimha Rao was not innocent at all. He was very conscious in his desire to see the Nehru-Gandhis marginalised within the Congress party. Sonia Gandhi has just reasons to dislike him.

It was not just Sonia Gandhi's apathy, but also many of the people that Narasimha Rao had marginalised within the Congress party, from Madhavrao Scindia to Arjun Singh to Mani Shankar Aiyar, they came back as Sonia's group. And they, more than Sonia Gandhi, really had it in for Narasimha Rao.

And the second problem?

The second problem they were facing was that Congress had collapsed in UP, especially among Muslim voters. The demolition of the Babri Masjid just accentuated the trend of Muslims voting for the Samajwadi Party, something which had begun in 1989. Muslims had left the Congress even before the Babri Masjid was demolished. The Congress's aim was to do things: to discredit Narasimha Rao's legacy and to make the claim that now that Congress does not have Narasimha Rao, the Muslims should repose their faith in the Nehru Gandhis.

In fact, Rahul Gandhi even made a statement (in 2007) that had someone from his family been a leader during that time, the mosque would not have fallen. And the simple answer to that question is that his mother was still one of most powerful leaders of the Congress party at the time. One word from her between October 30 1992

and December 5 1992 would have jolted the Congress into action. Had she just said that we don't trust Kalyan Singh, or the threat of the misuse of Article 356 is a lesser threat than the threat to India's secular fabric that the demolition of the mosque would portend, but she said nothing. She only spoke for the first time, I think, the day after the mosque fell.

They are grappling with two problems. The first is how to get rid of Narasimha Rao's legacy from the Congress Party.

Was there a concerted effort to defame Narasimha Rao?

That was part of it. The rest of the Congress party knows which way Sonia Gandhi is thinking. Then, they don't need to be instructed. To give an example, when the Congress was in power in Andhra Pradesh under YSR (Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy), there was talk of installing a statue of Narasimha Rao in Warangal, an area of what is Telangana today, where he is from. The local Congressmen that I spoke with told us that they really wanted to do it, but if they were seen garlanding a statue of Narasimha Rao, then their enemies within the party would use it to tell Sonia Gandhi. Within the rank and file of the Congress party, a clear message went that Narasimha Rao was fair game.

What is Narasimha Rao guilty of?

Just because the Congress has a motivation to besmirch Narasimha Rao's reputation does not mean that we should give him a free pass. There is no question that Narasimha Rao put his own political interest and his own survival over the survival of Babri Masjid. There is no debate about that. He was more worried about a no-confidence motion against him and the Supreme Court striking down the imposition of Article 356 and the damage it would do to his politics than he was about the survival of the Babri Masjid. But that would be accusing him of behaving like a politician. At a moment of profound crisis for the Indian Republic, Narasimha Rao failed to rise to the occasion. It is not clear to me that any other

Indian prime minister, bar Jawaharlal Nehru, would have acted differently from Narasimha Rao. I can only think of Jawaharlal Nehru as saying, 'I don't care if my government falls, I'm going to make sure the Babri Masjid does not fall.'

There is no question that Narasimha Rao put his own political interest and his own survival over the survival of Babri Masjid.

What is the story about Narasimha Rao sleeping when the Babri Masjid was under attack?

There was a rumour doing the round that when the mosque fell, Narasimha Rao was doing *pooja* in the Prime Minister's house. I traced that rumour to one source, which is Kuldip Nayar, the journalist, who mentions it in his book. Then, the next question is how does Kuldip Nayar know. He said he got the story from Madhu Limaye, who was a politician opposed to the Narasimha Rao at the time. Then the next question is how does Madhu Limaye know. Madhu Limaye says he heard it from someone's in the PM's office. Think about it. In law, a single hearsay, we do not allow. And yet, a rumour like this, which was based on two people leading up to Kuldip Nayar, is taken to be the truth. And the moment Kuldip Nayar said this story, there were many people in the PM's office who held a press conference saying that we were with Narasimha Rao when the mosque fell, or we were on the phone with him, but somehow that was not reported.

Why have the allegations about him being involved in the conspiracy persisted?

The evidence is very clear that throughout November and early December 1992, Narasimha Rao was meeting people from the BJP, the RSS and the VHP. He met Ashok Singhal, he met Advani, he met Murli Manohar Joshi, he kept meeting these people. He was actually meeting them to beg them not to destroy the mosque. There were a tremendous number of officials as well as other politicians present in the room. It was pretty well-known what the conversations looked like. The fact that Narasimha Rao was

reaching out to the BJP and the RSS, is something that he should do, right? If he was in a conspiracy with Advani, would he be meeting him so regularly? In fact, as I write in the book, Rao falsely accused Advani of involvement in the Hawala case in January 1996, almost certainly as revenge because he felt let down by Advani in Ayodhya. It would be fair to ask why was Narasimha Rao so gullible. Did he not know better?

But why have the allegations persisted?

With regard to why the rumours still persist, that answer is much clearer. If you look at people like Deng Xiaoping, FDR (Franklin D Roosevelt) in the US, who have been pivotal figures in their country's history. Today, their own political parties look up to them, celebrate them. Whereas Narasimha Rao's own party has decided that he is an outcaste. If your own party is accusing you of demolition of the Babri Masjid, the BJP, the Samajwadi Party, are very happy to play along. Look at the irony of the situation. The man (Kalyan Singh) who both the Supreme Court and the Liberhan Commission said was guilty of demolishing the Babri Masjid is today at the constitutional post of a governor. Whereas the man who was exonerated by both the Supreme Court and the Liberhan Commission, Narasimha Rao, is being constantly accused by the Congress party. They are trying to thread a needle by saying that it was part of the Congress that was led by Narasimha Rao that did Babri Masjid, not the party led by the Nehru-Gandhis, and the party should be forgiven for it. But I don't think that most Indians see that. I think most Indians see it as Congress admitting to a self-goal.

The man who both the Supreme Court and the Liberhan Commission said was guilty of demolishing the Babri Masjid is today at the constitutional post of a governor.

But what would be the motivation of BJP leaders to allege that Rao was in on the conspiracy? There was the Cobrapost sting operation in 2014. Just last year, former BJP

MP RS Vedanti called a press conference and accused Rao. You trace the Congress defamation of Narasimha Rao to 1998. Is there a pattern or timeline for the BJP?

I can't answer with respect to the specific motives of the people you mention, but I have not seen any corroborative evidence for any of these allegations. The BJP's general interest in Narasimha Rao has been to play a double game. At one level, both the BJP and the Congress were competing for Hindu votes because the Hindu votes, especially the upper caste Hindu votes, were in play in the early nineties. At the same time, the BJP is using the fact that the Congress has treated Narasimha Rao so badly to finger and embarrass the Congress.

Why did Narasimha Rao have so much faith in these Hindu right groups?

There are various reasons that are given. He was a devout religious Hindu himself. He spoke Sanskrit. People never mention that he also spoke Urdu and Persian. He definitely came from a deeply syncretic culture, but he was a scholar of Hinduism. I think at some level he felt that he could handle these guys. That he could meet Ashok Singhal and talk to him in Sanskrit and convince him.

The second reason is that he didn't have the sense of the BJP's rise, the way someone like Arjun Singh or Sharad Pawar or N.D. Tiwari, who were dealing with the BJP in their states, had. Whereas Narasimha Rao's opposition in the early years, when he was in Andhra Pradesh, had been the communists and then had been the rise of regional parties. So he did not have a feel that BJP was not just the movement of misguided religious Hindus, but it was fundamentally a political movement. He didn't have a feel for how transformational the BJP was in north India at the time.

Why did Narasimha Rao not impose President's Rule?

That was something that was discussed every day throughout India from October 30 to

December 6: should President's Rule be imposed? And Narasimha Rao's own law secretary said that it would probably be unconstitutional to impose President's Rule when law and order has not yet broken down, saying that there is anticipation of a breakdown in law and order. If you accept the principle that there is going to be an event that will portend a collapse of law and order, and in anticipation of that we have to dismiss Kalyan Singh, imagine how other central governments can misuse that interpretation of Article 356. Today, the Modi government can say that in Tamil Nadu, in ten days we apprehend that an event will take place that will lead to breakdown of law and order, and as a preventive mechanism we should dismiss the government. That creates its own problem. Narasimha Rao was well aware that he would be judged on this and that is why he made this a deeply collective decision and the tragedy of India is that nobody else wanted to step up.

Any politician, including Mani Shankar Aiyar, who tells you that the demolition of the Babri Masjid was inevitable. Ask them, show me your public statements before the mosque fell. I was with Mr. Chidambaram in a talk about my book and he was saying that it was obvious that the mosque was going to fall, that suicide groups of the VHP were being trained. Well, if you knew it, then why did you not speak up? You had the whole of November to say this. Why did everyone discover their voice after the mosque fell, including Narasimha Rao?

Narasimha Rao was well aware that he would be judged on this and that is why he made this a deeply collective decision and the tragedy of India is that nobody else wanted to step up.

It was at your book launch that Mani Shankar Aiyar said that Rao's pro-Hindu mindset led to the demolition. Do you agree? He also said Rao once told him that "he did not agree with my definition of secularism as India is a Hindu-majority country".

Let me put it this way. Both Rajiv Gandhi and

Narasimha Rao and Indira Gandhi as a second-term prime minister had a deep sense that Hindus, especially upper-caste Hindus, were leaving the Congress party through the 19080s. I certainly agree with Mani Shankar's description that Narasimha Rao saw that Congress cannot win without getting the Hindu vote, but that analysis was also shared by Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. In fact, on this count, Rajiv Gandhi, who is Mani Shankar Aiyar's idol, did far worse on communal questions in India. It is astonishing how much of a free pass he gets.

We know about Shah Bano. The Indian government was the first government, much before Iran, to ban Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. Here's a man who first opened the locks for prayer at Babri Masjid in 1986, who allowed the brick-laying or Shilanyas ceremony in 1989, much before the BJP did any of this, because he was interested in the Hindu vote. It's fair to make that claim but the Congress has broadly believed this since the 1980s for electoral reasons: you cannot win in India without getting the Hindu vote bank.

Rajiv Gandhi did far worse on communal questions in India. It is astonishing how much of a free pass he gets.

With Rajiv Gandhi, one can sense that in appeasing both Hindus and Muslims, he was politically and electorally driven, but with Narasimha Rao was it just electoral or ideological as well?

I don't think so. That Rao was Brahmin, he was a Hindu scholar, that he wore a *lungi*, he went to temples. This is true. But it is also true that he could quote the Koran by heart, people don't talk about that. He grew up in the Nizam's Hyderabad state, he grew up with Muslims. When he used to speak with the Pakistan president, he used to speak in Urdu that many people felt was better than the Pakistan president's Urdu.

But that doesn't mean that he was ideologically secular?

I would say, yes he was. It's hard to answer.

Even as a biographer, it's hard to get into his mind. He wasn't an elite, English-speaking liberal like Rajiv Gandhi. It's also fair to say that he was playing a double game, he wanted Muslims to come back to the Congress and he wanted Hindus to come back. He didn't take a clear principle.

The CPM government in Kerala today has taken a clear principle on Sabarimala, whether you like it or not, it has taken a clear secular principle. Look, there is a court order and it has to be implemented. Whereas the Congress in Kerala is playing a double game. At one end, it is saying that women's rights should be protected. At the other, it is saying Hindu majority, and that's an electoral game. And that is pretty much what Rao was playing too. I don't think his actions were motivated by being ideologically communal and there is no evidence of that. He was a diehard Congressman within the Congress system. And in that sense, no different from the broad Congress worldview about the role Hinduism has electoral politics in India. This is not to say that he did not make a serious error in Babri Masjid and his analysis was erroneous. It is the single most defining event in post-independence history, and Narasimha Rao, who I feel was on the right side of history when it comes to India's economy, foreign policy and welfare schemes, he was definitely on the wrong side of history when it comes to the Babri Masjid. But the question is how much of the blame is apportioned to him and the question of *mala fide*.

What is at the heart of the confusion over Narasimha Rao's role?

Everybody was trying to protect themselves rather than the mosque. It is an institutional tragedy of India. As I say in the book, I would go one step further. The BJP comes to power in UP in June 1991, and they come on the back of the Ayodhya movement, and Kalyan Singh is the OBC face of the Ayodhya movement and now he is chief minister, so constitutionally sworn to protect the mosque. I would say from June 1991 itself,

the days of the mosque were numbered. At the heart is a clash between the constitutional principles of secularism and of democracy. It's a hard question to answer. Can you say that you can't be a chief minister of Uttar Pradesh unless you swear not to demolish the mosque? That's not feasible, right? Or should Narasimha Rao have dismissed Kalyan Singh the day he became chief minister. It becomes a very hard question to answer in India's federal system when the police report to the state government. And that is the core question, what happens when democracy and secularism clash, and it's not an easy needle to thread.

At the heart is a clash between the constitutional principles of secularism and of democracy. At what point do you prioritize secularism over democracy?

If the Babri Masjid was under threat today, do you think it would have been easier to take a call on imposing President's Rule?

You tell me. The lead-up to Babri Masjid was like watching a cricket match. Australia may win, India may win, there was no certainty. At what point should you say that the danger is clear and present? It's much harder to do. The real question is, can you have a party like the BJP running a state or central government? That's the real question. Again, as I said, when Kalyan Singh came to power in 1991, he came to power on the demand that the Babri Masjid be demolished. There was no ambiguity here. The people of UP voted them in on the Ayodhya issue. At what point are you going to step in using counter-majoritarian measures and say 'look, this is unacceptable in a country like India'? Where do you draw the red line? At some point, do you think democracy, especially electoral democracy, must be curbed in the interest of secularism? It is this deep question. At what point do you prioritise secularism over democracy?

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HuffPost India

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Ministry Admits What Manmohan Singh Predicted – Note Ban Paralysed Agriculture Sector

The decision to demonetise Rs 500 and Rs 1000 notes led to a significant shortage of currency in a cash-dependent economy.

Studies have pointed out that the prices of all crops crashed immediately after demonetisation.

New Delhi: In its submission to the parliamentary standing committee on finance, the agriculture ministry has admitted that demonetisation caused severe hardships to farmers, *The Hindu* reported.

“Millions of farmers were unable to get enough cash to buy seeds and fertilisers for their winter crops. Even bigger landlords faced problems such as paying daily wages to the farmers and purchasing agriculture seeds for growing crops,” the ministry’s report said. “India’s 263 million farmers live mostly in the cash economy,” it added.

The admission comes two years after Prime Minister’s Narendra Modi’s decision to suddenly demonetise currency notes of Rs 500 and Rs 1000. The agriculture ministry has also pointed out that the move came at a time when farmers were either selling their kharif crops or sowing their rabi crops. Cash was the mode of transaction for both.

Due to the cash crunch, the National Seeds Corporation failed to sell 1.38 lakh quintals of wheat seeds. Wheat is a key rabi crop, with over 300 lakh-hectare area under wheat cultivation. The ministry of agriculture’s report also said that the sale of wheat seeds did not pick up even after the use of old currency notes was allowed by the government for its purchase, the English daily reported.

‘Organised loot and legalised plunder’

In November 2016, when former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh put forth a scathing critique of the note ban, he also pointed out that

the move could put the agriculture sector under stress. “55% of our workers in agriculture are reeling in distress. In my opinion, the way the scheme has been implemented will hurt agricultural growth in our country, will hurt small industry, will hurt all those people who are in the informal sector of the economy,” he has said as part of his speech in the Rajya Sabha where he described demonetisation as ‘organised loot and legalised plunder of the common people.’

Studies have pointed out that the prices of all crops crashed immediately after demonetisation. The crash was the most severe for vegetables and fruits which do not have the cushion of minimum support price or assured price.

As *The Wire* reported earlier, prices for several vegetables crashed and farmers were forced to dump their produce on the streets. The prices of potatoes in UP, for instance, fell 41% to Rs 532 per quintal after demonetisation.

The downward slide did not end there. In March 2017, prices crashed to Rs 399 per quintal, well below the average cost of production at Rs 500 a quintal.

Prices did not correct even in the following season, a full one year after demonetisation. Even in November 2017, prices remained around Rs 400 a quintal.

“Demonetisation ensured that traders had very little working capital. They forced farmers to sell at lower prices. Demand also fell as the entire unorganised sector was deprived of their mode of transaction. There were many reports that people were not able to buy enough food.

The Wire Staff

These factors played a huge role in the price crash that followed demonetisation. And cash shortage continued till June, so the impact was felt for a very long time period,” professor Arun Kumar, economist and author of a book on impacts of demonetisation, told *The Wire* in February this year.

We have also reported how demonetisation was a key factor that led to a sharp decline in prices of garlic -- from Rs 130 a kilogram to Rs 20 a kilogram. What was a golden crop for farmers in the Malwa region in western Madhya Pradesh and Hadoti region in eastern Rajasthan, led to one of the watershed moments in the history of peasant protests in India – the Mandsaur protests of June 2017.

Aabshar H. Quazi of *Hindustan Times* has also reported that at least five farmers have committed suicide in and around the Kota region owing to the crash in garlic prices.

Demonetisation led to a decline in rural

wages

Roshan Kishore, also of *Hindustan Times*, recently analysed the long-term impacts of demonetisation on the rural economy. He concluded that it had two negative impacts for rural folk – rural wages declined after demonetisation and rural food inflation exceeded urban food inflation.

“Agricultural wages picked up again in early 2016, probably aided by normal rainfall after two years. However, demonetisation killed this short phase of recovery,” he wrote explaining how the trajectory of rural wages moved.

This coupled with the fact that rural food inflation exceeded its urban counterpart, meant that the rural population, already suffering undress distress, were put at a further disadvantage after demonetisation.

“The bargaining power of farmers was always low, but demonetisation amplified it,” Kishore concluded. 

SEARCH FOR OUR ABIDING HERITAGE

Those who have conceived the idea of a Renaissance as a historical necessity know fully well that the great thinkers of ancient India made valuable contribution to the common human heritage. There are two aspects of human thought. One is temporary. That aspect of thought is valid for one particular period of history, but loses its force in another period of changed social environments. But there is an abiding under current throughout the history of human thought. In the absence of that, culture, progress, civilization would be impossible. Whenever mankind comes to a dead end, to what appears to be a dead end, it naturally looks back, trying to draw courage and inspiration from the abiding features in past traditions. It is necessary to discover the abiding features of the culture and thought currents of ancient India. If they can help us to visualize what is in store for us in the future, it will surely be worthwhile to dig in the past. We must dig deep in the mountainous heap of rubbish which has been built up as the bulwark of age- long stagnation, and which is mistakenly cherished even today as our heritage.

M.N. Roy

Under the yoke of neo-imperialism : A fake war of patriotism and treason

Prem Singh

1

Civil life in India, especially during the last two decades, has been afflicted by the twin war cry of patriotism (*rashtrabhakti*) and treason (*rashtradroh*). The three pillars of the Indian democracy - the legislative, the executive and the judiciary, including the fourth pillar - the press, the education and research institutions as well as independent and committed intellectuals of the civil society and activists working in different fields/peoples' movements have been witnessed participating in this war of words. Even the country's defense-establishment is often seen battling on the subject. It is not possible to accept the presumption that within the given power-structure, the lower and lower-middle strata of the society has not been affected by this phenomenon.

This war has picked up speed since the present government came to power. The reasons are obvious. The idea of patriotism and treason are closely linked with the idea of nationalism. Nationalism, on its part, is associated with capitalism. Aggressive capitalism, in order to flourish, needs aggressive nationalism. In such aggressive nationalism, a focused exploitation of the national identity and spirit of people is being conducted in order to secure the capitalist loot of the national resources. In this process, a fake enemy is constructed before the people to be given the role of a traitor. People forget about the real enemy of the nation, which is corporate capitalism in the present era, and start fighting against that imagined enemy. The emergence of aggressive nationalism in India and many other countries of the world is a manifestation of this very aggressive capitalism, in one or the other form.

The ongoing war between patriotism and treason in India does not have at its core a well-thought-out and serious ideological content concerning the nation. There is no need to give extensive details of the various ideological-strategic contexts and dimensions of this war to prove its truth. The way the roles, characters, thoughts, narratives, issues, symbols, goals, strategies etc. change every moment, the futility as well as craftiness of the war of patriotism and treason is self explanatory. The absurd and ridiculous nature of this war becomes clear by looking at just three episodes related to it. One, the attempts to keep a military tank in Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in check and the order to inculcate patriotism in the students and teachers and two, the binding of a citizen to the bonnet of military jeep by an army officer in Kashmir while confronting the protesters and thirdly the diktat to display a bizarre show of the national flag by the Muslim pilgrims of India at Mecca where they went to perform Hajj.

Many scholars find different narratives of the nation and its conflicts contributing into the making of this war. I do not want to go further into that debate here. I would simply like to say that the concept of nation, in modern India, is essentially linked to anti-colonialism. If any narrative of the nation does not address today's neo-imperialism, then it itself accepts the truth of its fakeness. This is not to say that in the center of national life exists politics. Politics can be real, and fake too. When fake politics prevails collectively and with pomp and show, everything goes fake in the national life. This has been happening in India for the last nearly three decades. The arguments propagated by those who face the allegations of treason, the

claimants of the Indian-Nation (*bharatiy-rashtra*), are often as shallow as of the claimants of Hindu-Nation (*hindu-rashtra*) theory, who are always happy in providing the certificate of patriotism to themselves.

A recent example would be quite adequate to explain the point. There was a considerable debate about the former President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee agreeing to deliver a speech at the headquarters of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). When his speech was over, those who opposed him for accepting the invitation, immediately changed the tune and began to build a monument of praise upon him. They explained that Shri Mukherjee has taught a good lesson on the idea of Indian-Nation to the RSS, right at its headquarters. They were elated to say that the idea of Indian-Nation and its mentors, which includes themselves, are so great.

The important question, how the emergence of the Hindu-Nation, and that too on such a huge scale, became possible despite the presence of the solid idea of the Indian-Nation and its mentors, was not even touched while eulogizing the speech of Shri Mukherjee? The idea of a fanatic Hindu-Nation has been present in the country for the last 80 years, and, if one takes a reference from Dr. Lohia's essay 'Hindu versus Hindu', the idea has prevailed for thousands of years earlier in a constant clash with the liberal stream of Hinduism. Notwithstanding the presence and influence of the claimants of the Indian-Nation in all the academic, educational, literary, artistic, cultural institutions and big NGOs of the country, it is natural to wonder as to how and why the educated and well-off Indians, in India and abroad, along with the ordinary masses, went on to support of the Hindus-fascist mindset?

Actually, the claimants of the Indian-Nation do not want to question their own responsibility in the debate. The question of responsibility

will naturally require introspection and maybe some self-criticism. But that can be done only when one does not consider himself/herself beyond criticism. Especially the Marxist, modernist and libertarian claimants of the Indian-Nation would not be ready for this kind of discussion that would lead to the open question of owning up responsibility. This is so because they make just a strategic use of the idea of the Indian-Nation basically in order to oppose the Hindu-Nation of the RSS. This strategy is applied to portray the RSS as a lone enemy. Ironically, it applies to the RSS as well because it has the same strategy of using an idea.

The idea of the modern Indian nation has been discussed and nurtured from the time of colonial domination to the time of Independence. This idea, with its strengths and weaknesses, is still being discussed and taking shape. Unfortunately, many Marxists, modernists, libertarians and even liberals do not want to come clear about their faith in it. They seem to be more interested in intellectual manoeuvres so that the entanglement or debate of nationalism keeps going on, so as to allow the conflict between the claimants of the Indian-Nation and the claimants of the Hindu-Nation to drag on. Most of these English-language bred intellectual elites are not ready to understand that the toiling masses of India have paid a heavy price for such intellectual manoeuvres; and these masses have now become victims to a variety of misconceptions.

In the context of Shri Mukherjee's speech, the claimants of the Indian-Nation did not make the remotest effort to raise the pertinent question about the fact that every camp seems to be joyfully sharing the yoke of neo-imperialism. The opponents of RSS may oppose fascism and plead for democracy. But the RSS knows that the BJP government will not always be there. It has invited Rahul Gandhi to its headquarters to know his mind. With the

support of the claimants of the Indian-Nation, when any other corporate pawn in political arena gathers adequate political strength, the RSS would then invite him/her too. This is not an appropriation. This, to say the least, is a unity of two fake groups working in favor of neo-imperialism. The collaboration between the two has been strengthened since 1991, the year when the New Economic Policies were imposed.

2

It is not without a reason. Both these ideas of nationalism are unrealistic in the context of modern India. The ‘Golden Age’, fetished by the claimants of Hindu-Nation is located in a distant time and age. The one created by communists, modernists and libertarians is situated somewhere in a remote ‘place’, which keeps changing according to their convenience. Not surprisingly, the journey of these two unrealistic ideas of the Indian nation essentially culminates at the doorsteps of corporate capitalism. As a result, ‘Manuvad’ is tagged on to the Hindu-Nation and, on the other hand, the claimants of Indian-Nation tag on a bizarre mix of many isms while aspiring to build the ‘digital India’. In the process of the struggle and dialogue with colonialism, the historic enterprise of redefining, reinterpreting and reorganizing the spirit of Indian-ness (*bharatiyata*) in the midst of global developments has come to almost a dead end. The stagnated idea of ‘nation’ often turns into a mentality, which can be simultaneously violent, conspiratorial and cowardly.

When capitalism persists incessantly, people ultimately rise to resist the resultant capitalist oppression. Usually people do not get involved in much direct resistance, for capitalist regimes have created a network of NGOs to dilute the struggle. But there is no end to capitalist catastrophe in India with its huge population. Here people cannot be cloistered for long by

putting NGO fences. If people do not fight a political battle as citizens, they fight in the name of religion, caste, region, and language. All conflicts between the Indian-Nation and the Hindu-Nation claimants are to exploit the resistance of people in their favor. They do not want to leave a middle path. It is not surprising if India is turning into a ‘mob-nation’.

It is a matter of concern that the Indian-Nation’s claimants from civil society activists call upon the caste/religious communities (dalits, Muslims, tribals, OBCs etc.) to come together on one platform against the fascist attack of the RSS/BJP. They take them for granted and treat them like how contractors treat construction workers. The intellectual claimants of the Indian-Nation think that all wisdom/ knowledge is their sole property. The strategy of the RSS has been to mobilize communities on identity lines in its favor since its inception and that makes RSS the biggest hurdle in the path of the modern sense of citizenship. Have the civil society activist claimants of the Indian-Nation also decided that the Hindu-Nation of the RSS is not contrary to the idea of a citizen-nation? There was a time when, with the imposition of the New Economic Policies in 1991, serious efforts were being made to create an alternative politics by bringing together various issue-based resistance movements of different areas in order to defeat the neo-imperialist attack. And now we witness a time when calls are given, by those ensconced in the lap of corporate politics, to various communities to either unite or even fight each other!

At one time it was believed that the caste-equation (OBCs-dalits-Muslims) politics is an antidote to communalism in elections. It was cloaked in nomenclatures like ‘politics of social justice’. However, the RSS went ahead and turned that idea to their own advantage, because the claimants of the Indian-Nation did not place the politics of social justice on the

constitutional-ideological axis of socialism, secularism and democracy. Social justice politics became confined merely to ‘social engineering’ with a sole aim of winning elections. The rest of the ‘task’ was completed by the casteist-dynastic leaders!

There is no need to explain that the worst kind of misery in this ‘mob-nation’ is that of Muslims. Most of the Muslim society, being isolated from the process of politicization, is bound to become a lackey of this or that caste-equation under this or that political party/leader. There is no place for them in the Hindu-Nation, at least with equal status. Unfortunately, even in the Indian-Nation, they do not have equal status as Indian citizens. They are treated even by their so called saviours with a scornful charity mentality. Such behavior is accepted as secular and comes handy to en-cash for the posts, awards and grants from willing regimes.

3

All narratives of the Indian-Nation have to together pay attention to their common hypocrisy. They are all against Gandhi. They sometimes beat Gandhi with the stick of Bhagat Singh, sometimes with that of Ambedkar, sometimes with the whip of Subhash Chandra Bose, sometimes under the pretext of Jawaharlal Nehru and sometimes with that of Jinnah as the potent weapon. But as soon as they confront the RSS, they all start to rail against the organization for its role in the assassination of Gandhi. I am not talking about a Gandhi here who blasted the evil face of capitalist industrial civilization even at the heights of its popularity charts worldwide; neither about a Gandhi, who gave a new meaning to politics and a new mode of protest against injustice/suppression in the violence-ridden world. Gandhi was exalted as the father of the nation also but there is no relevance to remembering him that way today since the

claimants of the Indian-Nation and the Hindu-Nation both are unanimous on corporate capitalism and thus denying Gandhi’s political philosophy and vision. Even if the claimants of the India-Nation would not declare it openly, like the Hindu-Nation claimants, the ‘Father of the Nation’ Gandhi too is not acceptable to them. The claimants of the Indian-Nation, in fact, should immediately release Gandhi from the shackles of ‘Father of the Nation’ also. There will be no problem in making a consensus on this subject. The Hindutva-minded people, who still derive vicarious pleasure, however unexpressed, in the killing of Gandhi or cater a wish to kill him in place of Godse will readily accept the idea of removing Gandhi from that position.

I am referring to the Gandhi here who linked the collective consciousness of the vast Indian society, which had been divided into varna-caste for centuries and was weakened by the imperialist loot, with the anti-Imperialist spirit. Gandhi went further and forced the then various intellectual streams to unite with the anti-imperialist spirit of the people. Gandhi’s unique contribution to the independent modern Indian nation was that in this venture he did not have the sentiment of hostility towards the imperialist British rulers, and also tried to prepare fellow Indians for the sentiment of antipathy-less opposition. From Martin Luther King Jr. to Nelson Mandela, many activists world over have been thankful to Gandhi for this teaching. If the claimants of the Indian-Nation do not want even that Gandhi, then they should immediately oust Gandhi from the discourse. This task of ousting Gandhi can be fulfilled only by the intellectuals because they, as a group, are the most hypocritical about him. There is no such example in the world where a person who devoted his life to the freedom struggle and did not want or taken anything in exchange for his good or bad role from the new

Independent nation, got boundless hatred and disregard from country's intellectuals.

One of the major achievements of the Indian-Nation claimants by creating a Gandhi-free India will be that the ruling classes will not be able to use Gandhi as a pawn to strengthen their power over people because intellectuals' hypocrisy about Gandhi helps the rulers to use his name against those people whom he most advocated. On being a Gandhi-free India, the business of spuriously selling Gandhi to the world by the rulers can be terminated soon enough. Gandhi once stated that the purpose and goal of his active participation in politics was to attain salvation. Indian-Nation's claimants, in fact, will therefore truly liberate Gandhi by creating a Gandhi-free India!

4

It is not unreasonable that almost all the claimants of the Indian-Nation do not even talk about any political alternative despite the intensity of the crisis posed by the corporate-communal nexus. Rather, they have successfully destroyed all the possibilities of an alternative politics built up after 1991 by forming complete solidarity with the anti-corruption movement of India Against Corruption (ICA) and the resulting party of that movement. It may be noted that Bharat Mata and Tricolor were made brand-equipment of patriotism in the public domain by the mentors of the anti-corruption movement and Aam Aadmi Party. Intellectuals used to enjoy a huge reputation and praise in India from the very beginning. It is ironic that despite the deep crisis in front of the nation, these very intellectuals do not show any inclination for making efforts in the direction of a new path. It is a unique feature of this modern era that whatever is attempted here, the outline is prepared by these very intellectuals who include supposedly certain great leaders as well.

When the Congress introduced New Economic Policies in 1991, Atal Bihari Vajpayee had said that now the Congress has adopted their ideology and work. When the BJP coalition government formed under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1999 and he made corporate-friendly decisions one after the other through ordinances, the socialist thinker Kishan Patnaik had sought an answer from the 'nationalist' RSS. The reality of the RSS is now exposed thoroughly. All of its 'cultural' and 'nationalist' pomposity was meant to grab and capture the left-overs of capitalist markets. The RSS's 'Hindu Lion' Mohan Bhagwat, who roared in Chicago recently, did not even grovel on the government's decision of 100 percent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the defense sector. The small and medium traders gave their physical, mental and material resources to the RSS/Jana Sangh/BJP since their establishment. However, as soon as RSS became a crony with multinationals and corporate houses, it threw them down. Therefore, repeated disclosures and opposition to RSS's 'hidden agenda' by the claimants of the Indian-Nation does not have much meaning.

There is no discussion among the claimants of the Indian-Nation about the phenomenon of neo-imperialism spreading in India and all over the world, of which communal fascism is a by-product, as if losing freedom, earned through huge sacrifices, is not a matter of concern. Their basic concern is only to defeat RSS's fascism. In this exercise, the claimant of the Indian-Nation do not hesitate to misguide the whole debate. They remove attention from the neo-imperialist attacks by presenting the debate as fascism versus democracy, Hindutva versus Hinduism, Brahminism versus Dalitism (*dalitwad*), Brahminism versus Backwardism (*pichhdawad*) etc. Their whole emphasis would be on making strategies to accelerate these conflicts. It is a fact that due to

democracy, some caste-communities have got political power. They struggle to keep that power safe and consolidate it. Their struggle, however, should be carried out on the democratic ground. Because that strength has been achieved through democracy and can be extended further through democratic methods only. But it is seen that some intellectuals, in their strategy, seek to find 'militant' elements in these communities and want to connect them with violent resistance against the Indian state. Is the intention behind this kind of strategy against fascism honest by any stretch of imagination?

5

At the time of imposition of the New Economic Policies in 1991, Kishan Patnaik tried to provide and delineate a relevant perspective and direction to the debate of patriotism and treason. He based his thoughts on the experience of two centuries of colonial occupation of India while contemplating on this contentious issue. He linked the beginning of neo-liberalism in India with the beginning of slavery once again, and blamed the intellectuals of India for this. He argued that the minds of Indian intellectuals are unable to work freely against neo-liberalism and neo-imperialism. Kishan Patnaik proposes a formula of 'economic nationalism' (*arthik rashtrawad*) to counter the neo-liberal economic subjugation. According to him, those who oppose the plunder and loot of the country's resources by domestic and foreign corporate

houses fall into the category of patriots. However, he has not said it explicitly, but the supporters of neo-liberalism themselves come under the category of traitors. (His books - '*Bharat Shudron Ka Hoga*', '*Vikalpneen Nahin Hai Duniya*', '*Bharatiya Rajaniti Par Ek Drishti*' and several articles published in the Hindi monthly '*Samayik Varta*' and other periodicals/news papers can be seen for detailed discussion on this topic).

To sum it up, aggressive capitalism is not only looting our resources and labor, but also hollowing our national spirit (*bodh*). It would be more appropriate to say that since our national spirit has become hollow, it has only facilitated the loot of the country's resources and labor. Our national life cannot be enriched if there is no national spirit. As we are witnessing, it is doomed to be superficial and quarrelsome. In fact, the ongoing aggressive nationalism is a futile exercise to fill the hollowness of the drying national spirit. It seems that this phase of usurping whatever remains of the loot will go on like this for a while. It is expected that this situation will not prevail or remain forever. The time will come when there will be a hunger for genuine National spirit in a generation or two. If that time does not come in the national life of India, then it should be assumed that we are not worthy of becoming a nation, and slavery is our destiny in the modern world.

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GENUINE SECULARISM

An alternative development in the democratic and therefore genuinely secular direction will be possible only when the placid background of ignorance, superstition and blind faith will be ploughed up by spread of knowledge, skepticism and a critical attitude. These are the characteristic features of genuine secularism.

M.N. Roy

Sohrabuddin Killed With Motive Of Political, Monetary Gains: Investigator

CIO Amitabh Thakur told the court that he had not found any material evidence to show who the political beneficiaries were.

Mumbai: Sohrabuddin Sheikh was killed in an alleged fake encounter in 2005 with the “dual motive of political and monetary gains”, the chief investigating officer (CIO) in the case told a special court here Monday.

CIO Amitabh Thakur also told the court that he had not found any material evidence to show who the political beneficiaries were.

Sheikh, a suspected gangster with terror links, was shot dead on November 26, 2005 while he was in custody of the Gujarat Police in an alleged fake encounter. His wife Kausar Bi was also allegedly killed in a similar manner within a few days.

Sheikh’s aide Tulsi Prajapati was allegedly killed in a staged encounter by the Gujarat and the Rajasthan Police in December 2006.

“It is correct to say that as per the charge sheet filed in the case, there was a dual motive

in the alleged encounter of Sohrabuddin Sheikh. One was political and another was monetary,” CIO Thakur told special court judge S J Sharma.

“I have not found any material evidence to show the persons who were political beneficiaries,” he added.

Mr Thakur further said there was no material showing if any of the accused facing the trial in the case got benefited “politically or monetarily” from the alleged killing.

Of the 38 people charged by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), 15 people, including senior IPS officers D G Vanzara, Rajkumar Pandian and Dinesh MN, and then minister of state for home in Gujarat Amit Shah were discharged by the court.

Courtesy [Press Trust of India](#), November 20, 2018 

Articles/Reports for The Radical Humanist

Dear Friends,

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- Mahi Pal Singh, Editor, The Radical Humanist

Diagnosis of Article 35-A, confusion/disinformation

Bhim Singh

This is unfortunate and sad that media has been pushing through interpretations coining its own definition some of which are totally contrary to the facts, history and Constitutional Law. The Article 35-A is mechanism of the Congress Govt., the then Prime Minister of J&K Bakshi Ghulam Mohd., only to perpetuate dictatorship of so-called ‘imposed’ rulers. There are basic differences between application of the Fundamental Rights to the citizens of India as compared to their application in respect of citizens of India who stand defined by the Constitution of J&K as ‘Permanent Citizens’. Since J&K was not merged into the Union of India by the Constituent Assembly of India, the State of J&K was allowed by the Constituent Assembly of India as a ‘Monarchy State’ under its, the then, Ruler Maharaja Hari Singh. On January 26, 1950 J&K was introduced into the Union of India by introducing a separate, though, temporary Article styled as temporary provision—370. Who is to be blamed? This is not an important subject today. The subject today before the citizens of India including the Permanent Residents in J&K (defined as citizens of India in the Indian Constitution) is that what is the space of the Fundamental Rights for the citizens of India (Permanent Residents in J&K)? Monarchy was abolished by a simple resolution of the so-called Constituent Assembly of J&K in 1952. Dr. Karan Singh was elected as the Head of the State (Sadar-e-Riyasat) by the Members of the Constituent Assembly. He was replaced by a Governor in 1964.

The important issue is that if the residents of J&K (the definition of State Subjects was introduced as Permanent Residents). J&K framed its own Constitution which was promulgated on January 26, 1957. In J&K

Constitution, there is no chapter even a ‘touch’ regarding the Fundamental Rights to the Permanent Residents of the State. Article 370 allowed the Monarchy to continue which was terminated through a declaration of the so-called Constituent Assembly, J&K under the leadership of Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah in 1952.

The most difficult question was about the civil and political rights of the Permanent Residents of J&K which got its own Constitution in 1957. J&K has worked out its own Constitution in 1939 under the leadership of Maharaja Hari Singh. It was that reason that Maharaja Hari Singh was permitted to continue as the Ruler of the State by the Constituent Assembly of India. The important law which was introduced by the Ruler of J&K in 1927 had introduced doctrine of State Subject. The State had enacted the law at that time to ensure that no outsider shall acquire or own any immovable property in J&K. Maharaja Hari Singh brought this law to protect the property of J&K from the outsiders. Most of the British Nationals at that time were interested to purchase immovable property, particularly, land in J&K and settle there. Maharaja Hari Singh made this law to save the immovable property in J&K from the outsiders. This law made got full protection from the Constitution of India which made it very clear that the local laws in respect of the welfare of the people shall not be affected. It was for this reason that word ‘State Subject’ was replaced as Permanent Resident. A permanent resident in J&K has an exclusive right over his immovable property. According to the law made by the Maharaja no outsider is allowed to purchase any immovable property in J&K. This continues a basic and fundamental right of the ‘Permanent Residents’ of J&K. This right was recognised

by the Constituent Assembly of India also. No law in the country allows outsiders to purchase the immovable property in J&K. This law has nothing to do with Article 35(A).

Coming to the present State of Affairs it is important that many political groups, individuals, historians are floating their own interpretations on the scope and application of Article 35(A). How 35(A) was added to Article 35. What were the circumstances at that time and which was the leadership of the country? These factors deserve to be studied in depth. In 1953 the situation in J&K took a different turn when two great friends Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah turned hostile for the reasons need not to be recorded in this chapter. Interestingly, J&K was headed by an elected Sadar-e-Riyasat known as Yuvraj Karan Singh. Under the instructions/advise of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru the Sadar-e-Riyasat of the State, Dr. Karan Singh dismissed the Sheikh Abdullah's government. Detained Sheikh Abdullah in jail who faced trial for more than 10 years for hatching so-called conspiracy against the state. Sheikh Abdullah's Constituent Assembly which he was heading was taken over by his successor Bakshi Ghulam Mohd. who was appointed a Prime Minister of the State by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. It was at the state that Sheikh Abdullah's friends and supporters managed to engage a British Lawyer, Mr. Dingle Foot who argued for Sheikh Abdullah in a special court set up at Canal Road, Jammu. The argument raised by Mr. Dingle Foot was simple that Sheikh Abdullah was an Indian citizen. Under the Constitution of India in its Chapter-III all Fundamental Rights were applicable to the permanent residents of J&K as J&K has been made an integral part of India. His arguments scared the Nehru Advisors, because, under the Fundamental Rights no person could have been detained for more than three months without trial. Therefore, he sounded that Sheikh Abdullah could not be detained in prison beyond three

months because Fundamental Rights detailed in the Constitution of India were applicable to Sheikh Abdullah also as every State Subject had become a citizen of India. This situation was responsible for turning the history of J&K towards misfortune and multiple tragedies. There was only one way to come out of this situation and international embarrassment that the scope of Fundamental Rights should be curbed for the Permanent Residents of J&K. The Prime Minister of India sent a letter to the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad seeking his urgent intervention to authorize/issue ordinance the Govt. of J&K to make any provision in the State Laws to curb any privilege or any guarantee ensured under the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Constitution of India. The ordinance of the President could not extend for more than six months. This subject was not covered by Article 370. The President has no power to do that. The Article 35(A) has been used though it lost its authority in 1955. The Govt. of J&K came out with new detention laws and detention of Sheikh Abdullah continued for 11 years. Even today J&K has separate detention laws called 'Public Safety Act' which was passed by the Assembly of J&K in 1978 when Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah himself was the Chief Minister. I would like to mention that I as an MLA of the Congress Party at that time was the first one to be detained in J&K Public Safety Act in 1978. It was Supreme Court which had quashed this order.

The situation in J&K was different and is different even today. I would like to bring it to the notice of the intellectuals, thinkers, statesmen, parliamentarians and particularly the writers and journalists, say media persons, that we must understand the entire sociopolitical situation in J&K before floating stories. I was shocked to know that some of the legal representatives of the different governments even that of the State of J&K and the Central Govt. have been arguing on the subject without

knowing the subject. It must have been understood that no power on earth nor even the Parliament or Govt. of India can change the characteristics of the Fundamental Rights in Chapter-III. That Article 35(A) inserted by the President of India in 1954 was contrary to the law and even violative of the command of the Chapter on Fundamental Rights.

From where President of India had drawn his power to amend a provision of Fundamental Rights in 1954. Was it supported or carried or even discussed/debated by the Parliament of India ever since 1954?. I wondered the wisdom of our great parliamentarians about their silence on the legal validity/credibility of this draconian amendment in Article 35 which had guaranteed that no provision in Chapter-III in the Indian Constitution could be changed/amended without a procedure clearly described in Article 368 of the Indian Constitution. Yes the Fundamental Rights in J&K or any provision in the Constitution shall override the subject like State Subject/ Permanent Resident in J&K which was promulgated by the Ruler of J&K in 1927. I wonder on the silence of the prominent law makers and the media persons that they are keeping silent on the so-called effects of Article 35(A) in respect of employment, acquisition of immovable property in the state or settlement in the state. This nowhere has dictated that the Fundamental Rights of the Permanent Residents of J&K shall stand scuttled in the absence of Article 35(A). The President of India had/has no power to amend/change any provision in the Constitution particularly contained in Chapter-III of the Indian Constitution on Fundamental Rights. Article 35(A) has no relationship and no relevance with Article 370 of Indian Constitution, although Article 370 is a temporary provision which has been going on for 70 years. They are different subjects all together. The President of India had no

constitutional power provided in the Constitution itself to change even, in any Article. The only way out is that Parliament of India should not wait for the Supreme Court judges or for the media to announce or pronounce their judgments. Let Parliament of India come forward to ensure that National Integration is strengthened with assurances that all the previous laws made by respective states in India before 1947 shall not be discouraged. That is assured the Constitution. The Permanent Residents of J&K deserve all Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Indian Constitution with guaranteed assurances that the protection given by the Constitution of India on the status of Permanent Residents shall remain intact and secure as has been assured in Article 11 to Article 13 of the Indian Constitution.

Article 35(A) reverses the guarantees assured in Article 35 itself. Yet it (35-A) does not tamper with the Fundamental Rights. It only vests the dictatorial power in the rulers of J&K. It is because of this authoritarian power vested in J&K by Article 35(A) that thousands of our youth have been lodged in jails. I, myself, have remained under draconian detention law made by J&K Rulers for years. I was awarded Rs.50,000/- compensation by the Supreme Court on my illegal arrest and detention in 1984 when I was Panthers MLA. In 2007, the Supreme Court granted compensation of Rs.2 lacs to Ms. Anita Thakur and Rs.1 lac to Mr. P.K. Ganjoo & Mr. H.C. Jalmeria Advocate each for their illegal detention and assault. This is the dictatorial power vested in J&K Govt. by Article 35(A).

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In Defence of Suu Kyi

Jawaharlal Jasthi

Freedom and human rights are prevailing in the West and nowhere else in the world. There they have the freedom to say anything and to do anything.

At present they are aghast with Myanmar for violation of human rights and the inhuman treatment meted out to Rohingya Muslims there. For that they hold Aung San Suu Kyi responsible and condemn her mercilessly as if they were waiting for such an opportunity. But the problem of Rohingyas has not arisen after Suu Kyi entered the government. It is there since decades before her. It was still worse under the decades of rule by the military junta. It was considered as something natural under military rule. Then nobody talked of the problem. Even Suu Kyi was a mute spectator of the conditions under military rule, but she refused to submit to their rule and preserved her sanctity and integrity over the years. Her tenacity was appreciated and prizes and praises were poured on her. Even the Nobel Prize was conferred on her. Then there were expectations that she would prevail on the junta some time and establish democracy in the unfortunate Myanmar. She too was entertaining hopes on that. She was under house arrest, almost solitary confinement. Many honors came to her.

Canada bestowed on her the honorary citizenship of the country. Many of the reputed cities in the west honored themselves by awarding her Freedom of the City – like Edinburgh, Oxford, Glasgow and New Castle. Even the US Holocaust Museum conferred on her the Elie Wiesel Award. The Amnesty International called her the Ambassador of Conscience in 2009. All these honors were conferred on her by themselves. She did not ask or crave for it. They claim to have recognised the sincerity of the person in standing against the tyrannical military rule. They felt

they are doing something great in furtherance of freedom and human rights by extending moral support to her by honoring her. She did not have any weapons in her hand except suffering silently. She became an inspiration to the people of the country and the political party National League for Democracy (NLD) is there in support of her.

Finally a day came when her party attained majority in the elections conducted by the military rulers. She was asked to form government. But she refused as it would be only a ritual and of no practical use for her. She preferred to wait expecting the tide to turn. In 2015 elections were held again and the party got better majority. Even then she was hesitating to form the government. The military authorities by that time made a constitution constituting the parliament with nominated military authorities in majority and nothing could be done except with their approval. She was prevailed on by her supporters to accept the offer to form government as times are changing to her favour and she would be able to do something better. She succumbed to the hope and pressure.

But the government under that constitution was formed by the military rulers and not by the majority party. She was disqualified to head the government as she married a foreigner in spite of the fact he died decades back and her children never set foot on the soil of Myanmar. The only concession given by the constitution was for her to nominate the President of her choice. But what is the use of it? It is also a ritual, not even ceremonious post. She herself has no powers and the designation she chose was "State Counsellor". Obviously it reflects her de facto position in the government. Everybody in the west knew that it is the junta that is in command and all others are just nominal and cosmetic, including the State

Counsellor and the President.

It is a fact that the Rohingyas in Myanmar are being treated in a horrible inhuman way. They deserve sympathy of everybody. Even Suu Kyi, being in such a helpless condition was constrained to say that the treatment could have been better. Under the conditions prevailing around her it requires some courage to say even that. But that was not enough. She too knows it was not enough. In fact if she says anything more she would be exposing herself to the coercion of military rulers who are de facto and de jure in charge of the country.

The United Nations sent a delegation to study the situation in Myanmar. Their report suggested condemnation of the rulers including military authorities for violation of human rights against Rohingyas. The Reuter journalists were arrested and that has become an additional sin of Suu Kyi. She pointed out there is a law in Myanmar under which the journalists were imprisoned. It amounted to supporting the imprisonment and deserving further condemnation. After all journalists are more valuable than other people and deserve better treatment. The entire media depends on them. Suu Kyi should have condemned the law, they say. She too knows it. But could she do it? That made her a criminal and heavens started falling on her. All the institutions and persons who showered prizes and awards on her started blaming her. They go to the extent of depriving her of all the honors bestowed on her earlier. But what is the record of the west on those lines?

What is happening in Palestine for the last half a century? The entire area is under military occupation. The people there lost their freedom of movement within their territory. Walls were erected to restrict them. Lands are occupied by settlers with full support of the government of Israel. Crops were uprooted. Houses and villages were demolished. Millions of people were confined to a tiny desert strip of Gaza suffering blockade for decades. There would

be some day when the people could not hold themselves against the situation and resort to rebellion fully knowing that it would be fatal to them only. They are dubbed terrorists and subjected to communal punishments. Is it all in support of human rights? One can find fault with inhuman laws passed by the government of Myanmar justifying the arrest of journalists. But what about the laws passed by Israel to justify whatever they do in Palestine lands beyond their borders? If that law is accepted by the west, why not the law of Myanmar? How many times US saved Israel in the Security Council? How many times resolutions were passed in the General Assembly of the United Nations condemning Israel? What is the result of it all?

All the powers in the west have the audacity to call Suu Kyi as not deserving the honor bestowed on her by them and started to withdraw the same as if she has committed a crime. Even the respectable institution like the Amnesty International goes to the extent of calling her not worth the honour to be called the Ambassador of Conscience and declares that it is withdrawn. She never asked for it and she is not poorer by withdrawing it. A prize or honor is given based on what the person has done till then. It does not bind the recipient to behave in a particular way by accepting the prize. But those who confer the award or prize have such expectations. That is wrong. That was why Jean Paul Sartre declined the Nobel Prize for Literature. He refused to be answerable to the expectations of the Prize givers. Mohd. Younus is reported to have suggested that Suu Kyi should not have accepted the Nobel Prize. But he did not consider it necessary to offer the same suggestion to Barack Obama when he was given the Noble Peace Prize in 2009. What was his achievement to deserve that prize? Just by winning election to Presidency makes him eligible for it? Perhaps the institution expected that he would do something during his tenure as President of the United States of America. But

what is it he has done? How many bombs were exploded during his tenure? What compensation did he offer to Iraq that was devastated by his predecessor in the name of fighting terrorism? That country was devastated completely for no fault of it. Is America not responsible to compensate? In fact Nobel Prizes are given late after the achievement of the person. It is not given before performance expecting future action. In fact it is not proper to bind the recipient to act in a particular way by accepting the prize. Surprisingly the Secretary of the Noble Committee is reported to have lamented that there is no provision in their code to withdraw the prize once conferred. He wanted to fall in line with all the other institutions that were standing in line to denude Suu Kyi of all the glory that clothed her by their honors. She does not lose anything by that as she did not crave for it. It was given to her only to satisfy the ego of the individuals who are in charge of those institutions.

The question arises why she struck to the post when she is not able to do anything of her choice. A relevant question! But look at the conditions prevailing in that country. She waited for conditions to change in the country. Nobody could do anything except the military rulers there. The change cannot be expected to come overnight. It has to be gradual. At best she thought she could expedite the process by taking the little opportunity offered to her. If she declines the offer, the military rulers do not lose

anything. But the country may be losing an opportunity to bring in the change required without shedding blood. Pity is that the so called international comity failed to bring any pressure on the military rulers but goes on harping that Suu Kyi failed to stand to their expectations. That is unjust. She did not do what she could not do. But they did something what they should not do. Their selective support to human rights at their own discretion amounts to discrimination. They have showered unsolicited awards on her and started withdrawing the same of their own accord. It only shows they are not what they appear to be. But she remains the same person then and now. She is Aung San Suu Kyi.

The UNO is not doing justice to themselves by sending delegates and getting reports of what is known to everybody. If all those organisations that are crying foul on Suu Kyi stood with her and condemned the military rulers, there could have been some better result. That is what they should have done if they have honoured her sincerely. Now that Suu Kyi herself stands devalued in the eyes of the free world the military rulers could feel more comfortable in their shoes. Perhaps that is why they invited her to form the government. That could be the only result when responsible institutions behave irresponsibly.

Jawaharlal Jasthi (J.L. Jawahar) is a veteran Radical Humanist and Rationalist, writer and author from Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh. 

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. Some of Roy's important books are also available at that site.

- Mahi Pal Singh

Extraordinary woman Madalyn Murray O'Hair

Dr. Narisetti Innaiah

I had the great opportunity to meet atheist leader from USA Madalyn Murray O'hair

Time magazine as MOST HATED WOMAN IN AMERICA with her photo on title page.



Actually her greatness lies in winning a case against Christians who were teaching religion in public schools. She protested and filed case in court. Her plea was upheld in Supreme Court of America in 1963 which is considered as greatest victory for atheists, rationalists and humanists. Now there is no religious teaching in schools. Only private religious managements teach religion.

Madalya O'Hair visited the humanists in India, to start with Mr M.V Ramamurthy and Subbamma. That is where I talked with her for the first time.

Then Madalyn visited the Atheist Centre of GORA in Vijayawada. Gora was no more. He passed away in 1975. Earlier Gora visited USA and met Madalyn. They both agreed organise

during 1978 at the residence of Mr M V Ramamurthy, the humanist leader in India. She was extraordinary woman who was called by

world atheist meet once in three years at Vijayawada. Of course those conferences are continuing even now.



Madalyn spent a day in the Atheist Centre, met all members of Gora family and several atheists too. She donated 1000 rupees for the work of the centre.

Mr Lavanam, Dr Vijayam, Dr Samaram, Saraswati Gora and few others were present. Madalyn was delighted to observe the programs there and felt happy.

Due to change of weather, water and food, Madalyn had digestion problems. Hence

she went back to Delhi. She was accompanied by her son Jon Garth Murray and her granddaughter Robin Murray.

Madalyn shifted her office from Baltimore in East coast of USA to Austin in Texas site. She founded the atheist centre and developed radio station, TV telecasting and library in Austin.

She toured world over and addressed meetings.

Madalyn and Paul Kurtz jointly organised

radio discussions and TV programs to propagate rationalism, humanism and atheism.

I reached USA for the first time during 1992 and contacted Madalyn on phone. Afterwards we continued phone conversations several times.

Suddenly news appeared that Madalyn disappeared from office and after few days the sad news revealed the murder of her by her office staff member for the sake of money. Much later he was convicted.

Thus a legendary leader disappeared from the scene creating a big vacuum. Then others came forward and continued her efforts. Now the headquarters are in New Jersey with Nick Fish as president of the association. The monthly journal is continued regularly.

We all stood in front of Supreme court building in Washington DC to commemorate the victory of Madalyn's case against teaching religion in public schools.



***Mrs Johnson President of Atheist Association in USA
(after Madalyn) interviewed Innaiah in Staten Island, New York.
Mr Bob the public relations officer was present***

Mrs Johnson the president of American atheist association interviewed me in their studios at Staten Island, New York which was telecast. Mr Aramalla Purnachandra, humanist from India who lives in New York was present during that interview.

Dr. Narisetti Innaiah is former Director, Centre for Inquiry (CFI), India. He did his Ph.D. on Philosophy of Modern Science. He

is a veteran Radical Humanist who has translated maximum books written by M.N. Roy as well as other books on humanism into Telugu. He has written books in English and Telugu on humanism, exposing blind belief systems, and translations of M N Roy, Richard Dawkins, Paul Kurtz, V R Narla, Sibnarayan Ray, V B Karnik, Agehananda Bharati, Sam Harris etc. 

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Dr. Innaiah at dinner table with Mrs. Barbara w/o Prof. Robert



Visit www.LohiaToday.com to learn about:

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- Various people's movements, read diverse periodicals like *Janata* & *The Radical Humanist* and thought provoking commentaries on current topics.

No man's thought should be made the center of a political action. It should help but not control. Acceptance and rejection are varying forms of blind worship. There are priceless treasures to learn from Gandhi and from Marx, but the learning can only be done when the frame of reference does not derive from an age or person.

- **Dr. Lohia**

Ram Manohar was very much misunderstood by his contemporaries. Perhaps his ideas were too original to be understood fully while his straight forwardness was unpleasant to many. - **Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan**



People will surely listen to me, perhaps after I am dead. - **Dr. Lohia**

